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by E. T. A. Hoffmann**

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Author: E. T. A. Hoffmann

Translator: A. Ewing

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THE SERAPION BROTHERS.

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THE SERAPION BRETHREN.

BY

ERNST THEODOR WILHELM HOFFMANN

Translated from the German

BY

MAJOR ALEX. EWING,

A.P.D.,

TRANSLATOR OF J. P. RICHTER'S "FLOWER, FRUIT, AND
THORN PIECES,"
ETC.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

Notwithstanding the popularity which several of Hoffmann's tales have obtained in many different countries, we are not aware of any complete or accurate translation of his works. In England they have become known in a very partial form, chiefly by the appearance of a few isolated tales in association with those of other writers, as in the 'Specimens of German Romance,' or in Gillies' 'German Stories,' which were published about 1830. Others are familiar only through the medium of a translation from a previous French version, as is the case with the well-known 'Nutcracker,'--and in this process of double dilution the Author's name has sometimes disappeared altogether.

The most important attempt to present this writer to English readers is the recent publication of two volumes entitled 'Hoffmann's Weird Stories,' which contain eleven tales seven being from the *Serapions-Brüder*, two from the *Nachtstücke*, and two from other parts of his works. These stories are all separated from the setting in which, as in the present volume, they for the most part appeared, and the translator has not aimed at any completeness or method in their selection. The first attempt to give English readers a satisfactory idea of Hoffmann's work in its completeness is inaugurated by the present volume, which will be followed by the remaining portion of the *Serapion Brethren*, and in due course it is hoped by other portions of his works.

Musicians will be interested by the fulness with which the Author's views on musical subjects so much in advance of his age, and so just and accurate are developed in many places, such as the dialogue called "The Poet and the Composer," and the conversation which precedes the tale "Master Martin." It would be of much interest could any of Hoffmann's numerous musical compositions be brought to light at the present day; they appear to have been considerably in advance of their period, although Weber's critique on one of Hoffmann's operas is full of high praise.

A. E.

Taunton, September, 1886.

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SECTION I.

"Look at the question how one will, the bitter conviction is not to be got rid of by persuasion, or by force, that what has been never, never can be again. It is useless to contend with the irresistible power of Time, which goes on continually creating by a process of constant destruction. Nothing survives save the shadowy reflected images left by that part of our lives which has set, and gone far below our horizon; and they often haunt and mock us like evil, ghostly dreams. But *we* are fools, and expect that matters which, in reality, were nothing but our *ideas*, parts and portions of our own individualities, are to be found actually existent in the world outside us, and blooming in perpetual youth! The woman we have loved and parted from, the friend to whom we have said good-bye, are both lost to us for ever. The people whom, perhaps years afterwards, we meet as *being* them, are not the same whom we left, neither are we ever the same to them."

So saying, Lothair got up from his seat, and folding his arms on the mantel-piece, gazed, with gloomy sadness, into the fire which was blazing and crackling merrily.

"One thing is certain enough," said Theodore, "that, at all events, you, dear Lothair, are so far actually the same Lothair whom I bade good-bye to twelve years ago, that whenever any little thing vexes or disappoints you at all, you immediately sink down to the lowest depths of gloom and despair. It is quite true--and Cyprian, Ottmar and I feel it as much as you that this first meeting of ours after our twelve years' separation comes short of being quite all that we had pictured it to be. Put the blame on me, who raced through one of those endless streets of ours after another, leaving no stone unturned to get you all assembled here to-night by my fireside. Perhaps I had better have left it to chance. But I could not bear the idea that we--who had spent so many years together in such close friendship, joined by the bonds of our common pursuits in art and knowledge, and only driven asunder by the hurricane which raged during that fateful time--that *we*, I say, should come to cast anchor in the same harbour, for so much as a single day, and yet not look upon each other with the eyes of the body, as we had with the eyes of the spirit in the interval. And now, we have been sitting here together for some hours, wearying ourselves to death over the enthusiastic quality of our revived friendship, yet not one of us has said anything worth listening to: we have talked tedious, tiresome stuff, to a perfectly astonishing extent. And why is this, but because we are a set of very childish children, thinking we were going to take up the old tune which we sang twelve

years ago, at the point where we broke off with it, and go on singing it as we were doing then. Lothair, we will say, should have read Tieck's 'Zerbino' aloud to us for the first time, to our astonished delight; or Cyprian should have brought some fanciful poem, or perhaps the text of a whole operatic extravaganza, to which I should then have composed the music on the spot, and thundered it out on the old weak-loined piano of twelve years back; or Ottmar should have told us about some wonderful curiosity he had come across--some remarkable wine, some extraordinary nincompoo, etc., and set us all on fire with projects and ideas how to make the most of our enjoyment of either, or both; and because none of all this has happened, we sit secretly sulking at each other, each thinking (of the other) 'Ay! what a change in the dear old fellow. Well! I never should have believed he could have altered so!' Of course we none of us *are* the same. I say nothing of the circumstance that we are twelve years older; that, no doubt, every year lays more earth upon us, which weighs us down from aerial regions, till we go *under* the earth at last. But whom of us, all this time, has not the wild whirlpool carried surging on from event to event, and from action to action? The terror, the trouble, the anxiety of that stormy time,¹ could not pass over us without leaving bleeding scars graven on our hearts. The pictures of our early days are pale compared with *that*, and we cannot revive their colours. No doubt, too, there is much in life and in ourselves which looked very bright and glorious, and has lost its dazzling glitter for our eyes, grown accustomed to a brighter light; but the modes of thinking and feeling which gave rise to our friendship remain pretty much the same. I mean that we all consider each other something rather above the common, in suitability to each other at all events, so as to be worthy of a thorough friendship. So let us leave the old days out of sight, with all the promise and anticipations belonging to them, and, starting from the conviction which I have expressed, see how we can best establish a new bond of union."

"Heaven be thanked," said Ottmar, "that Lothair could no longer endure the forced, unnatural condition in which we were, and that you, Theodore, have at once exorcised the malignant little fiend which was vexing and teasing us. This constrained feeling of 'You are bound to be enjoying yourself, whether you really are or not,' was beginning to stifle me, and I was just getting fearfully out of temper, when Lothair broke out as he did. But now that Theodore has pointed out so clearly what it was that was amiss, I seem to be brought much nearer to you all, and things appear as if the old kindly unconstrained comfort, with which we used to meet, were getting the upper hand. Theodore is right; though Time has altered a good many things, our belief in each other remains untouched. And with this, I solemnly declare the preliminaries of our new League established; and it is laid down as a rule that we come together once every week on a certain day--otherwise we shall lose sight of each other in this big town, and be further asunder than ever."

"A great idea," cried Lothair, "only you should add a few regular rules as to our weekly meetings; for instance, that we are, or are not, to talk upon certain subjects; or that each of us is bound to be three times as witty as usual; or that we must always eat sardine-salad. In this fashion, the fullest blown form of Philistinism that flourishes in any club will burst in upon us. Don't you think, Ottmar, that anything in the shape of a formal stipulation connected with our meetings would at once introduce an element of constraint, destructive, at all events, of *my* enjoyment in them? Let me remind you of the extreme repugnance which we used to feel towards everything in the shape of a 'club,' or whatever name might be given to absurd institutions of the kind, where all sorts of tedium and wearisomeness are carried forward on system. And now you propose to force and constrain, artificially, this four-bladed clover-plant of ours--which can only flourish and thrive naturally without any gardener's training--into an evil form of this sort."

"Our friend Lothair," said Theodore, "does not get out of his moods so very quickly, that we all know; as also that when he is in them he sees spectres, and fights with them sturdily until he is dead-beat, and obliged to acknowledge that they *were* nothing but spectres, the creations of his own brain. How is it possible,

Lothair, that Ottmar's harmless and very innocent suggestion should at once set you thinking of clubs, and the Philistinism inherent in them? All the same, you have brought to my memory a very amusing remembrance of our former days. I dare say you remember the time when we first left the Residency and went to the little town of P---? The customs of society made it incumbent on us to join the club which the so-called 'Upper ten' of the place belonged to. We received due notification, in a solemn document, worded in the most formal juridical style, that, after the due formalities, we had been admitted as members; and this notification was accompanied by a great book, of some fifteen to twenty sheets of paper, handsomely bound, containing the Club Rules. They had been drawn up by an old legal luminary, exactly in the style of the Prussian Municipal Code, all divided into titles and paragraphs, and were the most entertaining reading it is possible to conceive. For instance, one title was superscribed, 'Concerning Women and Children, and their Rights, and Privileges,' in which nothing more or less was sanctioned than that the wives and daughters of the members had the privilege of coming to tea within the precincts of the club every Thursday and Sunday evening, and might even dance there some five or six times during the winter. Concerning children the law was still more accurately and critically enunciated, the jurist having handled this subject with even more than his usual care, jealously distinguishing between children under age, children of age, and children under parental tutelage. Those under age were further sub-divided, according to their moral qualities, into well-behaved, and ill-behaved, and the latter were unconditionally debarred from admission, 'good behaviour' being a fundamental principle of the club constitution. The next title was the noteworthy one, 'Concerning Dogs, Cats, and other irrational creatures,' and laid down that nobody might bring into the club any dangerous wild beast. So that, had any member taken to himself (for example) a lion, a tiger, or a panther by way of lapdog, it would have been impossible for him to take it into the club. Even had its mane and claws been cut, a schismatic of this description would have been excluded unconditionally by the committee. Even the cleverest poodles, and the most highly-trained pugs were declared ineligible, and might only, (on exceptional occasions in summer, when dinner was in the open air,) be introduced, on presentation of a card of permission by the committee. We--Lothair and I--invented a number of addenda and declarations supplementary to this deeply-considered codex, which we proposed, with the most solemn gravity, at the next meeting, and, to our great entertainment, carried the thing so far that the most preposterous nonsense was discussed and debated on with the gravest deliberation. But at last one or two saw through our joke, so that all confidence in us was at an end--although our expectations were not realised, for we had thought it a certainty that we should be solemnly expelled from the club."

"I remember it quite well," said Lothair, "and I'm not a little annoyed to feel that nowadays I could not carry out a similar mystification. I have grown much too dull and sluggish, and inclined to be annoyed with matters which used to make me laugh."

"Nothing shall induce me to believe that," said Ottmar; "rather I feel convinced, Lothair, that the echoes of something painful are louder in you to-day than common. But a new life will shortly breathe through you like a breeze of spring; those jarring discords will die away, and you will be the same Lothair that you were twelve years since. Your club at P--- reminds me of another, whose founders must have been witty fellows. It was on the plan of a regular kingdom, with a King, Ministers, a Parliament, &c. Its sole *raison d'être* was good eating, and better drinking, and its meetings were held in the principal hotel, where the wines and *cuisine* were of the best. At those meetings, the Minister for Foreign Affairs would give notice of the arrival of some remarkably superior Rhine wine at some merchant's in the town. An embassy would then be despatched, furnished with minute instructions, and provided with necessary credits to be drawn against a special reserve-fund in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On occasions when a *ragout* turned out badly, everything was at sixes and sevens. Pourparlers and diplomatic notes were exchanged relating to the threatening aspect of the affairs of the realm. Then Parliament would meet to decide as to the

particular wine to be used on a given day in compounding the cold punch. The decision had to be solemnly laid before His Majesty in Council, and, after due deliberation, the King would bow, in assent; the ordinance concerning the cold punch, duly passed, would be remitted for execution to the Minister of the Interior. Art and Science, also, were represented in these ceremonies; the poet who wrote a new drinking song, and the musician who composed and performed it, receiving a decoration from His Majesty's hands in the shape of a red hen's feather, coupled with the permission to drink an extra bottle of wine--at their own expense. On State occasions the King had a crown, orb, and sceptre of gilt pasteboard, and the dignitaries of the realm wore quaint head-dresses. The symbol of the fraternity was a silver box with a hen sitting on eggs on the lid. At the time when I forgathered with this pleasant company, there was a large proportion of talented people in its ranks, so that it was entertaining enough, as far as it went."

"I have no doubt it was," said Lothair, "but I can't comprehend how a thing of the kind could be kept up for any length of time. The best of jokes loses its point if it is kept going so long as it seems to have been in this 'Lodge of the Clucking Hen,' if I may so style it. You have both, Theodore and Ottmar, told us of clubs on a grand scale, with their rules, regulations, and mystifications. Let me direct your attention to what was probably the very *minutest* club that ever, I should think, existed on this earth. In a certain little town on the Polish frontier, occupied, at the time, by Prussia, the only German officials were an old captain--retired on account of bad health--who was postmaster, and the exciseman. Every evening as the clock struck five, these two repaired to the only inn which there was in the place, to a little room where nobody else was admitted. Generally, the exciseman arrived there before the captain, who would find him smoking his pipe over his jug of beer. The captain, on coming in, would greet him with, 'Fine evening! Any news?' sit down opposite to him at the table; light his pipe--filled beforehand; take the paper out of his pocket, and hand each sheet, as he finished it, across to the exciseman, who would read it with equal care and avidity. They would go on puffing their clouds of smoke into each other's eyes in profound silence, till the clock struck eight, when the exciseman would get up, knock the ashes out of his pipe, and with a 'Not much news, to speak of,' be off to his bed. This they styled, in all seriousness, 'Our Club.'

"Very good indeed," said Theodore, "and our Cyprian here would have been a splendid candidate for membership in that club. He never would have broken the sacred silence by any ill-timed remark. He seems to have taken a vow of silence, like the monks of La Trappe, for up to this moment not a syllable has passed his lips."

Cyprian, who had indeed been completely silent up to this point, heaved a deep sigh, as if awaking from a dream; raised his eyes to the ceiling, and said, with a quiet smile:

"I don't mind confessing that all this day I have been unable to banish from my recollection a certain strange adventure which I met with several years ago; and perhaps when the voices within one are loud, the lips are not very apt to open for speech. But I have been attending to all that has been said, and can give a proper account of it all. In the first place, Theodore was quite right in saying that we had been childish in fancying that we could begin again just where we left off twelve years ago, and were sulking with each other because this was not, and could not be, the case. I maintain that nothing could have so established us as Philistines incarnate as to have gone ambling along in our old track. And this reminds me of two savants--but I must tell this story at full length. Imagine two men--whom I shall call Sebastian and Ptolemy--imagine to yourselves these two studying Kant's philosophy as hard as they could at College at K---, and daily carrying on long discussions as to various points of it. Just at the moment when Sebastian was going to deliver his most clenching blow, and Ptolemy pulling himself together to answer it, they were interrupted; and Fate so arranged matters that they never met again in K---, one going off in one direction, the other, in another. Nearly

twenty years afterwards Ptolemy saw in the streets of B---, a figure walking, whom he at once recognised as his friend Sebastian. He rushed after him, slapped him on the shoulder, and when he looked round, Ptolemy said: 'Then you maintain that----'

"In short, struck the (argumentative) blow which he had lifted his arm to deliver twenty years before! Sebastian sprung the mines which he had laid in K---. They argued for two hours, three hours, walking up and down the streets, and in the heat of their discussion, agreed to submit the question to the Professor for his decision, never recollecting that poor old Emanuel had been many a year in his grave. They parted, and never met again. Now to *me* there is something almost terrific about this story (which has this peculiarity, that it is strictly true). My imagination *boggles* at a Philistinism of a depth so ghastly! So we are not going to be Philistines. We are not going to insist on spinning on at the thread which we were spinning twelve years ago, nor be annoyed with each other for having on different hats and coats. We will be different to what we were then, and yet the same; so that is settled. What Lothair, without much relevancy, said of clubs is, I dare say true enough, and proves how prone poor Humanity is to dam up the minutest remnants of its freedom, and build an artificial roof to prevent it looking up to the clear blue sky. But what have we to do with this? For my part, I adhere to Ottmar's proposal, that we meet every week on a certain day."

"I shall oppose it persistently," said Lothair. "But to put an end to this horrible argument and discussion, let Cyprian tell us the strange adventure which is so much in his thoughts to-day."

"My idea," said Cyprian, "is rather that we should try to get into a merrier mood; and it would greatly conduce to this if Theodore would be so kind as to open yon old mysterious vase, which, judging by the delicate aroma it gives out, might have pertained to the Brotherhood of the Clucking Hen. Nothing on earth could have a more opposite effect than my adventure, which you would consider inappropriate, altogether uninteresting--nay, silly and absurd. It is gloomy in its character at the same time, and the part which I play in it is the reverse of distinguished: abundant reasons for saying nothing about it."

"Did I not tell you," cried Theodore, "that our Cyprian, our dear Sunday-child, had been seeing all kinds of questionable spirits again, which he won't allow our utterly carnal eyes to look upon? Out with your adventure, Cyprian, and if you *do* play rather an ungrateful part in it, I promise that I will soon recollect, and dish you up adventures of my own in which I play a more ungrateful part than you can possibly do. I assure you I have a large stock of them."

"So be it then," said Cyprian; and after gazing reflectively before him for a few seconds, he commenced as follows:--

"[You know that](#), some years ago I spent a considerable time in B---, a place in one of the pleasantest districts of the South of Germany. As my habit is, I used to take long walks in the surrounding country by myself, without any guide, though I should often have been the better for one. On one of these occasions I got into a piece of thickly wooded country and lost my way; the farther I went, the less could I discover the smallest vestige of a human footstep. At last the wood grew less thick, and I saw, not far from me, a man in a brown hermit's robe, with a broad straw hat on his head, and a long, wild black beard, sitting on a rock, by the side of a deep ravine gazing, with folded hands, thoughtfully into the distance. This sight had something so strange, unexpected, and out of the common about it that I felt a shiver of eeriness and awe. One can scarcely help such a feeling when what one has only heretofore seen in pictures, or read of in books, suddenly appears before one's eyes in actual, every-day life. Here was an anchorite of the early ages of Christianity, in the body, seated in one of Salvator Rosa's wild mountain scenes. But it soon occurred to me that probably a monk on his peregrinations was nothing uncommon in that part of the country. So I walked up to him, and asked if he could tell me the shortest way out of the wood to the high road leading to B---. He looked at me from head to foot with a gloomy glance, and

said, in a hollow and solemn voice:

"I know well that it is merely an idle curiosity to see me, and to hear me speak which has led you to this desert. But you must perceive that I have no time to talk with you now. My friend Ambrosius of Camaldoli is returning to Alexandria. Travel with him.'

"With which he arose and walked down into the ravine.

"I felt as if I must be in a dream. Presently I heard the sound of wheels close by, I made my way through the thickets, and found myself in a forest track, where I saw a countryman going along in a cart. I overtook him, and he shortly brought me to the high road leading to B----. As we went along I told him my adventure, and asked if he knew who the extraordinary man in the forest was?

"'Oh, sir,' he said, 'that was the worthy man who calls himself Priest Serapion, and has been living in these woods for some years, in a little hut which he built himself. People say he's not quite right in his head, but he is a nice, good gentleman, never does any harm, and edifies us of the village with pious discourses, giving us all the good advice that he can.'

"I had come across the anchorite some six or eight miles from B----, so I concluded that something must be known of him there, and this proved to be the case. Dr. S---- told me all the story. This hermit had once been one of the most brilliant intellects, one of the most universally-accomplished men in M----; and belonging, as he did, to a very distinguished family, he was naturally appointed to an important diplomatic post as soon as he had completed his studies: the duties of this office he discharged with great ability and energy. Moreover, he had remarkable poetical gifts, and everything he wrote was inspired by a most brilliant fancy, a mind and imagination which sounded the profoundest depths of all subjects. His incomparable humour, and the unusual charm of his character made him the most delightful of companions imaginable. He had risen from step to step of his career, and was on the point of being despatched on an important diplomatic mission, when he disappeared, in the most incomprehensible fashion, from M----. All search for him was fruitless, and conjecture and enquiry were baffled by a combination of circumstances.

"After a time there appeared amongst the villages, in the depths of the Tyrolese mountains, a man in a brown robe, who preached in these hamlets, and then went away into the wildest parts of the forests, where he lived the life of a hermit. It chanced one day that Count P---- saw this man (who called himself Priest Serapion), and at once recognised him as his unfortunate nephew, who had disappeared from M----. He was taken into custody, became violent, and all the skill of the best doctors in M---- could do nothing to alleviate his terrible condition. He was taken to the lunatic asylum at B----, and there the methodical system, based upon profound psychological knowledge, pursued by the medical man then in charge of that institution, succeeded in bringing about a condition of much less excitement, and greater quietness in the form of his malady. Whether this doctor, true to his theory, gave the patient an opportunity of escaping, or whether he himself found the means of doing so, escape he did, and was lost sight of for a considerable time.

"Serapion appeared, ultimately, in the country some eight miles from B----, where I had seen him; and the doctor declared that if any true compassion was to be shown him, he should not be again driven into a condition of wild excitement; but that, if he was to be at peace, and, after his fashion, happy, he should be left in these woods in perfect freedom, to do just as he liked; in which case he, the said doctor, would be responsible for the consequences. Accordingly, the police authorities were content to leave him to a distant and imperceptible supervision by the officials of the nearest village, and the result bore out what the doctor had said. Serapion built himself a little hut, pretty, and, under the circumstances, comfortable. He made chairs and tables, wove mats of rushes to lie upon, and laid out a garden where he grew flowers and vegetables. In all that did not touch the

idea that he was the hermit Serapion who fled into the Theban desert in the days of the Emperor Decius, and suffered martyrdom in Alexandria, his mind was completely unaffected. He could carry on the most intellectual conversation, and often showed traces of the brilliant humour and charming individuality of character for which he had been remarkable in his former life. The aforesaid doctor declared him to be completely incurable, and strongly deprecated all attempts to restore him to the world and to his former pursuits and duties.

"You will readily understand that I could not drive this anchorite of mine out of my thoughts, and that I experienced an irresistible longing to see him again. But just picture to yourselves the excess of my folly! I had no less an undertaking in my mind than that of attacking Serapion's fixed idea at its very roots. I read Pinel, Reil, every conceivable book on insanity which I could lay my hands on. I fondly believed that it might be reserved for *me*, an amateur psychologist and doctor, to cast some rays of light into Serapion's darkened intelligence. And I did not omit, either, to make myself acquainted with the stories of all the Serapions (there were no fewer than eight of them) treated of in the histories of saints and martyrs.

"Thus equipped, I set out one fine morning in search of my anchorite.

"I found him working in his garden with hoe and spade, singing a devotional song. Wild pigeons, for which he had strewed an abundant supply of food, were fluttering and cooing round him, and a young deer was peeping through the leaves on the trellis. He was evidently living in the closest intimacy with the woodland creatures. Not the faintest trace of insanity was visible in his face; it bore a quiet expression of remarkable serenity and happiness; and all this confirmed what Dr. S---- in B---- had told me. When he heard of my projected visit to the anchorite, he advised me to go some fine, bright pleasant morning, because, he said, his mind would be less troubled then and he would be more inclined to talk to a stranger, whereas at evening he would shun all intercourse with mankind.

"As soon as he saw me he laid down his spade, and came towards me in a kind and friendly manner. I said that, being weary with a longish journey, I should be glad if he would allow me to rest with him for a little while.

"'You are heartily welcome,' he said. 'The little which I can offer you in the shape of refreshment is at your service.'

"And he took me to a seat of moss in front of his hut, brought out a little table, set on bread, magnificent grapes, and a can of wine, and hospitably begged me to eat and drink. He sat down opposite to me, and ate bread with much appetite, washing it down with draughts of water.

"In good sooth I did not see how I was to lead the conversation to my subject--how I was to bring my psychological science to bear upon this peaceful, happy man. At last I pulled myself together and began:

"'You style yourself Serapion, reverend sir?'

"'Yes, certainly,' he answered. 'The Church has given me that name.'

"'Ancient ecclesiastical history,' I continued, 'mentions several celebrated holy men of that name. An abbot Serapion, known for his good works the--learned Bishop Serapion alluded to by Hieronimus in his book "*De Viris Illustribus*." There was also a monk Serapion, who (as Heraclides relates in his "Paradise") on one occasion, coming from the Theban desert to Rome, ordered a virgin, who had joined him--saying she had renounced the world and its pleasures--to prove this by walking with him naked in the streets of Rome, and repulsed her when she hesitated, saying, "You still live the life of Nature, and are careful for the opinions of mankind. Think not that you are anything great or have overcome the world." If I am not mistaken, reverend sir, this was the "filthy monk" (Heraclid himself so styles him) who suffered a terrible martyrdom under the Emperor Decius--his

limbs being torn asunder at the joints, and his body thrown down from a lofty rock.'

"That was so,' said Serapion, turning pale, and his eyes glowing with a sombre fire. 'But Serapion the martyr, had no connection with that monk, who, in the fury of his asceticism, did battle against human nature. I am Serapion the martyr, to whom you allude.'

"What?' I cried, with feigned surprise. 'You believe that you are that Serapion who suffered such a hideous martyrdom so many hundred years ago?'

"That,' said Serapion with much calmness, 'may appear incredible to you; and I admit that it must sound very wonderful to many who cannot see further than the points of their own noses. However, it is as I tell you. God's omnipotence permitted me to survive my martyrdom, and to recover from its effects, because it was ordained, in His mysterious providence, that I had still to pass a certain period of my existence, to His praise and glory, here in the Theban desert. There is nothing now to remind me of the tortures which I suffered except sometimes a severe headache, and occasional violent cramps and twitchings in my limbs.'

"Now,' thought I, 'is the time to commence my cure.'

"I made a wide circumbendibus, and talked in an erudite style concerning the malady of 'Fixed Idea,' which attacks people, marring, like one single discord, the otherwise harmonious organisms. I spoke of the scientific man who could not be induced to rise from his chair for fear he would break the windows across the street with his nose. I mentioned the Abbot Molanus, who conversed most rationally upon every subject, but would not leave his room because he thought he was a barleycorn, and the hens would swallow him. I came to the fact that to confound oneself with some historical character was a frequent form of Fixed Idea. 'Nothing more absurd and preposterous,' I said, 'could possibly be imagined than that a little bit of woodland country eight miles from B---, daily frequented by country folk, sportsmen, and people walking for exercise was the Theban desert, and he himself that ascetic who suffered martyrdom many centuries ago.'

"Serapion listened in silence. He seemed to feel what I said, and to be struggling with himself in deep reflection. So that I thought it was time to strike my decisive blow. I stood up, took him by both hands, and cried, loudly and emphatically:

"Count P---, awake from the pernicious dream which is entralling you; throw off that abominable dress, and come back to your family, which mourns your loss, and to the world where you have such important duties to discharge.'

"Serapion gazed at me with a sombre, penetrating gaze. Then a sarcastic smile played about his lips and cheeks, and he said, slowly and solemnly:

"You have spoken, sir, long, and, as *you* consider, wisely and well. Allow *me*, in turn, to say a few words in reply. Saint Anthony, and all the men of the Church who have withdrawn from the world into solitude, were often visited by vexing spirits, who, envying the inward peace and contentment of their souls, carried on with them lengthy contests, until they had to lie down conquered in the dust. And such is *my* fortune also. Every now and then there appear to me emissaries, sent by Satan, who try to persuade me that I am Count P---- of M---, and that I ought to betake myself to the life of Courts, and all sorts of unholiness. Were it not for the efficacy of prayer, I should take these people by the shoulders, turn them out of my little garden, and carefully barricade it against them. But I need not do so in your case; for you are, most unmistakably, the very feeblest of all the adversaries who have ever come to me, and I can vanquish *you* with your own weapons--those of ratiocination. It is insanity that is in question between us. But if one of us two is suffering from that sad malady, it is evident that *you* are so in a much greater degree than I. You maintain that it is a case of Fixed Idea that I believe myself to be Serapion the martyr--and I am quite aware that many persons hold the same

opinion, or pretend that they do. Now, if I am really insane, none but a lunatic can think that he could *argue* me out of the Fixed Idea which insanity has engendered in me. Were such a proceeding possible, there would soon be no madmen on the face of the earth, for men would be able to rule, and command, their mental power, which is not their own, but merely lent to them for a time by that Higher Power which disposes of them. But if I am *not* mad, and if I am really Serapion the martyr, it is insane to set about arguing me out of that, and leading me to adopt the Fixed Idea that I am Count P---- of M----. You say that Serapion the martyr, lived several centuries ago, and that, consequently, I cannot be that martyr, presumably for the reason that human beings cannot remain so long on this earth. Well, as regards this, the notion of time is just as *relative* a notion as that of number; and I may say to you that, according to the notion of time which I have in *me*, it is scarcely three *hours* (or whatever appellation you may choose to give to the divisions of time), since I was put to martyrdom by the Emperor Decius. But, leaving this on one side, can you assert, in opposition to me, that a life of such length as I say I have lived, is unexampled and contrary to human nature? Have you cognizance of the precise length of the life of every human being who has existed in all this wide world, that you can employ the expression 'unexampled' in this pert and decisive manner? Do you compare God's omnipotence to the wretched art of the clockmaker, who can't save his lifeless machinery from destruction? You say this place where we are is not the Theban desert, but a little woodland district eight miles from B----, daily frequented by country folk, sportsmen and others. *Prove* that to me.'

"Here, I thought I had my man.

"'Come with me,' said I, 'and in a couple of hours we shall be in B----, and what I assert will be proved.'

"'Poor, blinded fool,' said Serapion. 'What a wide distance lies between us and B----! But put the case that I went with you to some town which you call B----; would you be able to convince me that we had been travelling for two hours only, and the place we had arrived at was really B----? If I were to assert that you were insane, and suppose the Theban desert is a little bit of wooded country, and far-away Alexandria the town of B---- in the south of Germany, what would you say in reply? Our old discussion would go on for ever. Then there is another point which you ought seriously to consider. You must, I should suppose, perceive that I, who am talking with you, am leading the peaceful and happy life of a man reconciled with God. It is only after having passed through martyrdom that such a life dawns upon the soul. And if it has pleased the Almighty to cast a veil over what happened before my martyrdom, is it not a terrible, and diabolical action to try to tear that veil away?'

"With all my wisdom, I stood, confounded and silenced in the presence of this insane man! With the very rationality of his irrationality he had beaten me completely out of the field, and I saw the folly of my undertaking in all its fulness. Still more than that, I felt the reproach contained in what he had last said as deeply as I was astounded at the dim remembrance of his previous life which shone through it like some lofty, invulnerable, higher spirit.

"Serapion seemed to be reading my thoughts, and, looking me full in the face with an expression of the greatest kindness, he said:

"'I never took you for an evil-disposed adversary, and I see I was not mistaken. You may have been instigated by somebody--perhaps by the Evil One himself--to come here to vex and try me, but I am sure it was not a spontaneous act of yours. And perhaps the fact that you found me other than you expected, may have strengthened you in your expression of the doubts which you have suggested. Although I in no sense deviate from the devoutness beseeing him who has given up his life to God and the Church, that cynicism of asceticism into which many of my brethren have fallen--thereby giving proof of the weakness, nay, utter destruction of their mental vigour, instead of its boasted strength--is utterly foreign to me! You expected to find the Monk Serapion pale and haggard, wasted

with fast and vigil, all the horror of visions, terrible as those which drove even St. Anthony to despair, in his sombre face, with quivering knees scarce able to support him, in a filthy robe, stained with his blood. You find a placid, cheerful man. But I, too, have passed through those tortures, and have overcome them and survived. And when I awoke with shattered limbs and fractured skull, the spirit dawned, and shone bright within me, restoring my mind and my body to health. May it please Heaven speedily to grant to you also, my brother, even here on earth, a peace and happiness such as those which daily refresh and strengthen *me*. Have no dread of the terror of the deepest solitude. It is only there that a life like this can dawn upon the pious soul.'

"Serapion, who had spoken with genuine priestly unction, raised, in silence, his eyes to Heaven with an expression of blissful gratitude. How could I feel otherwise than awe-struck! A madman, congratulating himself on his condition, looking upon it as a priceless gift from Heaven, and, from the depths of his heart, wishing me a similar fate!

"I was on the point of leaving him, but he began in an altered tone, saying:

"You would, probably, scarcely suppose that this wild inhospitable desert is often almost too full of the noise and bustle of life to be suitable for my silent meditations. Every day I receive visits from the most remarkable people of the most diverse kinds. Ariosto was here yesterday, and Dante and Petrarch afterwards. And this evening I expect Evagrus, the celebrated father, with whom I shall discuss the most recent ecclesiastical affairs, as I did poetry yesterday. I often go up to the top of that hill there, whence the towers of Alexandria are to be seen distinctly in clear weather, and the most wonderful and interesting events happen before my eyes. Many people have thought *that* incredible, too, and considered that I only *fancy* I see before me, in actual life, what is merely born in my mind and imagination. Now *I* say *that* is the most incomprehensible piece of folly that can exist. What is it, except the mind, which takes cognizance of what happens around us in time and space? What is it that hears, and feels, and sees? Is it the lifeless mechanism which we call eyes, ears, hands, etc., and not the mind? Does the mind give form and shape to that peculiar world of its own which has space and time for its conditions of existence, and *then* hand over the functions of seeing, hearing, etc., to some *other* principle inherent in us? How illogical! Therefore, if it is the mind only which takes cognizance of events around us, it follows that that which it has taken cognizance of *has* actually occurred. Last evening only, Ariosto was speaking of the images of his fancy, and saying he had created in his brain forms and events which had never existed in time and space. I at once denied the possibility of this, and he was obliged to allow that it was only from lack of a higher knowledge that a poet would box up within the narrow limits of his brain that which, by virtue of his peculiar seer gift, he was enabled to see in full life before him. But the complete acquirement of this higher knowledge only comes after martyrdom, and is strengthened by the life in profound solitude. You don't appear to agree with me; probably you don't understand me here. Indeed how should a child of this world, however well disposed, understand an anchorite consecrated in all his works and ways to God? Let me tell you what happened before my eyes, as I was standing this morning at sunrise at the top of that hill.'

"He then related a regular romance, with a plot and incidents such as only the most imaginative poet could have constructed. The characters and events stood out with such a vivid, plastic relief, that it was impossible--carried away as one was by the magic spell of them--to help believing, as if in a species of dream, that Serapion had actually witnessed them from the hilltop. This romance was succeeded by another, and that by another, by which time the sun stood high above us in the noon-tide sky. Serapion then rose from his seat, and looking into the distance, said: 'Yonder comes my brother Hilarion, who, in his over strictness, always blames me for being too much given to the society of strangers.'

"I understood the hint, and took my leave, asking if I should be allowed to pay

him another visit. Serapion answered with a gentle smile, 'My friend, I thought you would be eager to get away from this wilderness, so little adapted to your mode of life. But if it is your pleasure to take up your abode for a time in my neighbourhood, you will always be welcome to my cottage and my little garden. Perhaps it may be granted to me to convert him who came to me as an adversary. Farewell, my friend.'

"I am wholly unable to characterize the impression which my visit to him had made upon me. Whilst his condition, his methodical madness in which he found the joy of his life, produced the weirdest effect upon me, his extraordinary poetical genius filled me with amazement, and his kindly, peaceful happiness, instinct with the quietest resignation of the purest mind, touched me unspeakably. I thought of Ophelia's sorrowful words:

"O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:
The expectancy and rose of this fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy."

Yet I could not make plaint against the Omnipotence, which probably had, in this mysterious fashion, steered his bark away from reefs, which might have wrecked it, into this secure haven.

"The oftener I went to see him, the more attached to him I became. I always found him happy, and disposed to converse, and I took great care never again to essay my rôle of the psychological doctor. It was wonderful with what acuteness and penetration he spoke of life in all its aspects, and most remarkable of all, how he deduced historical events from causes wholly remote from all ordinary theories on the subject. When sometimes--notwithstanding the striking acuteness of those divinations of his--I took it upon me to object that no work on history made any mention of the circumstances which he alluded to, he would answer, with his quiet smile, that probably no historian in the world knew as much about them as he did, seeing that he had them from the very lips of the people concerned, when they came to see him.

"I was obliged to leave B--- and it was three years before I could go back there. It was late in Autumn, about the middle of November--the 14th, if I do not mistake--when I set out to pay my anchorite a visit. Whilst I was still at a distance, I heard the sound of the little bell which hung above his hut, and was filled with gloomy forebodings, without apparent cause. At last I reached the cottage and went in.

"Serapion was lying on his mat, with his hands folded on his breast. I thought he was sleeping, and went softly up to him. Then I saw that he was dead."

"And two lions came and helped you to bury him," interrupted Ottmar.

"What do you say?" cried Cyprian astonished.

"Yes," Ottmar went on. "While you were in the forest, before you reached Serapion's hut, you met strange monsters of all kinds, and talked with them; a deer brought you St. Athanasius's mantle, and told you to wrap it about Serapion's body. At any rate, your last visit to your mad anchorite reminds me a good deal of that wonderful one which St. Anthony paid to Paul the Hermit, of which the holy man relates so much fantastic stuff that it's not difficult to see what a big bee was buzzing in his bonnet. I know something of the Legends of the Saints, you see, as well as you. Now I understand why it was that your head was so full of monks and monasteries, saints and hermits a few years ago. I saw that it

was so by the letters you sent me, which were so strange and mystic in their tone that they set me supposing all sorts of odd things. And if I am not mistaken, it was about that time that you wrote a curious book, treating of the profounder mysteries of the Catholic Church, but containing madness and diablerie sufficient to give you a very bad name amongst quiet, respectable folks. At that time you were possessed with Serapionism to a very dangerous degree."

"Quite true," said Cyprian, "and although that fanciful book does bear the devil on its forehead, by way of danger-signal--so that those who prefer to give it a wide berth may do so if they choose--I almost wish now I had never brought it into the world. It is quite true that it was suggested to me by my intercourse with the anchorite. I ought to have kept out of his way, perhaps; but you all of you know what a fascination insane people have always had for me. I have always thought that in connection with those abnormal conditions nature vouchsafes us glimpses into her most mysterious depths. In fact, by the very gruesomeness which I have felt in the society of mad people, I have found myself led upon the track of suggestions and ideas which have inspired my mind and fancy to flights of unusual loftiness. Perhaps people who are utterly sane may look upon flights such as these as mere paroxysms of dangerous ill-health. But that is nothing when one *knows* that one is sound and well."

"There is no doubt, dear Cyprian, that you are as sound and as well as possible," said Theodore, "and in fact all this is a proof of the strength and vigour of your constitution--which I almost could envy you for. You speak of glimpses into Nature's mysterious depths; but people who are not quite sure that they are exempt from anything like giddiness ought to keep away from glimpses of the kind. Of course this could never have applied to your Serapion, as you have described him to us, inasmuch as to associate with him must have been better than companionship with the most brilliant and splendid poet. But you will admit that, chiefly because so many years have passed since you saw him, you have pictured him to tie in all the brilliant colours in which he glows in your memory. Now *I* consider that, in the society of a man, insane in the particular way in which your Serapion was, I should never have been able to divest myself of an immense uneasiness, nay, I may say terror! Even when you were telling us how he considered his condition to be the happiest conceivable, and wished that it could be yours, I felt my hair beginning to stand on end! What if the notion that this condition *was* a happy one should take root in one's mind, and eventuate in real madness! Terrible thought! I could never have been much with Serapion, just for that reason. Then, besides the risk to the mind, there was the danger to the body, too. Pinel mentions plenty of cases of people suffering from Fixed Idea who have suddenly become fearfully violent, and murdered everybody whom they came near, like furious wild beasts."

"Theodore is right," said Ottmar. "Cyprian, I blame you for your foolish *penchant* for folly, your insane interest in insanity. There is a morbidness about it which may give you some trouble one of these days. For my part I shun mad people like the plague; and even people of over-excitability, which lead them into marked eccentricities of any kind, are repulsive and repugnant to me."

"You go too far," said Theodore, "in your distaste for every expression of feeling which takes any rather peculiar or unusual form. The incongruity which *excitable* people, as they are called, perceive between their inner selves and the world without them makes them grimace, in a manner which quiet folks, over whom pain has as little power as pleasure, can't understand, and are only annoyed with. Yet you yourself, Ottmar, with all your sensitiveness to this kind of behaviour in others, often lay yourself open to be accused of very distinct eccentricity."

"I happen to remember a man whose eccentricities were so extreme that half his fellow-citizens considered him a lunatic, although no one really less deserved to be so characterized. The way in which I made his acquaintance was as quaintly comic as the circumstances in, which I met with him at a later period were tragic

and terrible. I should like to tell you all this story, as a sort of transition from pure insanity, *viâ* eccentricity, to the realms of every-day rationality. Only I am afraid that, as I should have to say a good deal about music, I should be open to the objection which I made to Cyprian's story--that of giving my own particular hobby undue prominence, and introducing too much of my own personality into my tale. In the meantime, I see that Lothair is casting longing looks at that vase which Cyprian calls 'mysterious,' so we may as well break the spell which binds it."

"Now," said Lothair, when glasses of a fluid which would have merited the encomiums of the fraternity of the "Clucking Hen" had been passed round, "tell us about your eccentric friend--be entertaining, be affecting, be merry, or sad; but get us away from the atmosphere of that abominable mad anchorite, and out of the bedlam where Cyprian has been keeping us immured."

"[The man](#)," said Theodore, "whom I am going to tell you about was Krespel, a Member of Council in the town of H---. This Krespel was the most extraordinary character that I have ever, in my lifetime, come across. When I first arrived in H--- - the whole town was talking of him, because one of his *most* extraordinary pranks chanced to be in its fullest swing. He was a very clever lawyer and *diplomate*, and a certain German prince---not a person of *great* importance--had employed him to draw up a memorial, concerning claims of his on the Imperial Chancery, which had been eminently successful. As Krespel had often said he never could meet with a house quite to his mind, this prince, as recompense for his services, undertook to pay for the building of a house, to be planned by Krespel according to the dictates of his fancy. He also offered to buy a site for it; but Krespel determined to build it in a delightful piece of garden ground of his own, just outside the town-gate. So he got together all the necessary building materials, and had them laid down in this piece of ground. After which, he was to be seen all day long, in his usual extraordinary costume--which he always made with his own hands, on peculiar principles of his own--slaking the lime, sifting the gravel, arranging the stones in heaps, etc., etc. He had not gone to any architect for a plan. But one fine day he walked in upon the principal builder, and told him to come next morning, to his garden, with the necessary workmen--stonemasons, hodmen, and so forth--and build him a house. The builder, of course, asked to see the plan, and was not a little astonished when Krespel said there was no plan and no occasion for one; every thing would go on all right without one.

"The builder arrived next morning with his men, and found a great rectangular trench, carefully dug in the ground; and Krespel said 'this is the foundation; so set to work, and go on building the walls till I tell you to stop.'

"'But what about the doors and windows,' said the builder; 'are there to be no partition walls?'

"'Just you do as I tell you, my good man,' said Krespel, as calmly as possible; 'everything will come quite right in its own good time.'

"Nothing but the prospect of liberal payment induced the man to have anything to do with a job so preposterous--but never was there a piece of work carried through so merrily; for it was amid the never-ceasing jokes and laughter of the workmen--who never left the ground, where abundance of victuals and drink were always at hand--that the four walls rose with incredible celerity, till one day Krespel cried, 'Stop!'

"Mallets and chisels paused. The men came down from their scaffolds, and formed a circle about Krespel, each grinning countenance seeming to say--'What's going to happen now?'

"'Out of the way!' cried Krespel, who hastened to one end of the garden, and then paced slowly towards his rectangle of stone walls. On reaching the side of it which was nearest--the one, that is, towards which he had been marching--he

shook his head dissatisfied, went to the other end of the garden, then paced up to the wall as before, shaking his head, dissatisfied, once more. This process he repeated two or three times; but at last, going straight up to the wall till he touched it with the point of his nose, he cried out, loud--

"Come here, you fellows, come here! Knock me in the door! Knock me in a door *here!*' He gave the size it was to be, accurately in feet and inches; and what he told them to do they did. When the door was knocked out, he walked into the house, and smiled pleasantly at the builder's remark that the walls were just the proper height for a nice two-storied house. He walked meditatively up and down inside, the masons following him with their tools, and whenever he cried 'here a window six feet by four; a little one yonder three feet by two,' out flew the stones as directed.

"It was during these operations that I arrived in H---, and it was entertaining in the extreme to see some hundreds of people collected outside the garden, all hurraing whenever the stones flew out, and a window appeared where none had been expected. The house was all finished in the same fashion, everything being done according to Krespel's directions as given on the spot. The quaintness of the proceeding, the feeling--not to be resisted--that it was all going to turn out so marvellously better than was to have been expected; but, particularly, Krespel's liberality, which, by the way, cost him nothing, kept everybody in the best of humour. So the difficulties attending this remarkable style of house-building were got over, and in a very brief time there stood a fully-finished house, which had the maddest appearance, certainly, from the outside, no two windows being alike, and so forth, but was a marvel of comfort and convenience within. Everybody said so who entered it, and I was of the same opinion, when Krespel admitted me to it after I made his acquaintance.

"It was some time, however, ere I did so. He had been so engrossed by his building operations that he had never gone, as he did at other times, to lunch at Professor M---'s on Thursdays, saying he should not cross his threshold till after his house-warming. His friends were expecting a grand entertainment on that occasion. However, he invited nobody but the workmen who built the house. Then he entertained with the most *recherché* dishes. Journeymen masons feasted on venison pasties, carpenters' apprentices and hungry hodmen, for once in their lives stayed their appetites with roast pheasant and *paté de foie gras*. In the evening their wives and daughters came, and there was a fine ball. Krespel just waltzed a little with the foremen's wives, and then sat down with the town-band, took a fiddle, and led the dance-music till daylight.

"On the Thursday after this house-warming, which had established Krespel in the position of a popular character--'a friend to the working classes'--I at last met him at Professor M---'s, to my no small gratification. The most extravagant imagination could not invent anything more extraordinary than Krespel's style of behaviour. His movements were awkward, abrupt, constrained, so that you expected him to bump against the furniture and knock things down, or do some mischief or other every moment. But he never did; and you soon noticed that the lady of the house never changed colour ever so little, although he went floundering heavily and uncertainly about, close to tables covered with valuable china, or manœuvring in dangerous proximity to a great mirror reaching from floor to ceiling; even when he took up a valuable china jar, painted with flowers, and whirled it about near the window to admire the play of the light on its colours. In fact, whilst we were waiting for luncheon, he inspected and scrutinised everything in the room with the utmost minuteness, even getting up upon a cushioned arm-chair to take a picture down from the wall and hang it up again. All this time he talked a great deal; often (and this was more observable while we were at luncheon) darting rapidly from one subject to another, and at other times--unable to get away from some particular idea--he would keep beginning at it again and again, and get into labyrinths of confusion over it, till something else came into his head. Sometimes the tone of his voice was harsh and screaming, at other times it would be soft, sustained, and singing; but it was always completely

inappropriate to what he happened to be talking about. For instance, we were discussing music, and some one was praising a new composer: Krespel smiled, and said in his gentle *cantabile* tone, 'I wish to heaven the devil would hurl the wretched music-perverter ten thousand millions of fathoms deep into the abysses of hell!' and then he screamed out violently and wildly, 'She's an angel of heaven, all compounded of the purest, divinest music:' and the tears came to his eyes. It was some time ere we remembered that, about an hour before, we had been talking of a particular *prima donna*. There was a hare at table, and I noticed that he carefully polished the bones on his plate, and made particular enquiries for the feet, which were brought to him, with many smiles, by the professor's little daughter of fifteen. All the time of luncheon the children had been fixing their eyes upon him as on a favourite, and now they came up to him, though they kept a respectful distance of two or three paces.' 'What's going to happen,' thought I. The dessert came, and Krespel took a small box from his pocket, out of which he brought a miniature turning-lathe, made of steel, which he screwed on to the table, and proceeded to turn, from the bones, with wonderful skill and rapidity, all sorts of charming little boxes, balls, etc., which the children took possession of with cries of delight.

"As we rose from table, the professor's niece said--

"And how is our dear Antonia, Mr. Krespel?"

"Our--OUR dear Antonia!" he answered, in his sustained singing tone most unpleasant to hear. At first he made the sort of face which a person makes who bites into a bitter orange, and wants to look as if it were a sweet one; but soon this face changed to a perfectly terrible-looking mask, out of which grinned a bitter, fierce--nay, as it seemed to me, altogether *diabolical*, sneer of angry scorn.

"The professor hastened up to him. In the look of angry reproach which he cast at his niece I read that she had touched some string which jarred most discordantly within Krespel.

"How get on the violins?" said the professor, taking Krespel by both hands.

"The cloud cleared away from his face, and he answered in his harsh rugged tone, 'Splendidly, Professor. You remember my telling you about a magnificent *Amati*, which I got hold of by a lucky accident a short time ago? I cut it open this very morning, and expect that Antonia has finished taking it to pieces by this time.'

"Antonia is a dear, good child," said the Professor.

"Ay! that she is--that she is!" screamed Krespel, and seizing his hat and stick, was off out of the house like a flash of lightning.

"As soon as he was gone, I eagerly begged the Professor to tell me all about those violins, and more especially about Antonia.

"Ah," said the Professor, 'Krespel is an extraordinary man; he studies fiddle-making in a peculiar fashion of his own.'

"Fiddle-making?" cried I in amazement.

"Yes," said the Professor; 'connoisseurs consider that Krespel's violin-making is unapproachable at the present day. Formerly, when he turned out any special *chef d'œuvre*, he would allow other people to play upon it; but now he lets no one touch them but himself. When he has finished a fiddle, he plays upon it for an hour or two (he plays magnificently, with a power and an amount of feeling and expression which the greatest professional violinists rarely equal, let alone surpass), then he hangs it up on the wall beside the others, and never touches it again, nor lets anyone else lay hands upon it.'

"And Antonia?" I eagerly asked.

"Well, *that*," said the Professor, 'is an affair which would make me have a very shady opinion of Krespel, if I didn't know what a thoroughly good fellow he is; so that I feel convinced there is some mystery about it which we don't at present fathom. When he first came here some years ago, he lived like a hermit, with an old housekeeper, in a gloomy house in ---Street. His eccentricities soon attracted people's attention, and, when he saw this, he soon sought and made acquaintances. Just as was the case in *my* house, people got so accustomed to him that they couldn't get on without him. In spite of his rough exterior even the children got fond of him, though they were never troublesome to him, but always looked upon him with a certain amount of awe which prevented over-familiarity. You have seen how he attracts children by all sorts of ingenious tricks. Everybody looked upon him as a regular old bachelor and woman-hater, and he gave no sign to the contrary; but after he had been here some time, he went off on some excursion or other, no one knew where, and it was some months before he came back. The second evening after his return, his windows were lighted up in an unusual way--and that was enough to attract the neighbours' attention. Presently, a most extraordinarily beautiful female voice was heard singing to a pianoforte accompaniment. Soon the tones of a violin were heard joining in, responding to the voice in brilliant, fiery emulation. It was easy to distinguish that it was Krespel who was playing. I joined the little crowd assembled outside the house myself, to listen to the wonderful concert, and I can assure you that the greatest prima-donnas I have ever heard were poor every-day performers compared to the lady we heard that night. I *never* heard any one sing with such marvellously touching expression, and such absolute finish of execution; never had had any idea of such long-sustained notes, such nightingale roulades, such crescendoes and diminuendoes, such swellings to an organ-like *forte*, such dyings down to the most imperceptible whisper. There was not a soul in all the crowd able to resist the magic spell of this wonderful singing; and when she stopped, you heard nothing but sighs breaking the silence. It was probably about midnight, when, all at once we heard Krespel talking loudly and excitedly; another male voice, to judge by the tone of it, bitterly reproaching him about something, and a woman intervening as best she could tearfully, in broken phrases. Krespel screamed louder and louder, till at last he broke into that horrible *singing* tone which you know. A loud shriek from the lady interrupted him: then all was as still as death; and suddenly steps came rapidly down the stairs, and a young man came out, sobbing, and, jumping into a carriage which was standing near, drove rapidly away.

"The next day Krespel appeared quite in his ordinary condition, as if nothing had happened, and no one had the courage to allude to the events of the previous night; but the housekeeper said Krespel had brought home a most beautiful lady, quite young; that he called her Antonia, and that it was she who sung so splendidly; and that a young gentleman had also come, who seemed to be deeply attached to Antonia, and, as she supposed, was engaged to her; but that he had had to go away, because Krespel had insisted on it. What Antonia's precise position with respect to Krespel is, remains a mystery; at all events he treats her in the most tyrannical style. He watches her as a cat does a mouse, or as Dr. Bartolo, in *Il Barbiere*, does his niece. She scarcely dares to look out of the window. On the rare occasions when he can be prevailed upon to take her into society, he watches her with Argus-eyes, and won't suffer a note of music to be heard, far less that *she* shall sing; neither will he now allow her to sing in his own house; so that, since that celebrated night, Antonia's singing has become, for the people of the town, a sort of romantic legend, as of some splendid miracle, and even those who never heard her often say, when some celebrated prima-donna comes to sing at a concert, 'Good gracious! what a wretched caterwauling all this is, nobody can *sing* but Antonia!'

"You know how anything of this sort always fascinates *me*, and you can imagine how essential it became to me that I should make Antonia's acquaintance. I had heard those sayings of the public about Antonia's singing often, but I had had no idea that this glorious creature was there, on the spot, held in thralldom by this crack-brained Krespel, as by some tyrant enchanter. Naturally, that night, in my dreams I heard Antonia singing in the most magnificent style; and as she was

imploring me, in the most moving manner, to set her free, in a gloriously lovely *adagio*--absurdly enough, it seemed as if I had composed it myself--I at once made up my mind that, by some means or other, I would make my way into Krespel's house, and, like another Astolfo, set this Queen of Song free from her shameful bonds.

"Things came about, however, quite differently to what I had anticipated; for after I had once or twice met Krespel and had a talk with him about fiddle-making, he asked me to go and see him. I went, and he showed me his violin treasures: there ere some thirty of them hanging in a cabinet; and there was one, remarkable above the rest, with all the marks of the highest antiquity (a carved lion's head at the end of the tail-piece, etc.), which was hung higher than the others, with a wreath of flowers on it, and seemed to reign over the rest as queen.

"'This violin,' said Krespel, when I questioned him about it, 'is a very remarkable and unparalleled work, by some ancient master, most probably about the time of Tartini. I am quite convinced there is something most peculiar about its interior construction, and that, if I were to take it to pieces, I should discover a certain secret which I have long been in search of. But--you may laugh at me if you like--this lifeless thing, which I myself inspire with life and language, often speaks out of itself, to me in an extraordinary manner; and when I first played upon it, I felt as if I were merely the magnetiser--the mesmerist--who acts upon his *subject* in such sort that she relates in words what she is seeing with her inward vision. No doubt you think me an ass to have any faith in nonsense of this sort; still, it is the fact that I have never been able to prevail upon myself to take that lifeless thing there to pieces. I am glad I never did, for since Antonia has been here, I now and then play to her on that fiddle; she is fond of hearing it--very fond.'

"He exhibited so much emotion as he said this, that I was emboldened to say 'Ah! dear Mr. Krespel, won't you be so kind as to let me hear you play on it?' But he made one of his bitter-sweet faces, and answered in his *cantabile sostenuto*:

"'Nay, my dear master student, that would ruin everything;' and I had to go and admire a number of curiosities, principally childish trash, till at length he dived into a chest and brought out a folded paper, which he put into my hand with much solemnity, saying: '*There!* you are very fond of music: accept *this* as a present from me, and always prize it beyond everything. It is a souvenir of *great* value.' With which he took me by the shoulders and gently shoved me out of the door, with an embrace on the threshold--in short, he symbolically kicked me out of his house.

"When I opened the paper which he had given me, I found a small piece of the first string of a violin, about the eighth of an inch in length, and on the paper was written--

"'Portion of the first string which was on Stamitz's violin when he played his last Concerto.'

"The calmly insulting style in which I had been shown to the door the moment I had said a word about Antonia, seemed to indicate that I should probably never be allowed to see her; however, the second time I went to Krespel's I found Antonia in his room, helping him to put a fiddle together. Her exterior did not strike me much at first, but after a short time one could not resist the charm of her lovely blue eyes, rosy lips, and exquisitely expressive, tender face. She was very pale; but when anyone said anything interesting, a bright colour and a very sweet smile appeared in her face, but the colour quickly died down to a pale-rose tint. She and I talked quite unconstrainedly and pleasantly together, and I saw none of those Argus-glances which the Professor had spoken about. Krespel went on quite in his ordinary, beaten track, and seemed rather to approve of my being friendly with Antonia than otherwise. Thus it came about that I went pretty often there, and our little circle of three got so accustomed to each other's society that we much enjoyed ourselves in our quiet way. Krespel was always entertaining

with his strange eccentricities; but it was really Antonia who drew me to the house, and made me put up with a great deal which, impatient as I was in those days, I should never have endured but for her. In Krespel's quirks and cranks there was often a good deal which was tedious, and not in the best of taste. What most annoyed me was that, whenever I led the conversation to music--particularly to vocal music--he would burst in, in that horrible singing voice of his, and smiling like a demon, with something wholly irrelevant and generally disgustingly unimportant at the same time. From Antonia's looks of annoyance on those occasions, it was clear that he did this to prevent me from asking her to sing. However, I wasn't going to give in: the more he objected, the more determined was I to carry my point. I felt that I must hear her, or die of my dreams of it.

"There came an evening when Krespel was in particularly good humour. He had taken an old Cremona violin to pieces, and found that the sound-post of it was about half a line more perpendicular than usual. Important circumstance!--of priceless practical value! I was fortunate enough to start him off on the true style of violin playing. The style of the great old masters--copied by them from that of the really grand singers--of which he spoke, led to the observation that now the direct converse held good, and that singers copied the scale, and skipping 'passages' of the instrumentalists. 'What,' said I, hastening to the piano and sitting down at it, 'can be more preposterous than those disgusting mannerisms, more like the noise of peas rattling on the floor of a barn than music?' I went on to sing a number of those modern cadenza-passages, which go yoooping up and down the scale, more like a child's humming-top than anything else, and I struck a feeble chord or two by way of accompaniment. Krespel laughed immoderately, and cried 'Ha! ha! ha! I could fancy I was listening to some of our German Italians, or our Italian Germans, pumping out some aria of Pucitt or Portugallo, or some other such *maestro di capella*, or rather *schiaivo d' un prime uomo*.'

"'Now,' thought I, 'is my chance at last.--I am sure Antonia,' I said, turning to her, 'knows nothing of all that quavering stuff,' and I commenced to roll out a glorious soulful aria of old Leonardo Leo's. Antonia's cheeks glowed; a heavenly radiance beamed from her beautiful eyes; she sprang to the piano; she opened her lips--but Krespel instantly made a rush at her; shoved her out of the room, and, seizing me by the shoulders, shrieked--'Little son, little son, little son.' He continued, in a soft and gentle singing voice, while he took me by the hand, bending his head with much courtesy, 'No doubt, my dear young Master Student, it would be a breach of all courtesy and politeness if I were to proceed to express, in plain and unmistakable words, and with all the energy at my command, my desire that the damnable, hellish devil might clutch hold of that throat of yours, here on the spot, with his red-hot talons; leaving that on one side for the moment, however, you will admit, my very dear young friend, that it's getting pretty late in the evening, and will soon be dark; and as there are no lamps lighted, even if I were not to pitch you down stairs, you might run a certain risk of damaging your precious members. Go away home, like a nice young gentleman, and don't forget your good friend Krespel, if you should never--*never*, you understand--find him at home again when you happen to call.' With which he took me in his arms, and slowly worked his way with me to the door in such fashion that I could not manage to set eyes on Antonia again for a moment.

"You will admit that, situated as I was, it was impossible for me to give him a good hiding, as, probably, I ought to have done by rights. The Professor laughed tremendously, and declared that I had seen the last of Krespel for good and all; and Antonia was too precious, I might say too sacred, in my sight, that I should go playing the languishing *amoroso* under her window. I left her, broken-hearted; but, as is the case with matters of the kind, the bright tints of the picture in my fancy gradually faded, and toned down with the lapse of time; and Antonia, ay, even Antonia's singing, which I had never heard, came to shine upon my memory only like some beautiful, far-away vision, bathed in rosy radiance.

"Two years afterwards, when I was settled in B----, I had occasion to make a journey into the South of Germany. One evening I saw the familiar towers of H----

rising into sight against the dewy, roseate evening sky; and as I came nearer, a strange, indescribable feeling of painful, anxious uneasiness and alarm took possession of me, and lay on my heart like a weight of lead. I could scarcely breathe. I got out of the carriage into the open air. The oppression amounted to actual physical pain. Presently I thought I could hear the notes of a solemn hymn floating on the air; it grew more distinct, and I made out male voices singing a choral. 'What's this, what's this,' I cried, as it pierced through my heart like a dagger stab. 'Don't you see, sir?' said the postillion, walking beside me, 'it's a funeral going on in the churchyard.' We were, in fact, close to the cemetery, and I saw a circle of people in black assembled by a grave, which was being filled in. The tears came to my eyes. I felt as if somehow all the happiness and joy of my life were buried in that grave. I had been descending the hill pretty quickly, so that I could not now see into the cemetery. The choral ceased, and I saw, near the gate, black-dressed men coming away from the funeral. The Professor with his niece on his arm, both in deep mourning, passed close to me without noticing me. The niece had her handkerchief at her eyes' and was sobbing bitterly. I felt I could not go into the town; I sent my servant with the carriage to the usual hotel, and walked into the well-known country to try if I could shake off the strange condition I was in, which I ascribed to physical causes, being overheated and tired with my journey, etc. When I reached the alley which leads to the public gardens, I saw a most extraordinary sight--Krespel, led along by two men in deep mourning, whom he seemed to be trying to escape from by all sorts of extraordinary leaps and bounds. He was dressed, as usual, in his wonderful grey coat of his own making; but from his little three-cornered hat, which he had cocked over one ear in a martial manner, hung a very long, narrow streamer of black crape, which fluttered playfully in the breeze. Round his waist he had buckled a black sword-belt, but instead of a sword he had stuck into it a long fiddle bow.

"The blood ran cold in my veins. 'He has gone quite mad,' I said as I followed them slowly.

"They took him to his own door, where he embraced them, laughing loud. They left him, and then he noticed me. He stared at me in silence for a considerable time; then he said, in a mournful, hollow voice:

"'Glad to see you, Master Student, *you* know all about it.' He seized me by the arm, dragged me into the house, and upstairs to the room where the violins hung. They were all covered with crape, but the masterpiece by the unknown maker was not in its place, a wreath of cypress bough in its stead.

"I knew then what had happened. 'Antonia, alas! Antonia,' I cried in uncontrollable anguish.

"Krespel was standing in front of me with his arms folded, like a man turned to stone.

"'When she died,' he said, very solemnly, 'the sound-post of that fiddle shivered to pieces with a grinding crash. The faithful thing could only live with her and in her; it is lying with her in her grave.' I sank into a chair overpowered; but Krespel began singing a merry ditty, in a hoarse voice; and it was a truly awful sight to see him dancing, as he sang it, upon one foot, while the crape on his hat kept flapping about the fiddles on the wall; and I could not help giving a scream of horror as this crape streamer, during one of his rapid gyrations, came wafting over my face, for I felt as if the touch of it must infallibly infect me, and drag me, too, down into the black, terrible abyss of madness. But when I gave the scream, Krespel stopped dancing, and said, in his singing voice:

"'What are you shrieking out like that for, little son? Did you see the death angel, think you? people always do before the funeral.' Then, walking into the middle of the floor, he drew the bow out of his belt, and, raising it with both hands above his head, he broke it into splinters. Then he laughed long and loud, and cried, 'The staff's broken over me now, you think, little son, don't you?'²

nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind!

"I'm free now--I'm free! I'm free!
And fiddles I'll make no more, boys!
And fiddles I'll make no more!
Hurray! hurray! hip-hip hurray!
Oh! fiddles I'll make no more."

"This he sang to a terribly merry tune, dancing about on one foot again as he did so. Full of horror I was making for the door; but he held me back, saying, quite quietly and soberly this time:

"Don't go away, Master Student. Don't think that those outbreaks of my pain, which is so terrible that I can scarcely bear it longer, mean that I am mad. No, no, I am as sane as you are, and as calmly in my senses. The only thing is, a little while ago I made myself a nightshirt, and thought when I had it on I should be like Destiny, or God.' He went on talking the wildest incoherence for a time, till he sank down, completely exhausted. The old housekeeper came at my summons, and I was thankful when I found myself outside in the open air.

"I never doubted for an instant that Krespel had gone completely mad; but the Professor maintained the contrary. 'There are people,' he said, 'in whose cases Nature, or some destiny or other, has deprived them of the cover--the exterior envelope--under which we others carry on our madnesses unseen. They are like certain insects who have transparent integuments, which (as we see the play of their muscular movements) give the effect of a malformation, although everything is perfectly normal. What never passes beyond the sphere of thought in us becomes action in Krespel. The bitter scorn and rage which the soul, imprisoned as it is in earthly conditions of being and action, often vividly feels, Krespel carries out, or expresses, into external life, by extraordinarily frantic gesticulations and hare jumps. But those are his lightning conductors. What comes out of the earth he delivers back to the earth again; the heavenly he retains, and consequently apprehends it quite clearly and distinctly with his inner consciousness, notwithstanding all the crackiness which we sparking out of him. No doubt Antonia's unexpected loss touches him very keenly, but I should bet that he'll be going on in his usual jog trot to-morrow as if nothing had happened.'

"And it turned out very much as the Professor had expected: Krespel appeared next morning very much as if nothing had happened. Only he announced that he had given up fiddle-making, and would never play on one again. And it afterwards appeared that he kept his word.

"All that I had heard from the Professor strengthened my conviction that the relation in which Antonia had stood to Krespel--so very intimate, and so carefully kept unexplained--as also the fact that she was dead--very probably involved him in a very serious responsibility, which he might find it by no means easy to clear himself from. I made up my mind that I would not leave H---- until I had given him the full benefit of my ideas on this subject. My notion was to thoroughly alarm him, to appeal to his conscience, and, if I could, constrain him to a full confession of his crime. The more I considered the matter the clearer it seemed that he must be a terrible villain; and all the more eloquent and impressive grew the allocution which I mentally got ready to deliver to him, and which gradually took the form of a regular masterpiece of rhetoric.

"Thus prepared for my attack, T betook myself to him in a condition of much virtuous indignation one morning.

"I found him making children's toys at his turning lathe, with a tranquil smile on his face.

"How,' said I, 'is it possible that your conscience can allow you to be at peace for an instant, when the thought of the horrible crime you have been guilty of must perpetually sting you like a serpent's tooth?'

"He laid down his tools, and stared at me in astonishment.

"'What do you mean, my good sir?' he said. 'Sit down on that chair there.'

"But I went on, with much warmth, and distinctly accused him of having caused Antonia's death, threatening him with the vengeance of Heaven. Nay more, being full of juridical zeal--as I had just been inducted into a judicial appointment--I went on to assure him that I should consider it my duty to leave no stone unturned to bring the affair thoroughly to light, so as to deliver him into the hands of earthly justice. I was a little put out, I admit, when, on the conclusion of my rather pompous harangue, Krespel, without a word in reply, merely looked at me as if waiting for what I had to say next: and I tried to find something further to add: but everything that occurred to me seemed so silly and feeble that I held my peace. He seemed rather to enjoy this breakdown in my eloquence, and a bitter smile passed over his face, but then he became very grave, and said in a solemn tone:

"'My good young sir! Very likely you think me a fool--or a madman. I forgive you. We are both in the same madhouse, and you object to my thinking myself God the Father, because you think you are God the Son. How do you suppose you can enter into another person's life, utterly unknown to you in all its complicated turnings and windings, and pick up and follow all its deeply hidden threads? She is gone, and the riddle is solved!'

"He stopped, rose, and walked two or three times up and down the room. I ventured to ask for some explanation. He looked at me fixedly, took me by the hand, and led me to the window, opening both the outside jalousies. He leaned upon the sill with both his arms, and, so looking out into the garden, he told me the story of his life.

"When he had ended, I left him deeply affected, and bitterly ashamed.

"To make a long tale short, matters as concerned Antonia stood as follows:

"Some twenty years previously, his fancy of making a collection of the finest violins of the great old makers had taken him to Italy. At that time he had not begun to make violins himself, neither, consequently, to take them to pieces. At Venice he heard the renowned prima donna, Angela, at that time shining in the leading *rôles* at the Teatro di San Benedetto. She was as supereminent in beauty as she was in art: and well became, and deserved, her name of Angela. He sought her acquaintance, and, in spite of all his rugged uncouthness, his most remarkable violin playing, with its combination of great originality, force and tenderness, speedily won her artist's heart. A close intimacy led, in a few weeks, to a marriage--which not made public--because Angela would neither leave the stage, give up her well-known name, nor tack on to it strangely-sounding 'Krespel.' He described, with the bitterest irony, the quite peculiar ingenuity with which Signora Angela commenced, as soon as she was his wife, to torment and torture him. All the selfishness, caprice, and obstinacy of all the prima donnas on earth rolled into one, were, as Krespel considered, incorporated in Angela's little body. Whenever he tried to assert his true position in the smallest degree, she would launch a swarm of *abbates*, *maestros*, and *academicos* about his ears, who, not knowing his real relations with her, would snub him, and set him down as a wretched unendurable ass of an amateur *inamorato*, incapable of adapting himself to the Signora's charming and interesting humours. After one of those stormy scenes, Krespel had flown off to Angela's country house, and phantasizing on his Cremona, was forgetting the sorrows of the day. This had not lasted long, however, when the Signora, who had followed him, came into the room. She happened to be in a tender mood: she embraced Krespel with sweet, languishing glances, she laid her little head upon his shoulder. But Krespel, lost in the world of his harmonies, went on fiddling, so that the walls reechoed; and it so chanced that he touched the Signora, a trifle ungently, with his bow-arm. She blazed up like a fury, screamed out, '*Bestia tedesca*,' snatched the violin out of his hand, and dashed it to pieces on a marble table. Krespel stood before her for a moment, a

statue of amazement, and then, as if awaking from a dream, he grasped the Signora as with the fists of a giant, shied her out of the window of her own *palazzo*, and set off--without concerning himself further about the matter--to Venice, and thence to Germany. It was some little time before he quite realized what he had done. Though he knew the window was only some five feet from the ground, and the necessity of throwing the Signora out of it under the circumstances was quite indisputable, still he felt very anxious as to the results, inasmuch as she had given him to understand that he was 'about to be a father.' He was almost afraid to make any inquiries, and was not a little surprised, some eight months afterwards, to receive an affectionate letter from his beloved wife, in which she did not say a syllable about the little circumstance which had occurred at the country *palazzo*, but announced that she was the happy mother of a charming little daughter, and prayed the '*marito amato e padre felicissimo*' to come as quickly as he could to Venice. However, Krespel didn't go, but made inquiries through a trusted friend as to what had happened. He was told that the Signora had dropped down on to the grass as lightly as a bird, and the only results of her fall were mental ones. The Signora had been like a new creature after Krespel's heroic achievement. All her wilfulness and charming caprices had disappeared completely; and the *maestro* who wrote the music for the next Carnival considered himself the luckiest man under the sun; inasmuch as the Signora sang all his arias without one of the thousand alterations which, in ordinary circumstances, she would have insisted on his making in them. Krespel's friend added that it was most desirable to give no publicity to what had occurred, because, otherwise, *prima donnas* would be getting pitched out of window every day.

"Krespel was in great excitement. He ordered horses. He got in to the post-chaise.

"'Stop a moment, though,' he said. 'Isn't it a positive certainty that, as soon as I make my appearance, the evil spirit will take possession of Angela again? I've thrown her out of window once already. What should I do a second time? I don't see what I could do.'

"He got out of the carriage, wrote an affectionate letter to his wife, and--remained in Germany. They carried on a warm correspondence. Assurances of affection, fond imaginings, regrets for the absence of the beloved, etc., etc., flew backwards and forwards between H--- and Venice. Angela came to Germany, as we know, and shone as *prima donna* on the boards at F---. Though she was no longer young, she carried everything before her by the irresistible charm of her singing. Her voice had lost nothing at that time. Meanwhile Antonia had grown up; and her mother could scarce find words in which to describe, to Krespel, how, in Antonia, a Cantatrice of the first rank was blossoming out. Krespel's friends in F---, too, kept on telling him of this; begging him to go there and hear these two remarkable singers. Of course they had no idea of the relationship in which Krespel stood to them. He would fain have gone and seen his daughter, who lived in the depths of his heart, and whom he often saw in dreams. But the thought of what his wife was restrained him: and he stayed at home, amongst his dismembered fiddles.

"I daresay you remember a very promising young composer in F--- of the name of B---, who suddenly ceased to be heard of--no one knew why: perhaps you may have known him. Well, he fell deeply in love with Antonia; she returned his affection, and he urged her mother to consent to a union consecrated by art. Angela was quite willing, and Krespel gave his consent all the more readily that this young *maestro's* writings had found favour before his critical tribunal. Krespel was expecting to hear of the marriage every day, when there came a letter with a black seal, addressed in a stranger's hand. A certain Dr. M--- wrote to say that Angela had been taken seriously ill, in consequence of a chill caught at the theatre, and had passed away on the very night before the day fixed for Antonia's marriage. He added that Angela had told him she was Krespel's wife, and Antonia his daughter; so that he ought to come and take charge of her.

Deeply as he was shocked by Angela's death, he could not but feel that a certain disturbing element was removed from his life, and that he could breathe freely, for the first time for many a long day. You cannot imagine how affectingly he described the moment when he saw Antonia for the first time. In the very oddness of his description of it lay a wonderful power of expression which I am unable to give any idea of. Antonia had all the charm and attractiveness of Angela, with none of her nasty reverse side. There was no cloven foot peeping out anywhere. B---, her husband that was to have been, came. Antonia comprehending her quaint father, with delicate tact, and seeing into his inner depths, sang one of those motetts of old Padre Martini which she knew Angela used to sing to him during the fullest blossom-time of their days of love. He shed rivers of tears. Never had he heard even Angela sing so splendidly. The tone of Antonia's voice was quite *sui generis*--at times it was like the Æolian harp, at others like the trilling roulades of the nightingale. It seemed as though there could not be space for those tones in a human breast. Antonia, glowing with love and happiness, sang all her best solos, and B--- played between whiles as only ecstatic inspiration can play. At first, Krespel floated in ecstasy. Then he grew thoughtful and silent, at last he sprung up, pressed Antonia to his heart, and said, gently and imploringly, 'Don't sing any more, if you love me. It breaks my heart. The fear of it--the fear of it! Don't sing any more.'

"No," said Krespel next morning to Dr. M---, 'when, during her singing, her colour contracted to two dark red spots on her white cheeks, it was no longer a mere everyday family likeness--it was what I had been dreading.' The doctor, whose face at the beginning of the conversation had expressed deep anxiety, said, 'Perhaps it may be that she has exerted herself too much in singing when over-young, or her inherited temperament may be the cause. But Antonia has organic disease of the chest. It is that which gives her voice its extraordinary power, and its most remarkable timbre, which is almost beyond the scope of the ordinary human voice. At the same time it implies her early death. If she goes on singing, six months is the utmost I can promise her.' This pierced Krespel's heart like a thousand daggers. It was as if some beautiful tree had suddenly come into his life, all covered with beautiful blossoms, and it was sawn across at the root. His decision was made at once. He told Antonia all. He left it to her to decide whether she would follow her lover, and yield to his and the world's claims on her, and die young, or bestow upon her father, in his declining years, a peace and happiness such as he had never known, and live many a year in so doing.

"She fell sobbing into her father's arms. It was beyond his power to think at such a moment. He felt too keenly all the anguish involved in either alternative. He discussed the matter with B---; but although he asseverated that Antonia should never sing a single note, Krespel knew too well that he never would be able to resist the temptation to hear her sing compositions of his own at all events. Then the world--the musical public--though it knew the true state of the case, would never give up its claims upon her. The musical public is a cruel race; where its own enjoyment is in question, and terrible.

"Krespel disappeared with Antonia from F---, and came to H---. B--- heard with despair of their departure, followed on their track, and arrived at H--- at the same time that they did.

"Only let me see him once, and then die!" Antonia implored.

"Die--die!" cried Krespel in the wildest fury. His daughter, the only creature in the wide world who could fire him with a bliss he had never otherwise felt, the only being who had ever made life endurable to him, was tearing herself violently away from him. So the worst might happen, and he would give no sign.

"B--- sat down to the piano, Antonia sang, and Krespel played the violin, till suddenly the dark red spots came to Antonia's cheeks. Then Krespel ordered a halt, but when B--- took his farewell she fell down insensible in a swoon.

"I thought she was dead," Krespel said, 'for I quite expected it would kill her;

and as I had wound myself up to expect the worst, I kept quite calm and self-possessed. I took hold of B--- by the shoulders (in his frightful consternation he was staring before him like a sheep), and said (here he fell into his singing voice), "My dear Mr. Pianoforte-teacher, now that you have killed the woman you were going to marry by your own deliberate act, perhaps you will be so kind as to take yourself off out of this with as little trouble as you can, unless you choose to stay till I run this little hunting-knife through you, so that my daughter, who, as you see, is looking rather white, may derive a shade or two of colour from that precious blood of yours. Even though you run pretty quick, I could throw a fair sized knife after you." I suppose I must have looked rather terrible as I said this, for B---- dashed away with a scream of terror downstairs, and out of the door.'

"When, after B----'s departure, Krespel went to raise Antonia, who was lying senseless on the floor, she opened her eyes with a profound sigh, but seemed to close them again, as if in death. Krespel then broke out into loud, inconsolable lamentations. The doctor, fetched by the old housekeeper, said that Antonia was suffering from a violent shock, but that there was no danger, and this proved to be the case, and she recovered even more speedily than was to be expected. She now clung to her father with the most devoted filial affection, and entered warmly into all his favourite hobbies, however absurd. She helped him to take old fiddles to pieces, and to put new ones together. 'I won't sing any more. I want to live for you,' she would often say to her father with a gentle smile, when people asked her to sing, and she was obliged to refuse. Krespel endeavoured to spare her those trials, and this was why he avoided taking her into society, and tried to taboo all music. He knew, of course, what a pain it was to her to renounce the art which she had cultivated to such perfection. When he bought the remarkable violin already spoken of--the one which was buried with her--and was going to take it to pieces, Antonia looked at him very sorrowfully, and said, gently imploring him, 'This one, too?' Some indescribable impulse constrained him to leave it untouched, and to play on it. Scarcely had he brought out a few notes from it when Antonia cried, loudly and joyfully, 'Ah! that is I--that is I singing again.' And of a verity its silver bell-like tones had something quite extraordinarily wonderful about them. They sounded as if they came out of a human heart. Krespel was deeply affected. He played more gloriously than ever he had done before. And when, with his fullest power, he would go storming over the strings, in brilliant, sparkling scales and *arpeggios*, Antonia would clap her hands and cry, delighted, 'Ah! I did that well. I did that splendidly!' Often she would say to him, 'I should like to sing something, father!'; and then he would take the fiddle from the wall, and play all her favourite solos, those which she used to sing of old,--and then she was quite happy.

"A short time before I came back, Krespel one night thought he heard some one playing on the piano in the next room, and presently he recognized that it was B--- -, precluding in his accustomed rather peculiar fashion. He tried to rise from his bed, but some strange heavy weight seemed to lie upon him, fettering him there, so that he could not move. Presently he heard Antonia singing to the piano, in soft whispering tones, which gradually swelled, and swelled to the most pealing *fortissimo*. Then those marvellous tones took the form of a beautiful, glorious *aria* which B---- had once written for Antonia, in the religious style of the old masters. Krespel said the state in which he found himself was indescribable, for terrible alarm was in it, and also a bliss such as he had never before known. Suddenly he found himself in the middle of a flood of the most brilliant and dazzling light, and in this light he saw B---- and Antonia holding each other closely embraced, and looking at each other in a rapture of bliss. The tones of the singing and of the accompanying piano went on, although Antonia was not seen to be singing, and B--- was not touching the piano. Here Krespel fell into a species of profound unconsciousness, in which the vision and the music faded and were lost. When he recovered, all that remained was a sense of anxiety and alarm. He hastened into Antonia's room.

"She was lying on the couch, with her eyes, closed, and a heavenly smile on her face, as if she were dreaming of the most exquisite happiness and bliss. But she

was dead!"

Whilst Theodore had been telling this tale, Ottmar had been manifesting his impatience nay, his lively repugnance in various ways. Sometimes he would get up and walk about the room, then he would sit down again, and drink glass after glass of the contents of the vase; then he sat down at Theodore's table, and pulled the papers about, till he found an almanac, of which he eagerly turned over the leaves for a time, till at length he laid it down before him, open on the table, with the air of having discovered something in it of the deepest interest and importance.

"Well!" cried Lothair, when Theodore had ended his story; "this is almost too much. You can't bear the idea of the kindly visionary whom Cyprian told us about; you tell us it is dangerous to peep down into those mysterious abysses of nature; you will neither talk about things of the sort, nor hear them talked about, yet you come in upon us with a story which, frightful as it is in its crackiness, is infinitely beyond, at all events, *my* powers of endurance. What was the gentle, happy, contented Serapion in comparison with this splenetic Krespel--absolutely terrific in his spleneticism? You said we were to be led, gently, from insanity, *viâ* eccentricity, to ordinary, everyday rationality; and you go on to show us pictures which, if we look at them with any closeness, are enough to drive us clean out of our senses. Cyprian's story was largely tinctured by his own individuality, but yours was so by yours in a far higher degree, for I know that the moment music is in question, you get into a sort of magnetized condition, and see the strangest visions. As is usual with you, you have given your story a strong dash of mystery which, of course, excites and enthrals a listener, as anything out of the common groove will do, be it never so morbid. But there are limits to all things; and it is not right to drive people to the verge of insanity in this gratuitous sort of way. Antonia's story and circumstances, and the mysterious sympathy between her and that ancient violin are very touching, but in a way which makes one's blood curdle, and the *finale* of the tale produces an inconsolable misery which I cannot but call excessively painful--in fact, I consider it 'abominable.' It is a strong expression; but I really don't see that I can well retract it."

"Are you accusing me," asked Theodore with a smile, "of having harrowed your feelings with a more or less elaborately constructed fiction? I was merely telling you about a strange character, of whom I was reminded by the story of Serapion. I merely related circumstances which actually occurred; and if you think any of them improbable, remember, my dear sir, that it is nearly always the most improbable things that really come to pass."

"Very likely," said Lothair. "Still, that is small excuse for you. You should cither have told us nothing about this horrible Krespel, or (admirable colourist as you are) you should have shown him in more agreeable tints. However, we have had more than enough of that distressful architect, *diplomate*, and fiddle maker. May he sink into oblivion? But now, Cyprian, I bend my knee to you. I shall never call you a fanciful spirit-seer again. You have given us a strange proof that reminiscences are very remarkable and mysterious things. All this day you have not been able to get poor Serapion out of your mind, and I see quite clearly that you have been much relieved, and happier, since you told us his story. Now just come and look at this book here, this excellent specimen of the ordinary household almanac, for it contains a key to the whole mystery. This, you see, is the 14th of November. It was on the 14th of November that you found your hermit lying dead in his hut, and though you were not vouchsafed the assistance of a couple of lions to bury him--as Ottmar suggested--and met with no particularly wonderful adventures in the forest, of course you were deeply affected at the sight of your friend, who had passed to his rest so gently. The impression was ineradicable; and it may well be supposed that the spirit within you brought the image of your friend more vividly before you than usual on the anniversary of his death, by some process of which you were unconscious. Do me the kindness,

Cyprian, to add a miraculous circumstance or two to your account of Serapion's death, just to enrich the conclusion of it a little."

"When I was leaving the hut," said Cyprian, "the tame deer, which I told you about, came up to me with great tears in its eyes, and the wild doves hovered about me with anxious cries; and as I was approaching the village, to give information of his death, I met some peasants coming with a bier, all ready, who said that when they had heard the hermit's bell tolling at an unusual time they had known that the holy man had laid himself down to die, or was dead already. That is all, dear Lothair, that I have to serve up by way of a subject for your banter."

"Banter, do you say?" cried Lothair, rising. "What do you take me for, O my Cyprianus? Am I not, like Brutus, an honourable man; just and upright; a lover of the truth? Don't I enthusi-ize with the enthusiasts, and phantazize with the phantazizers? Do I not rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep? Just look here, my Cyprianus! Look once again at this book, this literary production here, crammed with incontrovertible facts, this most excellent specimen of the common, every-day household almanac. At the date '14th November' you find, it is true, the commonplace, every-day name 'Levin.' But cast your eyes upon this 'catholic' column here. There stands, in red letters,

"SERAPION, MARTYR.'

"Consequently, your Serapion died on the very name-day of the Saint whom he took himself to be! Come; I drink this cup to the memory of Serapion, saint and martyr, and do you all do likewise!"

"With all my heart!" said Cyprian, and the glasses clinked.

"Looking at the subject all round," said Lothair, "and especially now that Theodore has so thoroughly stirred my bile with that horrible Krespel of his, I am quite reconciled to Cyprian's Serapion. More than that, I honour and reverence his insanity; for none but a grand and genuine poet could have been attacked by a madness of that particular form. I needn't advert to the circumstance--it's an old, well-worn story--that, originally, the same word was used to denote the poet and the seer; but it is certain that we might often doubt just as much of the existence of real poets as of that of genuine seers, recounting in their *extasis* the wonders of a higher realm; or else why is it that so much poetry, by no means to be termed 'bad' (so far as its form and workmanship are concerned), affects us no more than some pale, faded picture, so that we are not carried away by it at all, and the gorgeousness of its diction only serves to increase the frost which it permeates us with? Why is this, but because the poet has never really *seen* what he is telling us about: the events and incidents have never appeared to his mental vision, in all their joy, terror, splendour, majesty, gloom, and sadness, inspiring him, and setting him aglow, so that his inward fire blazes forth in words of lightning? It is useless for a poet to set to work to make us believe in a thing which he does not believe in himself, cannot believe in, because he has never really seen it. What can the characters of a poet of this sort--who (according to the old expression) is not at the same time a genuine seer--be but deceptive puppets, glued together out of heterogeneous stuff? Your hermit, dear Cyprian, was a true poet. He had actually seen what he described; and that was why he affected people's hearts and souls. Poor Serapion! Wherein did your madness consist? except that some hostile star had taken away your faculty of discerning that duplexity which is, really, the essential condition of our earthly existence. There is an inner world; and a spiritual faculty of discerning it with absolute clearness, nay, with the most minute and brilliant distinctness. But it is part of our earthly lot that it is the *outer* world, in which we are encased, which is the lever that brings that spiritual faculty into play. The things of the inner world appear to us only inside the circle which is formed round us by the objects of the outer world, beyond which circle our spirits cannot soar, except in dim mysterious bodings--never; becoming distinct images--that such things exist. But you, happy hermit, lost sight of the outer world, and did not perceive the lever which set your inward faculty in

motion; and when, with that gruesome acumen of yours, you declared that it is only the mind which sees, hears, and takes cognizance of events and incidents, and that, as a consequence, whatever the mind takes cognizance of has actually happened, you forgot that it is the outer world which causes the spirit to exercise those functions which, take cognizance. Your life was a constant dream, from which your awaking in another world was assuredly not a painful one. I consecrate this glass to your memory."

"Don't you notice," said Ottmar, "that Lothair is looking quite a different person--thanks to Theodore's admirably compounded beverage, which has driven the evil spirit out of him?"

"Don't ascribe my better mood to the influence of the bowl," said Lothair. "You all know that, till the evil mood has left me, I never can touch wine. The truth is that I have only just begun to feel at ease, and at home, amongst you. The restless, excited state in which I was at first has gone; and as I not only forgive Cyprian for telling us about Serapion, but feel a real affection for him, why, Theodore's horrible 'Krespel' may pass muster as well. But there are a good many things I should like to say to you. We seem to be all agreed that we are a set of rather uncommonly superior people, and we have made up our minds to reconstitute our old alliance; whilst the bustle of this great town, our distance from each other, and the diversity of our occupations tend to keep us apart. Let us determine, then, this evening, the times and places of our weekly meetings. More than that, it cannot but be that, as of old, we shall wish to read to each other such little stories, and so forth, as we may have been writing from time to time. Let us remember Serapion the Hermit in connection with this. Let each of us try, and examine himself well, as to whether he has really *seen* what he is going to describe before he sets to work to put it in words. At all events, let each of us strive, very strenuously, to get a clear grasp, in his mind, of the picture he is going to produce,--in every one of its forms, colours, lights and shadows, and then, when he feels himself thoroughly permeated and kindled by it, bring it out into outer life. Thus shall our society be established on solid foundations, and be a source of comfort and gratification to us all. Let Serapion the Hermit be our patron saint: may his seer-gift inspire us. His rule we will follow, as true Serapion Brethren."

"Now," said Cyprian, "is not our Lothair the most extraordinary of all extraordinary fellows? At first he was the one who flamed furiously up in opposition to Ottmar's very sensible suggestion that we should meet every week on a certain evening, and dragged in the subject of clubs, without rhyme or reason. And now he is the very one to prove to us that our meetings are a necessity, as well as a pleasure, and to set to work to determine their character, and lay down the rules which are to govern them."

"I certainly did, at first, feel opposed to the idea of there being anything in the shape of formal conditions attached to our meetings," said Lothair, "but I was in a peculiar mood then, which has passed away now. There is no danger of our drifting into Philistinism. Everybody has more or less of a tendency towards it, however sublimely he may strive against it; and perhaps a certain spice of it may not always be an unmitigated evil. However, we needn't bother ourselves about whatever little clouds, of any sort, may rise on our horizon from time to time. The devil is sure to bring some over us, as opportunities offer. Let us discuss the Serapiontic principle. What are your views about it?"

Theodore, Ottmar and Cyprian all thought that their union would have been sure to assume a literary character, of itself, though nothing had been expressly stipulated to that effect,--and at once took the vow of obedience to the rule of Serapion the Hermit, so clearly formulated by Lothair; which, as Theodore pointed out, amounted to this--that they should never vex each other's souls by the production of scamped work.

So they clinked their glasses joyously, and gave each other the fraternal embrace of the true Serapion Brother.

"Midnight," said Ottmar, "is still a long way off, and I think it would be very nice if one of us were to relate something more pleasant and amusing, by way of throwing the melancholy, nay terrible, events we have been dealing with into the background a little. I think it rests properly with Theodore to operate his promised 'Transition to Ordinary Rationality.'"

"If you like," said Theodore, "I will read you a little story which I wrote some time ago, which was suggested to me by a picture. When I saw this picture, I discovered a meaning in it which the painter of it had certainly never dreamt of--could not have dreamt of in fact--because it referred to circumstances in my own early life, which the picture brought strangely back to my memory."

"I sincerely trust there are no mad people in it," said Lothair; "for I have had more than my fill of them already: and I hope it conforms to the rule of our patron saint."

"There are no mad people in it," said Theodore, "but, as to its conformity with Serapionitic rule, I must leave that to the verdict of my worthy brethren, begging them at the same time not to judge me too severely, seeing that my little story was suggested by a light, airy picture, and makes no pretence but to cause a passing moment's entertainment."

With which Theodore produced his manuscript, and began as follows:

"AN INTERRUPTED CADENCE.

"In the Berlin autumn Exhibition of 1814, there was a charming picture of Hummel's, called 'A Scene in an Italian Locanda,' which attracted much attention. It was both light and vigorous, and had all the effect of representing a real occurrence. The scene was a garden-arbour, thick with the luxuriant leafage of the South. Two Italian ladies, seated opposite to one another, at a table, with wine and fruit--one of them singing, the other accompanying her on a guitar. Between them, and behind the table, an *abbate*, standing beating the time, as music-director; his hand was raised, as a conductor's is when a singer is executing a *cadenza*, watching carefully and anxiously for the precise instant when the singer--evidently warbling out her cadence, with eyes upraised to the sky--should come in with her *trillo*--her long shake; at the precise termination of which it would be his duty to make his down-beat, on which signal the guitarist should strike in with her chord of the dominant. The *abbate*, all admiration and intense enjoyment, was watching for the proper instant to make his down-beat as a cat watches a mouse. Not if his life depended on it would he depass that precise instant by a hair's-breadth. Fain would he muzzle every fly, every mosquito, humming about under the leaves. Most distressful to him the approach of the landlord, who had selected that particular moment to come in with more wine. Beyond the arbour, in the middle distance, a shaded alley, with streams of bright sunlight breaking athwart it through the branches; and a man on horseback, drinking a cool draught, served to him by a girl from the *locanda*.

"Edward and Theodore were standing studying this picture; and Edward said:

"The more I look at this picture; at that lady singing--not quite so young as she has been, but inspired by genuine artistic enthusiasm--at the pure, intellectual Roman profile, and the magnificent figure of the lady accompanying on the guitar, and at the delicious little *abbate* beating the time, the more convinced I am that they are portraits of real, living persons. I feel as if I should like to step into that arbour and open one of those delightful wicker-covered flasks that are smiling at me on that table there. I can almost fancy I scent the aroma of the noble wine. And that latter idea must be realised, and not allowed to evaporate in this chill atmosphere. I propose that we go and drink a bottle of real Italian wine, in honour of this charming picture, and of the happy land of Italy, the only country where

life is worth living.'

"As Edward so spoke, Theodore was standing silent, sunk in deep reflection.

"Very well--yes--we may as well,' he answered, like a man waking from a dream. Yet he seemed loth to tear himself away from the picture, and still kept casting longing glances at it when he had mechanically followed his friend to the door.

"It was an easy matter to put Edward's idea into practice. They had only to cross the street to find themselves in the little blue room in the Sala Tarone, with a wicker-covered flask, like those in the picture, on the table before them.

"You seem, somehow,' said Edward, when they had swallowed two or three glasses of the Italian wine, and Theodore was still sitting silent and thoughtful--'you seem, somehow, as if that picture had produced a different impression, and a far less pleasant one, on you than on me.'

"I delight in that picture as much as anybody,' answered Theodore. 'But the extraordinary thing about it is, that it chances to represent a scene in my early life, with the utmost exactness, so that the very characters in it are absolute portraits of the real actors in that scene. You will admit that even pleasant reminiscences affect us strangely when they come bursting in upon us in this utterly unexpected sort of manner, as if evoked by the wand of an enchanter.'

"What a very extraordinary affair,' said Edward. 'You say this picture represents an incident, in your own life? It seems probable enough that the two ladies and the *abbate* are likenesses of real people: but that they should ever have had anything to do with *you* is certainly amazing enough. Do tell me all about it. We are not pressed for time, and nobody is likely to come in and disturb us at this hour of the day.'

"I should rather like to tell you about it,' said Theodore, 'only I shall have to go a longish way back, to the time when I was a mere boy.'

"Please go on, then, and tell me about it,' said Edward. 'I don't know much about your early life; and if it does take some time in telling we shall only have to send for another bottle of this Italian wine; nobody will be the worse for that, neither we nor Signor Tarone.'

"Nobody who knows me,' said Theodore, 'need feel any surprise at my having thrown everything else overboard, and devoted myself, body and soul, to the glorious art, music. Even when I was a mere child, music was the only thing I really cared about. I would hammer all day, and all night, too, if people would have allowed me, upon my uncle's old rattle-trap of a piano. Music was at an extremely low ebb in the little place where we lived; there was nobody to give me any instruction but an old, conceited, self-opinionated organist. His music was of the lifeless, mathematical order. He wearied my soul with a lot of ugly gloomy *toccatas* and *fugues*. However, I did not let this discourage me, but laboured faithfully on. The old fellow would often gird at me in bitter and unsparing terms; but he had only to sit down and play me something in his severely accurate manner, to reconcile me to life and art in a moment. Often the most wonderful ideas would come into my head on such occasions; many of Sebastian Bach's works, for instance, and they above all others, would fill me with a weird awe, as if they were legends about spirits and enchanters. But a perfect paradise opened upon me when, as happened in winter, the town band gave a concert, assisted by a few local amateurs, and I was allowed to play the kettledrums in the symphony, a favour granted to me on account of the accuracy of my time. It was many a day before I knew what wretched and ludicrous affairs those concerts were. My master, the organist, generally played a couple of pianoforte concertos of Wolff or Emanuel Bach; one of the bandsmen tortured himself--and his hearers--with some violin solo of Stamitz, and the excise officer blew terrifically on a flute, and wasted so much breath in the process, that he kept blowing out the candles on his

desk, so that they had to be constantly lighted up again. Nothing in the shape of singing could be accomplished, and this was a source of deep regret to my uncle, a "great" amateur musician. He remembered the days when the choir-masters of the four churches used to sing "Lottchen am Hofe" at the concerts, and he used to refer, with high approbation, to the fine spirit of religious tolerance which actuated those musicians, who laid aside their religious differences, and united in these performances, coming together, irrespective of creed, on a common basis of art. For, besides the Catholic and the Evangelical communities, the Protestants themselves were divided into French and German churches. The French choir-master used to take the part of "Charlotte," and my uncle used to say he sang it--spectacles on nose--in the loveliest falsetto that ever issued from a human throat.

"There dwelt amongst us, at this period, a certain "court-singer," retired on pension, whose name was Mademoiselle Meibel. She was a demoiselle of some five-and-fifty summers, but my uncle thought it would be only a proper thing if she could be induced to emerge occasionally from her pensioned retirement, so far as to sing a solo now and then at our concerts. After giving herself the proper amount of airs, and saying "no" a sufficient number of times, she graciously yielded, so that we got the length of including an occasional "*Aria di Bravura*" in our programmes. She was an extraordinary-looking creature, Mademoiselle Meibel. I can see her little wizened figure at this moment as if she were here before my eyes. She used to come forward on to the platform, very grave and dignified, her music in her hand, dressed in nearly all the colours of the rainbow, and make a ceremonious dip of the upper part of her body to the audience. She used to have on a miraculous sort of head-gear, with Italian porcelain flowers stuck on the front of it; and, as she sung, these flowers used to nod and quiver in the oddest fashion. When she ended her solo--received always by the audience with boundless applause--she would hand her music, with a glance of pride, to my master, who was accorded the privilege of dipping his forefinger and thumb into the little box, in the shape of a pug dog, which she at such times produced, and took snuff from with a courtly air. She had a most disagreeable, quavering voice, and introduced all kinds of horrible, vulgar grace-notes and flourishes; and you can imagine the ludicrous effect which this, in combination with her external appearance, produced on me. My uncle was loud in encomiums, but this was incomprehensible to me, and I sided all the more with my organist, who despised all vocal music, and used to mimic old Mademoiselle Meibel in the most entertaining style.

"The more I coincided with my master in considering all singing to be an inferior province of the musical art, the higher waxed his estimate of my musical endowments. He taught me counterpoint with untiring, indefatigable pains and zeal, and ere long I was able to write the correctest of *fugues* and *toccatas*.

"On my nineteenth birthday, I was playing one of those compositions of mine to my uncle, when the waiter of our principal hotel came in, and announced that two foreign ladies, who had just arrived in the town, were coming to see us.

"Before my uncle had time to throw off his large-flowered dressing-gown and dress himself, the ladies were in upon us.

"You know the electrical effect which any unusual apparition of this sort has upon people who live in small provincial places, but the one which now appeared to me was really such as to produce on me the effect of the wave of some enchanter's wand.

"Picture to yourself two tall, handsome Italian girls, dressed in the latest fashions, walking up to my uncle, with a combination of artistic ease and charming courtesy of manner, and talking away to him in voices which were extremely loud, and yet remarkably beautiful in tone. What was the curious language they were speaking? Now and then but only now and then it sounded something like German.

"My uncle didn't understand a word of it. He stepped back, completely

nonplussed, and pointed in silence to the sofa; they sat down there and talked to each other. *That* was real music. Ultimately they managed to explain to my uncle that they were singers on a tour, intended giving some concerts, and had been recommended to apply to him as a person who could assist them in the necessary arrangements. While they had been talking to each other I had gathered their names; Laretta, who seemed to be the elder of the two, kept talking away to my bewildered uncle, with immense energy and eager gesticulation, glancing about her with beaming eyes the while. Without being to be called "stout," she was luxuriant of figure to a degree which was at that time something wholly novel to my inexperienced--and admiring--eyes. Teresina, taller and slighter, with a long earnest face, spoke, in the intervals, very little, but much more comprehensibly. Every now and then she would smile, in a curious way, as if a good deal amused at the aspect of my poor uncle, who kept shrinking into his flowered dressing-gown as a snail does into its shell, vainly trying to stick away a certain string belonging to his nether garments, which would keep fluttering out every now and then, to the length of an ell or so.

"At last they rose to go. My uncle had promised to arrange a concert for the next day but one, and he and I (whom he had presented to them as a young *virtuoso*) were invited to go and take chocolate with the sisters that evening.

"When the time came, we walked slowly and solemnly up the stairs accordingly. We both felt very queer: somewhat as if we were going forward to undertake some rather perilous adventure, for which we were by no means adequately prepared.

"After my uncle, who had carefully prepared himself beforehand, had spoken much and learnedly about music--(nobody understood a word he said, neither he himself, nor we others)--after I had burnt my tongue, three times, terribly with the scalding chocolate smiling at my tortures with the stoicism of a Scaevola--Laretta said she would sing something. Teresina took the guitar tuned it, and struck two or three handfuls of chords. I had never heard the instrument before, and was much impressed by the strange, mysterious effect of its hollow vibrations.

"Laretta commenced a note, very *piano*, swelled it out to a ringing *fortissimo*, and then broke out into a bold warbling *cadenza*, extending over an octave and a half. I remember the words of the beginning of her aria:--

"Sento l'amica speme."

"My blood seemed to pause in my veins! I never had had an idea that there could be anything like this, and as Laretta soared on her bright pinions of song, higher and higher, and as the beams of those beautiful tones shone brighter and brighter upon me, all the music within me--dead and dormant hitherto--caught fire, and blazed on high in glorious and mighty flames.

"Ah! that was the first time in my life that I ever heard *music*! Next the sisters sang together, some of those earnest, quiet, deep-drawn duets of Abbate Steffani'e. Teresina's rich, exquisitely beautiful contralto stirred the depths of my soul. I could not keep back my tears, they rolled down my cheeks. My uncle blew his nose a great deal, and cast reproachful looks at me. It was no use; I couldn't control myself. This seemed to please the sisters; they asked about my musical studies. I felt utterly disgusted with all I had done, and declared, in my enthusiasm, that I had never heard music before.

"*Il buon fanciullo!*" said Laretta, very sweetly and tenderly.

"When I got home I felt almost out of my mind. I seized all the *toccatas* and *fugues* which I had so laboriously carpentered together (as well as forty-five Variations on a Thema in Canon, which the organist had composed for me, and presented to me in a beautifully written MS.), and shied the whole boiling of them into the fire. I laughed sardonically as this mass of double counterpoint crackled

and blazed, and went sparkling out into ashes. Then I sat down to the instrument, and tried, first to imitate the guitar, and then to play, and next to sing, the melodies which I had heard the sisters execute. At last, about midnight, my uncle came out of his bedroom crying, "For the love of heaven stop that caterwauling, be off to your bed, and let's try to get some sleep," with which he blew out the lights and left me in the dark. I had nothing for it but obey; but in my dreams I thought I had solved the secret of song, and was singing the "Sento l'Amica Speme" in the most exquisite style myself.

"Next morning my uncle had got together everybody who could play on string or wind instruments, to a rehearsal in the concert-room, and a proud man he felt himself to be able to turn out such a fine show of performers. The rehearsal was anything but a success, however. Lauretta essayed a grand scena, but we had not got many bars into the recitative when everything was at sixes and sevens; none of the players had the slightest idea of accompanying. Lauretta screamed, stormed, wept, with rage and disgust. The organist was at the piano, and him she attacked with her bitterest objurgations. He rose from his seat, and walked slowly, and with much composure, out at the door. The band-master, at whom she had hurled an "*asino tedesco*" put his violin under his arm, and cocked his cap martially over one ear; he, too, was making for the door, his men, unscrewing their mouthpieces, and sticking their bows in among their strings, preparing to follow him. Only the amateurs were left, looking at each other, almost with tears in their eyes, the exciseman saying, "Oh, dear me! how very much I do feel a thing of this sort!"

"But all my natural bashfulness had abandoned me. I stopped the band-master; I entreated and implored him; in the anguish of the moment I promised I would write him six minuets, with double trios each, for the county-ball. I succeeded in pacifying him. He went back to his music-stand; the bandsmen followed his example, and the orchestra was ready to commence operations once more. All except the organist; his place at the piano was vacant. I found him strolling--a calm, contemplative man--up and down in the market-place, by no process whatever to be prevailed upon to cross the threshold of the concert-room any more.

"Teresina had been looking on at all this, biting her lips to keep back her laughter. Lauretta was now just as conciliatory as she had previously been the contrary. She thanked me most warmly for all I had done. She asked if I could play the piano, and, ere I knew where I was, I found myself occupying the organist's vacant place, with the score before me. Up to this time I had never accompanied a singer, or directed an orchestra. Teresina sat down beside me, and indicated the various *tempi* to me. Lauretta gave me an encouraging "bravo!" now and then; the orchestra began to understand, and things went better. At the second rehearsal all was clear, and the sensation the sisters produced at the concert was indescribable.

"There were going to be great doings at the Residenz, on the occasion of the prince's return from abroad, and the sisters were engaged to sing there; in the meantime they decided on remaining in our little town, and giving one or two more concerts. The admiration of the towns-folk for them amounted to a species of insanity. Only old Mdlle. Meibel would take a reflective pinch out of her pug-dog snuff-box, and remark that screeching of that sort was not singing. My organist was no more to be seen, and I by no means regretted his absence. I was the happiest creature on earth. I sat with the sisters all day long, playing their accompaniments, and writing out the parts from the scores for the concerts at the Residenz. Lauretta was my ideal; all her naughty tempers, her artistic outbreaks of fury, impatience with her accompanist, and so forth, I bore like a lamb. I began to learn Italian, and wrote a *canzonetta* or two. How I rose to the empyrean when Lauretta sang my compositions, and even praised them! I often felt as if I had never thought and written those things, but as if the ideas streamed out for the first time when she sang them. With Teresina I did not get on so well. She sang very seldom; didn't seem to take much interest in me or my doings, and

sometimes gave me the impression of laughing at me behind my back.

"The time arrived at last when they had to leave us: then it was that I fully realized what Lauretta had become to me, and how impossible it was for me to be parted from her. After she had been unusually *smorfiosa* with me, she would be kind and caressing, but always in such a fashion that, although my blood would seethe, the coldness which I could feel that she brought to bear upon me was sufficient to prevent me from throwing myself at her feet with passionate avowals of love.

"I had a pretty fair tenor voice then: it had never had any cultivation, but it was beginning to improve, and I used to sing, with Lauretta, numbers of those tender Italian duets whose name is legion. We were singing one of those duets one day; the time of her departure was at hand--

"Senza di te, ben mio!
Vivere non poss' io."

"Who could have resisted this? I threw myself at Lauretta's feet, wild with despair.

"She helped me to rise. "Why should we part, dear friend?" she said. I listened in delighted amazement. She said I had much better go with her and Teresina to the Residenz. If I meant to devote myself to music altogether, I should have to quit my little native town some day or other.

"Picture to yourself a person who has bidden good-bye to life and hope, and is falling down some black, fathomless abyss; but, at the very instant when he expects the crash which is to dash him in pieces, lo and behold! he is in a beautiful bower of roses, with hundreds of little many-tinted lights dancing round him, and saying, "Darling! you're still alive, you see!" These were my sensations at that moment. To go with them to the Residenz was the one prominent, tangible idea of my life.

"I shan't weary you by describing how I set about proving to my uncle the absolute necessity of my going to the Residenz--no such very great distance, when all was said. He agreed at last, and said he would go with me! Here was an unexpected baulk to my little plans. I dared not tell him I was going with the ladies; but luckily one of his attacks of bronchitis came to my rescue.

"I started off in the stage-coach, but got out at the first change of horses, and waited there for the coming of my goddesses. I had plenty of money in my pocket, so that I was able to make all my arrangements. My idea was to escort the ladies on horseback, like a paladin of Romance; so I managed to hire a steed--not particularly grand to look at, but, as his owner assured me, a good serviceable animal,--and at the appointed time I mounted him, and rode out to meet the two *cantatrices*. Ere long, their little double-seated phaeton was seen coming quietly along. The two sisters were on the front seat, and behind sat their maid, little fat Gianna, a brown Neapolitan. The carriage was crammed with all sorts of boxes, band-boxes, portmanteaus, and so forth, and two pug-dogs, on Gianna's lap, yapped at me as I rode up.

"Everything went swimmingly till we got to the last stage from the Residenz, but there my horse was seized with the remarkable idea that he ought to go home to his stable. A conviction that severe measures are seldom effectual in such conjunctures induced me to try every description of mild persuasion that I could think of. The perverse animal was proof against all my gentle remonstrances. I wanted to go forward; he wanted to go back. All that I could accomplish in the circumstances was that, instead of retrograding, he kept describing circles. Teresina leant out of the carriage, laughing most heartily; whilst Lauretta put her hands before her eyes and screamed, as if I were in the utmost danger. I jammed my spurs into the brute's sides, and, ere I could say Jack Robinson, found myself on the broad of my back on the turnpike road, with the horse standing over me,

his long neck stretched out, surveying me with an expression of calm derision.

"I could not get up till the driver got off and helped me. Laretta, too, got out, and was weeping and screaming. I had twisted one of my feet, and couldn't ride any further. What was to be done? The horse was made fast to the back of the carriage, and I had to squeeze myself inside, as best I could. Just picture to yourself two well-grown young women, a fat maid, a couple of dogs, a dozen or so of baskets, band-boxes, etc., and me in addition, squeezed up in a little two-seated phaeton! Think of Laretta's lamentations about the want of room; the dogs' yapping; the Neapolitan's chattering, and the horrible pain of my foot, and you will have some idea what a charming position I was in. Teresina declared she could bear it no longer; the driver pulled up, and with one bound she was out of the carriage. She loosed my horse, got on his back, and trotted and curvetted down the road before us. She certainly looked splendid; the grace and distinction which she possessed in an eminent degree were more especially conspicuous on horseback. She made us hand her out her guitar, and, slinging her bridle over her left arm, she sang Spanish ballads as she rode along, striking handfuls of chords in accompaniment. Her silk dress fluttered in shimmering folds, and the white plumes in her hat nodded and quivered, like airy sprites, in time to the music. Her whole effect was romantic beyond expression, and I could not take my eyes away from her; although Laretta called her absurd, and said she was a silly, forward girl, and had better take care she didn't meet with an accident. However, the horse seemed to have altered his tactics--or perhaps he preferred the lady-singer to the Paladin; at all events, it was not till we were close to the gates of the Residenz that Teresina clambered back into the carriage again.

"Imagine me now deliciously up to my eyes in concerts, operas, and music of every description, passing my days and hours at the piano, whilst arias, duets, and I don't know all what, are being studied and rehearsed. From the total change in my outward man you gather that I am permeated and inspired by a spirit of might. All the provincial bashfulness is gone. I sit at the piano, a *maestro*, with the score before me, conducting my donna's *scenas*. My whole soul and existence is centred in melody. With the utmost contempt for counterpoint, I write quantities of *canzonettas* and *arias*, which Laretta sings--only in private, however. Why won't she ever sing anything of mine at a concert? I can't make this out. Teresina sometimes dawns on my memory, curvetting with her lyre on her charger, like some incarnation of music; and, spite of myself, I write loftier and more serious strains when I think of this. Laretta, no doubt, sports and plays with the notes like some fairy-queen. What does she ever attempt in which she does not succeed? Teresina never attempts a *roulade*; a simple *appoggiatura* or so, in the antique style, is the utmost that she ventures upon; but those long, sustained notes of hers shine through the dim background, and wonderful spirits arise, and gaze, with their earnest eyes, deep into the breast. I don't know why mine was so long before it opened to them.

"The sisters' benefit-concert came off at length. Laretta was singing a great *scena* of Anfossi's. I was, of course, at the piano as usual. We had arrived at her final "pause," where her grand *cadenza ad libitum* had to come in. It was a question of showing what she really *could* do. Nightingale trills went warbling up and down; then came long holding-notes; then all kinds of florid passages--a regular *solfeggio*; even I thought the affair was being kept up too long. Suddenly I felt a breath. Teresina was standing close behind me; Laretta was just pulling herself together to begin her long, swelling harmonica shake, which was to lead back to the *a-tempo*. Some demon took possession of me. I crashed down the chord of the dominant with both hands; the orchestra followed me; and there was an end of Laretta's *trillo*, just at the supreme moment when it ought to have set the audience *in furore*.

"Laretta, with a glare of fury at me, which went through me like a two-edged sword, tore her music in pieces, and sent it flying about my ears; then rushed away like a mad creature, through the orchestra, into the ante-room. As soon as the *tutti* was finished, I hastened after her. She was sobbing and raving. "Don't

come near me, you malignant fiend!" she screamed: "you have blasted my career for ever; how can I ever look an audience in the face again? You have robbed me of my name, and fame, and, oh, of my *trillo*! Out of my sight;" she made a rush at me, but I slipped deftly out of the door. During the *concerto*--which somebody or other played--Teresina and the Kapellmeister succeeded in so far pacifying her as to induce her to appear again--but not with me at the piano--and in the concluding duet, which the sisters sung, Laretta did actually introduce the harmonica shake, was tremendously applauded, and got into the most delightful temper imaginable.

"I, however, couldn't get over the style in which I had been treated before so many strangers; and I had quite made up my mind to be off back to my native town again the following morning. In fact I was packing up, when Teresina came into my room. When she saw what was going on, she was thunderstruck. "You going to leave us?" she cried. I said that after the way in which Laretta had behaved to me, I could not possibly stay.

""Then the hasty, petulant outburst of a foolish girl, which she is heartily ashamed of and sorry for, is going to drive you away; where else could you carry on your artistic life so happily? It rests entirely with you to cure Laretta of those tempers of hers. You are too good to her, and let her have her own way far too much. You have too high an opinion of her altogether. She has a very fair voice, and an enormous compass, no doubt. But all those *fioriture*, those everlasting scales and passages, and nightingale trills of hers, what are they but dazzling tricks, more like what an acrobat does on the tight-rope than anything else? Can such things possibly touch the heart? The harmonica shake, which you wouldn't let her bring in, is a thing which I detest! it makes me feel quite ill. Then all that clambering up among the ledger-line notes, isn't it a mere, unnatural forcing of the proper voice--the real voice--the only voice that touches the listener? What I admire are the middle and lower registers. A tone which goes to the heart, a genuine *portamento di voce*, I prefer to everything else. None of those meaningless *embellimenti*--a firm, steady, full utterance of the note--something like decision and accuracy of intonation; that is real singing, and that is how I sing myself. If you can't bear Laretta longer, don't forget that there is Teresina, who is your devoted friend: and you can be my *maestro* and composer quite in your own special style. Don't be vexed with me, but all your florid *canzonettas* and *arias* are nothing in comparison with *the one*."

"Teresina sang, in her rich pathetic tones, a simple *canzone* in church style which I had written a few days before. Never could I have imagined that it could ever possibly have sounded like that. Tears of rapture rolled down my cheeks: I seized her hand, and pressed it to my lips a thousand times: I vowed that nothing on earth should ever part us.

"Laretta looked upon my alliance with Teresina with angry jealousy, which she concealed as best she could. I was indispensable to her at the time; because, clever as her singing was, she couldn't learn anything new without assistance. She was a wretched hand at reading, and extremely shaky over her time. Teresina could read everything at sight, and the accuracy of her time was incomparable. Laretta's tempers and caprices never came out in such full force as when she was being accompanied. The accompaniment never pleased her. She looked upon it in the light of a necessary evil, she wanted the piano to be barely audible, always *pianissimo*. She was always dragging and altering the time, every bar different, just as she happened to take it in her head at the moment. I set to work to resist this firmly. I combatted those evil habits of hers; I showed her that there must be a certain energy about an accompaniment, that breadth of phrasing was one thing, and meaningless dragging quite another. Teresina backed me up staunchly. I gave up writing everything but the church style, and gave all the solos to the contralto voice. Teresina dragooned me pretty smartly, too; but I didn't mind that. She knew more than Laretta, and I thought she had more feeling for German music.

"When we were in a certain little town in the south of Germany, we met with

an Italian tenor on his way from Milan to Vienna. My ladies were charmed to meet with a fellow-countryman. He was continually with them. Teresina was the one whom he chiefly devoted himself to, and, to my no small disgust, I found myself quite playing second fiddle. One morning, as I was just going into their room, with a score under my arm, I heard an animated conversation going on between my ladies and the tenor. My own name struck my ear, and I listened with might and main. I knew enough Italian to catch every word that was said. Lauretta was relating the terrible story of the concert when I cut her out of her shake by striking my chord too soon.

""*Asino tedesco!*" cried the tenor. I felt inclined to go and chuck the vapouring stage-hero out of the window; but I restrained myself. Lauretta went on to say that she would have got rid of me on the spot, but that I had implored her to let me stay, and she had done so, out of compassion, as I was going to take singing-lessons from her. Teresina confirmed this, to my no small amazement. "He is a nice boy, enough," she added. "He is in love with *me* just now, and writes all his solos for the contralto. There is a certain amount of talent in him, if he could get rid of the stiffness and awkwardness which all Germans have. I am in hopes I may make a composer of him who may write some good things for the contralto: there is so little written for it that is worth very much. He is dreadfully wearisome with his everlasting sighings and devotion, and torments me fearfully with his compositions, which are poor enough as yet."

""Thank goodness, I am quit of him," cried Lauretta, "You know, Teresina, how he used to torture me with his *arias* and *duettos*," and she began a duet of mine, which she had highly praised formerly. Teresina took the second voice, and they both caricatured me most unmercifully. The tenor laughed till the room re-echoed. I felt a stream of icy water running down my back, my mind was thoroughly made up. I slipped back to my own room as quietly as I could. Its windows looked out into the side-street--the post-office was just over the way, and the Bamberg coach was drawing up to take in the mail-bags. The passengers were collecting at the gate, but I had still the best part of an hour before me. I got my things together as quickly as I could--magnanimously paid the whole of the hotel bill, and was off to the coach. As I went along the High Street, I saw my ladies looking out at the window, with the tenor, at the sound of the horn. But I kept well out of sight in the background, and pictured to myself, with deep delight, the crushing effect of the scathing letter which I had left for them.

""Here Theodore slowly savoured, with intense gusto, the last drops of the glowing Eleatic which Edward had poured out for him.

""I shouldn't have expected Teresina to have behaved as she did," said Edward, opening a fresh bottle, and shaking away the drop or two of oil on the surface like one accustomed to that operation. "I can't forget the pretty picture of her caracoling along on horseback, singing Spanish songs."

""That was her culminating point," said Theodore. 'I remember as distinctly as possible the impression that made upon me. I forgot the pain of my foot. She looked like some creature of a higher sphere. A moment of that sort makes a tremendous impression upon one sometimes. Things sometimes put on a form, in an instant, which no lapse of time can change. If ever, since then, I have been unusually happy in the subject of some bold, spirited *romanza*, you may be sure I had that scene, and Teresina, vividly before my mind.'

""We mustn't forget the clever Lauretta, either," said Edward. "I vote that we let by-gones be by-gones, and drink to both the sisters." Which they did.

""Ah!" said Theodore, 'how the perfumes of exquisite Italy breathe upon one out of this wine. One's blood seems to course through one's veins with threefold vigour. Oh, why had I to leave that glorious country so soon!'

""So far, though," said Edward, "I see no connection between what you have been telling me and the picture; so I suppose there is more about the sisters yet

to come. Of course I see that the ladies in the picture are no other than Laretta and Teresina."

"Yes," said Theodore. "And my longing sighs for Italy form a good-enough introduction to what there remains for me to say. A short time before I had to leave Rome, the year before last, I went for a little excursion into the country, on horseback. I came to a *locanda*, where I saw a nice-looking girl, and I thought it would be a good thing to get her to bring me a flagon of good wine. I drew up at the door in the shaded alley, the bright sunlight breaking athwart it through the branches. I heard singing, and a guitar, somewhere near. I listened attentively, for the voices of the singers affected me strangely; dim reminiscences stirred within me, but were slow to take definite form. I got off my horse, and slowly drew nearer to the vine-covered arbour where the music was going on. The second voice had stopped; the first was singing a *canzonetta* alone; the singer was in the middle of an elaborate *cadenza*, it went warbling up and down, till at last she began a long holding-note, and then, all at once, a woman's voice broke out in a fury, with curses, execrations and reproaches. A man was heard protesting, another man laughing, whilst a second woman's voice joined in the *mélée*. Wilder and wilder raged the storm, with true Italian *rabbia*. At last, just as I came up to the arbour, out flew an *abbate*, nearly knocking me down. He looked up at me, and I saw that he was none other than my good friend Signor Ludovico, my regular news-purveyor, from Rome. "What, in the name of Heaven----" I cried. "Ah, Signor Maestro! Signor Maestro!" he cried, "save me! rescue me! protect me from this mad creature--this crocodile, this tiger, this hyena--this devil of a girl! It is true I was beating the time to that *canzonetta* of Anfossi's, and I came in too soon with my down-beat, right in the middle of her pause-note, and cut her out of her *trillo*. Why did I look at her eyes, goddess of the infernal regions that she is? The devil take all pause-notes!"

"In most unusual excitement I hastened into the arbour, and at the first glance, recognised Laretta and Teresina. Laretta was still screaming and raging, Teresina talking violently into her face; the landlord was looking on with a face of amusement, whilst a girl was putting fresh flasks of wine on the table.

"The moment that the singers set eyes on me they threw themselves about my neck and overwhelmed me with the affectionateness of their reception. "Ah, Signor Teodoro, Signor Teodoro," all our little differences were forgotten. "This," said Laretta to the *Abbate*, "is a composer who has all the grace and melody of the Italians combined with the science of the Germans." And both the sisters, taking the words out of each other's mouths, told him all about the happy days we had spent together, my profound musical knowledge, even as a boy, our practisings, and the excellence of my compositions. Never had they really cared to sing anything but works of mine. Presently Teresina told me she had got an engagement at an important theatre for the next Carnival, but meant to make it a condition that I should be commissioned to write at least one tragic opera; since, of course, *opera seria* was my real line, etc., etc. Laretta, again, said it would be too bad if I didn't follow my special bent for the florid and sparkling style--for *opera buffa*, in fact: that she had got an engagement as prima donna in that line, and that, as a matter of course, nobody but I should write the operas in which she should appear. You can imagine how strange it felt to be with them again; and you see, now, that the scene and all the circumstances are exactly those of Hummel's picture.

"But didn't they say anything about the circumstances of your parting, or that scathing letter of yours?" asked Edward.

"Not a syllable," said Theodore. "Neither did I. I had long forgotten my annoyance, and remembered my affair with the sisters as a mere piece of fun nothing more. The only thing I did was to tell the *Abbate* how, many years ago, a similar misadventure had befallen me, and that in an aria of Anfossi's too. I incorporated in my story an account of all that had happened during the time that the sisters and I had spent together, delivering a swashing side-blow, now and

then, just to show the considerable increment of "calibre" which a few years of artistic experience had endowed me with. "And," said I in conclusion, "it was a very lucky thing that I did come in too soon with that down-beat of mine. No doubt it was fore-ordained from all eternity; and I have little doubt that, if I hadn't interrupted Laretta as I did then, I should have been sitting playing pianoforte accompaniments to this hour."

"But, Signer," said the *Abbate*, "what *maestro* can lay down laws to a prima donna? And then, your crime was far more heinous than mine. You were in a concert-room. I was only in this arbour here, merely *playing* the *maestro*. What did it matter about my down-beat? If those beautiful eyes of hers hadn't bewitched me, I shouldn't have made an ass of myself as I did." The *Abbate's* last words worked like magic. Laretta's eyes, which had begun to dart angry lightnings, beamed softly again.

"We spent that evening together. It was fourteen years since we had met, and fourteen years cause many changes. Laretta was by no means as young as she had been, but she had not lost all her attractiveness. Teresina had worn better, and still retained her beautiful figure. They dressed in much the same style as of old, and had all their former ways: that's to say, their dress and manners were fourteen years younger than themselves. At my request, Teresina sang some of those earnest, serious *arias* which had impressed me so much in early days, but they did not seem to be quite what my memory had represented them. And it was the same with Laretta's singing: though her voice had fallen off little, either in power or in compass, still it was different from the singing which lived in my memory as hers; and this attempt to compare a mental idea with the not altogether satisfactory reality, untuned me even more than the sisters' behaviour--their pretended ecstasy, their coarse admiration (which at the same time took the form of a generous patronage) had done at the beginning. But the droll little *Abbate*--who was playing the *amoroso* to both the sisters at once, in the most sugary manner--and the good wine (of which we had a fair share) gave me my good humour back at length, so that we all enjoyed our evening. The sisters invited me, in the most pressing manner, to go and see them, so that we might talk over the parts I was to compose for them; however I left Rome without ever seeing them again.

"Still," said Edward, "you have to thank them for awaking the music within you."

"Undoubtedly," answered Theodore, "and for a quantity of good melodies into the bargain; but that is exactly the reason why I never should have seen them again. No doubt every composer can remember some particular occasion when some powerful impression was made on him, which time never effaces. The spirit which dwells in music spoke, and the spirit *en rapport* with it within the composer awoke at that creative fiat; it flamed up with might, and could never be extinguished again. It is certain that all the melodies which we produce under an impulse of this sort seem to belong only to the singer who cast the first spark into us. We hear her, and merely write down what she has sung; but it is the lot of us feeble earthly creatures, clamped to the dust as we are, to long and strive to bring down whatever we can of the super-earthly into the wretched little bit of earthly life in which we are cribbed up. And thus the singer becomes our beloved--perhaps our wife! The spell is broken; our inward melody, with its message, or gospel of glory, turns to a squabble about a broken soup-plate, or a row about an ink-mark on one's new shirt. That composer is a happy man who never again, in this earthly life, sees Her who, with mystic power, kindled the music within him. He may rage, and mourn, poor boy! when his beautiful enchantress has left him; but she has been transformed to everlasting Music, glorious and divine, which lives on in eternal beauty and youth; and out of it are born the melodies which are Her only, and Her again and again. What is she but his highest ideal, reflected from him on to herself?

"Curious, but pretty plausible," said Edward, as the friends, arm-in-arm,

walked out of the Sala Tarone into the street."

It was admitted that, if Theodore's story might not satisfy all the necessary conditions, it came near enough to be passed as "Serapiontic." Ottmar said, "Your story, dear Theodore, has this effect, that it brings vividly to mind all your devoted labours at music. Each of us wished to draw you into a different province of it. While Lothair thought your instrumental writings your best, I thought your *forte* was comic opera. Cyprian wanted you to do 'things unattempted yet,' by putting music to (what he will now admit were) poems completely beyond all recognised forms and rules; and you yourself cared only for the serious ecclesiastical style. Well, as things stand at present, the *opera tragica* may probably be considered, the highest goal at which a composer can aim, and I can't understand why you haven't set to work at one long ago; you would surely have turned out something very superior in that line."

"And whose fault is it that I have not?" said Theodore, "but your own, and Cyprian's, and Lothair's? Could I ever succeed in inducing either of you to write me a libretto, with all my entreaties?"

"Marvellous fellow!" said Cyprian, "haven't I argued for hours and days with you about opera-texts? Haven't you rejected the finest ideas, on the ground that they were not adapted for music? Didn't you insist, at last, like an extraordinary fellow as you are, that I should regularly set to work to study music, so as to be able to understand, and comply with your requirements? So that I should have had to say good-bye to all idea of writing poetry, seeing that, like all professional writers, Kapellmeisters, and music-directors, you cleave to the established musical forms, and won't abandon them by so much as a hair's breadth."

"What I can't understand," said Lothair, "is, why Theodore, with his command of language and poetical expression, doesn't write librettos for himself? Why should we have to learn to be musicians, and expend our poetical powers, merely to produce a sort of block, or lay figure, for him to give life and motion to? Is it not principally because composers are usually one-sided people, without enough *general* education, that they require other folks to help them to do their own work? Are perfect unity of text and music conceivable, except when poet and composer are one and the same person?"

"All that sounds astonishingly plausible," said Theodore, "and yet it is utterly and completely untrue. I maintain that it is wholly impossible that any one person can write a work, the words and the music of which shall both be excellent."

"You composers," said Lothair, "get that idea into your heads either because you are absurdly unenergetic, or constitutionally indolent. The notion of having to go through the labour of writing the words before you can set to work at the music is so disagreeable to you that you can't bring yourselves to face it; but my belief is that, to a really inspired composer, the words and the music would occur simultaneously."

"You are rather driving me into a corner," said Theodore, "so instead of carrying on this argument, I shall ask you to let me read you a dialogue about the necessary conditions, or essentials of opera, which I wrote several years ago that eventful period which we have passed through was then only beginning. I thought my artistic existence seriously menaced, and I fell into a state of despondency, which was probably partly the result of bad health. At this time I made a Serapiontic friend, who had abandoned the pen for the sword. He cheered me in my despondency, and forced me to throw myself into the full current of the events of that stirring time." Without further introduction, Theodore at once began:--

"THE POET AND THE COMPOSER.

"The enemy was before the gates. Heavy guns were thundering in every direction, and shells were hurtling through the air; the people of the town were running, with white faces, into their houses, and the empty streets rang to the tramp of the cavalry patrols that were cantering along through them, and driving, with threats and curses, such of the soldiers as were loitering, or had fallen out of the ranks from any cause, forward into the trenches. But Ludwig sat on, in his back room, sunk and lost in the lovely, glorious vision-world which had opened upon him at his piano. For he had just completed a symphony, in which he had tried to write down, in notes to be seen and read, what he had heard and seen within him; a work which, like Beethoven's colossal ones in that kind, should tell, in heavenly language, of the glorious wonders of that far-off, romantic realm where life is all unspeakable, blissful, longing. Like *his* marvellous creations, it was to come from that far-off realm, into this little, arid, thirsty world of ours, and, with beautiful, syren-accents, lure away from it those who should list, and give ear to its charming. But the landlady came in and rated him for sitting at his piano in that time of danger and distress; asking him if he meant to stay in his garret and be shot. At first he didn't understand what the woman was talking about, till a fragment of a shell knocked a piece of the roof off, and the broken panes of the window went clattering down upon the floor. Then the landlady ran down-stairs weeping and screaming; and Ludwig, taking his most precious possession, the score of his symphony, under his arm, hastened after her to the cellar. The inhabitants of the house were all assembled there. In an access of liberality very unusual with him, the wine-shop keeper, who occupied the lower story, had 'stood' a dozen or so of his best wine; whilst the women, in fear and trembling, brought numerous tit-bits in their work-baskets. People ate and drank, and quickly passed from their condition of exaltation and excitement to that confidential frame of mind in which neighbour, drawing close to neighbour, seeks, and thinks he finds security; and, so to say, all the petty, artificial *pas* which we have been taught by conventionality are whelmed and merged in the great colossal waltz-whirl, to which the iron hand of destiny beats the resistless measure. The trouble and danger--the risk to life and limb--were forgotten; cheerful conversation was the order of the day; animated lips uttered brilliant speeches, and fellow-lodgers, who barely touched a hat to each other at ordinary times as they met on the stairs, were seated side by side, confiding to each other their most confidential affairs.

"The firing began to slacken a good deal, and there was talk of going up-stairs again, as the streets seemed to be getting pretty safe. An ex-Militaire, who was present, went further; and, after a few instructive observations concerning the system of fortification practised by the Romans, and the effect of the catapult (with a passing allusion or two to Vauban, and more modern times), was just proving to us that we had no cause for the slightest uneasiness, because the house was completely out of the line of fire, when a shot sent the bricks of the cellar-ventilator rattling down about our ears. No one was hurt, however; and, as the Militaire jumped, with a brimming bumper in his hand, on to the table (which the falling bricks had cleared of the bottles), and defied any other shot to trouble us, we were all quite reassured at once; and this proved to be our last scare. The night passed away quietly, and, in the morning, we found that the troops had moved off to occupy another position, abandoning the town to the enemy. On leaving the cellar, we found the enemy's cavalry scouring the streets, and a placard posted up guaranteeing that the townsfolk and their property should not be molested.

"Ludwig joined the throng, eager to see the new spectacle, which was watching the arrival of the enemy's commander-in-chief, who was coming in at the gate, with a pompous fanfare of trumpets, surrounded by a brilliant escort. Scarcely could he believe his eyes when he saw his old college-friend Ferdinand among the staff, in a quiet-looking uniform, with his left arm in a sling, curvetting close past him on a beautiful sorrel charger. 'It was he--it was really and truly himself and no other!' Ludwig cried involuntarily. He couldn't overtake him, his horse was going too fast, and Ludwig hastened, full of thought, back to his room. But he couldn't get on with any work; he could think of nothing but his old friend, whom he had

not seen for years; and the happy days of youth which they had spent together rose to his memory bright and clear. At that time Ferdinand had never shown any turn for soldiering: he was devoted to the Muses, and had evinced his poetic vocation in many a striking poem; so that this transformation was all the more incomprehensible; and Ludwig burned with anxiety to speak with him, though he had no notion where or how he should find him. The bustle and movement in the streets increased; a considerable portion of the enemy's forces, with the Allied Princes at their head, passed through the town, as a halt was to be made in the neighbourhood for a day or two; and the greater the crowd about headquarters the less chance there seemed of encountering Ferdinand. But suddenly, in an out-of-the-way *café*, where Ludwig was in the habit of going for his frugal dinner, Ferdinand came up to him with a cry of delight.

"Ludwig was silent, for a certain feeling of discomfort embittered, for him, this longed-for meeting. It was, as it often is in dreams, when, just as we are going to put our arms about people whom we love, they suddenly change into something else, and the whole thing becomes a mockery, Here was the gentle son of the Muses, the writer of many a romantic lay which Ludwig had clothed in music, in a nodding plume, with a clanking sword at his side, and even his voice transformed to a harsh, rough tone of command. Ludwig's gloomy glance rested on the wounded arm, and upon the decoration, the cross of honour, on his breast. But Ferdinand put his arm round him and pressed him to his side.

"I know what you are thinking,' he said; 'I understand what you feel at this meeting of ours. But the Fatherland called me; I could not hesitate to obey. My hand, which had only wielded the pen, took up the sword, with the joy, with the enthusiasm, which the holy cause has kindled in every breast which is not stamped with the seal of cowardice. I have given some of my blood already; and the mere accident that this happened under the Prince's eyes has gained me this cross. But, believe me, Ludwig, the strings which vibrated in me of old, and whose tones have so often spoken to you, are all whole and uninjured still; and many a night, when, after some fierce engagement, the troopers have been sleeping round the fire of the bivouac on some lonely picquet, I have written poems which have elevated me and inspired me in my glorious duty of fighting for Honour and Freedom.'

"Ludwig's heart opened at these words; and when Ferdinand went with him into a small private room, and took off his sword and helmet, he felt as if his friend had only been dressed to act a part, and had taken off his stage-costume.

"As they dined and talked over the old days they began to feel as if they had only parted yesterday. Ferdinand asked what Ludwig had been composing lately, and was much astonished to learn that he had never written an opera, because he never had been able to meet with a libretto to his satisfaction--one that could inspire him with music.

"I can't understand,' said Ferdinand, 'why you haven't written a Libretto long ago yourself. You have a very vivid imagination, and a fine command of language.'

"*Ludwig.* 'Yes, I have imagination enough to invent plenty of good plots. Indeed, often, when at night a slight headache keeps me in that dreamy condition which is like a struggle between sleeping and waking, I not only think of splendid subjects for operas, but see and hear them being performed, to my own music. But, so far as the faculty of retaining them and writing them down is concerned, my belief is that I am wholly without it. And in fact it is scarcely to be expected of us composers that we should acquire that technical, mechanical skill (which is necessary to success in every art, and only comes by constant perseverance and long practice) which would enable us to write our own librettos. But even if I had the skill to write out a plot, properly arranged in lines, scenes, etc., I scarcely think I should set to work to do it for myself.'

"*Ferdinand.* 'But then nobody could so thoroughly understand your special musical tendencies as yourself.'

"*Ludwig*. 'That, I daresay, may be true enough. Still, I can't help thinking that a composer who should sit down to put the idea of a plot, which had occurred to him, into the words would be something like a painter who should be called upon to make a minute etching, or a line-engraving, of his picture before setting to work to draw it and colour it.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'You mean that the necessary fire would smoulder out during the process of versifying?'

"*Ludwig*. 'I think it would. My poetry would seem trashy, to myself; something like the cases of rockets which had fallen down, charred and empty, after rushing all resplendent up to the skies. To me it appears that in no art so much as in music is it so essential that the entirety of the subject involved, with all its parts, down to the minutest detail, should be grasped by the mind at *first*, in its earliest, glowing outburst; because in no other is subsequent polishing and altering so hurtful. I am convinced, by my own experience, that the melody which comes to you, as at the wave of an enchanter's wand, the first time you read the words of a poem, is always the best--nay, probably the only really *right* one (for that particular composer at all events), to put to it. It would be impossible for a composer not to think of the music called for by the situation, while he was writing down the words. Indeed he would be thinking so much of *it* that he could not give the necessary attention to the words, and if he forced himself to do so the river of the music would soon dry up, as if sucked in by thirsty sands. Nay, to express my meaning more clearly, I will say that, at the moment of his musical inspiration, all *words*, all verbal expressions, would appear insufficient to him, nay flat, and miserably inadequate; and it would be necessary for him to come down to a lower level, to go, like a beggar asking for alms, in quest of those words, necessities of the lower requirements of his existence. Would not his wings soon be paralysed, like a caged eagle's, so that he would try to soar sunwards in vain?'

"*Ferdinand*. 'One listens to all this, of course; but do you know, my dear friend, that what you say does not so much convince me as it seems to indicate your own *personal* repugnance to working your way, laboriously, through all the necessary *scenas, arias, duettos*, etc., till you get to the point of composing the music.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Perhaps; but I renew an old reproach. Why, in the days when you and I were living in such constant intimacy, would you never write me a libretto, eagerly as I begged you to do so?'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Because I think it the most thankless labour imaginable. You must allow that no demands could be more exacting than those which you composers make upon us; and if you say that a musician can't be expected to acquire the technical skill which the mechanical part of poetry-writing demands, I, again, think that it is too much to expect of a poet that he should be continually harassing himself about the precise structure of your *terzettes, quartettes, finales*, etc., so as not to run the risk of transgressing against some of those forms, which you look upon--Heaven knows why--as so many matters fixed and established for ever and ever, like the laws of the Medes and Persians. After we have expended our best efforts with extremity of mental tension, in trying to apprehend all the situations of our story in a true poetical spirit, and to express them in the most eloquent language, and the smoothest and most finished versification, it is quite terrible how you run your pens through our finest lines, in the most relentless manner, and spoil our happiest ideas and expressions, by inverting them, or altering them, or drowning them in the music. I say this merely with reference to the uselessness of spending time and labour on elaborate finish. But then, many admirable plots, which have occurred to us in our poetic inspiration, and which we bring to you, all pride, expecting you to be delighted with them, you reject in a moment, as being unsuitable, and unworthy to be clothed in music. But this must often be sheer caprice, or I don't know what else it can be; because you often set to work upon texts which are absolutely wretched and----'

"*Ludwig*. 'Stop a moment, my dear friend! Of course there are composers who

have as little idea of music as many rhyme-spinners have of poetry, and *they* have often put notes to plots which really are wretched, in all respects. But real composers, who live and move and have their being in true, glorious, heavenly *Music*, always choose poetic texts.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Do you say so of Mozart?'

"*Ludwig*. 'Mozart--however paradoxical it may appear to you--never chose any but poetic texts for his classical operas. But, leaving that on one side for the moment, my opinion is that it is always quite easy to know what sort of plot is adapted for an opera, so that the poet need never be in any danger of making any mistake about it.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'I must confess I never have really gone into this: and indeed I know so little about music that I don't suppose it would have been of much consequence if I had.'

"*Ludwig*. 'If by the expression "knowing about music" you mean being thoroughly versed in the so-called "school routine" of music, there is no necessity for your being that, to be able to know what composers require. It is quite easy, altogether apart from the school routine, so to comprehend, and have within one, the true essence of music as to be, in this sense, a much better musician than a person who, after studying the whole, extensive school-routine in the sweat of his forehead, and labouring through all its manifold, intricate mazes and labyrinths, worships its lifeless rules and regulations as a self-manufactured Fetish, in place of the living Spirit: and whom this Idol-cult excludes from the happiness of the higher realm of bliss.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Then you think the poet might enter into this inner sanctum without the preliminary initiation of the "school"?''

"*Ludwig*. 'I do, certainly. And I say that, in that far-off realm which we often feel,--so dimly, but so unmistakeably,--to be so close about us, whence marvellous voices sound to us, awakening all the tones which are sleeping in our hearts, cabined, cribbed, confined, so that those tones, awakened and set free, dart aloft in fiery streams, gladsome and happy, and we taste of the bliss of that paradise whence the voices come--I say that, in that far-off realm, the Poet and the Musician are intimately-allied members of one and the same Church: for the "secret" of poetry and of music is one and the same, and opens to both the portals of the Inner Sanctuary.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'I hear my dear old Ludwig trying to formulate the laws of art in dim and mystic phrases; and I must say, that the gulf which seemed to lie between poet and composer, begins to look much narrower than it did.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Let me try to express my idea about the true essentials of Opera in as few words as possible. A proper opera, in my opinion, is one in which the music springs directly out of the poem, as a necessary sequence, or consequence.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'I don't quite understand that, as yet.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Is not music the mysterious language of a higher spirit-realm, whose wondrous accents make their way into our souls, awaking in them a higher Intensity of life? All passions contend together, shimmering in bright armour, and then merge and sink into an ineffable longing which fills our being. This is the effect (not, perhaps, to be more clearly expressed in words) of *Instrumental* music. But Music, to enter wholly into our lives, must take those visions of hers which she thus brings with her, and, clothing them in words and actions, speak to us of *particular* passions and events. Very well! Can the vulgar and the commonplace be spoken of in those accents of glory? Can Music tell us of anything other than the wonders and the mysteries of that realm from whence she comes to us with those magic tones of hers? Let the poet equip himself for a bold flight into the land of romance. There he will find the Marvellous, which it is for him to bring

into this work-a-day world, so living and glowing in brilliant colouring that we accept it as true without hesitation. So that--as if carried out of this arid every-day life in some blissful dream--we go wandering along the flowery paths of that happy country, and, forgetting everything else for the time, understand its language--which is what the mighty voice of Music speaks.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Then it is the Romantic Opera, with its fairies and spirits, its prodigies and transformations, that you would adhere to, exclusively?'

"*Ludwig*. 'I certainly think the Romantic Opera the only perfect kind, because it is only in the realm of the Romantic that music is at home. Of course you will understand that I profoundly despise that miserable class of productions in which silly, *unspiritual* spirits appear, and where wonders are heaped upon wonders, without rhyme or reason, merely for the delectation of the *eyes* of the musical groundlings. It is only a poet of true genius who can write the book of a proper Romantic Opera; for none other can bring the wonders of the Spirits-World into this life of ours. On his wings we soar across the gulf which divides us from it. We grow to feel at home in that strange land; we give belief to the marvels which, as necessary results of the influence of higher natures on our personality, we see taking place; and we comprehend all the powerful incidents and situations which fill us with awe and horror, and also with the highest rapture. It is, in one word, the magical power of Poetical Truth which the poet who would represent those marvels must have at his command; for it is that alone which can carry us away: and a mere collection of meaningless fairies, who (as is the case in so many productions of the kind) are introduced only to dance about the *pagliasso* in flesh-coloured skin-tights,--foolish absurdities as they are,--will always leave us indifferent and uninterested. In an opera the effect produced upon us by the influence of higher beings should take place *visibly*, so as to display before our eyes a romantic life, or condition of existence, in which the *language*, too, is more highly potentiated; or rather, is derived from that distant realm: in other words, is *sung music*: ay! where the scenes and incidents, too, hovering and soaring about in grand and beautiful tones, and masses of tones, seize us and carry us away with irresistible might. It is in this way that, as I said before, the music ought to take its rise and origin straight out of the poem, as a necessary sequence, or consequence.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Now I quite understand you; and I think, at once, of Tasso and Ariosto. Still, it seems to me, it would be no easy matter to write a musical drama as you would postulate it.'

"*Ludwig*. 'It is work for a real romantic poet, of true genius. Think of the splendid Gozzi! in his dramatic legends he has completely fulfilled the conditions which I have laid down as essential for the poet of opera, and I cannot understand why this rich mine of magnificent opera-plots has been so little drawn upon, hitherto.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'I remember being greatly delighted with Gozzi, when I read him some years ago; though, of course, I did not then look at him from your point of view.'

"*Ludwig*. 'One of the best of his tales is "The Raven." A certain King Millo, of Frattombrosa, cares for nothing but the chase. One day in the forest he sees a splendid raven, and he sends an arrow through its heart. The raven falls upon a monumental tomb of the whitest marble, which there is there under the trees, besprinkling it with his blood. On this, the forest is shaken, as if by an earthquake; and a terrible monster comes stalking out of a cave, and thunders forth a curse upon Millo, in the following terms:--

"Findest thou not a fair woman,
White as this monument's marble,
Red as the raven's heart's blood,
Black as the night of his plumes,
Perish in raving madness."

"All attempts to discover such a woman are fruitless. But the king's brother, Gennaro, who is devoted to him, vows that he will never rest till he finds this woman, who is to restore his brother's reason. He traverses land and sea; till at last, counselled by an old man versed in necromancy, he discovers Armilla, daughter of the mighty sorcerer Norand. White is her skin like the monument's marble, red like the raven's blood; and black as his plumes are her hair and eyebrows. He succeeds in carrying her off, and after many adventures, they reach the shores of Frattombrosa in safety. As he lands on the beach, chance places in his possession a magnificent charger, and a falcon endowed with extraordinary powers. He is filled with joy that he is enabled to restore his brother's reason, and also to have two such acceptable gifts to offer him. He lies down to rest in a pavilion which has been prepared for him under a tree. Then two doves come and sit in the branches, and begin to talk:--

""Woe! Woe to Gennaro! Well had he never been born; the falcon will peck out his brother's eyes--but if he giveth it not, or if he telleth what he hath heard, he will turn to stone; if his brother mounteth the horse, it will instantly kill him--but if he giveth it not, or telleth what he hath heard, he will turn to stone; if his brother weddeth Armilla, a monster will come on the wedding-night, and tear him limb from limb but if Gennaro withholdeth Armilla, or telleth what he hath heard, he will turn to stone!

""Woe! Woe to Gennaro! Well had he never been born!"

"Norand appears, and confirms what the doves have said. It is the punishment--the penalty, for having carried Armilla away.

"As soon as Millo sets eyes on Armilla, his madness departs. The horse and the hawk are brought, and the king is charmed with his brother's affection in bringing him presents so much to his mind. Gennaro brings the hawk, but ere his brother can take it, he cuts off its head. Thus Millo's eyes are saved; and just as Millo is setting foot in the stirrup to mount the horse, Gennaro draws his sword and hews off its fore-legs with one stroke. Millo thinks it is love-madness which causes Gennaro's conduct, and Armilla confirms this opinion, as Gennaro's sighs and tears, and his confusion and inexplicable behaviour have for some time made her suspect him of being secretly in love with her. She assures the king of her entire devotion to him; of which Gennaro had laid the foundation, by his warm and touching accounts of his brother on the journey. To cast aside all suspicion, she begs that the marriage may be hurried on as much as possible; and that is accordingly done. Gennaro, who sees his brother's last hours at hand, is in despair at being so misjudged; and yet, a terrible fate awaits him if a word of explanation crosses his lips. But he determines to save his brother, at whatever cost, and makes his way in the night, by a subterranean passage, to his sleeping chamber. A terrible dragon appears, breathing flames and fire. Gennaro attacks it; but his blows have no effect; the monster is nearing the sleeping chamber. In his desperation he delivers a tremendous two-handed stroke at the creature, and this cleaves through the door of the chamber. Millo comes out, and, as the monster has disappeared, he sees in his brother a traitor urged to fratricide by the madness of unhallowed passion. Gennaro cannot vindicate himself. The guards are summoned, and he is disarmed and thrown into a dungeon. He is doomed to die, but begs that he may speak with his brother first. Millo consents. Gennaro recalls to his memory the tender affection which has always subsisted between them; but when he asks if his brother can truly suppose him capable of his murder, Millo calls for proofs of his innocence; and then, in his agony, Gennaro divulges the terrible prophecies of the doves and Norand. But no sooner have the words been spoken than Gennaro is turned to a marble statue. On this Millo, in his grief and remorse, determines that he never will leave the statue's side, and will die at its feet in contrition and sorrow. At this juncture Norand appears, and says, "In the eternal Book of Destiny were written the raven's death, the curse on you, and the carrying away of Armilla. One thing, and one alone, will bring your brother back to life--but it is a terrible deed. Let Armilla be slain at the statue's side, by this dagger; and when the cold marble is besprinkled with her

heart's blood, it will warm into life. If you have courage to kill her, do it. Weep, weep, and lament! even as do I!" He vanishes. Armilla wrings from the unfortunate Millo the purport of Norand's terrible disclosure. Millo quits her in despair, and, filled with horror and grief, careless of living longer, she stabs herself with the dagger. As soon as her blood besprinkles the statue Gennaro comes back to life. Millo comes: he sees his brother alive, and his bride lying slain. In his despair he is going to stab himself with the dagger; but the gloomy dungeon changes to a great, illuminated hall; Norand appears: all the mysterious decrees of fate are accomplished, all the sorrow is past. Norand touches Armilla. She comes back to life, and everything ends happily.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Yes; I remember this fine, imaginative tale quite well, and the impression it made upon me. You are quite right; this is an instance in which the Marvellous takes the form of an essential element, and has so much poetical verity that we believe it without hesitation. Millo's killing of the raven is what knocks at the brazen gates of the Spirit-Realm; on that they fly open with a clash, and the spirits come swooping in upon the human life, and immesh the mortals in the web of strange, mysterious destiny which impends over them.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Exactly; and notice the grand, powerful situations which the poet has evolved from this contest with the spirit-world. Gennaro's self-sacrifice; Armilla's deed of heroism; there is a grandeur in them which our "moral" playwrights, in their rummagings among the paltrinesses of every-day life (like sweepings of drawing-rooms thrown out into the dust-bin) haven't the slightest idea of; and then the comic parts for the masks are must effectively woven in.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Yes it is only in the Romantic Drama that the comic element blends on such perfectly equal terms with the tragic that they contribute with equality to the general effect.'

"*Ludwig*. Even common opera-manufacturers have got hold of some dim notion of that, for it is thence that the so-called Comic-Heroic operas take their origin--productions in which the Heroic is often exceedingly Comic, and the Comic is so far Heroic that it most heroically ignores all the requirements of taste and propriety.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'According to your notion of the essentials of opera, we can't congratulate ourselves on possessing very many.'

"*Ludwig*. 'No; most so-called operas are only plays with singing added; and the utter absence of dramatic effect, which is ascribed sometimes to the music, sometimes to the plot or to the words, is really due to the lifelessness of the mass of scenes, tacked together without inward connection or poetical truthfulness, and incapable of kindling music into life. The composer has often to work between the lines, as it were, on his own account, and the wretched words meander along in a side-channel, not to be brought into the musical current by any conceivable means. In such a case the music may be good enough; that is,--without having depth enough to carry away the listener with magic power, it may give a certain amount of pleasure, like a glittering play of gay colours. Then the opera is merely a concert, given on a stage, with dresses and scenery.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'As it is the Romantic Opera, in its strictest sense, which is the only species that you recognise as opera, properly so-called, how about musical Tragedies, and Comic Operas in modern costume?--you repudiate them altogether, I presume.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Oh, no; not at all. In most of the older Tragic Operas--such as are not written nowadays, unfortunately (either as regards plots or music)--what so powerfully sways the audience is the heroic nature of the action, and the inward strength of the characters and situations. That dark mysterious power which rules, controls, and disposes of Gods and Men, we see stalking along visibly before our eyes; we hear the eternal, irreversible, immutable decrees of Fate, to which the Gods themselves have to submit, pronounced and formulated aloud, in

awful and mysterious tones. From Tragic matter of this sort the Fantastic element is perforce excluded; but a loftier language--in the wondrous accents of Music--has to be employed to depict that intercourse with the Gods which stirs the Mortals to a higher life, and to God-like achievements. Were not the ancient tragedies musically declaimed, by the way?--and did not that prove clearly the necessity for a higher medium of expression than ordinary language? The musical tragedies have inspired composers of genius in a quite special way--with a lofty, I might almost say, a *saintly* style of writing. It is as if we mortals were wafted upwards, in some condition of mystic consecration, on the pinions of the tones of the golden harps of the Cherubim and Seraphim, to the realms of light, where we learn the mystery of our existence. What I would say, Ferdinand, is to point out the close relationship that there is between the old Church Style and the Tragic Opera, whence the old writers have framed a glorious style of their own, of which modern composers have no idea--not even excepting Spontini, with all his wealth and exuberance of fancy. The glorious Gluck, who stands apart by himself, a hero, I need say nothing about; but as an instance how the grand tragic style has influenced far inferior talents, think of the chorus of the Priests of Night in Piccini's "Dido."

"*Ferdinand*. 'This is just as it used to be in the golden old days when we were together. As you talk in that inspired sort of way of your Art, you raise me up to the level of ideas which otherwise I never should have dreamt of; and, I assure you, at this moment I consider that I really know a good deal about music. In fact, I think no passable line of poetry would occur to me without its appropriate clothing of music.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Is not this the true inspiration of the poet of opera? I maintain that he should "think" the music belonging to his lines just as much>as the composer does; and that the only thing which differentiates the one from the other is the distinct recognition of particular melodies, and of particular qualities and peculiarities of the Bounds of instruments which are co-operating and involved in the effects; in fact, the easy, habitual command over the "Inner Kingdom" of Music. But I have still to tell you my ideas about *Opera Buffa*.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'You will scarcely have a good word to say for that, particularly if it is in modern costume.'

"*Ludwig*. 'On the contrary, I consider that it is just when it is in the costume of the day that not only is it at its best, but that it is the only genuine form of *opera buffa* in the sense in which the mobile, mercurial, excitable Italians have understood it and written it. In this case it is the Fantastic element which is *paramount*, proceeding partly from the quips of individual characters, partly from the *bizarre* play of chance. The Fantastic element comes pop into our everyday lives, and turns everything topsy-turvy. One ought to have to say, "Yes; that really *is* Brown (or Jones, or Robinson) in that snuff-coloured Sunday coat of his with the brass buttons, which we all know so well. And what in the name of fortune 's the fellow going on like *that* for?" Picture to yourself some respectable family--uncles, aunts, and so forth--and a little languishing daughter; throw in two or three students, be-singing their cousin's eyes and playing the guitar under the windows. Let the tricky sprite Puck pop suddenly into the middle of them! The result you may imagine. All the fat's in the fire; everything is at sixes and sevens; everybody goes darting in every direction, gesticulating and grimacing, skipping and posturing, as if a whole hive of bees were let loose in their bonnets. Some strange planet rules the ascendant; the nets of haphazard are set, and will catch the most respectable folk if their noses happen to be just the least bit longer than the average. I consider that the very essence of *opera buffa* lies in this incursion of the Fanciful-Fantastic, the preposterous and absurd, into actual, everyday life, and the incongruities that result. And it is just the power of catching hold of this fanciful-fantastic element--which generally lies rather far off and out of the way--and bringing it, with vividness, into everyday life, which makes the acting of Italian buffo actors so inimitable. They catch the indications given by the author, and their acting clothes the skeleton which he has sketched with flesh and

colour.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'I think I follow you quite. What you mean is, that in the *opera buffa* the Fantastic element takes the place of the Romantic (which, in general terms, you consider an essential principle of opera), and the art of the poet has to consist in this--that the characters must appear, not only with much finish, and standing out in *alto-relievo*, as well as being poetically true, but so clearly drawn as well from everyday life, and so full of individual character, that the spectator at once says, "Look there! that's my next-door neighbour, whom I say 'How are you?' to every day. And that's the student who goes to his lectures every morning, and sighs so tremendously as he passes his cousin's window," etc., etc. And then all these people are to be subjected to the spell of some Puck, in such fashion that what they set to work to do under that influence, and all that happens to them, are to affect us as if we were there on the spot, sharing their experiences with them, under the influence of the same spell.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Exactly. And I scarcely need say that, according to my principle, music adapts itself well to *opera buffa*, and that in so adapting itself there results a certain special style which makes a special impression of its own on the hearer.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Do you think music can express all the shades of the Comic?'

"*Ludwig*. 'I am quite sure it can; clever artists have proved it scores of times. For instance, music can express the most delicate and delightful Irony. That is the predominating element in Mozart's glorious "Cosi fan tutte."'

"*Ferdinand*. That, by the way, leads me to the remark that, according to your principle, the so-much disparaged text of that work is really highly suitable for an opera.'

"*Ludwig*. 'That is exactly what I was thinking of when I said, a little while ago, that for his classic operas Mozart always chose really suitable texts, for "Le Nozze di Figaro" is more a Comedy in Music than a true Opera. The nefarious attempt to turn pathetic dramas into operas can never come to anything; our "Orphan Hospitals," "Oculists," and so forth, are sure to be soon forgotten. And what could have been more miserable and opposed to the true spirit of opera than all that series of *vaudeilles* of Dittersdorf's? But on the other hand I call such works as "The Sunday-Child" and "The Sisters of Prague" admirable. One might style them true German *opere buffe*.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'They have always amused me greatly, at all events, when decently given; and I have always thought of what Tieck makes his "poet" say to the public in his "Puss in Boots": "If you want to enjoy this thoroughly, you must divest yourself of whatever you may have attained in the shape of cultivation and learning, and become wholly as little children, so as to enjoy it as such."'

"*Ludwig*. 'Unfortunately those words, like many others of the kind, fell upon stony ground, and could take no root. But the *vox populi*, which is generally the *vox Dei* in theatrical matters, has drowned the few isolated sighs and groans which super-delicate and sensitive people have given vent to over the sad untruthfulness and tastelessness of those works--"trifling," according to their ideas. And there are instances on record of some of those very people who, in the height of their calm, contemptuous, aristocratic impassibility and supercilious scorn of the whole thing, have been so carried away by the infection of the roars of laughter of the "baser" folk about them that they have burst out laughing in the most deplorable way themselves, declaring that they had no idea what they were laughing at.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Wouldn't Tieck, if he had chosen, have written splendid opera plots, according to your definition of them?'

"*Ludwig*. 'No doubt, being a true romantic poet; and I remember I did once think of writing music to a plot of his. But though the subject was well adapted for

music, the work was too diffuse and lengthy; not concentrated enough. It was called "The Monster of the Enchanted Forest," if I remember rightly.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'That reminds me of another difficulty which we meet with in writing for you composers: I mean the extraordinary brevity and conciseness which you insist upon. All our efforts to portray this or that situation or burst of passion in properly descriptive language are so much wasted labour. You will have the whole affair comprised in a line or two; and even these few lines you twist about and turn upside-down just as you take it in your heads.'

"*Ludwig*. 'I think the writer of the words of an opera ought to be something like a scene painter, and paint his picture correctly as regards the drawing, but in broad, powerful lines; then the music will be what will make it appear in proper light and shade, and in correct perspective, so that it shall have a proper effect of life, and what seemed only meaningless dashes of colour prove to be forms instinct with meaning, standing out prominently in relief.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'So that what we have to do is to give you a sketch merely, not a finished poem?'

"*Ludwig*. 'No, no; that is not what I mean at all! It is scarcely necessary to say that the poet of opera must observe, as regards the arrangement, the disposition, of the whole, all the rules essential to dramatic composition; but what he has to take special care for is to so order his scenes that the subject-matter may unfold itself, clearly and intelligibly, to the *eyes* of the spectator: who ought to be able to understand what is going on from what he sees taking place, almost without catching any of the words. No dramatic poem so absolutely demands this sort of distinctness as the opera-text, for not only is it more difficult to distinguish words when they are sung, (however distinctly,) than when they are spoken, but the music tends to carry the audience into distant regions, and it is necessary that the attention should be kept directed to the particular point where the action is concentrated, *pro tempore*. Then as regards the words, the composer likes them best when they express the passion, or situation, to which they refer, *vigorously* and *concisely*. There is no occasion for flowery diction, and, above all, there should be no imagery, no similes.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Then how about Metastasio, with his exuberance of similes?'

"*Ludwig*. 'Yes; he had the strange idea that the composer, particularly in arias, must always have his imagination stirred up by some poetical comparison. Hence his oft-repeated openings such as "Come una Tortorella," etc., or "Come Spume in Tempesta," etc.: and in fact, the cooing of doves and the roar of the sea have often made their appearance--in the accompaniment, at all events.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'But, while we avoid flowery language, are we to be allowed any sort of elaboration of interesting situations? For instance: the young hero sets off to the battle, and bids adieu to his aged father, the old king, whose country is trembling in the grasp of a victorious usurper. Or some terrible fate severs a youth from his beloved. Are neither of them to say anything but just "fare-thee-well"?''

"*Ludwig*. 'The hero may add a few words about his courage and the justice of his cause, and the lover may tell his sweetheart that life will be nothing but a long, painful dream without her. Still, the simple "fare-thee-well" will be amply sufficient for the Composer--(who draws his inspiration, not from the words, but from the business and the situations)--to represent the mental condition of the hero and the lover with powerful strokes and touches. To stick to the instance you have adduced; just think in what thousands of most affecting and heart-breaking ways the Italians have sung the little word "*addio*." What thousands--ay, and thousands of thousands--of shades musical expression is capable of! And of course it is just that that is the marvellous mystery of the Tone-Art that, just where language comes to an end, *she* is only beginning to disclose a perennial fountain of fresh forms of expression.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'Then what the opera-poet has to do is--to strive to attain the utmost simplicity, as far as the words are concerned; it will be enough to *suggest* the situation, in clear and forcible language.'

"*Ludwig*. 'Exactly: because the composer has to draw his inspiration from the matter, the business and the situation--not from the words. And not only is imagery to be avoided, but everything in the shape of a reflection is a bugbear to the composer.'

"*Ferdinand*. 'After what you have said, I can assure you it seems to be anything but an easy matter to write an opera text. Now, this indispensable simpleness of the language; I can't say that I quite see how to----'

"*Ludwig*. 'How to accomplish it! No! You are so fond of painting with words, and so accustomed to it. But though Metastasio (as I think) has exemplified in his librettos how opera texts ought *not* to be written, there are quantities of Italian poems which are absolute models of words for music. For instance take the lines, known to the whole world, no doubt:

"Almen si non poss' io
Seguir l'amato bene,
Affetti del cor mio
Seguite-lo per me!"

What can be simpler? Yet, in these few, unpretending words lies the suggestion, or indication, of love and sorrow which the composer comprehends, and can apply all the resources of musical expression to represent. The particular situation in which the words are to be sung will so stir his imagination that he will give the music the most individual character. And this is why you will often find that a poetical composer sets words that are wretched enough to admirable music. In such cases what inspired him was that the matter was genuinely suitable for opera; and as an instance I merely mention Mozart's "Zauberfloete."

"Ferdinand was going to reply, when, outside the windows, down in the street, the drums were heard beating the *générale*. This seemed to wake him to the sense of present duty as with an electric shock. Ludwig shook him warmly by the hand.

"'Ah, Ferdinand,' he cried, 'what is to become of Art in these terrible times? Won't it die, like some delicate plant lifting its languid head towards the clouds beyond which the sun has disappeared? Ah! Where are the golden days when we were lads? All that is good is drowned and swept away by this torrent that whirls along, devastating the country. We see bleeding corpses, appearing by glimpses, carried along in its dark billows; and in the horror which seizes us, we slip and lose our footing, we have nothing to hold on to; our cry of terror dies away in the darksome air--victims of inappeasable anger, we sink to earth, and there is no hope of salvation.' Ludwig paused, sunk in his thoughts.

"Ferdinand stood up, and put on his sword and helmet. He stood before Ludwig like the God of War armed for the fray. Ludwig looked up at him admiringly, and a glow came over Ferdinand's face, and he said, in a calm and reassuring tone:

"'Ludwig, what has happened to you? Has the dungeon air which you have been breathing here so long debilitated you, so that you are too sick and faint to feel the warm reviving breath of spring which is blowing, sweet and gentle, up there among the clouds as they glow with the rose tints of dawn? The children of Nature were abrutized and sunk in sluggish inaction, careless of all her most precious gifts, and treading them into the mire. Then their angry mother awoke the Genius of War, who had long been sleeping in gardens heavy with the breath of flowers--and War came, like some Giant of Adamant, amongst these spoilt children, who, at the sound of his awful voice, which makes the hills tremble, fled to their mother's arms for refuge, though they had forgotten her before. But with remembrance came gratitude. Nothing but strength brings success. The divine

element radiates out from contest and striving as life does from death. Yes, Ludwig, a time is upon us which is pregnant with fate, and (as in the awful profundity of the ancient Sagas, which come rolling over to us like the mysterious muttering of distant thunder) we can trace, once more, distinctly, the voice of that Power which rules for Ever more. Nay, marching visibly into our lives, it awakes in us a faith which enables us to read the riddle of our Being. The morning light is breaking, and inspired Singers are soaring up in the sweet fresh morning air, proclaiming the advent of the Divine, and celebrating it with hymns of praise. The golden gates are open, and art and knowledge, in one united ray, are kindling that flame of sacred effort which makes all humanity one universal Church. Therefore lift up your eyes, dear friend. Courage--Confidence--Faith.'

"Ferdinand clasped Ludwig's hand; and in a few moments his charger was bearing him rapidly along with the troops moving on to the attack, the light and joy of battle on every brow."

The friends were much affected by this; for each of them remembered days when the clutch of a hostile destiny was at his throat and all comfort or enjoyment in life seemed to be a thing of the past for ever. And then, after a time, the first rays of the beautiful Star of Hope began to pierce the clouds and rose higher and higher, reviving them, strengthening and invigorating them with newness of life. Then, in the gladsomeness of contest, everything stirred, and came into activity, shouting for joy. At last the grandest and most brilliant of victories rewarded their courage and constancy.

"Each of us," said Lothair, "has said, within himself, very much what the Serapiontic Ferdinand said; and well is it for us that the menacing storms which thundered over our heads refreshed us, instead of annihilating us, and braced us like a fine sulphur bath. In fact, it seems to me that it is only now, and here among you, that I begin to feel quite strong and well, and to trace a fresh impulse to begin, now that the storms are over, to bestir myself again in the paths of literature and science. I know that Theodore is doing so right strenuously; he is devoting himself, as of old, to his music, although he is not neglecting literature neither, so that I am expecting him to astonish us, one of these days, with an opera altogether his own, both music and words. All that he has said about the impossibility of the same person writing the words and the music of an opera may be plausible enough, but it doesn't convince me."

"I don't agree with you," said Cyprian, "but I don't see much use in continuing the discussion. It seems all the more a waste of time that if the thing were possible, which Theodore says it is not, he would be the first to set about doing it. It would be far better if he would open his piano and, as he has favoured us with so many interesting Stories, let us hear some of his Compositions."

"Cyprian," said Theodore, "is always accusing me of sticking too closely to established forms, and rejecting any poetry which cannot be fitted to some of them. This I do not admit, and I mean to prove what I say by producing some music of mine to words which require a setting differing from any of the hackneyed 'forms' in question. I mean the Night Hymn in Mueller the painter's 'Genofeva.' All the sweet sadness,--the pain, longing, and sense of the supernatural,--of a heart torn by hopeless love are in the words of this beautiful poem. Moreover, as the verses have a certain touching flavour of the Antique, I have thought it better that the composition should be without any instrumental accompaniment, but for voices alone, in the style of old Alessandro Scarlatti, or the more modern Benedetto Marcello. I have done all the music for it in my head, but only the beginning of it has been written down as yet. If you haven't quite forgotten all about singing, and, especially, if you still feel the benefit of our old practice at 'reading invisible music,' and can strike your notes correctly as of old, I should like that we sing what I have composed for these words."

"Ah yes!" said Ottmar, "I remember about the 'reading invisible music.' You

used to put your fingers on the notes of the chords without pressing them down, and each of us sang the notes of his part without previously hearing them on the instrument. People who didn't notice the process of indicating the notes couldn't imagine how we 'improvised' part-music so cleverly; and for those who possess the talent of being easily astonished, it really is a good and interesting musical trick. For my part, I still sing that mediocre, grumbling old baritone of mine, and have as little forgotten how to hit my note as Lothair, who can still, with his fine *basso*, lay firm foundations on which tenors like you and Cyprian can build skywards with security."

"For Cyprian's beautiful, delicate, tender tenor," said Theodore, "this thing of mine is exactly suitable. Therefore I shall give him the first tenor part, and take the second myself. Ottmar, who was always very accurate in striking his note, shall take the first bass, and Lothair the second. Only, for Heaven's sake, don't thunder, but keep the whole thing soft and *sostenuto*, as the character of the composition requires."

Theodore struck two or three introductory chords on the piano, and then the voices began, with long, sustained notes, in the key of A flat major:

"Beauteous Lover's Star,
That gleamest far and far,
In pale blue vault of Heaven!
To thee, this night, our hearts make prayer;
Oh! aid us in our fond despair!
To Love--to Love alone our souls are given."

The two Tenors now went on, in duet; key of F minor:

"Oh! calm and holy night!
Those glowing worlds of light--
Heaven's eyes--begin to tread their mystic measure.
Soar high, like sweet bells far-off chime,
Night Hymn of Love, in silv'ry rhyme--
Beat at Heaven's gate, in rhythmic, pulsant measure."

At the words "soar high," etc., the music had gone into the key of D flat major, and now Lothair and Ottmar came in, in B flat minor:

"Oh! saintly souls above,
That burn in holy love,
With heart and tongue all pure from earthly tainting,
Drop down some balm on this poor heart,
Which fails, and droops, in bitter smart,
Contending here--in conflict well-nigh fainting."

Then, finally, the four voices ended in F major:

"Knock, knock, and soon the angel's voice will say,
'The gates are open! enter in for aye!'"

All of them--Lothair, Ottmar, and Cyprian--felt much affected by Theodore's lovely music, which was in the simple, serious style of the early masters. The tears came to their eyes. They embraced the clever composer; they pressed him to their hearts. The clocks tolled midnight.

"Blessed be our reunion!" cried Lothair. "Oh! glorious Serapion Brotherhood, which binds us with an eternal chain! May it ever keep green and flourish! As we have done to-night, we will continue to refresh and vivify our minds in the paths of literature and art; and our next care will be to assemble again here at our Theodore's, at the same time in the evening, this day week."

SECTION II.

Seven o'clock struck. Theodore was expecting his friends impatiently. At last Ottmar came in.

"Leander has just been with me," he said; "that was what detained me. I told him how sorry I was that I was called away by a pressing engagement. He insisted on walking with me as far as the place I was going to, but I slipped away from him in the dark--not without some difficulty. I know he knew quite well I was coming here, and wanted to come too."

"And you haven't brought him?" said Theodore. "He would have been most welcome."

"No, no," said Ottmar, "that would never have answered at all. In the first place, I don't consider that I have any right to bring in a stranger--or, if Leander is not exactly a stranger, any fifth person whatever--without the unanimous consent of the Serapion Brethren. Besides, rather an unfortunate thing happened with regard to Leander, through Lothair's fault. Lothair told him about our delightful Serapion Brotherhood, in his usual enthusiastic style. He talked hyperbolically of the admirable tendency of the Serapiontic principle, and asseverated nothing less than that we meant--keeping that principle constantly in view--to incite each other to undertake all sorts of interesting and important work. On that, Leander said that an opportunity of associating himself in this way with literary people was what it had long been his most ardent desire to meet with, and that he hoped, if we would admit him to our order, to prove himself a highly meritorious brother of it. He added that he had a great many things *in petto*, and as he said so, he made an involuntary movement of his hand towards one of his coat pockets. It was stuffed to fatness; and, to my alarm, I saw that the other pocket was so too; they were both distended with manuscripts, and papers of an alarming aspect were sticking out of his breast pocket as well."

Here Ottmar was interrupted by the somewhat boisterous entry of Lothair, who was followed by Cyprian.

"A certain little storm cloud," said Theodore, "has been forming, rather threateningly, in the atmosphere of this Serapion Brotherhood of ours. However, Ottmar has managed to dispel it cleverly. Leander wanted to come bothering us, and stuck to poor Ottmar like grim death, till he managed to give him the slip in the dark."

"Why didn't he bring him?" asked Lothair. "He's a witty, clever, intelligent fellow: I can't think of a more eligible member of our society."

"How exactly like you that is," said Ottmar: "you are always the same old Lothair; always changing your mind; always a member of the opposition. If I had brought him, you would have been the very first to find fault with me most bitterly. You say Leander is intelligent, clever, and witty. Very well; so he is--all that and more. Everything he writes has a roundness and a finish which evinces soundness of criticism and clearness of judgment; but, in the first place, I don't believe there is a man on this earth who is so absolutely devoid of any trace of the Serapiontic principle. Everything he writes he has most maturely thought out, weighed, and considered in all its aspects, but never really *seen*. His reasoning faculty does not control his imagination; it puts itself in its place. Then he delights in a wordy prolixity which is unendurable to the hearer, if not to the reader; works of his which one must admit to possess plenty of talent and interest, are tedious beyond expression when he reads them aloud."

"There is a curious question there, connected with reading aloud; I mean as to things *adapted* for reading aloud," said Cyprian; "it seems as if not only the most vivid life were essential to them, but that they should be restricted to a certain definite length."

"The reason, I think," said Theodore, "is that the reader must not declaim; experience tells us that *that* is unendurable; he ought merely to slightly indicate the various feelings that arise in the course of the action, preserving a quiet tone; and this tone, after a time, produces an irresistibly narcotic effect."

"What I think," said Ottmar, "is, that a story or poem, to be adapted for reading aloud, ought to approach very closely to the dramatic, or be dramatic altogether; but then again, why is it that most comedies and tragedies are unsatisfactory when read aloud?--that is, become boring and wearisome?"

"Just because they are quite *undramatic*, said Lothair; "or because too much has been left for the effect of the action of the actors on the stage; or because the poem is so weak and feeble in itself that it does not call up before the listener's mind any picture in clear, distinct colours, and with living figures, except with the help of the actors and the stage. However, we are losing sight of Leander, as to whom I maintain, notwithstanding what Ottmar says to the contrary, that he well deserves to be admitted to our circle."

"Well and good," said Ottmar, "but please to remember what your own experience has been of him already; how he once dogged and pursued you wherever you went, with a fat-fat dramatic poem; how you always managed to give him the slip, till he asked you and me to a splendid dinner, with grand cuisine and first-rate wines, so that we might swallow the poem, thus washed down, like a dose of medicine; how I endured two acts of it like a man, and was screwing up my courage for a third, when you lost patience, and got up, declaring that you were suddenly taken very unwell, and left poor Leander in the lurch, wines, dinner, and all. Recollect how he came to your house once when you had several people with you; how he now and then rustled papers in his pockets, looking from one to the other with sly, crafty glances, in hopes that somebody would say, 'You've brought something good, haven't you, dear Leander?' How you privately implored us all, for God's sake, to take no notice whatever of this menacing rustling, but to hold our tongues. Remember how you used to liken old Leander--with a tragedy always in his breast pocket, always armed and eager for the fray--to Meros creeping to slay the tyrant, with a dagger in his breast; how once, when you were obliged to ask him to dinner, he came with a great fat manuscript in his hand, so that our hearts sunk within us; how he then announced, with the sweetest smiles, that he could only stay for an hour or so, because he had promised to go to Madame So-and-so's to tea, and to read her his last epic poem in twelve cantos; how we then breathed freely again, like men relieved from a terrible burden; and when he went away all cried, with one voice, 'Oh, poor Madame So-and-so!--what an unfortunate woman!'"

"Stop, stop, Ottmar," said Lothair; "what you say is all true enough, of course, but nothing of that sort could take place amongst Serapion Brethren. We form a strongly organized opposition to everything that is not in harmony with our fundamental principle, and I would give odds that Leander conforms to our rule."

"Don't imagine anything of the kind, dear Lothair," said Ottmar. "Leander has a fault which many conceited writers have in common with him--he won't listen; and, just for that reason, he always wants to be the person who reads or speaks. He would always be trying to occupy the whole of our evenings with his own interminable compositions; he would take our efforts to obviate this in the worst possible part, and, consequently, mar the whole of our enjoyment: he even spoke to-day of works to be undertaken in common; and with that idea in his head he would torture us terribly."

"That is a sort of thing which never answers," said Cyprian. "It doesn't seem practicable for several people to write a work together; it would require such absolute similarity of mental disposition, such depth of insight, and such identity of the power to grasp ideas as they suggest and succeed one another, even if a plot were fully determined on in concert. I say this from experience, although of course there are some instances to the contrary."

"At the same time," said Cyprian, "sympathetically-minded friends often give each other valuable hints and suggestions, which lead to the production of works."

"For a suggestion of that sort," said Ottmar, "I have to thank our friend Severin, who, when he comes back here, as I expect him to do immediately, will make a much better Serapion Brother than Leander. I was sitting with him in the Thiergarten, Berlin, when there happened, before our eyes, the incident which suggested the story called 'A Fragment of the Lives of Three Friends,' which I wrote, and have brought with me to read to you to-night; for when (as you shall presently hear) the pretty girl read the letter, which had been privately handed to her, with tears in her eyes, Severin cast pregnant glances at me, and whispered, 'There's something for you, Ottmar; let your fancy move its wings; write at once all about the girl, the letter, and her tears.' I did so, and here you have the result."

The friends sat down at the round table; Ottmar took a manuscript from his pocket, and read--

'A FRAGMENT OF THE LIVES OF THREE FRIENDS.'

"One Whit Monday the 'Webersche Zelt,' a place of public resort in the Thiergarten, Berlin, was so densely crowded by people of every sort and kind that it was only by dint of unremitting and assiduous shouting, and the most dogged perseverance of pursuit, that Alexander succeeded in capturing a much-vexed and greatly-badgered waiter, and inducing him to set out a small table under the trees beside the water, where he, with his friends Severin and Marzell (who had managed, by the exercise of fine strategical talent, to possess themselves of a couple of chairs), sat down in the happiest possible frame of mind. It was only a few days since they had come back to Berlin. Alexander had arrived from a distant province to take possession of the heritage of an aunt deceased, and the two others had come back to resume the duties of their Government appointments, from which they had been absent for a considerable time on military duty, during the important campaign which was just at an end. This was the day when they had arranged to celebrate their reunion in famous style, and, as it often happens, it was the Present, with its doings and strivings, more than the eventful Past, that was occupying their minds.

"'I can assure you,' said Alexander, taking up the steaming coffee-pot and filling the cups, 'that if you saw me in my aunt's old house--how I wander pathetically up and down the lofty chambers hung with gloomy tapestry; how Mistress Anne, my aunt's former housekeeper, a little spectral-looking creature, comes in wheezing and coughing, carrying the pewter salver with my breakfast in her trembling arms, putting it down on the table with a curious backward-sliding curtsey, and then making her exit without a word, sighing, and scuffling along on slippers too large for her feet, like the beggar wife of Locarno, while the tom-cat and the pug, eying me with dubious glances, go out after her; how I then, with a low-spirited parrot scolding at me, and china mandarins nodding at me with scornful smiles, swallow cup after cup of the coffee, scarcely daring to desecrate this virginal chamber, where amber and mastic have been wont to shed their perfumes, with vulgar tobacco reek,--I say, if you were to see me in these circumstances, you would say I was under some spell of enchantment; you would regard me as a species of Merlin. I can assure you that the easy adaptability to circumstances which you have so often blamed me for was the sole cause of my having at once taken up my quarters in my aunt's lonely house, instead of looking out for some other lodging; for the pedantic scrupulosity of her executor has rendered it an exceedingly uncanny place to be in. That strange creature of an aunt of mine (whom I scarcely ever saw) left directions in her will that everything was to remain till my arrival exactly as she left it at her death. By the side of the bed,

which is resplendent in snow-white linen and sea-green silk, still stands the little tabouret, on which, as of yore, is laid out the maidenly night-dress and the much be-ribboned nightcap; under it are the embroidered slippers,--and a brightly polished silver mermaid (the handle of some piece of toilet apparatus or other) glitters as it projects from beneath the quilt, which is all over many-tinted flowers. The unfinished piece of embroidery, which she was working at shortly before her death, is still lying in the sitting-room, with Arndt's 'True Christianity' open beside it; and (what for me, at all events, fills up the measure of eeriness) in this same room there is a life-size portrait of her, taken some thirty-five or forty years ago, in her wedding-dress; in which wedding-dress, as Mistress Anne tells me with many tears, just as it is shown in the picture, she was buried.'

"'What a strange idea!' said Marzell.

"'Yet not so very odd, after all,' said Severin; 'those who die maids are called the brides of Christ, and I trust nobody would be reprobate enough to make fun of this pretty old fancy, which well beseems an old maiden's creed. At the same time I don't quite gather why the aunt had her portrait taken as a bride forty years ago.'

"'As the tale was told to me,' said Alexander, 'my aunt was engaged to be married at one time--indeed the wedding-day had arrived, and she was dressed and waiting for the bridegroom; but he never made his appearance, having thought proper to leave the place that morning with a "flame" of his of earlier date. My aunt took this deeply to heart, and, without being exactly queer in the head, always kept the anniversary of that marriage-day of hers, that was to have been, in a curious way. Early in the morning of it she used to put on her wedding-dress complete, and (as she had done on the day itself) lay out a little table of walnut-wood with gilt carvings in her dressing-room, with chocolate, wine, and cake for two people, and then walk slowly up and down, sighing and softly lamenting, till ten at night, when, after she had prayed fervently, Mistress Anne would undress her, and she would go silently to bed, sunk in deep reflection.'

"'I call that exceedingly touching,' said Marzell. 'Woe to the traitor who caused the poor creature that never-forgotten pain!'

"'But there may be another side to the question,' said Alexander: 'the man whom you accuse of perfidy--and who was a traitor, no doubt, whatever may have been his motives--may have had a warning from his good genius; or, if you prefer to say so, a better feeling may have come to him. Perhaps it was her money that was the attraction; he may have found out that she was imperious, quarrelsome, miserly--in short, a disagreeable person to have much to do with.'

"'Perhaps,' said Severin, laying his pipe on the table, and looking reflectively before him with his arms crossed; 'but could those silent, affecting funereal observances--those resigned regrets, heard only in her own heart, for the unfaithful scoundrel--have existed in any but a deep and tender nature, which must have been a stranger to the worldly infirmities which you accuse your aunt of? No doubt the bitter feeling--(how seldom can we altogether master it, hard beset as we are in this life of ours?)--may sometimes have manifested itself in her in various forms, not always very easily recognizable, and having a more or less unpleasant effect upon the old lady's surroundings; still, that yearly day of pious sorrow would have atoned, in my eyes, at all events, for any amount of shortcomings during the rest of the time.'

"'I agree with you, Severin,' said Marzell. 'The old lady can't have been quite so bad as Alexander--though only from hearsay--makes her out to have been; at the same time I must confess I don't like to have anything to do with folks who have had their lives embittered, and it's better that Alexander should edify himself with the story of the old lady's way of keeping her wedding-day (that ought to have been), and rummage in the well-filled boxes and chests she has left him, or gloat over the valuable "inventory," than that he should see the deserted bride, dressed for the altar, walking up and down beside her chocolate-table.'

"Alexander set the coffee-cup which he was raising to his lips down untasted on the table with a clatter; beat his hands together, and cried, 'For Heaven's sake don't put ideas of that sort into my head! Really I feel in that state that it wouldn't astonish me if I were to see my old aunt in her bride-clothes suddenly peering, in a horrible, spectral manner, out of the middle of that group of nice-looking girls there, in the bright sunshine!'

"That serves you right for having said what you did about your aunt, who never did you anything but kindness, even in death,' said Severin, with a quiet laugh, puffing away little blue cloudlets from his pipe, which he had resumed.

"Do you know, my dear fellows,' said Alexander, 'that the very atmosphere of that old house of mine seems to be so thoroughly impregnated with the essence and spirit of the old lady, that one has only to be in it for a day or two to find one's self imbibing it to a very appreciable extent?'

"Marzell and Severin chanced to be handing their empty cups to Alexander as he spoke; he put in the sugar and milk, and poured out the coffee with a dainty, deliberate care, and said:

"I daresay you notice how differently I do a thing of this sort from my old way of doing it; I mean, I do it much more like an old lady; and you will be more astonished still when I tell you that I find myself taking a strange pleasure in well-polished pewter and copper, and in linen and silver plate--in everything relating to a well-ordered household. In one word, I feel like some old housekeeper. I find myself looking with a funny satisfaction at household paraphernalia of every sort, and it has suddenly dawned upon me that it is good to be the possessor of something besides a bed, a chair, a table, a lamp and an inkstand. My aunt's executor smiles and tells me I can marry whenever I choose, and have nothing to do but fix upon the bride and the parson. What he really means is that the bride's not far to seek. He has a little bit of a daughter himself; a dressy little thing with great big eyes, excessively childish and innocent in her ways, always gushing with artlessness, and hopping about like a water-wagtail. I daresay this may have been all very well, considering her little elfin figure, some sixteen years ago or so; but now that she's two- or three-and-thirty, it gives one rather a queer sensation.'

"Ay,' said Severin, 'and yet how very natural that kind of self-mystification is. Where is the precise point where a girl, who has taken up some particular line, in consequence of some personal peculiarity or other, is to say to herself, "I am no longer what I was; the colours I put on are still fresh and youthful, but my face has lost its bloom; so, patience! what can't be cured must be endured!" The sight of a poor girl in these circumstances fills me with pity, and, for that very reason, I could put my arms about her, take her to my heart, and comfort her.'

"You see, Alexander,' said Marzell, 'that Severin's in his most beneficent mood to-day. First, he takes up the cudgels for your aunt, and now the executor's daughter (I think I know who the executor is--Falter, the Kriegsraht); Falter's little witch of two- or three-and-thirty, whom I know very well, inspires him with sentiments of sad, compassionate sympathy; presently he'll advise you to marry her, and cure her of that inappropriate *naïveté* of hers; for that she will lay aside, as far as you are concerned at all events, the moment she says "Yes!" Don't you do anything of the kind. Experience teaches that naïve little creatures of that kind are sometimes--or rather very often--of feline nature, and, out of the velvet paws which they stroke you with before the parson's blessing, can soon stick out sharp enough claws, on suitable opportunity afterwards.'

"Heavens and earth!' cried Alexander, 'what nonsense you're talking! Neither Falter's little witch of thirty-two, nor anybody else, were she ten times as young and charming, could induce me to go and sacrifice, of my own free will and accord, the golden years of youthful liberty and freedom which, now that a slice of the good things of this world has fallen to my share, I mean to set to work to thoroughly enjoy; and the fact is that the old bridely aunt has such a ghostly, haunting effect upon me, that I can't help associating all sorts of eery, uncanny,

shuddery feelings with the very word "bride."

"I'm sorry for you," said Marzell; 'for my part, the moment I think of a girl dressed for her wedding, I feel sweet, secret thrills going all through me; and if I see such a creature, I feel impelled to clasp her to me, mentally, with a lofty, pure affection which has nothing in common with mundane passion.'

"'Oh!' said Alexander, 'I know you always fall in love with every bride you come across; and often even other people's sweethearts are to be found set up in that inner sanctuary which you have established in your imagination.'

"'He loves with them that love,' said Severin; 'that's why I like him so much.'

"I shall set my aunt at him," said Alexander, laughing, 'and see if that will rid me of a species of haunting which is becoming rather a nuisance to me. You are looking at me with questioning glances, are you?--very well then; I'll make a clean breast of it. The old-maid nature is traceable in me in this further respect, that I feel a perfectly unendurable terror of ghosts, and go on like some little child whom its nurse has frightened with a bogey. What happens is no less than this: that often in broad daylight, and particularly about mid-day, when I'm looking into the chests and boxes, I suddenly seem to catch a glimpse of my aunt's peaky nose close beside me, and of her long, lean fingers poking in among the clothes and linen, and rummaging among them. If I take down a teacup, or a saucepan off the wall, to look at them with a feeling of satisfaction, all the rest rattle, and I expect to see a ghostly hand offering me another; then I throw the things down, and run to the front-room without looking over my shoulder. There I sing or whistle out of the open window into the street, at which Mistress Anne is greatly scandalized: and that the aunt "walks" every night at twelve o'clock is a positive and undoubted fact.'

"Marzell laughed heartily at this. Severin remained grave, and said, 'Let us hear all about that; it'll probably turn out to be some trick or other. Fancy a fellow with your enlightened, advanced views, turning spirit-seer!'

"'Well, Severin,' said Alexander, 'you know quite well, and so does Marzell, that nobody could be less of a believer in ghosts and apparitions than I have always been. Never in my life till now have I ever met with anything in the least out of the common, and I had never had the slightest experience of that strange, nervous sense of the proximity of spiritual principles belonging to another state of being which paralyzes both body and mind; but let me tell you what happened the very first night I spent in the house.'

"'Not too loud, then,' said Marzell, 'for I think our neighbours here are doing us the favour of listening to what we are saying.'

"'They shan't hear,' said Alexander; 'indeed I scarcely like to tell even you; however, here goes, I may as well out with it. Mistress Anne received me, dissolved in tears, and went before me with a branched silver candlestick in her trembling hands to the bedroom, groaning and coughing as she went. The postboy had to bring in my trunk, and as he pocketed, with profuse thanks, the tip I gave him, he took a survey of the room with a grin on his face, till he fixed his eyes on the great towering bed with the sea-green curtains.'

"'My word!' he cried, 'the gentleman'll have a better night of it than he would have had in the old coach!--and the nightgown and nightcap all ready and waiting!'

"'Mistress Anne, almost fainting with the shock of this irreverent mention of the maidenly night-gear, was letting the candlestick fall, but I caught it in time, and lighted the fellow out. He cast a facetious look at the old woman as he departed. When I came back she was all in a tremble; she thought I would tell her to go, and proceed coolly to desecrate the maidenly couch by sleeping in it, but she revived when I told her I wasn't accustomed to anything so soft, and should be obliged if

she would make me up a shake-down as well as she could in the sitting-room. Her wrinkles of annoyance vanished, and her face lighted up, in a way it never has since, into a most gracious smile. She dipped her long lean arms down to the ground, fingered up the down-trodden heels of her slippers, and trotted off, half frightened and half delighted. As I meant to have a fine long sleep, I told her not to come with my coffee before nine o'clock; so I left the old woman for the night almost with Wallenstein's words.

"I was tired to death, and thought I should fall asleep in a moment, but the manifold thoughts and fancies which began to cross each other in my brain drove sleep away. I seemed to be only beginning to realize the rapid change which had taken place in my position and circumstances. It was only now, when I had actually taken possession of my property, and was absolutely in my house, that I quite grasped the fact that I was suddenly lifted out of very narrow circumstances to a position of affluence, and that life was opening before me a vista of most agreeable ease and comfort. The watchman's discordant voice croaked out "Eleven," and "Twelve." I was so wide awake that I distinctly heard my watch ticking on the table, and a cricket chirping somewhere a long way off; but as the last stroke of twelve sounded, hollow and faint, from a church-clock in the distance, measured footfalls began to walk up and down the room, and at every step came the sounds of sobbing and sighing, growing louder and louder, till they were like the heart-breaking cries of some creature in deadly pain or peril, and then there came a scuffling and a scratching on the outside of the door, and a dog whimpered and moaned, in tones that were almost human. I had noticed the old pug--my aunt's pet and darling--the evening before. It was evidently him, whining to get in. I got out of bed: I stared most scrutinizingly all about the room, which was dimly lighted by the glimmer of the sky. Everything that was in it I could make out distinctly; but no form was to be seen moving up and down, though the footsteps, and the sobbing and sighing, still went on, apparently close beside my bed. And then, suddenly, I was seized by that terror, arising from the proximity of a spirit, which I had never known before. I felt a cold perspiration dropping from my forehead, and my hair standing straight up on end, as if frozen by its iciness. I could not move a limb, nor open my mouth to scream, for terror; but my blood streamed faster in my throbbing veins, and kept my inner senses active, though they could exercise no control over my organs, which were paralyzed as with a spasm of death. Suddenly the footsteps stopped, and the sobbing ceased; then I could hear a sort of coughing sound--like a clearing of the throat more than coughing; the door of a cupboard seemed to open; there was a clattering as of a silver spoon; then a sound as if some bottle was opened and put back on the shelf; a sound of swallowing, and then a deep-drawn sigh. At that instant a tall, white figure seemed to come wavering forward out of the wall. I sunk down into the depths of an ice river of the wildest terror. I lost consciousness.

"I came to myself with the sensation of a fall from some height. You all know that every-day dream sensation; but the peculiar feeling that I experienced then I hardly know how to describe to you. It was some time before I could make out where I was, and then there was a sense as if something terrible had been happening, which a long, death-like sleep had wiped away the remembrance of. At last it all came gradually back to me, but I thought it was nothing but a painful dream. However, when I got up I noticed the portrait for the first time--the portrait in the wedding-dress; a life-size, three-quarter length portrait. A cold shiver ran down my back, for I felt sure I recognized in it the figure which I had seen in the night. But then I could see nothing in the shape of a cupboard in the room, and that confirmed me in the conclusion that I had only been dreaming.

"Mistress Anne brought my coffee. She looked me long in the face, and said, "Eh, sir! you *are* looking pale and badly!--has anything been happening?" Far from telling her anything about it, I said an oppression in my chest had prevented me from sleeping. "It's the stomach!--it's the stomach!" said the old woman. "Eh! we've help at hand for that!" She scuffled up to the wall; opened a door in the hangings which I had not noticed before, and I saw into a cupboard where there were glasses, small bottles, and two or three silver spoons. The old woman took

out one of the spoons, clattering and tinkling it as she did so; opened a bottle; poured a few drops from it into the spoon; put it back in its place, and then came towards me with her unsteady, wavering gait. I gave a scream of horror. It was the exact reproduction, in broad, waking daylight, of the scene of the previous night.

""Well, well!" croaked the old woman, with a strange grin; "it's only a drop of medicine, sir. The mistress was troubled with her stomach too, and often had to take a little."

"I manned myself, and swallowed the stuff, which was bitter and hot. My eyes were on the bride's picture, which was just over the wall-press. "Whose portrait's that?" I asked.

""Good gracious, sir! don't you know?" she cried. "That's poor dear mistress, that's dead and gone your aunt." The tears ran down her cheeks. The dog began to whimper, as it had done in the night. I mastered my inward shudder, and forced myself with some difficulty to be composed. I said:

""Mistress Anne! I feel quite positive that my aunt was at that cupboard last night at twelve o'clock, taking some of those drops."

"The old woman showed no surprise. A strange, deadly pallor seemed to extinguish the last sparks of life in her wrinkled face, and she said softly, "Has the Feast of the Invention of the Cross come round again?--No; it's long past the third of May."

"I didn't feel able to ask anything further, and the old woman went away. I dressed as fast as I could, left my breakfast untouched, and ran as quickly as possible into the open air to try and shake off the dreadful feeling of unreality--as if everything was a horrible dream--which had taken possession of me again. That night, without my having given any orders on the subject, Mistress Anne made up my bed in a nice cheerful room facing the street. I have never said another word to her about what I heard and saw, far less to Falter. Do me the favour, you two, to say nothing about it either, or there will only be a lot of annoying tittle-tattle, and endless troublesome questions, and, very likely, all the bother of a formal investigation by the Psychological Society. Even in the room where I sleep now, I feel pretty certain I can hear the footsteps and the sobs every night at midnight. However, I mean to put up with it the best way I can for a short time, and then try to get rid of the house as quietly as possible, and look out for another.'

"When Alexander had finished, there was a short silence. Then Marzell said:

"All this about your old aunt haunting the house is strange and uncanny enough. But, firmly as I believe that an extraneous Spiritual Principle, or "Entity," has the power of making itself felt by, or perceptible to, us in some way or other, this adventure of yours strikes one as being very largely tinctured with a purely material element. The footsteps, and the sighing and sobbing, might pass well enough: but that the poor old aunt deceased should go and swallow stomachic drops, as she did when she was feeling a little out of sorts in this life--well, it's too much like the lady who, when she revisited the glimpses of the moon after death, used to scrabble outside the window like a cat shut out by accident.'

"Now that,' said Severin, 'is just one of the regular, stereotyped ways in which we go wilfully mystifying ourselves. We admit that an extraneous Spiritual Principle can affect us (apparently, at all events), by acting on our bodily senses, but we insist on giving said spiritual principle a certain amount of education, and on teaching it what it is proper, and what it is improper that it should do. According to your theory, my dear Marzell, a spirit may go about in slippers and sigh and sob, but it mustn't take the cork out of a bottle, or swallow any of its contents. Here it is to be observed that our own spirit, in dreams, often hangs commonplace matters out of our own imprisoned state of life on to that higher condition of being which only indicates itself dimly, even in dreams; and that it

employs a great deal of irony in so doing. May not this irony, which lies so very deep in our nature (so conscious of its state of decadence from what it originally was) still exist in the soul after it has burst from the chrysalis of the body, and out of this life of dreams, when it is allowed a glance back at its discarded envelope? On this theory, the essential factor in every case of spirit-seeing is the Will of the Spiritual Entity, and the influence exerted by it. This influence is what sends the person affected by it, though in the waking state, into the world of dreams--(though the person seeing relieves that he does so by means of his natural senses)--and it would be absurd enough were we to insist on establishing, for appearances of this sort, any particular "Norm," corresponding to our ideas of what ought, or ought not to be. It's worthy of remark that people who walk in their sleep, active dreamers, are often employed about the most trivial functions of life: for instance, the fellow who, on the night of full moon, always used to saddle his horse, take it out of the stable, and then lead it back, unsaddle it, and go to his bed again. However, all these matters are mere *disjecta membra*. What I really am driving at is, briefly----

"You believe in the old aunt then, do you?" asked Alexander, turning rather pale.

"What is there that he doesn't believe?" said Marzell. "And I am a true believer, too, though not such a confirmed one, perhaps. But now I'm going to tell you that I have been haunted too; and that by a much worse apparition, in the house where I'm lodging at present. I assure you it nearly frightened me to death."

"And I haven't been so much better off, neither," said Severin.

"When I got back here to Berlin the other day," said Marzell, "I took a nice, comfortable, well-furnished room in Friedrich Strasse. Like Alexander, I was tired to death when I threw myself into bed; but I had hardly been asleep for an hour or so when I became aware of something like a bright light shining on my closed eyelids. I opened my eyes--and, fancy my horror--close beside my bed stood a tall, attenuated figure, with a face as pale as death, and frightfully distorted, staring at me fixedly with glassy-looking spectral eyes! A white shirt was hanging from the shoulders of this figure, so that its breast was bare, and seemed to be bloody. In its left hand it had a branched candlestick, with two lighted wax candles; and in its right, a tall glass full of water. Speechlessly, I kept my eyes riveted on this spectral being as it began swinging the lights and the glass in wide circles, uttering horrible, whimpering sounds as it did so. Like Alexander, I was seized by "ghost terror." Slower and slower the spectre swung the lights and the water-glass, till they came to a stop. Then I fancied I could hear a sort of low, whispering singing in the room, and, with a curious sardonic sort of laugh, the figure went slowly away, out of the door. It was long before I could summon up courage to get up and hurriedly bolt the door, which I found I had neglected to do the night before when I went to bed. Often and often, when I was serving in the field, I have found some stranger standing beside me when I awoke; but that never frightened me at all, so that I was firmly persuaded there was something supernatural about the affair in this instance. Well, I was going downstairs next morning to talk to the landlady about what had happened in the night. As I came out on to the landing the opposite door opened and a tall attenuated figure, muffled up in a white dressing-gown, came out meeting me. At the first glance I recognized the deadly white face and the sunken, glassy eyes I had seen at my bedside in the night. And, although I knew, now, that, if the ghost appeared again it was kickable, still, I felt a sort of echo of the terror which had been on me in the night, and was starting off downstairs as fast as I could. But the individual barred my passage, took me politely by the hand and said, in a kindly manner, with a good-tempered smile on his face:

""Good-morning, dear neighbour. I trust you had a quiet night, and that nothing disturbed you?""

"I told him what had happened without a moment's hesitation; adding that I felt pretty certain he had been the apparition himself, and that I was glad I hadn't

given him a pretty warm reception, as, from my recent experience in the field, I was, not unnaturally, rather apt to think that people who came in upon me in that sort of fashion were not exactly friendly. I added that I could scarcely be expected to answer for myself, in that respect, in the future.

"As I said this the man kept on smiling and shaking his head; and, when I had finished, he said, very softly and gently:

""Well, my dear neighbour, I hope you won't be annoyed. Ay--ay--the fact is, I thought, I felt quite *sure* it would be so, and this morning I knew it had been, I felt so well and happy, so composed and reassured in myself. You see, I'm a very anxious, nervous man: how could it be otherwise? Yes, yes: and so they say that, the day after to-morrow,--"

"And he went on to talk about common, every-day gossip of the town, and then to other matters connected with the place, likely to be of interest to a new arrival; and all this he dished up not without a spice of irony which was entertaining enough. So, now that he began to be interesting, I went back to the events of the night, and asked him to tell me, without reserve or hesitation, what had induced him to come and wake me up in that alarming manner.

""Ah, my dear neighbour," he said, "I really hope you won't be much annoyed with me for taking the liberty--I'm sure I scarcely know how I could have been so bold. It was only that I was anxious to know how you were disposed towards me. I'm an exceedingly anxious, nervous man; and a new neighbour can be a very painful trial to me till I know what terms we're going to be upon."

"I assured this extraordinary fellow that, so far, I hadn't the slightest idea what he was driving at; and then he took me by the hand, and led me into his room.

""Why should I hide from you, dear neighbour," he said, taking me to the window--"why should I deny, or make any secret of the miraculous power which I possess? God's strength is made perfect in our weakness; and thus it is that, to me, wretched creature that I am, exposed without shield to all the fiery darts of the adversary, has been vouchsafed, as a means of help and protection, the miraculous power of seeing, under certain conditions, into the hearts of men, and reading their inmost thoughts. I take up this clear, bright vessel, containing distilled water" (he took a tall drinking-glass from the window-sill, it was the same he had had in the night), "I fix my thoughts and concentrate my will upon the person whose heart I wish to read, and I swing the glass to and fro, observing certain prescribed oscillations, known only to myself. Presently little bubbles begin to move up and down in the water, throwing reflections, something like the back of a looking-glass, and by-and-by, as I look at them, I seem to see, as it were, my own inner spirit reflected in them, perceptibly and legibly, although a higher consciousness recognizes the image and its reflection as that of the person upon whom I am exerting my will. Often, when the propinquity of a stranger, as yet uninvestigated, makes me over anxious and uneasy, it chances that I make an experiment in the night; and I presume this was the case last night; for I can assure you you caused me no little uneasiness yesterday evening. Oh! my dear, dear neighbour, surely I can't be wrong, surely I'm not making a mistake here: you and I spent many happy days together in Ceylon, just as nearly as possible two hundred years ago? Did we not?"

"Then he got into all sorts of labyrinths of incoherence, and I saw well enough whom I had to do with, and got away from him as quickly as I could, though not without some difficulty.

"When I asked the landlady about him, I found that my neighbour, who had long been a much esteemed savant and man of business, with much many-sided cultivation, had a short time before fallen into a profound *maliconia*, in which he believed that everybody was inimically disposed to him and wanted to do him some harm; till all at once he thought he had discovered the means of finding out those who were his enemies and were hostile to him; upon which he had passed

into his present tranquil and contented condition of madness with "fixed idea." It seems he sits nearly all day at his window making experiments with his glass. His own kindly disposition is seen in the circumstance that he nearly always augurs well of the people whom he experiments upon, and when he comes across anybody whom he thinks inimical, or dubious, he is not angry, but droops into a state of quiet sadness. So that his madness is quite harmless, and his elder brother, who manages his affairs, can let him live wherever he chooses, and has no occasion to give himself any trouble about him.'

"So that your ghost,' said Severin, 'belongs to the category of those in Wagner's "Book of Apparitions," inasmuch as your explanation--to the effect that it was due to natural causes, and was chiefly the result of your own imagination--comes dragging in at the tail of the story, as is always the case in that most prosy of books.'

"If nothing short of a ghost will satisfy you,' said Marzell, 'of course that is so. However, this madman of mine with whom I'm now on the most intimate terms--is a very interesting specimen; and there's only one thing connected with him that I don't altogether like, namely, that he's beginning to take to *other* fixed ideas; for instance, that he's the King of Amboyna, and has been taken prisoner, and exhibited for money about the country, as a bird of paradise, for fifty years. Now that sort of thing is capable of turning into a violent form of insanity. I knew a man who used to shine as the moon in the quietest and happiest madness every night, till he took it in his head that he had got to rise as the sun also, and then he broke out into the wildest violence.'

"My dear fellows,' cried Alexander, 'is this talk for a place like this, in the middle of thousands of people in their holiday clothes, enjoying themselves in the bright sunshine? All we want to make us perfect is that Severin--who's looking much paler and more pensive than I like to see him shall have had some more terrible experience than even we have, and will tell us about it.'

"Well,' said Severin, 'the fact is, though I haven't been seeing any ghost, still the mysterious, the supernatural, has come in contact with my life so nearly and closely, that I have been most painfully made aware of the existence of "the electric chain with which we are darkly bound."' "

"I was certain,' said Alexander, 'that the strange mood he is in must be traceable to something out of the common.'

"We shall hear strange matters now, I feel certain,' said Marzell with a laugh.

"On which Severin said:

"If Alexander's aunt deceased takes doses of stomachic drops, if Nettelmann, the ex-private secretary--(for he's the madman, and a very old acquaintance of mine he is)--has divined Marzell's good disposition towards him in a glass of water, perhaps I may be allowed to tell you of a curious instance of foreboding, or presentiment, or call it a prescience, which I have experienced in the form of the perfume of a flower. You know that I am living at the far end of the Thiergarten, near the park-ranger's? Very well. The day of my arrival----'

"Here Severin was interrupted by an old gentleman, vary nicely dressed, who politely asked him to be kind enough to move his chair a little forward to let him pass. Severin rose, and the old gentleman, bowing courteously, led forward an elderly lady, apparently his wife. A boy of some twelve years followed them. Severin was about to sit down again, when Alexander said softly, 'Wait a moment; that young lady there seems to belong to the family, too.'

"The friends looked, and saw a wonderfully beautiful creature approaching, with hesitating steps, looking backwards over her shoulder. She seemed to be looking for some one whom she was anxious to see, or perhaps had noticed in passing. Almost immediately a young fellow came gliding up to her through the

crowd, and slipped a note into her hand, which she quickly concealed in her breast. Meanwhile, the old gentleman had taken possession of a table which some people had just left, and was telling the flying waiter (whom he had checked in his flight, and was holding tight by the flap of his jacket) at much length, and with great minuteness, what he was to go and bring. The lady was occupied in dusting the chairs, and consequently they did not observe the loitering of their daughter, who, without taking any notice of Severin (who still stood politely holding the chair to allow her to pass), made haste to rejoin her people. She sat down so that the friends were able to look straight into her wonderfully beautiful face, and dark, exquisitely 'appealing' eyes. There was something immensely attractive and irresistible in her whole being, and in all her movements. She was beautifully dressed in the latest fashions, a trifle too much dressed, perhaps, for the promenade, but still in perfect taste. The mother recognised a lady sitting a short distance off, and they rose and talked to each other; the old gentleman lighted his pipe. The young lady took advantage of this chance to take the letter from her breast and read it hastily, and the friends saw the colour come quickly to the poor thing's cheeks, and the big tears rise in her eyes, while her bosom rose and fell with emotion. She tore the letter into little fragments, and let the wind carry them one by one away, as if each was some beautiful hope hard to relinquish. The old people came back: the father looked keenly at her tearful eyes, and seemed to be asking her what was the matter. She answered a word or two in a tone of gentle regret (the friends couldn't hear them), but, as she took out her handkerchief and held it to her cheek, they concluded she was pretending to have toothache; and therefore it struck them as strange that her father--who had a somewhat caricature-like face of irony on him--made funny grimaces, and laughed heartily.

"Neither Alexander, Severin, nor Marzell had said a word, but kept their eyes riveted on the lovely creature who had suffered such a bitter sorrow. The boy now came and sat down, and his sister changed her place so that her back was turned to our friends. This broke the spell, and Alexander, standing up, and tapping Severin on the shoulder, said:

"Well, friend Severin, what has become of your prescience in the shape of a flower; and of Nettelmann, my aunt, and all the other subjects we were discussing so profoundly? What is this apparition which has tied our tongues and amazed our eyes?"

"One remark I will make," said Marzell with a heavy sigh, 'to wit, that that poor girl there is the most divinely and exquisitely beautiful creature that ever I beheld.'

"Oh!" said Severin, sighing more deeply than Marzell; 'and to think that this lovely darling is under the burden of some terrible sorrow!'

"Ay," said Marzell, and has probably just received a crushing blow.'

"Exactly," said Alexander. 'What I wish to goodness is, that I could get hold of that great, awkward-looking lout of a fellow who gave her the letter. If I could only give him a good hiding, I should feel relieved in my mind. Of course it was he whom she was expecting to meet here; and, instead of joining the family party, like a man, he has gone and handed her some boshy letter telling her he couldn't come. Some preposterous piece of jealousy, I suppose; some lover's quarrel or another.'

"Marzell interrupted him impatiently. 'How little you know the world! Your hiding would fall upon the shoulders (temptingly broad they are, I admit) of an innocent, inoffensive messenger. You could see that in the silly smile of him, in his whole manner, even in his walk. He was only the letter-carrier, not the letter-writer. You may do what you like, but if you hand a person a letter of your own writing, the contents of it are legible in your face. At all events your face is always a condensed "summary" of the full official report inside. Nothing but the most cruel irony (easily recognisable into the bargain) would have made a man give the woman he loved a letter with the particular sort of bow that the fellow made when

he handed that one. No! what seems certain is, that the poor thing expected to meet her sweetheart--prevented from seeing her at home--in this place. He has been unavoidably prevented from coming; or perhaps, as Alexander thinks, some silly lover's quarrel has kept him away: so that he sent some friend with the letter. At all events, whatever the facts may be, the little scene was quite heart-breaking.'

"And yet," said Severin, 'you ascribe this deep, heart-breaking sorrow to some trumpery, every-day cause! No, no! she has a secret passion, most likely against her parents' will. All her hopes depended upon some one event which to-day was to decide. It has all turned out amiss! hope's star has set for ever, all earthly happiness is a thing of the past! Didn't you see the heart-breaking look of deep, inconsolable sorrow with which she sent the fragments of the fatal letter fluttering away on the breeze, like Ophelia with her straw flowers, or Emilia Galotti with her roses? I could have wept tears of blood when the wind whirled away those words of death, as in bitter, sneering mockery! Is there no comfort on earth? Does the world contain no more hope or consolation for that most lovely, interesting young creature?'

"Bravo, Severin," said Alexander, 'you're fairly afloat and under way, now! you've got your tragedy fairly in hand! No, no! we'll leave her some hope still, some prospect of happiness in this world; and I believe she hasn't many misgivings on the subject herself. She seems to be pretty composed and comfortable in her mind. See how carefully she's putting her new white gloves down on the tablecloth, and how quietly and daintily she's dipping her cake in her tea. See, she's nodding at the old fellow as he puts a tiny droplet of rum into the cup. The boy's munching away at the bread-and-butter. Plump! goes a fid of it into his tea, which splashes up in his face. The old folks are laughing, and so's the young lady, she's actually shaking with laughter.'

"Ah!" said Severin, 'that's just the terrible part of it; to be obliged to pretend to be interested in every day matters when the heart is breaking. Indeed, it's easier to laugh, then, than to seem indifferent.'

"I do beg, Severin," said Marzell, 'that you'll be quiet for a little. If we keep on looking at her in this way we shall get so terribly interested in her that we shan't see the end of it. Let's talk about something else.'

Alexander agreed, and they set to work to carry on a conversation, lightsomely fluttering from topic to topic. In this they were so far successful that they talked about utterly trivial matters with a great expenditure of noise. But everything they said had such a strange character and peculiar tone, never in the least appropriate to the subject, that the words seemed to be mere cyphers with some hidden, mysterious meaning. They determined to celebrate this day of their reunion with a bowl of cold punch; and at the third glass of it they fell weeping into each other's arms. The young lady rose, went to the railing above the stream, and stood there pensively gazing at the clouds.

'Swift-sailing cloudlets
Borne by the breezes,'

quoted Marzell, in accents of gentle sorrow. But Severin banged his glass on the table, and spoke of a battle-field which he had seen by the light of a full-moon, and of the pale corpses that had gazed at him with eyes instinct with life.

"God be about us!" cried Alexander. 'What's the matter with you, brother?'

The girl sat down again at the table. With one impulse the three fellows jumped up and ran a sort of race to the rail she had been leaning on. Alexander depassed the other two by a powerful leap over a couple of chairs, leant upon the spot where the girl had been standing, and stuck to it like a leech, though the other two tried to shove him away, on pretext of embracing him affectionately. Severin spoke with great solemnity of the clouds and the way they were floating,

and described, louder than was necessary, their shapes and figures. Marzell, without listening to him, compared Bellevue to a Roman villa; and, although he had just come back by way of Switzerland, said the flat, bare, ugly country, with the lightning-conductors on the powder-magazines--which he called 'masts surmounted by gleaming stars'--was beautiful and romantic. Alexander contented himself with saying it was a lovely evening, and the Webersche Zelt a charming spot.

"The family seemed to be preparing for a move. The old gentleman knocked the ashes out of his pipe, the young lady put away her knitting, and the boy sought--and called for--his cap, which, after a little, the busy house poodle (who had been playing with it) brought and laid down at his feet, and then stood looking up in his face, eager to be of further service, and anxious to set about it at once (after the nature of his kind). The friends' conversation subsided in tone. The family bowed civilly to them as they passed, on which they, ducking their heads faster and further than the occasion demanded, banged them all three together with a resounding thwack. Ere they recovered from this, the family had gone. Then they slunk, in gloomy silence, back to their cold punch, which they found miserable. The imagery of the clouds paled into cold darksome mist; Bellevue was Bellevue again, each lightning-conductor a lightning-conductor, and the Webersche Zelt a common refreshment shop. And, as there was hardly anybody else left in the place, an unpleasant chill began to be perceptible, the very pipes wouldn't keep alight; and the friends crept away, in a conversation which only flared up for a moment now and then, like a burnt-out candle. Severin left the others while they were still in the Thiergarten, as he lived in it at the other end; and Marzell, turning off at the Friedrich Strasse, left Alexander to wend his way to his distant dwelling, and the society of his 'walking' aunt. It was on account of the distance at which they lived from one another that they had chosen a public place for their meetings, where they might see each other on particular days of the week. They came, however, more for the sake of keeping their promise than from any strong desire to see each other. They found it impossible to hit back again upon the old confidential tone which had formerly prevailed among them. Each of them seemed to have something on his mind which destroyed all enjoyment and freedom, and which he felt bound to keep to himself like some dark and dangerous secret. In a very short time Severin suddenly disappeared from Berlin altogether. Soon after that, Alexander complained, in a highly despairing manner, that he had applied unsuccessfully for an extension of his leave, and would be obliged to go away before he had settled all the legal business connected with his heritage affairs, and say good-bye to his nice, comfortable house.

"'But I thought you found it so uncanny to live in,' said Marzell. 'Isn't it pleasant to get away from the sound of your aunt "walking" every night at twelve o'clock?'

"'Oh,' said Alexander, 'she's given that up some time ago; and I can assure you that I regularly long for household ease and quietness, and I shall most likely apply for my retirement almost at once, so as to devote myself to art and literature altogether.'

"Indeed, Alexander was obliged to go away within a very few days. Soon after that, the war broke out again, and Marzell had to rejoin the army. So that the three friends were once more separated, almost before they could be said to have met, in the proper sense of the word.

"Two years afterwards, when Whit Monday came round in due course, Marzell, who had come back a second time from field service, was standing leaning over the old balustrade, in the Webersche Zelt, and revolving many things in his mind. Somebody tapped him on the shoulder, and when he looked round, lo! Alexander and Severin were both there.

"'See how one comes across one's friends!' cried Alexander, joyfully. 'I was strolling along to keep an engagement, thinking of anything rather than of seeing

either of you here. Close past me goes a figure; I couldn't believe my eyes, but it was Severin. I called to him; he turned round, and was just as glad to see me as I was to meet him. I asked him to come to my house, but he said he had an irresistible desire to come here, so I gave up my engagement, and came here too. His presentiment was right, you see; we have found you here!'

"The truth is,' said Severin, 'that I felt quite certain I should find *you* here, and I hardly knew how to keep my patience till you came.'

"Don't you think Severin looks remarkably well?' said Marzell; 'he has quite got rid of that sickly pallor he used to have, and there are none of those nasty cloud shadows which used to be upon his brow.'

"I may say just the same of you, dear Marzell,' said Severin; 'for, though you didn't look so seedy as I did--and I really was very far from nourishing, either in body or mind--still, the strange depression and perturbation of spirit you were in had so completely got the upper hand with you, that it had turned your bright young face into the likeness of a crabbed old gentleman's. I suspect both of us have passed through a good deal of purifying purgatorial fire; and Alexander looks as if he had done the same, for he had lost all his good-spirits towards the end, and put on a damned medicine face, where one might read, "a tablespoonful every hour." Whether it was the aunt that was at the bottom of it, or, as I shrewdly suspect, something else, I don't know; at all events, he seems to be a new man now, as well as we.'

"You're quite right,' said Marzell; 'and, the more I look at the fellow, the more clearly I see what wonders a comfortable income can work here below. Had he ever such rosy cheeks?--such a rounded chin? Don't these sweetly-smiling lips say, "The roast-beef was superior, and the burgundy first quality"?''

"Severin laughed.

"Observe,' said Marzell, taking Alexander by the arms and turning him round, 'what superfine cloth his coat's made of! Look at the dazzling whiteness of his linen!--that splendid gold chain with about seven hundred seals! Tell us, lad, how you have managed to turn out such a terrific swell? It's so unlike what you used to be. One might almost have said of you, quoting Sir John Falstaff, that you might be wrapped in an eel-skin; and now you're getting almost pudgy. What does it all mean?'

"Well,' said Alexander, blushing a little, 'have you got anything more to say about me? You know I took my retirement a year ago, and am leading a happy, comfortable life?'

"The fact is,' said Severin, who had not been listening much to what Marzell was saying, but had been standing lost in thought, 'we parted in a strange sort of fashion; not at all as old friends should.'

"You, in particular,' said Alexander, 'for you went off without saying a word to either of us.'

"Ah!' said Severin, 'I was in the height of a phase of most extraordinary folly just then, and so were you, and Marzell, too, for----'

"He suddenly stopped, and the three looked at one another with sparkling eyes, like people all struck at once by the same idea, like an electric shock. While Severin had been speaking, they had been going along arm-in-arm, and they now found they were at the very table where the beautiful creature who had turned all their heads two years before had been sitting that day. What their eyes all said was, 'There! there is the place where she was sitting!' There was a strong feeling as if she were coming back again. Marzell was beginning to move out the chairs. However, they went on, and Alexander had a table set out on the spot where they themselves had been sitting that eventful Whit Monday. The coffee had come; but neither of them had spoken a word, and Alexander seemed the most embarrassed

of the three. The waiter stood waiting for his money. He looked in amazement from one of these speechless customers to another; he rubbed his hands; he coughed; at last he said, in a feebly voice:

"Shall I bring some rum, gentlemen?"

"On which they looked in each other's faces, and burst out into fits of extravagant laughter.

"Oh, Lord!" cried the waiter, starting back a couple of paces, 'they're all off their heads!'

"Alexander calmed him by paying for the coffee, and, when he had gone, Severin began:

"What I was just going to say, we have all represented in pantomime; and the denouement, with the "moral" of the story as well, were expressed by that hearty burst of laughter of ours. This day two years ago, we all fell into a condition of the most egregious folly; we're ashamed of it now, and completely cured.'

"The fact was,' said Marzell, 'that that exquisitely beautiful creature turned all our heads to a frightful extent.'

"Exquisitely beautiful!" said Alexander; 'exquisitely beautiful, indeed! But,' he continued, with a little dash of anxiety in his tone, 'you say, Marzell, that we are all quite cured of our folly--*id est*, of our having lost our hearts to that girl whom we none of us knew anything about. Now let me ask you one thing. If she were to come back here again to-day, and sit down in her old place, shouldn't we fall back into the old folly again, just as we did before?'

"For my part,' said Severin, 'I'm quite certain, beyond the possibility of any mistake about it, that I am most thoroughly cured of it.'

"And so am I," said Marzell, quite as unmistakeably. Nobody was ever made such a thorough ass of as I was, when I came to a closer acquaintance with that incomparable lady.'

"Closer acquaintance?--incomparable lady?" interrupted Alexander eagerly.

"Well, yes,' said Marzell; 'it's impossible to deny the fact that that adventure of ours here, which I might almost call a novelette in one volume, was followed in my case by a regular screaming farce.'

"My luck was no better,' said Severin. 'Only, if your novelette was in one volume, and your farce in one act, all I played in was a little duodecimo sheet, and a single scene.'

"During this, Alexander's face had got red as fire; the perspiration stood on his forehead; his breath came short and quick, he ran his hands through his curly hair; in short, he showed every symptom of the greatest excitement, and was so clearly unable to retain any control over himself that Marzell cried:

"What on earth's the matter with you, my dear fellow? What are you getting into such a state of mind about?"

"He's simply over head and ears in love still with the lady whom we've given up,' said Severin, laughing, 'and he doesn't believe us, doesn't think it possible we can have had our little romances or novelettes; at all events, he's getting infernally jealous. And I'm sure he may save himself the trouble. I was most abominably treated, at all events.'

"So was I, in a way,' said Marzell, 'and I give you my word that the spark which fell into my heart that Whit Monday has gone out most completely, beyond the possibility of ever being kindled again. So you may be as deeply in love with the lady as ever you like!'

"So you may as far as I'm concerned too," said Severin.

"Alexander, now quite reassured again, laughed very heartily, and said:

"You were right about me, to a certain extent, though you're partly on a wrong scent, too. So just listen a moment. It is quite true that, when I remembered that eventful afternoon, that lovely girl, in all her marvellous attractiveness, came so vividly to my mind's eye that I fancied I could hear her beautiful voice, and touch her white, delicate hand as she held it out to me. I felt as though it was to her alone that I could devote the whole affection of my heart and being, and as if I never could be happy without her! Now, supposing this to be true, just think what a terrible thing it would be!"

"What for? Why on earth?" cried Severin and Marzell, both together.

"Because I have been married for the last year," answered Alexander quietly.

"You married, for the last year?" the friends cried, clapping their hands, and then shouting with laughter. "Who is it? Is she nice-looking? Rich, poor, young, old: how, when, what, where?"

"Alexander stopped his ears. 'I beg of you,' he cried imploringly, as he leant his left hand on the table, and with the right (on the little finger whereof the betrothal ring glittered, beside a chrysophrase) took the spoon and stirred his coffee. 'I implore you to spare me all these questions, and, if you would do me a real favour, tell me what happened to you after our adventure here with the lady.'

"Ay! ay! brother!" said Marzell; 'it strikes me you haven't made a very good job of it. It isn't Falter's little witch, is it?'

"If you have any real regard for me," said Alexander, 'please don't badger me with questions, but let me hear about your own adventures.'

"It's the ghost's doing," said Severin. 'He felt himself compelled to add some wife or another to his collection of pots and pans and plate and household linen. So there he sits, with a heart torn with regret and forbidden love; though that flourishing exterior of his doesn't quite seem to suit that theory either. What does the aunt, of the stomach drops, say to it all?'

"She is highly satisfied," said Alexander. 'But oh! if you have any real commiseration for me, if you don't want to embitter for ever this occasion of our meeting again after all this time, do, for Heaven's sake, leave off your damnable questions, and begin your stories.'

"They saw that Alexander was so terribly in earnest, that it would be cruelty to keep him on tenter-hooks any longer. So Marzell at once began his part of the tale, as follows:

"We all admit and know that, this day two years ago, a very pretty girl turned all our heads at the first glance; that we conducted ourselves as young asses do in such circumstances, and couldn't shake off the insanity which had come upon us. Night and day, wherever I went, that girl's image haunted me. She went with me to the War Office, into the Secretary of State's private sanctum; she came to meet me out of his writing-table, and confused all my finely turned official periods with her beautiful eyes, so that people asked me, with melancholy faces, if the old wound in my head was troubling me again. To see her again was my goal, the object of all my restless efforts. I ran from one street to another like a letter-carrier, from morning till night. I looked up at all the well-to-do people's windows, all in vain. Every afternoon I used to come to the Webersche Zelt here.'

"So did I! So did I!" cried Severin and Alexander.

"I used to see you," said Marzell, 'but I kept carefully out of your way.'

"That's exactly what we did, too,' they all cried *in tutti*.' Oh, what infernal donkeys!

"'It was no use,' said Marzell. 'But I had neither peace nor rest. The very idea that she was in love with somebody else already, that I could but perish in hopeless misery, even if ever I succeeded in making her acquaintance; that I should only then clearly find out the extent of my misery, to wit, her inconsolable regret for the man she had lost, her love for him, and her fidelity--I say, just this very idea was what fanned the fire within me to a terrific pitch of fury. The tragic pictures of her condition which Severin painted here for us came back to my mind, and, while I piled up all imaginable love-misfortunes on to her head, I seemed to myself to be the more unfortunate of the two. In my sleepless nights, and on lonely walks, I used to spin the wildest and most ingenious romances, in which, of course, the unknown lover and I myself played the leading parts. No scenes were too improbable to be introduced into these imaginary dramas of mine, and I was immensely delighted with myself in my character of the hero, resigned to suffer a hopeless passion. As I have said, I went all over the town, in the most senseless manner, searching for her who ruled my thoughts and my whole being. Very well; one forenoon, I found myself in the new street called "Green Street;" and, as I was strolling along there, deep in thought, a young gentleman stopped me, took off his hat politely, and asked if I could tell him where Mr. Asling, the Geheime Rath, lived in that street. I said I could not. But the name "Asling" struck me, somehow. "Asling? Asling?" I said to myself. Then, all at once I remembered that my romantic passion had so occupied my head that I had forgotten all about a letter for this very Mr. Asling, which a nephew of his (whom I had left, wounded, in hospital at Deutz) had given me to deliver to him. I determined to atone for this unpardonable oversight at once. I saw that a shopkeeper directed the young gentleman to a fine-looking house just over the way, and I followed him. I was shown into an anteroom, and the servant begged me to wait there a few minutes, his master being engaged with a strange gentleman. He left me alone there, and I was glancing carelessly at the engravings on the wall, when the door behind me opened, I turned round, and saw *her!* her very self, the beautiful creature whom we saw in the Thiergarten. I really cannot describe to you with any clearness what my feelings were, but I know I could scarcely breathe, couldn't utter a syllable, and felt ready to fall down at the angel's feet.'

"Ay, ay!" said Alexander, rather astonished; 'then you were really very seriously in love with her, old fellow?'

"'At all events,' continued Marzell, 'my feelings at that moment were those of the wildest devotion. My state of consternation and speechlessness must have been queer enough to see, for Pauline looked at me as if she were considerably alarmed; and as I couldn't utter a syllable, and she very naturally thought I must be either a bumpkin or a born idiot, she said at last, with a delicate smile of irony just fluttering over her lips, "You're waiting to see my father, are you not?" The bitter shame that I felt for myself gave me back complete self-control. I pulled myself together with an effort: I told her my name with a courteous bow, and explained the commission which I was entrusted with for the Geheime Rath. On this Pauline cried, loudly and joyfully:

""Oh, how delightful! News of my cousin? You have met him: you know him; you've spoken to him? I don't believe his letters. He always says he's almost well. Do, please, let me know the worst. He'll be lame for life, won't he, poor fellow?""

"'I assured her, as I was quite justified in doing, that the bullet-wound which had nearly fractured his kneecap, though it certainly had been dangerous at one time, and though amputation had been talked of, was now so very much better that there was no more danger, and that, as he was a fine healthy young fellow, there was every prospect of his soon being able to leave off his crutches, which he had been obliged to use for a month or two.

"'As I got more accustomed to be actually looking at Pauline, to see her eyes, to

be under the magic spell of her presence, and having got a little of my confidence back, from talking about these matters of fact, I took heart of grace, and told her all about the action where her cousin got wounded. We had both been in this action together, serving in the same battalion, as it happened. You know how one manages, in such a case, to give a pretty graphic and vivid account of things, and, indeed, is rather apt to get--more than is quite called for--into that emphatic and picturesque "manner" which never fails in its effect upon young women. Of course you will understand that I didn't dwell so much upon the disposition of the troops, the plan of attack, the "general idea" of the operations, the feigned attacks, masked batteries, debouching and development of the cavalry arm, etc., etc., as upon the minor incidents of a more personal kind, which are what really interest friends at home. Many an incident which I scarcely noticed when it happened put on quite an interesting and affecting appearance when I was telling her about it; and thus it came about that Pauline was sometimes pale from sorrow and alarm, and at other times smiling gently through her tears.

""Ah!" she said, "when I came in just now, and you were standing so still and so thoughtfully, looking at that picture of a battle, it must have been recalling some painful memory to your mind."

"A red-hot dart seemed to go through my heart at this. I suppose I must have turned as red as blood.

""What I was thinking of," I said, "was probably the happiest moment of my life, though at that moment I received a mortal wound."

""But you've quite got over it, have you not?" she asked with much anxious sympathy. "I suppose some bullet struck you at the moment of victory?"

"I felt a good deal of an ass; but I suppressed this feeling to the best of my power, and without looking up, but fixing my eyes on the ground like some naughty schoolboy who has just been having a blowing up, I said in a feeble voice:

""I have had the pleasure of seeing you before."

"Then the conversation went on in most edifying fashion, Pauline saying:

""Oh, really, I didn't know!"

""Yes," I went on; "it was such magnificent spring weather, and I was enjoying it with two friends of mine, whom I hadn't seen for several years."

""Ah! that must have been very nice," she said.

""I saw you, Miss Asling," I said.

""Did you really?" she answered. Oh, that must have been in the Thiergarten."

""Yes," said I; "one Whit Monday, in the Webersche Zelt."

""Yes, yes; quite right," cried Pauline. "I was there with my father and mother. There was a great crowd of people. I enjoyed it immensely. But I don't remember seeing you."

"My former state of idiocy came back upon me in full force, and I was on the point of saying something very absurd, when the Geheime Rath came in, to whom Pauline announced with much joy that I had brought a letter from her cousin. The old gentleman was charmed, and cried:

""What! a letter from Leopold! He's alive, then? How's his wound getting on? When will he be able to be moved?"

"And with that he took me by the lapels of the coat, and led me into his own room. Pauline followed; he called for breakfast, and asked endless questions. In short, I had to stay two good hours, and when at last I tore myself away with

much difficulty (for Pauline sat close beside me, and kept looking me in the eyes with childlike unconstraint), he put his arm about my shoulders and begged me to come in as often as I could--at breakfast-time, for preference.

"I was now (as often happens in field service) right in the thick of the fire, without expecting it. If I were to detail to you the tortures that I underwent; how I often, as if impelled by some irresistible power, rushed away to that house which appeared to me a place so fatal to my peace; how I used to drop the bell-handle, without ringing it, and go home, then go back again, wander round and round the house, and at last go bursting into it, like a moth which can't keep away from the candle which is to burn it to a cinder, verily you would laugh, because you anticipate my admission that at that time I was deliberately making myself an ass of the very first water. Nearly every evening when I went I found a number of people there, and I must say that I never was so happy as I was on these occasions, and in that house; notwithstanding that, in the character of my own "dæmon" or warning angel, I mentally gave myself constant digs in the ribs, and cried into my own ears, "You're a lost man! It's all up with you."

"Every night I went home more hopelessly in love and more intensely miserable. I soon felt convinced, from Pauline's happy, untroubled behaviour, that any thing like an unhappy love-affair on her part was quite out of the question; and frequent allusions of the guests clearly pointed to the fact that she was engaged, and would soon be married. There was a great amount of pleasant, jovial fun and merriment about the whole circle. It was quite a peculiarity of that house; and Asling himself--a fine, vigorous, jolly fellow, in first-rate health and well-to-do circumstances--was the leading spirit in all this. Often there seemed to be schemes of fun and mystification, on an extensive scale, on the *tapis*, which I, as a comparative outsider, not knowing the persons and circumstances, wasn't admitted to share in. There was generally great laughter and amusement going on among the *habitués* over these affairs. I remember that one time when, after a long struggle with myself, I had yielded to the temptation and gone in rather late, I found the old gentleman and Pauline sitting in one of the windows with a group of young ladies round them. The old gentleman was reading something out to them; and when he had finished there was a ringing burst of laughter. To my astonishment he had a big nightcap in his hand, with an enormous bunch of carnations stuck on to it; this, after saying a word or two more, he put on his head, and nodded out of the window with it several times, moving his head up and down, at which they all burst out laughing again tremendously.'

"'Damnation! damnation!' cried Severin, getting up from his chair, and walking about.

"'What's the matter with you?' cried the other two anxiously.

"'Nothing! oh, nothing!' he said; 'I'm all right. Go on, my dear fellow, go on, that's all. Let's hear the rest of it.'

"He repeated this request, not without laughing bitterly within himself. Marzell went on:

"'I don't know whether it was from my having been a comrade of his nephew, or because the curious state I always was in on account of my continual condition of excitement endowed me with some odd interest in his eyes. But at all events the old gentleman soon took a great liking to me, and I should have been utterly blind had I not observed that Pauline evidently cared much more for me than for any of the other fellows who came about her.'

"'Really! really!' said Alexander, in a tone of anxiety.

"'There could be no doubt about it,' continued Marzell, and no wonder that I should have got nearer to her liking; because, like any girl with a head on her shoulders, she couldn't, with her delicate tact, help hearing in every thing that I said (or did) a full-choired hymn in praise of her marvellous attractiveness, my

deepest devotion to that whole nature of hers, instinct with the most passionate fervour. She would often let her hand remain in mine for minutes, she would return my gentle pressure, and, once, when the girls were all waltzing to the rather wheezy old piano, she came into my arm, and I felt her bosom rising and falling, and her sweet breath on my cheek. I was beside myself. Fire burned on my lips. I should have kissed her in a minute.'

"The devil! the devil!" roared Alexander, jumping up like a man possessed, and grabbing hold of his hair with both hands.

"For shame! for shame! remember you're a married man," said Severin, pushing him back into his chair again. 'I'll be hanged if you're not daft about Pauline at this moment, married though you be. Think shame of yourself, wretched Benedict, with your neck fast in the yoke.'

"Well! go on with your story," said Alexander, in an inconsolable tone, 'we shall hear of fine goings on, I can see.'

"From what I have told you," continued Marzell, 'you can form some idea of my state of mind. I was torn by a thousand passions, and worked myself up to the highest pitch of heroism. I made up my mind that I would quaff the brimming cup of poison, and then go and breathe out what was left to me of life far, far away from the beloved one. In other words, I meant to tell her I loved her, and then avoid her, till the wedding day, at all events; for then I meant to do as the heroes in so many novels do, that is, look on at the ceremony concealed behind a pillar in the church, and after the fatal "yes" fall down at full length, with a tremendous crash, senseless on the floor; be carried out by the sympathizing spectators, and so forth. Possessed with this idea, I went to the house earlier than usual one day, like a man out of his mind. I found Pauline alone in the drawing-room, and, before she had time to be frightened at my agitated condition, I fell at her feet, seized her hands, pressed them to my heart, vowed that I loved her to distraction, and, pouring out a flood of tears, said I was the most miserable of mankind, doomed to a cruel death, as she had given her heart and promised her hand to another, before we had met. Pauline let me rage out what I had to say; then, with a charming smile, she made me rise and sit down by her on the sofa, and then she asked me, in a voice of gentle concern:

""What's the matter with you? Please calm yourself, dear Mr. Marzell, you're in a state which terrifies me."

"I repeated all I had said before, more coherently however. Then Pauline said:

""But how did you ever get it in your head that I'm in love with anybody, or engaged to be married? There's not a word of truth in either the one story or the other, I can assure you."

"I maintained, on the other hand, that I had been quite certain ever since the first moment I had set eyes on her that she was in love; and as she kept pressing me to explain more clearly, I told her the whole story of that first Monday of ours in the Webersche Zelt. Scarcely had I finished it when Pauline got up and danced about the room with shouts of laughter, crying:

""Oh! good gracious! It's too delicious altogether! Well! what dreams! what ludicrous absurdities to take in one's head! Oh! I never heard anything like it! it's really beyond everything!"

"I sat nonplussed; Pauline came back to me, took me by the hands, and shook me by them, as one does to rouse a person from a deep sleep.

""Now please to listen to what I'm going to tell you," she said, trying hard, but not very successfully, to restrain her laughter. "The young man whom you took for a messenger of love was a shopman from Bramigk, the draper's; the note he gave me was from Bramigk himself. He, like the most charming and courteous of shopkeepers as he is, had promised to get me a hat from Paris (I had admired the

pattern when I saw it), and to let me know as soon as it arrived. I wanted it particularly to wear the evening of that Whit Monday when we were all in the Webersche Zelt. I wanted to put it on to go to a singing tea in; you know what we call a singing tea here? A place where people sing in order to drink tea, and drink tea for the purpose of singing. Very well! The hat had come, but it was so badly made that it had to be all altered before I could wear it. This was the fatal news that made me shed a tear or two. I didn't want my father to see that it had made me cry, but he soon found out what I was vexed about, and chaffed me unmercifully on the subject. You know I have a habit of holding my handkerchief to my face, as I did that day, when anything annoys me?"

"Pauline burst out laughing again. But a bitter frost seemed to go through my veins and marrow, and a voice within me seemed to cry, "Wretched, shallow, disgusting dress-worshipper!"

"Come, come!" interrupted Alexander, 'that's terribly severe, and not true of her. I call it going too far.... However, let's hear the rest of your story.'

"My feelings,' said Marzell, 'I really cannot describe to you. I had awakened from the mocking dream in which some wicked demon had held me enthralled. I felt, now, that I had never really been in love with Pauline, but had only been the sport of some incomprehensible self-mystification. I could scarcely find a syllable to say; my whole body shook and trembled with rage and vexation. When Pauline, in alarm, asked what was the matter with me, I pretended that I was taken suddenly unwell, and I fled, like a hunted deer, out of the house for ever. As I was crossing the square of the Gendarmerie, I saw a body of volunteers falling in to march off and join the army. This showed me clearly the course I ought to adopt, for the calming of my mind, and to forget this miserable business. Instead of going home, I went off and enrolled myself for service in the field. Everything was arranged in a couple of hours' time. I ran home, put on my uniform, packed my knapsack, took my musket and bayonet, and went to hand over to the charge of my landlady what things I was going to leave behind. While I was talking to her, I heard some commotion going on on the stairs outside.

"Ah! they're bringing him down," said the landlady, and opened the door. I saw Nettelmann, the madman, coming down between two keepers. He had on a lofty crown of gilt paper, and was carrying a long ruler, with a gilt apple on the top of it.

"He thinks he's King of Amboyna again, now," the landlady whispered, "and he's been doing such extraordinary things of late that his brother has had to have him taken to the asylum."

"He recognized me; smiled down at me with proud benignity, and said, "Now that the Bulgarians have been vanquished by our trusty General Tellheim, we are returning to our capital."

"Though I wasn't making any attempt to speak to him, he motioned me to silence with a wave of his hand, and said:

"Enough, enough! we are aware what you would say, good sir. No more! We are satisfied with you; you have done your duty. Accept this trifle as a mark of our favour and esteem."

"With which he took two or three cloves from his waistcoat-pocket and put them into my hand. The men put him into a carriage which was waiting. The tears came to my eyes as I saw him driven off.

"I hope we soon shall see you back again, safe and sound, and covered with glory," said the landlady, shaking me warmly by the hand. With many a painful thought in my tormented breast, I ran out into the night, and soon came up with the party of my comrades, who were singing cheery soldier-songs as they marched along.'

"Then," said Alexander, 'you feel certain that your love for Pauline was a mere self-mystification?'

"As sure as that I'm alive," answered Marzell; 'and it won't require much knowledge of mankind to convince you that my rapid change of sentiment, when I found I hadn't a rival, would have been impossible otherwise. Moreover, I am seriously in love now; and although I laughed at the notion of your being married, because the idea of you in the capacity of Paterfamilias seems rather too funny, somehow (I hope you won't be vexed at my saying so), I am expecting very soon to lead a darling girl home as my bride, in a fairer land than ours.'

"I'm very glad, and I give you my heartiest congratulations, my dear, dear old fellow," said Alexander, quite delighted.

"See how pleased he is that somebody else is going to follow his own absurd example," said Severin. 'As far as I'm concerned, the idea of marriage fills me with absolute horror. However, I should like to tell you the adventure I had with Pauline; it will amuse you.'

"Well, what had you to do with Pauline?" asked Alexander, in an irritable tone, 'We must hear that.'

"It didn't amount to very much," said Severin, 'compared to Marzell's long tale, with all its psychological remarks and illustrations. Mine is a very commonplace piece of fun. You know that, about this time two years ago, I was in a very strange condition altogether. Probably it was the state of my health, which was very queer at that time, which had converted me into a terribly sensitive, overstrung, fanciful spirit-seer. I was always floating on a boundless ocean of dreams and presentiments. I thought I understood the language of birds, like a Persian Mage. I heard voices in the rustling of the trees, sometimes of warning, sometimes of consolation. I saw my own image wandering in the clouds of the sky. Very well! It happened one day, when I was sitting in a lonely part of the Thiergarten on a bank of grass, that I got into a condition which I can only compare to that species of delirium which one often feels just when one is falling asleep. I seemed to be suddenly surrounded with the scent of a most delicious rose, but at the same time I became aware that this rose odour really was a beautiful being, whom I had long, though unconsciously, loved with the deepest and most passionate devotion. I strove to see her with my corporeal eyes; but it seemed to me that a great, dark-red carnation was laid on my brow, and the scent of this carnation burned away the rose perfume, as with a scorching ray, benumbing my senses so that a bitter sense of pain took possession of me, which strove to find expression in accents of wild anguish. Through the trees came sighing a sound like that when the evening wind touches the Æolian Harp with a gentle waft of its pinions, and breaks the spell which holds the music prisoned and sleeping within the strings. But this was not *my* sound. It was that of the beautiful being who was stricken to death (as I was also) by the hostile contact of the carnation. If I may put this vision of mine into the form of an Indian myth, I might say that the rose and the carnation represented, for me, life and death; and all the absurdities which I said and perpetrated this day two years ago were chiefly due to the circumstance that in that beautiful creature, who was sitting in that chair there, and who has since assumed the corporeal form of Pauline Asling, I fancied I recognized her whose love had disclosed itself to me in the form of the rose perfume. You remember that I got away from you as soon as I could, leaving you in the Thiergarten. A sure presentiment told me that if I made an effort, and got quickly through the Leipzig gate, and then to Unter den Linden, I should meet the family, at the slow rate they were walking at, somewhere near the castle; so I ran as hard as I could; and I did meet them, very near the place where I had thought I should. I followed them at a little distance, and found out, that same evening, where the beautiful creature lived. You will probably laugh when I tell you that I thought I could scent a mysterious perfume of rose and carnation, actually in Green Street itself. For the rest, I conducted myself like some boy in a state of calf-love, who destroys the finest trees, contrary to the forest regulations, by carving interlaced initials on

them, and carries about a withered petal, which the beloved has dropped, next his heart, wrapped in seven pieces of paper. That is, I used to pass under her window twelve, fifteen, or twenty times a-day; and if I saw her at it, I would stare at her, without any salutation, in a way which must have been funny enough. Heaven only knows how I arrived at the conviction that she understood me, and was fully conscious of the psychical influence which she had exerted on me in that flower-vision, and recognized in me him over whom the hostile carnation had cast a dark pall as he was striving to clasp her, who had thus risen as a planet of love in the depths of his being. That very day I sat down and wrote to her. I told her my vision; how I had then seen her at the Webersche Zelt, and known her as the being of my dream. I said I knew she fancied she loved another, and that in this connection something disastrous had come into her life. There could be no doubt, I said, that she, like me, had become aware of our intimate psychic relation, and our mutual devotion, in some dream-consciousness such as my own; though perhaps it was but now that my vision had clearly revealed to her all that had been slumbering in the depths of her nature; but, in order that this might come, joyfully and gladsomely, into actual life, so that I might approach her with a heart at rest, I implored her to be at the window the next day, at twelve o'clock, and, as an unmistakeable symbol of our happy love, to wear fresh-blown roses on her breast. Should she, however, be irresistibly drawn away from her *rapport* with me, through hostile deception, by some other--if she rejected me without remead--I asked her to wear carnations instead of roses. The letter was probably a mad and senseless affair. That I am prepared to admit now. I sent it by such a trusty messenger that I knew it would reach the proper hands. Full of inward anxiety, and with a heavy heart, I went the next day at twelve o'clock to Green Street. I neared the house. I saw a white form at the window. My heart throbbed so that it almost burst my bosom. I came in front of the house. The old gentleman--he was the white figure--opened the window. He had a great white nightcap on, with a large bunch of carnations stuck in front of it. He nodded in a friendly way, so that the flowers waved and quivered; he wafted kisses of his hand at me, with the sweetest smiles. Just then I caught sight of Pauline, as well, peeping out from behind the curtains. She was laughing! I had been standing motionless, like a man under a spell; but when I saw her, I rushed away like a mad creature. There! you can understand, if you had any doubt about it before, that this cured me completely; but the shame of it would not let me rest. As Marzell did later, I went off at once to join the troops on active service, and nothing but the adversity of fate prevented us from meeting again.'

"Alexander laughed immoderately over the humorous old gentleman.

"Then this,' said Marzell, 'was what he was after that time when I found him with the nightcap; and of course it was your letter that he was reading to the girls.'

"Of course,' said Severin; 'and although I can see the absurdity of the thing now, and think the old gentleman was perfectly right, and feel really obliged to him for the drasticity and appropriateness of the dose of medicine he made me swallow, still that adventure of mine causes me the most intense annoyance, and, to this hour, I can't endure the sight of a carnation.'

"Well,' said Marzell, 'we've both been pretty severely punished for our folly. Alexander, who doesn't seem to have fallen in love with Pauline till we had gone through with our share of the business, turns out to have been the wisest of the three: and, for that reason, he has kept clear of further absurdities, and has none to tell us about.'

"But, at all events,' said Severin, 'he can tell us how he came by his wife.'

"Really, my dear old fellow,' said Alexander, 'there's very little to tell; except that I saw her, fell in love with her, and married her. But there's one thing connected with it which may interest you, because my aunt has to do with it.'

"Well! well! tell us!' they both cried.

"You will remember," said Alexander, "that at that time I left Berlin, and my house--uncanny though it was to me by reason of my aunt's "walking" in it at night--greatly against my will. The connection of all these matters was as follows. One fine morning, after T had been terribly disturbed the whole of the night by tappings and rappings in all directions--which came into the room where I was sleeping, this time--I was lying in the window seat, quite tired and exhausted, and excessively out of temper and annoyed with the whole affair. I was looking out into the street mechanically, when, right opposite, in the big house over the way, a window opened, and a most beautiful girl in a pretty morning dress looked out. Much as I had admired Pauline, I thought her whom I then saw more charming still. I couldn't withdraw my eyes from her. At last she looked down; she couldn't help seeing me. I made her a greeting, and she returned it with indescribable pleasantness of manner. I found out from Mistress Anne who the people who lived there were, and I made up my mind that I must make their acquaintance somehow, so as to get nearer to her. It was an odd thing that, as soon as my thoughts were occupied with this young lady, and I was wholly sunk in sweet love-dreams about her, all the supernatural noises connected with my aunt ceased. Mistress Anne, whom I made as much of as ever I could, and who had quite got over her dread of me, often told me a good deal about my aunt. She was inconsolable because the poor soul, who had led such a pious, and exemplary life, could find no rest in her grave, and she laid all the blame upon the man who had treated her so cruelly, and the insuperable disappointment she had suffered on her wedding day--that was to have been. I told her, with much joy, that I never heard anything at night now.

""Ah!" she cried, with tears in her voice, "if the Feast of the Invention of the Cross were only over!"

""What is there specially about the Feast of the Invention of the Cross?" I quickly asked.

""Oh, good gracious!" she answered, "don't you know? That was to have been her marriage day. She died on the third of April, you remember. That day week she was buried. The executor put seals on all the rooms except the big drawing-room and the closet off it; so I had to live in them, though I felt it terribly, I couldn't tell why. When day was dawning on the morning of the Feast of the Invention of the Cross, I felt an icy hand on my forehead, and distinctly heard your aunt's voice say 'Get up, Anne! Get up! it's time for you to dress me; the bridegroom's coming.' I jumped out of bed, terribly frightened, and hurried on my clothes. Everything was silent, and there was only a cold air moving through the room. Mimi kept on whimpering and whining, and even Hans--contrarily to cat-nature--groaned, and pressed himself, frightened, into corners. Then presses and cupboards seemed to be being opened, and there was the sound of the rustling of a silk dress, and a voice singing a morning hymn. I heard all this distinctly, master, but I saw nothing. Terror nearly overmastered me, but I knelt down in a corner and prayed fervently. Then a small table seemed to be being moved, and glasses and teacups set out on it; footsteps went up and down the room. I couldn't stir, and--what more shall I say?--I heard the mistress going about, just as she always had done on that unlucky day, sobbing and sighing; till the clock struck ten, when I distinctly heard the words 'Go to your bed, Anne; it's all over now.' Then I fell down insensible, and the people found me lying there in the morning when they broke open the door, for they thought something must have happened to me as they had seen or heard nothing of me. But I've never told anybody about it except you."

""From my own experience, I couldn't doubt that everything had happened as the old woman described it, and I was glad I hadn't arrived sooner, so as to have had to go through it myself. It was just at this very time, when the ghost seemed to be laid, and I was living in the sweetest of hopes and anticipations, that I was obliged to leave Berlin; and that was the cause of my annoyance, which you noticed yourselves. But before six months were over I had taken my retirement, and then I came back as quickly as possible. I very soon managed to make the

acquaintance of the family over the way, and I found the young lady, who had seemed so fascinating at first sight, to be even more charming and attractive in every respect on closer acquaintance, so that I felt that the happiness of my life was wholly bound up in her. I don't know quite why, but I always thought she was in love with someone else; and this opinion was confirmed once when the conversation happened to turn on a certain young gentleman, at the mention of whom tears came to her eyes and she rose and left the room. Still, I put no constraint on my feelings, but, without actually saying anything to her, I allowed her to see the affection which fettered me to her. She appeared to like me better every day, and to be much gratified with my homage, which took the form of a thousand little attentions calculated to please her.'

"'Never,' cried Marzell, interrupting Alexander in his story 'never should I have believed that this inexperienced, uncouth sort of a fellow would have been capable of all that. He's a spirit-seer and a lover *à la mode* rolled into one. But now that he tells us about it, I believe it, and see him pervading all the shops to get some piece of head gear the young lady had a fancy for, or rushing into Bouché's, out of breath, to buy the finest roses and carnations----'

"To the devil with these damnable flowers!' cried Severin.

"Alexander went on with his story:

"Don't suppose I made her any valuable presents; I knew better. That wasn't the sort of thing to go down in that house, I soon saw. What I did was to associate apparently unimportant civilities and attentions with myself, personally. I never appeared without bringing some pattern she had wanted, or a new song, or some book which she hadn't seen, or something of the kind. If I didn't call every forenoon for half an hour or so, I was missed. In short, why should I bother you with tiresome details? My relations with her passed into that pleasant phase of confidential intimacy which leads to love-avowal, and to marriage. But I wished to get rid of the very shadow of the last remaining cloud, and, therefore, in a pleasant hour I spoke, straight out, of my foregone conclusion that she either then liked somebody else, or had done so previously; and I mentioned all the circumstances which led me to this conclusion, speaking particularly of the young gentleman, the mention of whom had brought tears to her eyes.

"'I must confess to you," she said, "that longer intercourse with that gentleman--whom a mere chance brought to the house, as a perfect stranger might have been dangerous to my peace of mind, and, indeed, I did feel a strong regard for him growing in me; and that is why I am always so sorry, when I think of the terrible misfortune which parted us, that I can't help crying."

"'The terrible misfortune which parted you?" I inquired.

"'Yes," she said; "I never knew any man whose conversation, and intellect, and whole character, had such a power over me, altogether. But I couldn't deny, what my father always said, that he was continually in a most strangely excited condition. This I attributed to causes which we knew nothing about, perhaps some deep impression made upon his mind by something that had happened to him during the war, which he had been serving in; though my father thought drink was the cause of it. But I was right, as the event proved. One day he found me alone, and exhibited a state of mind, which I at first took for an outburst of the most passionate affection. But by-and-by, when he ran away, trembling in every limb as with a frost, and uttering unintelligible cries, I could only conclude it was insanity, and so it was, poor fellow! He had once happened to mention his address, and I remembered it. After we had seen nothing of him for some weeks, my father sent there to make inquiries. The landlady--or rather, the porter who waited on the lodgers--told our servant that he had gone mad some time before, and been taken to the asylum. I suppose it must have been lottery speculations which turned his head, for it seems he thought he was king of the Ambé."

"'Good gracious!' cried Marzell, 'that must have been Nettelmann. Ambé--

Amboyna.'

"It may have been some confusion,' said Severin under his breath. 'I seem to see daylight through it, but go on, please.'

"Alexander looked at Severin with a sad smile, and then continued:

"My mind was now at ease, and soon the young lady and I were engaged, and the wedding day fixed. I wanted to sell my house, for the ghostly noises were still heard in it now and then. But my father-in-law advised me not to do so, and so it came about that I told him the whole story. He is a jovial sort of man, full of vital energy; but he grew deeply thoughtful over this, and spoke about it in a way that I hadn't expected.

"'People used to have a pious simple faith," he said. "We believed in another world, but we admitted the feebleness of our senses. Then came 'enlightenment,' and made everything so very clear and enlightened, that we can see nothing for excess of light, and go banging our noses against the first tree we come to in the wood. We insist, now-a-days, on grasping the other world with stretched-out arms of flesh and bone. Keep you the house, and leave the rest to me."

"I was astonished when he settled that the marriage should take place in the drawing-room of my house, and on the day of the Feast of the Invention of the Cross; and still more when he had everything arranged just as it had been on the celebrated day of my aunt's marriage--that was to have been. Mistress Anne crept about, in whispered prayer, her face contracted with anxious alarm. The bride came in her wedding dress, the clergyman arrived nothing out of the common was to be heard or seen. But when the blessing was pronounced, a gentle sigh seemed to pass through the room; and the bride, and I myself, and every one present declared that at that instant we all felt an indescribable sense of happiness strike through us like an electric spark. Since that moment there never has been the slightest trace of anything haunting me, except to-day, when thinking vividly of the charming Pauline, did bring a haunting something into my married happiness."

"This Alexander said with an odd smile, and looking round him.

"'Oh! you donkey!' said Marzell. 'I hope she may not turn up here to-day. I really shouldn't like to answer for the consequences.'

"Meanwhile a good many pleasure-seekers had come into the grounds, and taken their places at various tables. But the one where the Aslings had been sitting on that memorable day two years ago was still unoccupied.

"'There's a very distinct presentiment at work within me,' said Severin. 'I quite expect to see that place there occupied by ----'

"He stopped, for as he spoke, behold! Geheime Rath Asling appeared, with his wife on his arm; Pauline came after them, looking the picture of happiness and beauty--in all other respects exactly the Pauline of two years back. Just as was the case then, she was looking back over her shoulder, as if expecting to see somebody. She caught sight of Alexander, who had risen from his chair.

"'Ah!' she cried, running up to him joyfully. 'Here you are already!'

"He took her hand, and said to Marzell and Severin:

"'Dear old friends! this is my darling wife, Pauline!'"

The Brethren were much pleased with Ottmar's story.

"You had special reasons for laying the scene of your story in Berlin," said Theodore, "and giving the names of streets, squares, etc. But I think it is a good

thing, as a general rule, to indicate localities in this way. It not only brings in an element of historical truth, which helps a sluggish fancy; but--at all events for people who know the places--the story gains greatly in life and vigour."

"Our friend hasn't managed to steer altogether clear of that ironical bent of his, though, which is especially strong in all that concerns the fairer sex," said Lothair. "However, I make no attack on him upon that score."

"Merely a pinch of salt," said Ottmar, "to season rather meagre fare. For the fact is, I felt it as I read the story--it's too prosaic--too much about everyday matters."

"As Theodore approves of naming the scene of action," said Cyprian; "as Ottmar thinks his subject-matter over-prosaic; and if Lothair will allow me a pinch of irony now and then, I'll read you a story which suggested itself to me when I was living in Dantzic."

He read:--

"THE ARTUS HOF.

"Doubtless, kind reader, you have often heard a great deal about the fine old business town of Dantzic. And, probably, you know, from reading of them, all about the 'lions' of the place. But I should be better pleased could I think that you had been there, in person, at some time or other, and had actually seen, with your own eyes, the wonderful hall into which I fain would take you; I mean the 'Artus Hof.'

"In the mid-day hours, a throng of business men, of all nations and conditions, goes surging up and down in it, with a confused uproar of voices which deafens the ear. But, no doubt, the time when--if you were in Dantzic--you would best like to go into it would be after the exchange hours are over, when the business men are gone to their mid-day meal, and only a few rare ones now and then cross the hall at intervals with preoccupied faces--there is a passage through it, leading from one street to another--for then a magic half-light comes stealing through the dim, ancient windows, and all the curious frescoes and carvings which ornament the walls seem to come to life, and begin to move. Stags with great antlers, and other strange animals, gaze down at you with gleaming eyes, so that you don't half care to look at them. And the more the light fades, the more awe-inspiring grows the marble statue of the king in the centre of the hall. The large picture of the Virtues and the Vices (whose names are written beside them) loses a good deal of its moral effect: for the Virtues soar more irretrievably aloft, half hidden in grey clouds; and the Vices--beautiful women in shining raiment--come forward enticingly, and seem to be trying to lure you from the path of duty, whispering to you in accents sweet and low. Wherefore, you turn from them to the belt of colour which goes nearly round the walls, on which you see long trains of soldiers, in various costumes of the old Imperial-City times, going marching along. Worthy burgomasters, with shrewd, significant faces, ride at their head on spirited horses, richly caparisoned. The drummers and fifers, and the Hallebardiers march along so briskly and bravely that you begin to hear the stirring martial music, and expect them to go tramping out at the great window yonder on to the market-place--looking at all this, you would, if you were a draughtsman, set to work and make a pen-and-ink sketch of that fine stately Burgomaster there, with the strikingly handsome page in attendance on him. There is always plenty of pens, ink, and paper on the tables--provided at the public expense for the merchants' use--so that you would not be able to resist the temptation.

"There would be no objection to your so employing your time, kind reader; but that was by no means the case with Traugott, the young merchant, who was continually getting into the most terrible scrapes on this very account.

"Write off at once and advise our correspondent in Hamburg of the day's transactions, Herr Traugott," said Elias Roos, the head of a flourishing firm, of which Traugott had just been admitted a partner, being moreover engaged to Roos's only daughter Christina. Traugott with some difficulty found a vacant place at the crowded tables, took a sheet of paper, dipped his pen in the ink, and was just going to begin with a fine caligraphic flourish, when--as he was rapidly revolving in his mind what he was going to say--he lifted his eyes mechanically to the wall above him.

"Now, chance had so ordained matters that he was sitting just in front of a certain little group of two figures, the sight of which always caused him a strange, inexplicable sense of sorrow. It represented a grave-looking, almost sombre man, with a dark, curling beard, handsomely dressed, riding a black horse, with a page at his bridle whose masses of hair and richly-tinted costume gave him almost the appearance of a girl. The face and figure of the man caused Traugott a certain feeling akin to fear, but a world of sweet presage streamed forth upon him from the face of the page. Somehow he never could withdraw his eyes from this couple whenever he happened to look at them; consequently, instead of writing the Hamburg letter as he ought to have done, he kept gazing at these two figures, and drawing with his pen on the paper before him, without observing what he was about. When this had been going on for some little time, somebody tapped him on the shoulder from behind, and said, in rather a hollow voice:

"Good! very good! I like that; it promises well!"

"Traugott, waking from his dream, turned sharply round, and felt like a man struck by a thunderbolt. Astonishment, alarm, rendered him speechless; for he found himself staring into the face of the very man who was represented in the fresco on the wall above him. It was he who had spoken the words, and beside him stood the beautiful page, smiling at Traugott as if with inexpressible affection.

"It is they in the body," was the thought which flashed through his mind. 'They'll throw off those ugly cloaks directly, and appear in their beautiful antique costume.'

"The seething masses of people were hurrying to and fro, and the two strange figures were speedily lost in the throng. But Traugott stood in the same spot, with his letter of advice in his hand, till the business hours were long over, and only one or two people passed at intervals through the hall. At last he saw Herr Elias Roos, coming up to him with two strange gentlemen.

"Well, Traugott," said Elias Roos, 'what are you cogitating about here so late in the afternoon? Have you sent off the Hamburg advices all right?'

"Without thinking what he was doing, Traugott handed him the sheet of paper which he had in his hand. On seeing it, Elias Roos struck his clenched fists together over his head, stamped with his right foot, slightly at first, then very violently, and shouted, till the hall resounded:

"Oh! good Lord! Oh! good Lord! Stupid, childish nonsense! Here's a partner for you! Here's a precious son-in-law! Damnation, sir, are you out of your senses? The letter of advice, the letter of advice? Oh God--the *post!*"

"Herr Elias nearly went into a fit with anger. The two strangers smiled at this singular letter of advice, which certainly wasn't of much use as such, as it stood. Immediately after the words 'Referring to your esteemed order of the 20th instant,' Traugott had made a firm, bold outline sketch of the two striking figures of the old man and the page. The strange gentlemen strove to calm Herr Elias, addressing him in the most soothing tones; but he shoved his wig into various positions, banged his cane on the floor, and cried:

"The devil's in the fellow! Had a letter of advice to write; instead of that, goes

and draws pictures! Five hundred pounds gone!--pht!--he blew through his fingers; and then repeated, in a weeping tone, 'Five--hundred--pounds!'

"Don't distress yourself, Herr Roos," said, at last, the elder of the two strangers; 'the post is gone, certainly, but I am sending a courier off to Hamburg in an hour's time. He can take your letter of advice, and it will reach your correspondent sooner than it would have done by the regular mail.'

"Most incomparable of men!" cried Herr Elias, with full sunshine restored to his face.

"Traugott had recovered from his astonishment, and was hastening to the table to write the advice; but Herr Elias shoved him away, saying, through his teeth, with most diabolical looks:

"Don't trouble yourself, my lad!"

"While Herr Elias was writing busily, the elder of the strangers went up to Traugott, who was standing silent and abashed, and said:

"You seem to be a little out of your element here, my dear sir! It would never have occurred to a real man of business to sketch figures when he ought to have been writing a letter of advice.'

"This Traugott could not gainsay. Much astonished, himself, at what had occurred, he said:

"I can't quite make it out. I've written plenty of letters of advice. It's only now and then that I make one of these mistakes.'

"My dear sir," said the stranger, with a smile, 'I must say I don't think it seems to be a mistake at all. I should rather be inclined to suppose that very few of your letters of advice are worth as much as this admirable, accurate, and powerful outline sketch. There is true genius in it!'

"With which he took the paper from Traugott, folded it carefully up, and put it in his pocket. This convinced Traugott firmly that he had done something much better than writing a letter of advice. A new spirit awoke within him; and when Elias Roos, who had finished his letter, and was still very much out of temper, cried, 'That nonsense of yours very nearly cost me £500,' Traugott answered him, louder and more firmly than usual, 'Don't go on making such a fuss, or I shall have to bid you good-morning, and write no more of your damned letters of advice.'

"Herr Elias set his wig straight with both hands, stared at Traugott, and said:

"What nonsense you're talking, partner; you can't be serious, son-in-law?"

"The elder of the strangers intervened, and it required very few words to wholly re-establish the peace between them. Then they all went to dinner at Elias Roos's house.

"Christina received them in a beautifully-fitting dress, which set off her well-developed, pretty figure to advantage. She wielded the massive soup-ladle with great skill.

"I suppose I ought to describe the five people at this dinner-table; but Traugott's adventures are waiting to be told, and such pictures of said people as I could sketch would be very hasty. You are aware that Elias Roos wears a round wig, and I could add little more, as, from what he has said, you can see before you the little, stoutish man in his leather-coloured suit with gilt buttons. Of Traugott I have much to say, because this is his story which I am telling, and he is the principal character in it. If it is true that our thoughts, words, and works--coming, as they do, from the inner depths of our natures--do so shape and model the outward man that there results a certain marvellous harmony of the whole--not to

be explained, only to be felt--which we term 'character,' Traugott's appearance will be plain to you from my story without any further description. If this is not the case, all further description would be useless, and you can take this tale as not read. The two strange gentlemen are uncle and nephew, well-to-do business men, and 'friends'--that is to say, business connections--of Roos's. They come from Koenigsberg, wear English clothes, carry about mahogany boot-jacks from London, are connoisseurs in the arts, and, taking them all round, persons of much cultivation. The uncle is making a collection of pictures, which is why he pocketed Traugott's sketch.

"As I perceive that Christina will speedily vanish from my story, I had better give a few indications of what she is like before she makes her exit. She is of medium height, with a finely-developed figure; about two or three and twenty, with a round face, a short nose, slightly turned up, and kindly light-blue eyes, which say, with a charming smile, to every man she meets, 'I'm going to get married very soon (don't much mind to whom). She has a beautiful, fair complexion; hair not over red; most kissable lips, and a mouth rather too large, which she has an odd way of drawing on one side, though two rows of pearls are thereby rendered visible. If the next house were on fire, and the flames were catching the room, she would just, quickly, feed her canary and put away the clothes from the wash, and then go and tell her father that the house was on fire. No almond-tart ever came to grief in her hands, and her butter-sauce is always of exactly the right thickness, because she always stirs it from left to right, never the other way. As Elias Roos has just poured out the last of the bottle into old Franz's glass, I further remark, hastily, that it is because he's going to marry her that she's so fond of Traugott; for what in the world would become of her if she weren't to get married? After dinner Roos proposed to the strangers a walk round the walls. How gladly would Traugott have made his escape and been by himself! Never had he known anything like the thoughts, feelings, and sensations which he had experienced to-day. Escape he could not, however, for just as he was slipping out at the door, without even kissing Christina's hand, Herr Elias seized him by the coat-tails, crying, 'Come, partner; you're not going to give us the slip, are you, son-in-law?' So he had to stay.

"A well known professor of natural philosophy was of opinion that Nature, in her capacity of a skilled experimentalist, has somewhere or other set up a tremendous electrical machine, from which mysterious conductors stretch all through our lives; and, though we avoid them and keep clear of them as well as we can, at some given moment or other we can't help treading on them, and then the flash and the shock dart through us, altering everything in us completely. No doubt Traugott had stepped on to one of these conductors at the moment when he began sketching the old man and the page, without having any idea that they were standing behind him in the flesh; for the strange apparition of them had gone darting through him like a flash of lightning, and he felt that he now clearly knew and understood things which had formerly been but presages and dreams. The shyness which used to tie his tongue when conversation turned upon things which lay hidden, like holy mysteries, in the depths of his being, had vanished; and so, when the uncle began finding fault with the wonderful figures, partly painted, partly carved, in the Artus-Hof, as being 'in bad taste,' and particularly the soldier-pictures as being 'wild and extravagant,' Traugott boldly maintained that, though it was possible that they might not strictly conform to the canons of art, still, it had been the case with him, as well as with many others, that a marvellous world of imagination had dawned upon him in the Artus Hof, and that some of the figures had told him, in looks full of life, as well as in distinct words, that he was a mighty master himself, and able to make and form like him from whose mysterious *atelier* they had proceeded.

"Herr Elias really looked, if possible, even a greater ass than usual when the youngster spoke these lofty words; but the uncle, with a strange, slightly sneering smile, said:

"I repeat what I said before, that I can't understand how you should be a man

of business, and not devote yourself to art altogether.' The man was excessively antipathetic to Traugott, somehow; and he therefore, during the walk, kept to the nephew, who was very pleasant and friendly.

"'Ah, Heavens!' the nephew said, 'how I envy you that talent of yours! If I could only draw like you! I really have a great turn for it; I've drawn some capital eyes, and ears and noses, and two or three heads even; but oh!--the office, you know,--the office!'

"'I thought,' said Traugott, 'that when one was conscious of a real gift--a true calling--for art, one ought to devote one's self to it altogether.'

"'Be an artist, you mean? How can you say such a thing? Look here, my dear fellow; I've thought over this subject perhaps more than most people; indeed I have such a reverence for art that I've gone deeper into this, almost, than I can explain, so that I can only give you a hint or two of what I mean.'

"He looked so learned and so profoundly thoughtful as he said this, that Traugott really felt a sort of veneration for him.

"'You'll admit,' said the nephew, when he had taken a pinch of snuff, and sneezed a couple of times, 'that the function of art is to weave flowers into life. Amusement--recreation after the serious business of life--is the delightful end and object of all artistic effort; and this is attained exactly in proportion as the productions of art are satisfactory. This goal of art is distinctly perceptible in actual life, because it is only those who practise art on this principle who enjoy that comfort and prosperity which flies away for ever from those who (against the true principles of things) look upon art as the primary object and highest aim of life. Therefore, my dear sir, don't you pay any attention to what my uncle said, nor let that lead you astray from the serious business of life, to an occupation which can no more stand alone than a helpless infant learning to walk.'

"Here the nephew paused, as if expecting Traugott to reply; but he had no idea what to say. The nephew's harangue had struck him as being a farrago of incredible nonsense, and he contented himself with asking him what he considered 'the serious business of life.' The nephew looked at him rather puzzled.

"'Well,' he said at last, 'you'll admit that a man must live; and the embarrassed professional artist can scarcely be said to do that.' He then went on talking a quantity of nonsense, using fine words and elaborate expressions; the result of which was, that by 'living' he meant having plenty of money and no debts; eating and drinking of the best, and having a nice wife and children, with no grease-spots on their Sunday-clothes, etc. This seemed to stifle Traugott, and he was glad when he got quit of this sapient nephew, and was alone in his own quarters.

"'What a wretched, miserable life I am leading, to be sure!' he said to himself. 'In the beautiful morning--in the glorious, golden spring-time, when the soft west wind comes breathing even into the gloomy streets, and seems to tell, in its gentle murmurings, of all the wonders and marvels that are blossoming into beauty in the fields and woods--I slink into Elias Roos's smoky office, "creeping like snail unwillingly to school." There pale faces sit behind shapeless desks, and nothing breaks the gloomy silence, buried in which everybody labours, but the turning of the leaves of big account-books, the jingle of money on the desks, and an occasional unintelligible word or two. And what kind of labour is it? What is all this thinking and writing for? That the coins in the chest may increase in number; that the Fafner's ill-luck-bringing hoard may sparkle and gleam the brighter. The artist--the sculptor--can go out with uplifted head, and inhale the refreshing spring-rays, which kindle in him an inner world full of glorious pictures, so that it bursts into happiness of life and motion. Out of the dark thickets come wonderful forms, created by his own spirit; and they remain his; because the mysterious spells of light, of colour, and of form dwell within him, and he fixes down for ever that which his mental vision has seen, representing it to the senses. Why should I

not break away from this hateful life? The wonderful old man has confirmed me in the idea that I am called to be an artist; still more has the beautiful page. It is true he didn't say anything, but I felt that his look told me clearly everything which has been in me so long, in the form of presentiment, but which a thousand doubts and misgivings have pressed down and prevented from shooting up into life. Can I not be a great artist, in spite of my abominable calling?'

"Traugott got out all the drawings he had ever done, and looked through them critically. Much of his work struck him quite differently from what it had formerly done, and generally seemed much better than he had thought. There was one drawing particularly--one of his childish attempts, done in his early boyhood--a leaf, on which the old burgomaster and the page were copied, in somewhat distorted, but clearly recognizable outlines; and he remembered well that, even in these early days, those figures had a strange influence upon him, and that he was once, in the gloaming, impelled, as by an irresistible spell, to leave his play and go to the Artus Hof, where he laboured diligently at copying them. He was moved by the deepest, most melancholy yearning as he looked at this drawing. He ought by rights to have gone to the office for a couple of hours as usual, but he felt that he could not; and, instead, he went out and up on to the Karlsberg. Thence he looked out over the sea: and in the dashing billows, in the grey evening haze rising, and lying in wonderful shapes of cloud-vapour over Hela, he strove to read, as in a magic mirror, the destiny of his future life.

"Do you not hold, dear reader, that that which comes down into our breasts from the higher realm of love has to reveal itself to us at first as hopeless sorrow? That is the doubt, the misgiving, which comes surging into the artist's heart. He sees the ideal, and feels his powerlessness to grasp it. But then there comes to him a godlike courage; he makes endeavour, and his despair melts away into a sweet longing which gives him strength, and incites him to approach nearer and nearer to that Unattainable which he never reaches, though always getting closer to it.

"Traugott was now powerfully attacked by this hopeless pain. When, early the next morning, he looked again at his drawings, they all seemed feeble and wretched, and he remembered what an experienced friend had often said: that great mischief, together with very mediocre results in art, proceed from the circumstance that people often mistake mere vivid, superficial excitement for a true, inward calling for art. He was much disposed to look upon the Artus Hof and the figures of the burgomaster and the page as outward, superficial excitements of this description. He condemned himself to go back and work in the office, regardless of the loathing, which often came so forcibly upon him that he was obliged to leave off work all of a sudden and rush into the open air. Herr Elias, with careful consideration, attributed this to the poor state of health which he felt certain the deadly pale face of the youngster indicated.

"A considerable time elapsed--the St. Dominic's Fair was at hand, after which Traugott was to marry Christina, and be formally announced to the commercial world as Roos's partner. This point of time was, to him, that of his sorrowful farewell to all his fair hopes and beautiful dreams; and it lay heavy on his heart when he saw Christina hard at work having everything scrubbed and polished on the second floor, folding curtains with her own hands, giving the final polish and glitter to all the brass, etc.

"One day, in the thick of the turmoil in the Artus Hof, at its most crowded hour, Traugott heard a voice behind him, whose well-remembered tones went straight to his heart:

"Is this paper really at such a discount?'

"He turned quickly, and saw, as he had expected, the wonderful old man, who had gone up to a broker to sell some paper whose price was tremendously depreciated. The handsome lad was standing behind the old man, and cast a sad, kindly look at Traugott. He went quickly up, and said:

"Excuse me, sir; but that paper is very low in the market just at present. Still, there can be no doubt that it will stand much better in a very few days. If you will take my advice, you will keep it, and not sell till the quotation is more favourable."

"My good sir," said the old man coldly and irritably, "what have you got to do with my affairs? How do you know but that I may want ready money just at this particular moment, so that this piece of paper may be of no use to me?"

Traugott, vexed that the old man had taken his interference so amiss, was going quickly away, but the lad looked beseechingly at him with tearful eyes.

"I meant you kindly, sir," he said quickly, "and I can't allow you to be such a serious loser. Sell me the paper, on the understanding that I pay you the higher rate which it will stand at in a day or two."

"You're a strange person," said the old man; "I don't see why you should go making my fortune in this sort of way."

As he said this, he looked piercingly at the lad, who cast down bashful eyes of blue. They went with Traugott to his office, where the money was paid over to the old man, who put it in his purse with a face of gloom. Whilst this was going on, the lad said to Traugott:

"Was it not you who were drawing so cleverly a week or two ago in the Artus Hof?"

"Yes," said Traugott, while the colour came to his cheeks as he remembered the letter of advice.

"Oh, then," said the lad, "I'm not surprised----"

The old man looked at him angrily, and he stopped at once. Traugott couldn't help a certain embarrassment in their presence, so that they were gone before he managed to ask where they lived, etc., etc. The looks of them had something so marvellous about them that even the people in the office were struck by it.

The surly book-keeper stuck his pen behind his ear and stared at the old man, with his arms crossed behind his head.

"God bless my soul!" he cried, when the couple had gone out, "that chap with the curly beard and the black cloak looks like an old picture of the year 1400 in the church of St. John."

But Herr Elias took him for a Polish Jew, notwithstanding his aristocratic bearing, and his grave, thoughtful, old-German face.

"Stupid brute!" he cried. "Sells his paper now, and would get at least ten per cent, more for it this day week!" Of course he didn't know that Traugott was going to pay him the difference out of his own pocket; which he did some days afterwards, when he came across the old man and the lad in the Artus Hof again.

"My son," said the old man, "has reminded me that you are a brother-artist; therefore I have accepted this service from you, which otherwise I should not have done."

They were standing beside one of the four granite pillars which support the vaulted roof of the hall, and close to the figures which Traugott had drawn in the letter of advice. He spoke, without hesitation, of the extraordinary likeness of these figures to the old man and the lad. The old man gave a strange smile, laid his hand on Traugott's shoulder, and said, in a low voice of some caution:

"You are not aware, then, that I am Godfredus Berklinger, the German painter, and that I painted the figures which you seem to admire a very long time ago, when I was quite a young student of my art? I painted my own portrait as the Burgomaster, as a *souvenir*, and that the page leading the horse is my son you

may see in a moment if you compare their faces and figures.'

"Traugott was dumb with amazement, but he soon felt that the old man, who believed himself the master who had painted these pictures over two hundred years ago, must be suffering from some species of insanity.

"'Indeed,' said the old man, lifting his head and looking round him with pride, 'it was a glorious springtide of art when I adorned this hall with all these pictures, in honour of the wise King Arthur and his Round Table. I have always felt convinced that the noble presence, who came to me once when I was working here, and called me to mastership, which I had not then attained, was King Arthur himself.'

"'My father,' said the lad, 'is an artist whom there are not many like, and you would not regret it if he were to allow you to come and see his works.'

"The old man had taken a few steps through the hall, which was then empty; and he called to the lad to come away. But Traugott boldly asked him to show him his pictures. The old man scanned him long, with keen, penetrating eyes, and finally said, very seriously:

"'You are somewhat presumptuous, truly, in that you would penetrate into the holy of holies before your apprenticeship is well begun. However, be it so! if your eyes are too feeble to see as yet, you may to some extent surmise. Come to me early to-morrow.'

"He explained where he lived, and Traugott got away from his work as soon as possible the next morning, and hastened to the out-of-the-way street where the old man was to be found. The lad, dressed in antique German costume, opened the door, and took him into a spacious room, where the old man was sitting on a little stool before a large canvas, all covered with a grey ground-tint.

"'You are come at a fortunate time, sir,' cried the old man, 'for I have just this moment put the finishing touches to this great picture, upon which I have been engaged for more than a year, and which has cost me no small pains! It is the companion picture to another of the same size, representing "Paradise Lost," which I finished last year, and which you will see here also. This one, as you see, is "Paradise Regained," and I should pity you if you were to try to discover any hidden allegory in it. It is only weaklings and bunglers who paint allegorical pictures. This picture of mine does not suggest; it *is*! You observe that all these rich groupings of men, animals, flowers and jewels form one harmonious whole, whose loud, glorious music is a pure, heavenly harmony of eternal glorification and ecstasy.'

"Then he began to point out, and give prominence to particular groups. He drew Traugott's attention to the mysteries of the disposition of the light and shade; to the lustre and sparkle of the flowers and gems; to the wonderful forms which, rising out of the bells of lilies, grouped themselves into bands of beautiful maidens and youths; to the bearded men who, with youthful vigour in their looks and motions, seemed to be conversing with curious animals. He spoke louder and louder, more and more vehemently and incoherently.

"'Let thy diamond crown sparkle, thou mighty sage!' he cried, with gleaming eyes riveted on the empty canvas. 'Throw off the Isis-veil which thou hast cast over thy head at the approach of the uninitiate! Why dost thou wrap that dark mantle so carefully over thy breast? I must see thy heart! It is the philosopher's stone, which discloses all secrets. Art thou not *me*? What meanest thou by confronting me with such audacity? Wilt thou do battle with thy master? Dost thou think that gleaming ruby there, which is thy heart, can grind my breast to dust? Come on, then! come forth! come *here*! I am he that made thee, for I am----'

"Here the old man fell to the ground in a heap, as if struck by a lightning flash. Traugott raised him up; the lad brought an easy-chair, in which they placed the

old man, who now seemed to be lying in a quiet sleep.

"You now know my dear old father's condition, sir," said the lad softly, in a low voice. 'A cruel fate has stripped all the flowers away from his life; for many years he has been dead to the art, which was his life formerly. He sits for entire days before a canvas, stretched and grounded as you see that one. This he calls "painting," and you have seen the condition of excitement which the description of one of his so-called pictures produces in him. Besides this, he is tormented by another most unfortunate idea, which makes my life a very sad and unhappy one. But this I look upon as a blow of destiny which carries me away in the same sweep with which it has come over him. If you would like to recover a little from the impression of this strange scene, come with me into the next room, where you will see several pictures painted in my father's earlier, fruitful days.'

"How astonished was Traugott to see a number of works which might have been by the most celebrated painters of the Dutch School! They were generally scenes from life; for instance, a company of people coming back from the chase, singing, and playing on instruments, and the like. They were full of deep meaning; and the heads, particularly, had a wonderful expression of life and vigour. As Traugott was going back to the other room, he noticed a picture close to the door, before which he paused as if spell-bound. It was a portrait of a most beautiful girl, in ancient German dress, but the face was exactly that of the lad, only rounder and with more colour; and the figure seemed to be on a fuller scale. A thrill of nameless delight went through Traugott at the sight of this beautiful lady. In power and vigour the picture was quite equal to a Vandyke. The dark eyes gazed down on Traugott with a might of love-appeal; the sweet lips, half-parted, seemed to be whispering words of affection.

"Oh Heaven! oh Heaven!" sighed Traugott out of the depths of his heart, 'where is she to be found?'

"Come, sir," said the lad, 'we must go to my father.'

"But Traugott cried, like one beside himself:

"Ah! that is she, the beloved of my soul, whom I have so long treasured in the depths of my heart, whom I was conscious of, and recognized only in dreams! Where is she? Where is she?'

"The tears streamed from young Berklinger's eyes; he seemed torn with a spasm of pain, scarce able to master his emotion.

"Come!" he said at last, in a firm, steady voice. 'That is a portrait of my sister, my unfortunate sister, Felizitas. She is lost, gone for ever. You will never see her.'

"Traugott, scarcely conscious what he was doing, let himself be conducted back to the other room. The old man was still asleep, but he started up, with eyes flashing anger, and cried:

"What are you doing here, sir?'

"The lad reminded him that he had just been showing Traugott his new picture. He then seemed to remember what had happened. He appeared to get weaker, and said, very faintly:

"You will pardon an old man's forgetfulness, my dear sir?'

"Your new picture is a most magnificent work," said Traugott. 'I have never seen anything like it. It must take enormous labour and study to paint like that. I trace in myself a great, irresistible bent towards art, and I beg you most earnestly, my dear old master, to take me as your most diligent and hard-working pupil.'

"The old man grew quite serene and kindly. He embraced Traugott, and

promised to be his faithful master and instructor. Traugott went to him every day, and made great progress. His office work was now altogether repugnant to him; he got so careless of it and inattentive to it that Herr Elias Roos made loud complaints, and at last was glad when Traugott, under the pretext of a lingering illness, gave up going to the office at all: for which reason, also, the marriage was put off for an indefinite time, to Christina's no small vexation.

"That Mr. Traugott of yours,' said a business friend to Roos, 'looks as if he had got something or other on his mind; perhaps some old love debit which he would like to square up before he marries; he's so terribly white, and wild-looking.'

"Ay, ay,' said Elias; 'and why not, if he likes? I wonder,' he continued after a little, 'if that sly little baggage of a Christina of mine has been up to any tricks? That book-keeper's a spoony sort of fellow; he's always kissing her hand, and squeezing it. Traugott's over head and ears in love with her. Is it a bit of jealousy, I wonder? Gad! I must watch how the cat jumps a little.'

"But though he watched as carefully as he could, he did *not* see how she jumped; and he said to the business friend aforesaid:

"He's a precious rum customer, Master Traugott, I can tell you; but I see nothing for it but to let him "gang his gate" as he likes best. If he hadn't between seven and eight thousand pounds in my house, I should soon let him see what I'd be after. Damme! he never does a stroke of work in the office.'

"Traugott would now have been leading a life of the brightest sunshine in the study of his art, had his heart not been consumed by the fervour of his love for the beautiful Felizitas, whom he often saw in wondrous dreams. Her portrait had disappeared; the old man had taken it away, and Traugott did not dare to ask about it for fear of annoying him. For the rest, Berklinger had got more and more confidence in Traugott as time went on, and he now allowed him to better his narrow housekeeping in many ways, instead of paying for his lessons in money. Traugott learned from young Berklinger that the old man had lost very considerably by the sale of a small collection of pictures, and that the paper which Traugott had negotiated for him was all that had been left of that sum, and was in fact all the money they had remaining. But it was extremely seldom that he was able to have any talk with the lad in private; the old man watched him with extraordinary vigilance, and always instantly interfered when he was beginning to talk freely and unconstrainedly with his friend. This pained Traugott greatly, as from his extraordinary likeness to Felizitas he was devoted to him; and often, when he was near the lad, he almost felt as if the beloved form was by him in all its beauty--as if he felt the sweet breath of her love; and he would fain have taken the lad to his heart as if he had been the adored Felizitas herself.

"The winter was over; the beautiful spring shone forth, and blossomed in all its loveliness in wood and meadow. Elias Boos advised Traugott to go to some watering-place, or try a course of whey. Christina began to look forward to her marriage again, though Traugott seldom showed himself, and still seldomer allowed the idea of such a thing as marriage to enter his head.

"One day, Traugott had been obliged to go to the office and spend a considerable time there, in connection with the settlement of some important accounts; so that the usual hour for his lesson was long past, and he did not arrive at Berklinger's till it was late in the evening twilight. He found nobody in the front-room, and from the next proceeded the sound of a lute. He had never heard the instrument before. He listened. A song, broken by pauses, breathed through the chords like gentle sighs. He opened the door. Heavens! a female figure, in ancient German dress, was seated with her back to him, with high lace collar, exactly like the portrait. At the slight sound which Traugott made in opening the door, the lady rose, laid the lute on the table, and turned. It was her very self!

"Felizitas!' Traugott cried wildly, in the fulness of his rapture, and was going to kneel at her feet, when he felt himself seized by the neck from behind, with a

mighty grip, and dragged out of the room.

"Profligate! Villain unparalleled!" cried old Berklinger, as he thrust him out, 'this is your love of art, is it? Do you want to kill me?'

"He dragged him out at the door; a knife was gleaming in his hand. Traugott fled down-stairs, stupefied, half crazy with love and terror. He hurried home.

"He rolled about, sleepless, from side to side in his bed.

"Felizitas! Felizitas!" he cried, torn with anguish and love-pain; 'you are here, and I may not see you!--cannot take you to my arms! For you love me, that I know, by the bitter torture that I feel myself?'

"The spring sun came shining brightly into his room; he pulled himself together, and resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery in Berklinger's house, cost what it might. He went there as quickly as he could; but what were his feelings when he saw that all the windows were open, and women busy cleaning out the rooms. He felt what had happened. Berklinger and his son had left the house late the previous evening, and gone away, no one knew whither. A cart with two horses had taken away the boxes with the pictures, and the two small trunks which contained the Berklingers' little all; and he had followed, with his son, about half-an-hour afterwards. All efforts to trace them were vain; no stable-keeper had hired out horses to anybody answering to the description of them which Traugott gave; even at the town-gates he could hear nothing satisfactory. Berklinger had disappeared as if he had been carried away on Mephistopheles's mantle. Traugott ran home in utter despair.

"She is gone! she is gone! the beloved of my soul! All--all is lost!" he cried, as he went banging past Elias Roos (who happened to be in the front hall near the entry door) on his way to his room.

"God bless my soul and body!" cried Herr Elias, shoving back his wig. 'Christina! Christina!' he then cried till the house rang; 'Christina! horrible girl! undutiful daughter!'

"The clerks came running out of the office with faces of terror.

"What's the matter, Herr Roos?" cried the bookkeeper, in great alarm; but Herr Roos went on shouting 'Christina! Christina!'

"Just then Christina came in at the street-door, and, after she had lifted the brim of her broad straw-hat up a little, asked, with a smile, what her father was making such a shouting about.

"I'm not going to have you bolting away in this inexplicable sort of way," Herr Elias roared at her, wrathfully in the extreme. 'The son-in-law's a melancholy sort of customer, and as jealous as the Grand Turk. Just you keep at home, d'ye see, or we shall have all the fat in the fire directly. My partner's sitting in there, howling and groaning, because you're out of the way somewhere.'

"Christina cast a look of amazement at the bookkeeper, who replied by a significant glance towards the office-cupboard where Herr Elias kept the cinnamon-water.

"Better go in and comfort the intended," he said, going back to the office. Christina went to her own room, just to put on some other 'things;' give out the week's washing; make the necessary arrangements with the cook about the Sunday dinner, and hear the gossip of the town during that process, and then go at once and see what was the matter with the 'intended.'

"You know, dear reader, that we should all of us--had we been in Traugott's place--have had to go through the essential stages of the condition. No escape from that. After the despair comes a benumbed, heavy brooding, in which the

'crisis' takes place; and then the condition passes into a gentle sorrow, in which Nature knows how to apply her remedies efficaciously.

"In this stage of heavy, but beneficent sorrow, Traugott was sitting some days afterwards on the Karlsberg, gazing once more at the waves as they beat upon the shore, and the grey mists that lay over Hela. But not, this time, was he trying to read the future. All that he had hoped and anticipated was past.

"Ah!" he sighed, 'my calling for art was a bitter deception. Felizitas was the phantom which lured me to believe in what never existed save in the insane dreams of a fever-sick fool. It is all over. I fight no more! Back to my prison! So let it be, and have done with it!'

"Traugott worked in the office again, and the marriage-day with Christina was fixed once more. The day before it, Traugott was standing in the Artus Hof, looking, not without inward heart-breaking sorrow, at the fateful forms of the burgomaster and his page, when he noticed the broker to whom Berklinger had been trying to sell his paper. Almost involuntarily, without thinking what he was doing, he went up to him and asked him:

"Did you know a strange old man with a black, curly beard, who used to come here some time ago, with a handsome lad?"

"Of course I did," said the broker: Godfried Berklinger, the mad painter.'

"Then have you any idea what's become of him?--where he's living now?"

"Certainly I have," answered the broker; 'he's been quietly settled down at Sorrento for a good while, with his daughter?'

"With his daughter Felizitas?' cried Traugott, so vehemently that all the people looked round at him.

"Well, yes," answered the broker quietly; 'that was the nice-looking lad that used to go about with the old man. Half Dantzic knew it was a girl, though the old gentleman thought nobody would ever find it out. It had been prophesied to him that if his daughter ever got into any love-affair he would die a horrible death, and that was why he didn't want anybody to know about her, and gave out that she was his son.'

"Traugott stood as if petrified. Then he set off running through the streets, out at the town-gate to the open country, and on into the woods, loudly lamenting.

"Miserable wretch that I am!" he cried. 'It was she!--it was herself! I have sate beside her thousands of times; inhaled her breath, pressed her delicate hands, looked into her beautiful eyes, listened to her sweet accents! and now she is lost! Ah, no!--lost she is not! After her to the land of art! The hint of destiny is clear. Away!--away to Sorrento!' He rushed home. Elias Roos chanced to come in his way. He seized him, and dragged him into his room.

"I'll never marry Christina!" he shouted; 'she's like the Voluptas, and the Luxuries, and has hair like the Ira, in the picture in the Artus Hof. Felizitas! beautiful, beloved being! how you stretch out your longing arms to me! I am coming! I am coming! and I give you fair warning, Elias,' he continued, once more clutching that man of business, whose face was as white as a sheet, 'that you'll never see me in that damned office of yours any more! What the devil do I care for your infernal ledgers and day-books? I'm a painter--and a good painter too: Berklinger is my master, my father, my everything; and you are nothing--and less than nothing!'

"With this he gave Elias a good shaking, who shouted at the top of his lungs, 'Help! help, you fellows! Come here! the son-in-law's gone off his head! My partner's raving! Help! help!'

"The clerks all came rushing out of the office; Traugott had left Elias go, and was lying exhausted in a chair. They all came round him; but on his jumping up suddenly, with a wild look, and crying, 'What the devil do you want?' they ran jostling out at the door in a heap, with Herr Elias in the centre. Presently there was a rustling, as of a silk dress, outside, and a voice inquired:

"Are you really gone out of your senses, Mr. Traugott, or are you only joking?"

"It was Christina.

"'I'm not a bit wrong in my head, my clear child,' Traugott answered, 'and I'm not joking in the slightest degree. But there'll be no wedding to-morrow, as far as I am concerned. As to that, my mind's completely made up. It's impossible that ever I can marry you at all.'

"'Oh, very well,' said Christina, without the smallest excitement; 'I haven't been caring so much about you for some time as I used, and there are people who would think themselves very well off to marry me if they got the chance. So, adieu.'

"With which she went rustling out.

"'She means the book-keeper,' thought Traugott. As he was calm, now, he betook himself to Herr Roos, to whom he demonstrated circumstantially that there could not possibly be any further question of him as a son-in-law, or as a partner either. Herr Elias agreed to everything, and asseverated, times without number, in the office, with gladness of heart, that he thanked God he was well rid of the crack-brained Traugott, when the latter was far away from Dantzic.

"Life dawned upon Traugott with a fresh and glorious brightness when he found himself in the longed-for land. The German artists in Rome admitted him into the circle of their studies, and thus it happened that he made a longer stay there than his eagerness to see Felizitas, which had urged him on restlessly till then, wholly justified. But this longing had become less urgent. It had taken more the form of a blissful dream whose perfumed shimmer pervaded all his being, so that he looked upon it, and the exercise of his art, as matters belonging wholly to the high and holy, super-earthly realm of blissful presage and anticipation. Every female figure which he painted with his skilful artist's hand had the face of the beautiful Felizitas. The young artists were much struck by the beauty of this face, of which they could not come across the original in Rome; and they besieged Traugott with questions as to where he had seen her. But he felt a certain shyness about telling them his strange adventure at Dantzic; till at length an old friend of his, Matuszewski by name (who, like himself, had devoted himself to painting in Rome), joyfully announced that he had seen the girl whom Traugott introduced in all his pictures. Traugott's joy may be imagined; he no longer made any secret of what it was that had drawn him so strongly to art and brought him to Italy, and the artists thought his Dantzic adventure so curious and interesting that they all undertook to search eagerly for his lost love. Matuszewski was the most successful; he soon found out where the girl lived, and learnt, besides, that she really was the daughter of a poor old painter, who was at that time tinting the walls in the church of Trinità dell' Monte. Traugott went to that church with Matuszewski, and thought he actually recognized old Berklinger in the painter, who was up upon a lofty scaffold. From thence the friends, whom the old man had not noticed, hurried to where he lived.

"'It is she!' cried Traugott when he saw the painter's daughter on the balcony, busy about some woman's work. "With a loud cry of 'Felizitas! Felizitas!' he burst into the room. The girl looked at him quite terrified. She had the features of Felizitas, and was excessively like her, but was not she. This bitter disappointment pierced Traugott's heart as with a thousand daggers. Matuszewski explained to the girl how the matter stood, in a few words. She was very lovely in her shyness, with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes; and Traugott, who at first wanted to be off immediately, remained where he was (after giving

just another sorrowful look at the pretty young creature), fettered by gentle bands. Matuszewski managed to say polite and pleasant things to reassure the pretty Dorina, who soon lifted the dark fringed curtains of her eyes, and looked at the strangers with smiling glances, saying her father would soon be home and that he would be delighted to see German artists, of whom his opinion was high. Traugott could not but admit that, except Felizitas, no woman had ever made such an impression on him as Dorina. She was, in fact, almost Felizitas herself, only her features were a little more strongly marked, and her hair a trifle darker. It was the same portrait painted by Raphael and by Rubens. The father came in ere long, and Traugott at once saw that the height of the scaffold on which he had seen him had deceived him as to his appearance. Instead of the vigorous Berklinger, this was a little lean, timid creature, oppressed by poverty. A deceptive cross shadow in the church had given to his smooth-shaven chin the effect of Berklinger's black curly beard. He showed great practical knowledge in talking of his art, and Traugott determined to cultivate an acquaintance which, painfully as it had commenced, was becoming pleasanter every moment. Dorina, all sweetness and childlike candour, allowed her liking for the young German painter to be clearly seen. Traugott returned it heartily, and soon got so accustomed to be with her that he spent entire days with the little household, moved his studio to a large empty room near their house, and at last went and lodged with them altogether. In this way he greatly improved their slender scale of housekeeping, and the old man could not think otherwise than that Traugott was going to marry Dorina. He told him so, one day, plump and plain. Traugott was not a little alarmed: for he only then began to ask himself what had become of the object of his journey. Felizitas stood once more vividly before his memory, and yet he did not feel able to quit Dorina. In some mysterious way he could not think of ever possessing his vanished love as a wife. Felizitas seemed a spiritual image, never either to be won, or lost--eternally present to the spirit--never to be physically gained and possessed. But Dorina often came to his thoughts as his dear wife. Sweet thrills permeated him, a gentle glow streamed through his veins. And yet it seemed a treason to his first love to allow himself to be bound with new, indissoluble ties. Thus did the most contradictory feelings strive in his heart. He could not come to a decision. He avoided the old man carefully, who was under the impression that Traugott was going to trick him out of his daughter, and took care to talk everywhere of Traugott's marriage as a settled thing, saying that otherwise he never would have allowed his daughter to contract an intimacy so dangerous to her fair fame. One day his Italian blood fired up, and he told Traugott distinctly that he must either marry Dorina, or be off about his business, as he could not allow their intimacy to go on, on its present footing, for another hour. Traugott was vexed and indignant, and that not with the old man only. His own conduct struck him as contemptible. It seemed a sin and an abomination to have ever thought of another than Felizitas. It tore his heart to part from Dorina, but he broke the tender ties by a mighty effort, and set off as fast as possible to Naples--to Sorrento.

"He spent a year in the most careful efforts to discover Berklinger and Felizitas--in vain; nobody knew anything about them. All that he traced was a faint sort of surmise--based upon what seemed little more than a legend--that there had once been an old German painter in Sorrento, several years before. Driven to and fro as if upon a stormy ocean, Traugott ended by settling down for some time in Naples; and, as he worked more diligently at his painting again, the longing for Felizitas grew gentler and milder in his heart. But he never saw a woman at all resembling her in figure, walk, or bearing, without feeling the loss of the dear, sweet child most painfully. When painting, he never thought of Dorina, but always of Felizitas, who was his constant ideal.

"At last he got letters from home, in which his agent told him that Herr Elias Roos had shuffled off this mortal coil, and that his presence was necessary for the settlement of his affairs with the book-keeper, who had married Christina, and was carrying on the business. Traugott hastened back to Dantzic by the quickest route.

"There he stood once more in the Artus Hof, by the granite pillar, opposite to the Burgomaster and the Page. He thought of the strange adventure which had introduced such a painful element into his life; and, in deep and painful sorrow, he gazed at the lad, who seemed to welcome him back with eyes of life, and to whisper in sweet and charming accents, 'You see, you could not leave me, after all!'

"Can I believe my eyes? Is it really you, sir, back again safe and sound, and quite cured of the troublesome melancholy which used to bother you so?"

"So croaked a voice beside Traugott. It was our old acquaintance the broker.

"I never found them," said Traugott involuntarily.

"Them?" inquired the broker. "Whom did you never find, sir?"

"The painter, Godfredus Berklinger, and his daughter Felizitas," answered Traugott. "I searched for them all over Italy; nobody knew anything about them in Sorrento."

"The broker looked at him with eyes of wide amazement, and stammered: 'Where did you look for them, sir? In Italy? at Naples? at Sorrento?'

"Yes, of course I did," said Traugott wrathfully.

"The broker struck his hands together time after time, crying 'Oh, my goodness gracious! Oh, my goodness gracious! Oh, Mr. Traugott, sir!'

"Well! what is there so astonishing about it?" said Traugott. "Don't go on like a donkey! For the sake of the woman he loves, a man will go even as far as to Sorrento. Yes, yes! I loved Felizitas, and I went in search of her."

"But the broker jumped about on one leg, and kept on crying, 'Oh, my goodness gracious!' till Traugott seized him and held him tight; and looking at him with earnest glance said:

"For God's sake, man, out with what you see so extraordinary about the affair!"

"But, Mr. Traugott," began the broker at last, "don't you know that Herr Aloysius Brandstetter, the town councillor and Dean of Guild, calls that little villa of his at the bottom of the Karlsberg, in the fir wood near Conrad's Hammer, "Sorrento"? He bought Berklinger's pictures, and took him and his daughter to live in his house, that's to say, in Sorrento. They were there for a year or two, and you might have stood upon the Karlsberg on your own logs, my dear sir, and looked down into the garden, and seen Mademoiselle Felizitas walking about in funny old-fashioned clothes, like those in the pictures there. You needn't have taken the trouble to go to Italy! Afterwards the old man--- But that's a painful story."

"Let me hear it," said Traugott in a hollow voice.

"Well," continued the broker, "young Mr. Brandstetter came back from England and fell in love with Mademoiselle Felizitas; and once when he found her in the garden, he fell romantically on his knees to her and vowed he would marry her, and free her from the tyrannical slavery her father kept her in. The old man was close by, though they didn't see him; and as soon as ever Felizitas said, "I will be yours," he tumbled down, with a hollow cry, as dead as a herring, sir! They say he looked awful, all blue and bloody, for he had broken a blood-vessel somehow or other. After that, Mademoiselle Felizitas couldn't endure young Mr. Brandstetter, so she married Mr. Mathesius, the police magistrate at Marienwerder. You'll go and call upon her, of course, for the sake of old times. Marienwerder isn't quite so far away as Sorrento in Italy. She's quite well, and very happy, They've got several nice children."

"Traugott hastened away, silent and benumbed. This outcome of his adventure filled him with awe and terror.

"'Oh no!' he cried. 'This is not she, this is not she--not Felizitas, the angelic creature who kindled that eternal love and longing in my soul! whom I went in search of to a far-off country, always and always seeing her dear image before me like my star of fortune, beaming and glowing in sweet hope! Felizitas! Mrs. Mathesius, wife of Mathesius, the police magistrate. Ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Mathesius!'

"He laughed loud and bitterly in the wildness of his grief; and, as of old, he went out at the Olivaer Gate and up on to the Karlsberg. He looked down into the grounds of Sorrento: the tears rolled down his cheeks. 'Ah!' he cried, 'how deeply, how incurably deeply, thou Eternal Power that rulest all things, does thy bitter scorn and mockery wound the tender hearts of poor humanity! But, no, no; why should the child, who puts his hands into the fire instead of enjoying its warmth and brightness, complain? Destiny was at work with me, visibly; but my feeble eyes could not see; and, in my audacity, I thought that creation of the old master which came so wondrously to life and approached me, was a thing like myself, and that I could drag it down into this wretched earthly existence. No, no, Felizitas! I have not lost you. You are, and shall be, mine for ever, because you are the creative art which lives within me. It is only now that I really know you. What have you, what have I, to do with Mrs. Mathesius, the police magistrate's wife? Nothing, that I can see.'

"'I couldn't quite see what you had to do with her, either, Mr. Traugott,' a voice fell in.

"Traugott awoke from a dream. He found himself, without knowing how, in the Artus Hof again, leaning on the granite pillar. The person who had just spoken was Christina's husband. He handed Traugott a letter which had just arrived from Rome. Matuszewski wrote:

"'Dorina is prettier and more charming than ever; only rather pale, for love of you, dear friend. She expects you hourly, for she is certain you could not desert her. She is really tremendously devoted to you. When shall we see you here again?'

"'I'm very glad, indeed,' said Traugott to Christina's husband after reading this, 'that we managed to settle all our business to-day, for I start to-morrow for Rome, where the lady I am going to marry is expecting me eagerly.'"

When Cyprian finished reading, the friends congratulated him on the pleasant, healthy tone which pervaded his story. Only Theodore thought the fair sex might find a good deal to take exception to in it, and that not only the blonde Christina with her well scoured pots and pans, but the mystification of the hero, Mrs. Mathesius the police magistrate's wife and all the latter part of the story, with its profound irony, would much displease them.

"If you are going to model your work," said Lothair, "according to what pleases women, you must, of course, leave out irony altogether--although it is the source of the most delicate and delightful kind of humour--because they have not, as a general rule, the smallest sense of it."

"Which I, for one, am thoroughly glad is the case," said Theodore. "You'll admit that humour, which, in us, takes its source in striking contrasts, is quite foreign to feminine nature. And we are vividly conscious of this, though we may not often clearly account to ourselves for it. For, tell me, though you may take pleasure for a time in the conversation of a witty and humorous woman, would you like her as a sweetheart or a wife?"

"Not at all," said Lothair, "although there is a great deal to be said on the extensive question of how far humour is a feminine quality or otherwise; and I

hereby reserve the privilege of hereafter addressing my worthy Serapion Brethren, at a suitable opportunity, on this important question, with a fulness and wisdom with which no psychologist has as yet discussed it. But, as a general query, let me ask you, Theodore, if you consider it essentially necessary to think of every superior woman, with whom one may have a little rational conversation, in the light of a sweetheart or wife?"

"I think," said Theodore, "that any feminine being can only really interest one if one, at all events, does not shrink from the idea of her as a sweetheart or wife, and that, the more this idea finds comfortable room in one's mind, the greater is the interest."

"That," said Ottmar, laughing, "is one of Theodore's most daring theories, which I know well of old. He has always acted up to it, and often coolly turned his back upon many a charming creature, because he couldn't manage to fancy himself in love with her for an hour or two. Even as a dancing student, he used to declare, earnestly, that he gave his heart to every girl he danced with, at all events while the waltz or quadrille lasted; and he used to try to express in his 'steps' what his lips were forbidden to utter, and sigh as profoundly as his stock of breath would let him."

"Allow me," said Theodore, "to interrupt this un-Serapiontish conversation. It is late; and I should be sorry not to read you, to-night, a tale which I finished yesterday. The spirit moved me to treat, rather more fully than has been done previously, a well-known *thema* concerning a miner at Falun; and you must decide whether I have done well to yield to the spirit's prompting, or not. I have had to keep my colouring down to a melancholy tone, which may perhaps contrast unfavourably with Cyprian's more cheerful picture. Forgive me this, and lend me a favourable ear."

Theodore read:--

"THE MINES OF FALUN."

"One bright, sunny day in July the whole population of Goethaborg was assembled at the harbour. A fine East-Indiaman, happily returned from her long voyage, was lying at anchor, with her long, homeward-bound pennant, and the Swedish flag fluttering gaily in the azure sky. Hundreds of boats, skiffs, and other small craft, thronged with rejoicing seafolk, were going to and fro on the mirroring waters of the Goethaelf, and the cannon of Masthuggetorg thundered their far-echoing greeting out to sea. The gentlemen of the East-India Company were walking up and down on the quay, reckoning up, with smiling faces, the plentiful profits they had netted, and rejoicing their hearts at the yearly increasing success of their hazardous enterprise, and at the growing commercial importance of their good town of Goethaborg. For the same reasons everybody looked at these brave adventurers with pleasure and pride, and shared their rejoicing; for their success brought sap and vigour into the whole life of the place.

"The crew of the East-Indiaman, about a hundred strong, landed in a number of boats (gaily dressed with flags for the occasion) and prepared to hold their 'Hoensning.' That is the name of the feast which the sailors hold on such occasions; it often goes on for several days. Musicians went before them, in strange, gay dresses, playing lustily on violins, oboes, fifes and drums, whilst others sung merry songs; after them came the crew, walking two and two; some, with gay ribbons on their hats and jackets, waved fluttering streamers; others danced and skipped; and all of them shouted and cheered at the tops of their voices, till the sounds of merriment rang far and wide.

"Thus the gay procession passed through the streets, and on to the Haga suburb, where a feast of eating and drinking was ready for them in a tavern.

"Here the best of 'Oel' flowed in rivers and bumper after bumper was quaffed. Numbers of women joined them, as is always the case when sailors come home from a long voyage; dancing began, and wilder and wilder grew the revel, and louder and louder the din.

"One sailor only--a slender, handsome lad of about twenty, or scarcely so much--had slipped away from the revel, and was sitting alone outside, on the bench at the door of the tavern.

"Two or three of his shipmates came out to him, and cried, laughing loudly:

"Now then, Elis Froebom! are you going to be a donkey, as usual, and sit out here in the sulks, instead of joining the sport like a man? Why, you might as well part company from the old ship altogether, and set sail on your own hook, as fight shy of the "Hoensning." One would think you were a regular long-shore land-lubber, and had never been afloat on blue water. All the same, you've got as good pluck as any sailor that walks a deck--ay, and as cool and steady a head in a gale of wind as ever I came athwart; but, you see, you can't take your liquor! You'd sooner keep the ducats in your pocket than serve them out to the land-sharks ashore here. There, lad! take a drink of that; or Naecken, the sea-devil, and all the Troll will be foul of your hawse before you know where you are!"

"Elis Froebom jumped up quickly from the bench; glared angrily at his shipmates; took the tumbler--which was filled to the brim with brandy--and emptied it at a draught; then he said:

"You see I can take my glass with any man of you, Ivens; and you can ask the captain if I'm a good sailor-man, or not; so stow away that long tongue of yours, and sheer off! I don't care about all this drink and row here; and what I'm doing out here by myself is no business of yours; you have nothing to do with it."

"All right, my hearty!" answered Ivens. "I know all about it. You're one of these Nerica men--and a moony lot the whole cargo of them are too. They're the sort of chaps that would rather sit and pipe their eye about nothing particular, than take a good glass, and see what the pretty lasses at home are made of, after a twelve-month's cruize! But just you belay there a bit. Steer full and bye, and stand off and on, and I'll send somebody out to you that'll cut you adrift, in a pig's whisper, from that old bench where you've cast your anchor."

"They went; and presently a very pretty, rather refined-looking girl came out of the tavern, and sat down beside the melancholy Elis, who was still sitting, silent and thoughtful, on the bench. From her dress and general appearance there could be no doubt as to her terrible calling. But the life she was leading had not yet quite marred the delicacy of the wonderfully tender features of her beautiful face; there was no trace of repulsive boldness about the expression of her dark eyes--rather a quiet, melancholy longing.

"Aren't you coming to join your shipmates, Elis?" she said. "Now that you're back safe and sound, after all you've gone through on your long voyage, aren't you glad to be home in the old country again?"

"The girl spoke in a soft, gentle voice, putting her arms about him. Elis Froebom looked into her eyes, as if roused from a dream. He took her hand; he pressed her to his breast. It was evident that what she had said had made its way to his heart.

"Ah!" he said, as if collecting his thoughts, "it's no use talking about my enjoying myself. I can't join in all that riot and uproar; there's no pleasure in it, for me. You go away, my dear child! Sing and shout like the rest of them, if you can, and let the gloomy, melancholy Elis stay out here by himself; he would only spoil your pleasure. Wait a minute, though! I like you, and I should wish you to think of me sometimes, when I'm away on the sea again."

"With that he took two shining ducats out of his pocket, and a beautiful Indian

handkerchief from his breast, and gave them to the girl. But her eyes streamed with tears; she rose, laid the money on the bench, and said:

"Oh, keep your ducats; they only make me miserable; but I'll wear the handkerchief in dear remembrance of you. You're not likely to find me next year when you hold your Hoensning in the Haga."

"And she crept slowly away down the street, with her hands pressed to her face.

"Elis fell back into his gloomy reveries. At length, as the uproar in the tavern grew loud and wild, he cried:

"Oh, that I were lying deep, deep beneath the sea! for there's nobody left in the wide, wide world that I can be happy with now!"

"A deep, harsh voice spoke, close behind him: 'You must have been most unfortunate, youngster, to wish to die, just when life should be opening before you.'

"Elis looked round, and saw an old miner standing leaning against the boarded wall of the tavern, with folded arms, looking down at him with a grave, penetrating glance.

"As Elis looked at him, a feeling came to him as if some familiar figure had suddenly come into the deep, wild solitude in which he had thought himself lost. He pulled himself together, and told the old miner that his father had been a stout sailor, but had perished in the storm from which he himself had been saved as by a miracle; that his two soldier brothers had died in battle, and he had supported his mother with the liberal pay he drew for sailing to the East Indies. He said he had been obliged to follow the life of a sailor, having been brought up to it from childhood, and it had been a great piece of good fortune that he got into the service of the East-India Company. This voyage, the profits had been greater than usual, and each of the crew had been given a sum of money over and above his pay; so that he had hastened, in the highest spirits, with his pockets full of ducats, to the little cottage where his mother lived. But strange faces looked at him from the windows, and a young woman who opened the door to him at last told him, in a cold, harsh tone, that his mother had died three months before, and that he would find the few bits of things that were left, after paying the funeral expenses, waiting for him at the Town Hall. The death of his mother broke his heart. He felt alone in the world--as much so as if he had been wrecked on some lonely reef, helpless and miserable. All his life at sea seemed to him to have been a mistaken, purposeless driving. And when he thought of his mother, perhaps badly looked after by strangers, he thought it a wrong and horrible thing that he should have gone to sea at all, instead of staying at home and taking proper care of her. His comrades had dragged him to the Hoensning in spite of himself, and he had thought, too, that the uproar, and even the drink, might have deadened his pain; but instead of that, all the veins in his breast seemed to be bursting, and he felt as if he must bleed to death.

"Well," said the old miner, "you'll soon be off to sea again, Elis, and then your sorrow will soon be over. Old folks must die; there's no help for that: she has only gone from this miserable world to a better."

"Ah!" said Elis, "it is just because nobody believes in my sorrow, and that they all think me a fool to feel it--I say it's that which is driving me out of the world! I shan't go to sea any more; I'm sick of existence altogether. When the ship used to go flying along through the water, with all sail set, spreading like glorious wings, the waves playing and dashing in exquisite music, and the wind singing in the rigging, my heart used to bound. Then I could hurrah and shout on deck like the best of them. And when I was on look-out duty of dark, quiet nights, I used to think about getting home, and how glad my dear old mother would be to have me back. I could enjoy a Hoensning like the rest of them, then. And when I had

shaken the ducats into mother's lap, and given her the handkerchiefs and all the other pretty things I had brought home, her eyes would sparkle with pleasure, and she would clap her hands for joy, and run out and in, and fetch me the "Aehl" which she had kept for my homecoming. And when I sat with her of an evening, I would tell her of all the strange folks I had seen, and their ways and customs, and about the wonderful things I had come across in my long voyages. This delighted her; and she would tell me of my father's wonderful cruizes in the far North, and serve me up lots of strange, sailor's yarns, which I had heard a hundred times, but never could hear too often. Ah! who will give me that happiness back again? No, no! never more on land!--never more at sea! What should I do among my shipmates? They would only laugh at me. Where should I find any heart for my work? It would be nothing but an objectless striving.'

"It gives me real satisfaction to listen to you, youngster," said the old miner. 'I have been observing you, without your knowledge, for the last hour or two, and have had my own enjoyment in so doing. All that you have said and done has shown me that you possess a profoundly thoughtful mind, and a character and nature pious, simple, and sincere. Heaven could have given you no more precious gifts; but you were never in all your born days in the least cut out for a sailor. How should the wild, unsettled sailor's life suit a meditative, melancholy Neriker like you?--for I can see that you come from Nerica by your features, and whole appearance. You are right to say good-bye to that life for ever. But you're not going to walk about idle, with your hands in your pockets? Take my advice, Elis Froebom. Go to Falun, and be a miner. You are young and strong. You'll soon be a first-class pick-hand; then a hewer; presently a surveyor, and so get higher and higher. You have a lot of ducats in your pocket. Take care of them; invest them; add more to them. Very likely you'll soon get a "Hemmans" of your own, and then a share in the works. Take my advice, Elis Froebom; be a miner.'

"The old man's words caused him a sort of fear.

"What?" he cried. 'Would you have me leave the bright, sunny sky that revives and refreshes me, and go down into that dreadful, hell-like abyss, and dig and tunnel like a mole for metals and ores, merely to gain a few wretched ducats? Oh, never!'

"The usual thing," said the old man. 'People despise what they have had no chance of knowing anything about! As if all the constant wearing, petty anxieties inseparable from business up here on the surface, were nobler than the miner's work. To his skill, knowledge, and untiring industry Nature lays bare her most secret treasures. You speak of gain with contempt, Elis Froebom. Well, there's something infinitely higher in question here, perhaps: the mole tunnels the ground from blind instinct; but, it may be, in the deepest depths, by the pale glimmer of the mine candle, men's eyes get to see clearer, and at length, growing stronger and stronger, acquire the power of reading in the stones, the gems, and the minerals, the mirroring of secrets which are hidden above the clouds. You know nothing about mining, Elis. Let me tell you a little.'

"He sat down on the bench beside Elis, and began to describe the various processes minutely, placing all the details before him in the clearest and brightest colours. He talked of the Mines of Falun, in which he said he had worked since he was a boy; he described the great main-shaft, with its dark brown sides; he told how incalculably rich the mine was in gems of the finest water. More and more vivid grew his words, more and more glowing his face. He went, in his description, through the different shafts as if they had been the alleys of some enchanted garden. The jewels came to life, the fossils began to move; the wondrous Pyrosmalite and the Almandine flashed in the light of the miner's candles; the Rock-Crystals glittered, and darted their rays.

"Elis listened intently. The old man's strange way of speaking of all these subterranean marvels as if he were standing in the midst of them, impressed him deeply. His breast felt stifled; it seemed to him as if he were already down in these depths with the old man, and would never more look upon the friendly light

of day. And yet it seemed as though the old man were opening to him a new and unknown world, to which he really properly belonged, and that he had somehow felt all the magic of that world, in mystic forebodings, since his boyhood.

"Elis Froebom," said the old man at length, "I have laid before you all the glories of a calling for which Nature really destined you. Think the subject well over with yourself, and then act as your better judgment counsels you."

"He rose quickly from the bench, and strode away without any good-bye to Elis, without looking at him even. Soon he disappeared from his sight.

"Meanwhile quietness had set in in the tavern. The strong 'Aehl' and brandy had got the upper hand. Many of the sailors had gone away with the girls; others were lying snoring in corners. Elis--who could go no more to his old home--asked for, and was given, a little room to sleep in.

"Scarcely had he thrown himself, worn and weary as he was, upon his bed, when dreams began to wave their pinions over him. He thought he was sailing in a beautiful vessel on a sea calm and clear as a mirror, with a dark, cloudy sky vaulted overhead. But when he looked down into the sea he presently saw that what he had thought was water was a firm, transparent, sparkling substance, in the shimmer of which the ship, in a wonderful manner, melted away, so that he found himself standing upon this floor of crystal, with a vault of black rock above him, for that was rock which he had taken at first for clouds. Impelled by some power unknown to him he stepped onwards, but, at that moment, every thing around him began to move, and wonderful plants and flowers, of glittering metal, came shooting up out of the crystal mass he was standing on, and entwined their leaves and blossoms in the loveliest manner. The crystal floor was so transparent that Elis could distinctly see the roots of these plants. But soon, as his glance penetrated deeper and deeper, he saw, far, far down in the depths, innumerable beautiful maidens, holding each other embraced with white, gleaming arms; and it was from their hearts that the roots, plants, and flowers were growing. And when these maidens smiled, a sweet sound rang all through the vault above, and the wonderful metal-flowers shot up higher, and waved their leaves and branches in joy. An indescribable sense of rapture came upon the lad; a world of love and passionate longing awoke in his heart.

"Down, down to you!" he cried, and threw himself with outstretched arras down upon the crystal ground. But it gave way under him, and he seemed to be floating in shimmering æther.

"Ha! Elis Froebom; what think you of this world of glory?" a strong voice cried. It was the old miner. But as Elis looked at him, he seemed to expand into gigantic size, and to be made of glowing metal. Elis was beginning to be terrified; but a brilliant light came darting, like a sudden lightning-flash, out of the depths of the abyss, and the earnest face of a grand, majestic woman appeared. Elis felt the rapture of his heart swelling and swelling into destroying pain. The old man had hold of him, and cried:

"Take care, Elis Froebom! That is the queen. You may look up now."

"He turned his head involuntarily, and saw the stars of the night sky shining through a cleft in the vault overhead. A gentle voice called his name as if in inconsolable sorrow. It was his mother's. He thought he saw her form up at the cleft. But it was a young and beautiful woman who was calling him, and stretching her hands down into the vault.

"Take me up!" he cried to the old man. "I tell you I belong to the upper world, and its familiar, friendly sky."

"Take care, Froebom," said the old man solemnly; "be faithful to the queen, whom you have devoted yourself to."

"But now, when he looked down again into the immobile face of the majestic

woman, he felt that his personality dissolved away into glowing molten stone. He screamed aloud, in nameless fear, and awoke from this dream of wonder, whose rapture and terror echoed deep within his being.

"I suppose I could scarcely help dreaming all this extraordinary stuff,' he said to himself, as he collected his senses with difficulty; 'the old miner told me so much about the glories of the subterranean world that of course my head's quite full of it. But I never in my life felt as I do now. Perhaps I'm dreaming still. No, no; I suppose I must be a little out of sorts. Let's get into the open air. The fresh sea-breeze'll soon set me all right.'

"He pulled himself together, and ran to the Klippa Haven, where the uproar of the Hoensning was breaking out again. But he soon found that all enjoyment passed him by, that he couldn't hold any thought fast in his mind, that presages and wishes, to which he could give no name, went crossing each other in his mind. He thought of his dead mother with the bitterest sorrow; but then, again, it seemed to him that what he most longed for was to see that girl again--the one whom he gave the handkerchief to--who had spoken so nicely to him the evening before. And yet he was afraid that if she were to come meeting him out of some street she would turn out to be the old miner in the end. And he was afraid of *him*; though, at the same time, he would have liked to hear more from him of the wonders of the mine.

"Driven hither and thither by all these fancies, he looked down into the water, and then he thought he saw the silver ripples hardening into the sparkling glimmer in which the grand ships melted away, while the dark clouds, which were beginning to gather and obscure the blue sky, seemed to sink down and thicken into a vault of rock. He was in his dream again, gazing into the immobile face of the majestic woman, and the devouring pain of passionate longing took possession of him as before.

"His shipmates roused him from his reverie to go and join one of their processions, but an unknown voice seemed to whisper in his ear:

"What are you doing here? Away, away! Your home is in the Mines of Falun. There all the glories which you saw in your dream are waiting for you. Away, away to Falun!"

"For three days Elis hung and loitered about the streets of Goethaborg, constantly haunted by the wonderful imagery of his dream, continually urged by the unknown voice. On the fourth day he was standing at the gate through which the road to Gefle goes, when a tall man walked through it, passing him. Elis fancied he recognized in this man the old miner, and he hastened on after him, but could not overtake him.

"He followed him on and on, without stopping.

"He knew he was on the road to Falun, and this circumstance quieted him in a curious way; for he felt certain that the voice of destiny had spoken to him through the old miner, and that it was he who was now leading him on to his appointed place and fate.

"And, in fact, he many times--particularly if there was any uncertainty about the road--saw the old man suddenly appear out of some ravine, or from thick bushes, or gloomy rocks, stalk away before him, without looking round, and then disappear again.

"At last, after journeying for many weary days, Elis saw, in the distance, two great lakes, with a thick vapour rising between them. As he mounted the hill to westward, he saw some towers and black roofs rising through the smoke. The old man appeared before him, grown to gigantic size, pointed with outstretched hand towards the vapour, and disappeared again amongst the rocks.

"There lies Falun,' said Elis, 'the end of my journey.'

"He was right; for people, coming up from behind him, said the town of Falun lay between the lakes Runn and Warpänn, and that the hill he was ascending was the Guffrisberg, where the main-shaft of the mine was.

"He went bravely on. But when he came to the enormous gulf, like the jaws of hell itself, the blood curdled in his veins, and he stood as if turned to stone at the sight of this colossal work of destruction.

"The main-shaft of the Falun mines is some twelve hundred feet long, six hundred feet broad, and a hundred and eighty feet deep. Its dark brown sides go, at first for the most part, perpendicularly down, till about half way they are sloped inwards towards the centre by enormous accumulations of stones and refuse. In these, and on the sides, there peeped out here and there timberings of old shafts, formed of strong shores set close together and strongly rabbeted at the ends, in the way that blockhouses are built. Not a tree, not a blade of grass to be seen in all the bare, blank, crumbling congeries of stony chasms; the pointed, jagged, indented masses of rock tower aloft all round in wonderful forms, often like monstrous animals turned to stone, often like colossal human beings. In the abyss itself lie, in wild confusion--pell-mell stones, slag, and scoria, and an eternal, stupefying sulphury vapour rises from the depths, as if the hell-broth, whose reek poisons and kills all the green gladness of nature, were being brewed down below. One would think this was where Dante went down and saw the Inferno, with all its horror and immitigable pain.

"As Elis looked down into this monstrous abyss, he remembered what an old sailor, one of his shipmates, had told him once. This shipmate of his, at a time when he was down with fever, thought the sea had suddenly all gone dry, and the boundless depths of the abyss had opened under him, so that he saw all the horrible creatures of the deep twining and writhing about amongst thousands of extraordinary shells, and groves of coral, in dreadful contortions, till they died, and lay dead, with their mouths all gaping. The old sailor said that to see such a vision meant death, ere long, in the waves; and in fact he did very soon after fall overboard, no one knew exactly how, and was drowned without possibility of rescue. Elis thought of that: for indeed the abyss seemed to him to be a good deal like the bottom of the sea run dry; and the black rocks, and the blue and red slag and scoria, were like horrible monsters shooting out polype-arms at him. Two or three miners happened, just then, to be coming up from work in the mine, and in their dark mining clothes, with their black, grimy faces, they were much like ugly, diabolical creatures of some sort, slowly and painfully crawling, and forcing their way up to the surface.

"Elis felt a shudder of dread go through him, and--what he had never experienced in all his career as a sailor--his head got giddy. Unseen hands seemed to be dragging him down into the abyss.

"He closed his eyes and ran a few steps away from it; and it was not till he began climbing up the Guffrisberg again, far from the shaft, and could look up at the bright, sunny sky, that he quite lost the feeling of terror which had taken possession of him. He breathed freely once more, and cried, from the depths of his heart:

"'Lord of my Life! what are the dangers of the sea compared with the horror which dwells in that awful abyss of rock? The storm may rage, the black clouds may come whirling down upon the breaking billows, but the beautiful, glorious sun soon gets the mastery again, and the storm is past. But never does the sun penetrate into these black, gloomy caverns; never a freshening breeze of spring can revive the heart down there. No! I shall not join you, black earthworms that you are! Never could I bring myself to lead that terrible life.'

"He resolved to spend that night in Falun, and set off back to Goethaborg the first thing in the morning.

"When he got to the market-place, he found a crowd of people there. A train of

miners with their mine-candles in their hands, and musicians before them, was halted before a handsome house. A tall, slightly-built man, of middle age, came out, looking round him with kindly smiles. It was easy to see, by his frank manner, his open brow, and his bright, dark-blue eyes, that he was a genuine Dalkarl. The miners formed a circle round him, and he shook them each cordially by the hand, saying kindly words to them all.

"Elis learned that this was Pehrson Dahlsjoe, Alderman, and owner of a fine 'Fraelse' at Stora-Kopparberg. 'Fraelse' is the name given in Sweden to landed property leased out for the working of the lodes of copper and silver contained in it. The owners of these lands have shares in the mines and are responsible for their management.

"Elis was told, further, that the Assizes were just over that day, and that then the miners went round in procession to the houses of the aldermen, the chief engineers and the minemasters, and were hospitably entertained.

"When he looked at these fine, handsome fellows, with their kindly, frank faces, he forgot all about the earthworms he had seen coming up the shaft. The healthy gladness which broke out afresh in the whole circle, as if new-fanned by a spring breeze, when Pehrson Dahlsjoe came out, was of a different kidney to the senseless noise and uproar of the sailors' Hoensning. The manner in which these miners enjoyed themselves went straight to the serious Elis's heart. He felt indescribably happy; but he could scarce restrain his tears when some of the young pickmen sang an ancient ditty in praise of the miner's calling, and of the happiness of his lot, to a simple melody which touched his heart and soul.

"When this song was ended, Pehrson Dahlsjoe opened his door, and the miners all went into his house one after another. Elis followed involuntarily, and stood at the threshold, so that he overlooked the spacious floor, where the miners took their places on benches. Then the doors at the side opposite to him opened, and a beautiful young lady, in evening dress, came in. She was in the full glory of the freshest bloom of youth, tall and slight, with dark hair in many curls, and a bodice fastened with rich clasps. The miners all stood up, and a low murmur of pleasure ran through their ranks. "Ulla Dahlsjoe!" they said. "What a blessing Heaven has bestowed on our hearty alderman in her!" Even the oldest miners' eyes sparkled when she gave them her hand in kindly greeting, as she did to them all. Then she brought beautiful silver tankards, filled them with splendid Aehl (such as Falun is famous for), and handed them to the guests with a face beaming with kindness and hospitality.

"When Elis saw her a lightning flash seemed to go through his heart, kindling all the heavenly bliss, the love-longings, the passionate ardour lying hidden and imprisoned there. For it was Ulla Dahlsjoe who had held out the hand of rescue to him in his mysterious dream. He thought he understood, now, the deep significance of that dream, and, forgetting the old miner, praised the stroke of fortune which had brought him to Falun.

"Alas! he felt he was but an unknown, unnoticed stranger, standing there on the doorstep miserable, comfortless, alone--and he wished he had died before he saw Ulla, as he now must perish for love and longing. He could not move his eyes from the beautiful creature, and, as she passed close to him, he pronounced her name in a low, trembling voice. She turned, and saw him standing there with a face as red as fire, unable to utter a syllable. So she went up to him, and said, with a sweet smile:

"I suppose you are a stranger, friend, as you are dressed as a sailor. Well! why are you standing at the door? Come in and join us."

"Elis felt as if in the blissful paradise of some happy dream, from which he would presently waken to inexpressible wretchedness. He emptied the tankard which she had given him; and Pehrson Dahlsjoe came up, and, after kindly shaking hands with him, asked him where he came from, and what had brought

him to Falun.

"Elis felt the warming power of the noble liquor in his veins, and, looking the hearty Dahlsjoe in the eyes, he felt happy and courageous. He told him he was a sailor's son and had been at sea since his childhood, had just come home from the East Indies and found his mother dead; that he was now alone in the world; that the wild sea life had become altogether distasteful to him; that his keenest inclination led him to a miner's calling, and that he wished to get employment as a miner here in Falun. The latter statement, quite the reverse of his recent determination, escaped him involuntarily; it was as if he could not have said anything else to the alderman, nay as if it were the most ardent desire of his soul, although he had not known it till now, himself.

"Pehrson Dahlsjoe looked at him long and carefully, as if he would read his heart; then he said:

"I cannot suppose, Elis Froebom, that it is mere thoughtless fickleness and the love of change that lead you to give up the calling you have followed hitherto, nor that you have omitted to maturely weigh and consider all the difficulties and hardships of the miner's life before making up your mind to take to it. It is an old belief with us that the mighty elements with which the miner has to deal, and which he controls so bravely, destroy him unless he strains all his being to keep command of them--if he gives place to other thoughts which weaken that vigour which he has to reserve wholly for his constant conflict with Earth and Fire. But if you have properly tested the sincerity of your inward call, and it has withstood the trial, you are come in a good hour. Workmen are wanted in my part of the mine. If you like, you can stay here with me, from now, and to-morrow the Captain will take you down with him, and show you what to set about.'

"Elis's heart swelled with gladness at this. He thought no more of the terror of the awful, hell-like abyss into which he had looked. The thought that he was going to see Ulla every day, and live under the same roof with her, filled him with rapture and delight. He gave way to the sweetest hopes.

"Pehrson Dahlsjoe told the miners that a young hand had applied for employment, and presented him to them then and there. They all looked approvingly at the well-knit lad, and thought he was quite cut out for a miner, as regarded his light, powerful figure, having no doubt that he would not fail in industry and straightforwardness, either.

"One of the men, well advanced in years, came and shook hands with him cordially, saying he was Head-Captain in Pehrson Dahlsjoe's part of the mine, and would be very glad to give him any help and instruction in his power. Elis had to sit down beside this man, who at once began, over his tankard of Aehl, to describe with much minuteness the sort of work which Elis would have to commence with.

"Elis remembered the old miner whom he had seen at Goethaborg, and, strangely enough, found he was able to repeat nearly all that he had told him.

"'Ay,' cried the Head-Captain. 'Where can you have learned all that? It's most surprising! There can't be a doubt that you will be the finest pickman in the mine in a very short time.'

"Ulla--going backwards and forwards amongst the guests and attending to them--often nodded kindly to Elis, and told him to be sure and enjoy himself. 'You're not a stranger now, you know,' she said, 'but one of the household. You have nothing more to do with the treacherous sea the rich mines of Falun are your home.'

"A heaven of bliss and rapture dawned upon Elis at these words of Ulla's. It was evident that she liked to be near him; and Pehrson Dahlsjoe watched his quiet earnestness of character with manifest approval.

"But Elis's heart beat violently when he stood again by the reeking hell-mouth,

and went down the mine with the Captain, in his miner's clothes, with the heavy, iron-shod Dalkarl shoes on his feet. Hot vapours soon threatened to suffocate him; and then, presently, the candles flickered in the cutting draughts of cold air that blew in the lower levels. They went down deeper and deeper, on iron ladders at last scarcely a foot wide; and Elis found that his sailor's adroitness at climbing was not of the slightest service to him there.

"They got to the lowest depths of the mine at last, and the Captain showed him what work he was to set about.

"Elis thought of Ulla. Like some bright angel he saw her hovering over him, and he forgot all the terror of the abyss, and the hardness of the toilsome labour.

"It was clear in all his thoughts that it was only if he devoted himself with all the power of his mind, and with all the exertion which his body would endure, to mining work here with Pehrson Dahlsjoe, that there was any possibility of his fondest hopes being some day realized. Wherefore it came about that he was as good at his work as the most practised hand, in an incredibly short space of time.

"Staunch Pehrson Dahlsjoe got to like this good, industrious lad better and better every day, and often told him plainly that he had found in him one whom he regarded as a dear son, as well as a first-class mine-hand. Also Ulla's regard for him became more and more unmistakeable. Often, when he was going to his work, and there was any prospect of danger, she would enjoin him to be sure to take care of himself, with tears in her eyes. And she would come running to meet him when he came back, and always had the finest of Aehl, or some other refreshment, ready for him. His heart danced for joy one day when Pehrson said to him that as he had brought a good sum of money with him, there could be no doubt that--with his habits of economy and industry--he would soon have a 'Hemmans,' or perhaps even a 'Fraelse'; and then not a mineowner in all Falun would say him nay if he asked for his daughter. Fain would Elis have told him at once how unspeakably he loved Ulla, and how all his hopes of happiness were based upon her. But unconquerable shyness, and the doubt whether Ulla really liked him--though he often thought she did--sealed his lips.

"One day it chanced that Elis was at work in the lowest depths of the mine, shrouded in thick, sulphurous vapour, so that his candle only shed a feeble glimmer, and he could scarcely distinguish the run of the lode. Suddenly he heard--as if coming from some still deeper cutting--a knocking resounding, as if somebody was at work with a pick-hammer. As that sort of work was scarcely possible at such a depth, and as he knew nobody was down there that day but himself--because the Captain had got all the men employed in another part of the mine--this knocking and hammering struck him as strange and uncanny. He stopped working, and listened to the hollow sounds, which seemed to come nearer and nearer. All at once he saw, close by him, a black shadow and--as a keen draught of air blew away the sulphur vapour--the old miner whom he had seen in Goethaborg.

"'Good luck,' he cried, 'good luck to Elis Froebom, down here among the stones! What think you of the life, comrade?'

"Elis would fain have asked in what wonderful way the old man had got into the mine; but he kept striking his hammer on the rocks with such force that the fire-sparks went whirling all round, and the mine rang as if with distant thunder. Then he cried, in a terrible voice:

"'There's a grand run of trap just here; but a scurvy, ignorant scoundrel like you sees nothing in it but a narrow streak of 'Trumm' not worth a beanstalk. Down here you're a sightless mole, and you'll always be a mere abomination to the Metal Prince. You're of no use up above either--trying to get hold of the pure Regulus; which you never will--hey! You want to marry Pehrson Dahlsjoe's daughter; that's what you've taken to mine work for, not from any love of your own for the thing. Mind what you're after, double-face; take care that the Metal

Prince, whom you are trying to deceive, doesn't take you and dash you down so that the sharp rocks tear you limb from limb. And Ulla will never be your wife; that much I tell you.'

"Elis's anger was kindled at the old man's insulting words.

"'What are you about,' he cried, 'here in my master, Herr Pehrson Dahlsjoe's shaft, where I am doing my duty, and working as hard at it as I can? Be off out of this the way you came, or we'll see which of us two will dash the other's brains out down here.'

"With which he placed himself in a threatening attitude, and swung his hammer about the old man's ears; who only gave a sneering laugh, and Elis saw with terror how he swarmed up the narrow ladder rungs like a squirrel, and disappeared amongst the black labyrinths of the chasms.

"The young man felt paralyzed in all his limbs; he could not go on with his work, but went up. When the old Head-Captain--who had been busy in another part of the mine--saw him, he cried:

"'For God's sake, Elis, what has happened to you? You're as pale as death. I suppose it's the sulphur gas; you're not accustomed to it yet. Here, take a drink, my lad; that'll do you good.'

"Elis took a good mouthful of brandy out of the flask which the Head-Captain handed to him; and then, feeling better, told him what had happened down in the mine, as also how he had made the uncanny old miner's acquaintance in Goethaborg.

"The Head-Captain listened silently; then dubiously shook his head and said:

"'That must have been old Torbern that you met with, Elis; and I see, now, that there really is something in the tales that people tell about him. More than one hundred years ago, there was a miner here of the name of Torbern. He seems to have been one of the first to bring mining into a flourishing condition at Falun here, and in his time the profits far exceeded anything that we know of now. Nobody at that time knew so much about mining as Torbern, who had great scientific skill, and thoroughly understood all the ins and outs of the business. The richest lodes seemed to disclose themselves to him, as if he had been endowed with higher powers peculiar to himself; and as he was a gloomy, meditative man, without wife or child--with no regular home, indeed--and very seldom came up to the surface, it couldn't fail that a story soon went about that he was in compact with the mysterious power which dwells in the bowels of the earth, and fuses the metals. Disregarding Torbern's solemn warnings--for he always prophesied that some calamity would happen as soon as the miners' impulse to work ceased to be sincere love for the marvellous metals and ores--people went on enlarging the excavations more and more for the sake of mere profit, till, on St. John's Day of the year 1678, came the terrible landslip and subsidence which formed our present enormous main-shaft, laying waste the whole of the works, as they were then, in the process. It was only after many months' labour that several of the shafts were, with much difficulty, got into workable order again. Nothing was seen or heard of Torbern. There seemed to be no doubt that he had been at work down below at the time of the catastrophe, so that there could be no question what his fate had been. But not long after, and particularly when the work was beginning to go on better again, the miners said they had seen old Torbern in the mine, and that he had given them valuable advice, and pointed out rich lodes to them. Others had come across him at the top of the main-shaft, walking round it, sometimes lamenting, sometimes shouting in wild anger. Other young fellows have come here in the way you yourself did, saying that an old miner had advised them to take to mining, and shewn them the way to Falun. This always happened when there was a scarcity of hands; very likely it was Torbern's way of helping on the cause. But if it really was he whom you had those words with in the mine, and if he spoke of a fine run of trap, there isn't a doubt that there must be a grand

vein of ore thereabouts, and we must see, to-morrow, if we can come across it. Of course you remember that we call rich veins of the kind "trap-runs," and that a "Trumm" is a vein which goes sub-dividing into several smaller ones, and probably gets lost altogether.'

"When Elis, tossed hither and thither by various thoughts, went into Pehrson Dahlsjoe's, Ulla did not come meeting him as usual. She was sitting with downcast looks, and--as he thought--eyes which had been weeping; and beside her was a handsome young fellow, holding her hand, and trying to say all sorts of kind and amusing things, to which she seemed to pay little attention. Pehrson Dahlsjoe took Elis--who, seized by gloomy presentiments, was keeping a darksome glance riveted on the pair--into another room, and said:

"Well, Elis, you will soon have it in your power to give me a proof of your regard and sincerity. I have always looked upon you as a son, but you will soon take the place of one altogether. The man whom you see in there is a well-to-do merchant, Eric Olavsen by name, from Goethaborg. I am giving him my daughter for his wife, at his desire. He will take her to Goethaborg, and then you will be left alone with me, my only support in my declining years. Well, you say nothing? You turn pale? I trust this step doesn't displease you, and that now that I'm going to lose my daughter you are not going to leave me too? But I hear Olavsen mentioning my name; I must go in.'

"With which he went back to the room.

"Elis felt a thousand red-hot irons tearing at his heart. He could find no words, no tears. In wild despair he ran out, out of the house, away to the great mine-shrift.

"That monstrous chasm had a terrible appearance by day; but now, when night had fallen, and the moon was just peeping down into it, the desolate crags looked like a numberless horde of horrible monsters, the direful brood of hell, rolling and writhing, in wildest confusion, all about its reeking sides and clefts, and flashing up fiery eyes, and shooting forth glowing claws to clutch the race of mortals.

"Torbern, Torbern,' Elis cried, in a terrible voice, which made the rocks re-echo. 'Torbern, I am here; you were not wrong I was a wretched fool to fix my hopes on any earthly love, up on the surface here. My treasure, and my life, my all-in-all, are down below. Torbern! take me down with you! Show me the richest veins, the lodes of ore, the glowing metal! I will dig and bore, and toil and labour. Never, never more will I come back to see the light of day. Torbern! Torbern! take me down to you!'

"He took his flint and steel from his pocket, lighted his candle, and went quickly down the shaft, into the deep cutting where he had been on the previous day, without seeing anything of the old man. But what was his amazement when, at the deepest point, he saw the vein of metal with the utmost clearness and distinctness, so that he could trace every one of its ramifications, and its risings and fallings. But as he kept his gaze fixed more and more firmly on this wonderful vein, a dazzling light seemed to come shining through the shaft, and the walls of rock grew transparent as crystal. That mysterious dream which he had had in Goethaborg came back upon him. He was looking upon those Elysian Fields of glorious metallic trees and plants, on which, by way of fruits, buds, and blossoms, hung jewels streaming with fire. He saw the maidens, and he looked upon the face of the mighty queen. She put out her arms, drew him to her, and pressed him to her breast, Then a burning ray darted through his heart, and all his consciousness was merged in a feeling of floating in waves of some blue, transparent, glittering mist.

"Elis Froebom! Elis Froebom!' a powerful voice from above cried out, and the reflection of torches began shining in the shaft. It was Pehrson Dahlsjoe come down with the Captain to search for the lad, who had been seen running in the direction of the main-shaft like a mad creature.

"They found him standing as if turned to stone, with his face pressed against the cold, hard rock.

"What are you doing down here in the night-time, you foolish fellow?' cried Pehrson. 'Pull yourself together, and come up with us. Who knows what good news you may hear.'

"Elis went up in profound silence after Dahlsjoe, who did not cease to rate him soundly for exposing himself to such danger. It was broad daylight in the morning when they got to the house.

"Ulla threw herself into Elis's arms with a great cry, and called him by the fondest names, and Pehrson said to him:

"You foolish fellow! How could I help seeing, long ago, that you were in love with Ulla, and that it was on her account, in all probability, that you were working so hard in the mine? Neither could I help seeing that she was just as fond of you. Could I wish for a better son-in-law than a fine, hearty, hard-working, honest miner--than just yourself, Elis? What vexed me was that you never would speak.'

"We scarcely knew ourselves,' said Ulla, 'how fond we were of each other.'

"However that may be,' said Pehrson, 'I was annoyed that Elis didn't tell me openly and candidly of his love for you, and that was why I made up the story about Eric Olavsen, which was so nearly being the death of you, you silly fellow. Not but what I wished to try you, Ulla, into the bargain. Eric Olavsen has been married for many a day, and I give my daughter to you, Elis Froebom, for, I say it again, I couldn't wish for a better son-in-law.'

"Tears of joy and happiness ran down Elis's cheeks. The highest bliss which his imagination had pictured had come to pass so suddenly and unexpectedly that he could scarce believe it was anything but another blissful dream. The workpeople came to dinner, by Dahlsjoe's invitation, in honour of the event. Ulla had dressed in her prettiest attire, and looked more charming than ever, so that they all cried, over and over again, 'Ey! what a sweet and charming creature Elis has got for a betrothed! May God bless them and make them happy!'

"Yet the terror of the past night still lay upon Elis's pale face, and he often stared about him as if he were far away from all that was going on round him. 'Elis, darling, what is the matter?' Ulla asked anxiously. He pressed her to his heart and said, 'Yes, yes, you are my own, and all is well.' But in the midst of all his happiness he often felt as though an icy hand clutched at his heart, and a dismal voice asked him,

"Is it your highest ideal, then, to be betrothed to Ulla? Wretched fool! Have you not looked upon the face of the queen?'

"He felt himself overpowered by an indescribable, anxious alarm. He was haunted and tortured by the thought that one of the workmen would suddenly assume gigantic proportions, and to his horror he would recognize in him Torbern, come to remind him, in a terrible manner, of the subterranean realm of gems and metals to which he had devoted himself.

"And yet he could see no reason why the spectral old man should be hostile to him, or what connection there was between his mining work and his love.

"Pehrson, seeing Elis's disordered condition, attributed it to the trouble he had gone through, and his nocturnal visit to the mine. Not so, Ulla, who, seized by a secret presentiment, implored her lover to tell her what terrible thing had happened to him to tear him away from her so entirely. This almost broke his heart. It was in vain that he tried to tell her of the wonderful face which had revealed itself to him in the depths of the mine. Some unknown power seemed to seal his lips forcibly; he felt as though the terrible face of the queen were looking out from his heart, so that if he mentioned her everything about him would turn to

stone, to dark, black rock, as at the sight of the Medusa's frightful head. All the glory and magnificence which had filled him with rapture in the abyss appeared to him now as a pandemonium of immitigable torture, deceptively decked out to allure him to his ruin.

"Dahlsjoe told him he must stay at home for a few days, so as to shake off the sickness which he seemed to have fallen into. And during this time Ulla's affection, which now streamed bright and clear from her candid, child-like heart, drove away the memory of his fateful adventure in the mine-depths. Joy and happiness brought him back to life, and to belief in his good fortune, and in the impossibility of its being ever interfered with by any evil power.

"When he went down the pit again, everything appeared quite different to what it used to be. The most glorious veins lay clear and distinct before his eyes. He worked twice as zealously as before; he forgot everything else. When he got to the surface again, it cost him an effort of thought to remember about Pehrson Dahlsjoe, about his Ulla, even. He felt as if divided into two halves, as if his better self, his real personality, went down to the central point of the earth, and there rested in bliss in the queen's arms, whilst *he* went to his darksome dwelling in Falun. When Ulla spoke of their love, and the happiness of their future life together, he would begin to talk of the splendours of the depths, and the inestimably precious treasures that lay hidden there, and in so doing would get entangled in such wonderful, incomprehensible sayings, that alarm and terrible anxiety took possession of the poor child, who could not divine why Elis should be so completely altered from his former self. He kept telling the Captain, and Dahlsjoe himself, with the greatest delight, that he had discovered the richest veins and the most magnificent trap-runs, and when these turned out to be nothing but unproductive rock, he would laugh contemptuously and say that none but he understood the secret signs, the significant writing, fraught with hidden meaning, which the queen's own hand had inscribed on the rocks, and that it was sufficient to understand those signs without bringing to light what they indicated.

"The old Captain looked sorrowfully at Elis, who spoke, with wild gleaming eyes, of the glorious paradise which glowed down in the depths of the earth. 'That terrible old Torbern has been at him,' he whispered in Dahlsjoe's ear.

"'Pshaw! don't believe these miners' yarns,' cried Dahlsjoe. 'He's a deep-thinking serious fellow, and love has turned his head, that's all. Wait till the marriage is over, then we'll hear no more of the trap-runs, the treasures, and the subterranean paradise.'

"The wedding-day, fixed by Dahlsjoe, came at last. For a few days previously Elis had been more tranquil, more serious, more sunk in deep reflection than ever. But, on the other hand, never had he shown such affection for Ulla as at this time. He could not leave her for a moment, and never went down the mine at all. He seemed to have forgotten his restless excitement about mining work, and never a word of the subterranean kingdom crossed his lips. Ulla was all rapture. Her fear lest the dangerous powers of the subterranean world, of which she had heard old miners speak, had been luring him to his destruction, had left her; and Dahlsjoe, too, said, laughing to the Captain, 'You see, Elis was only a little light-headed for love of my Ulla.'

"Early on the morning of the wedding-day, which was St. John's Day as it chanced, Elis knocked at the door of Ulla's room. She opened it, and started back terrified at the sight of Elis, dressed in his wedding clothes already, deadly pale, with dark gloomy fire sparkling in his eyes.

"'I only want to tell you, my beloved Ulla,' he said, in a faint, trembling voice, 'that we are just arrived at the summit of the highest good fortune which it is possible for mortals to attain. Everything has been revealed to me in the night which is just over. Down in the depths below, hidden in chlorite and mica, lies the cherry-coloured sparkling almandine, on which the tablet of our lives is graven. I have to give it to you as a wedding present. It is more splendid than the most

glorious blood-red carbuncle, and when, united in truest affection, we look into its streaming splendour together, we shall see and understand the peculiar manner in which our hearts and souls have grown together into the wonderful branch which shoots from the queen's heart, at the central point of the globe. All that is necessary is that I go and bring this stone to the surface, and that I will do now, as fast as I can. Take care of yourself meanwhile, beloved darling. I will be back to you directly.'

"Ulla implored him, with bitter tears, to give up all idea of such a dream-like undertaking, for she felt a strong presentiment of disaster; but Elis declared that without this stone he should never know a moment's peace or happiness, and that there was not the slightest danger of any kind. He pressed her fondly to his heart, and was gone.

"The guests were all assembled to accompany the bridal pair to the church of Copparberg, where they were to be married, and a crowd of girls, who were to be the bridesmaids and walk in procession before the bride (as is the custom of the place), were laughing and playing round Ulla. The musicians were tuning their instruments to begin a wedding march. It was almost noon, but Elis had not made his appearance. Suddenly some miners came running up, horror in their pale faces, with the news that there had been a terrible catastrophe, a subsidence of the earth, which had destroyed the whole of Pehrson Dahlsjoe's part of the mine.

"'Elis! oh, Elis! you are gone!' screamed Ulla, wildly, and fell as if dead. Then only, for the first time, Dahlsjoe learned from the Captain that Elis had gone down the main-shaft in the morning. Nobody else had been in the mine, the rest of the men having been invited to the wedding. Dahlsjoe and all the others hurried off to search, at the imminent danger of their own lives. In vain! Elis Froebom was not to be found. There could be no question that the earth-fall had buried him in the rock. And thus came desolation and mourning upon the house of brave Pehrson Dahlsjoe, at the moment when he thought he was assured of peace and happiness for the remainder of his days.

"Long had stout Pehrson Dahlsjoe been dead, his daughter Ulla long lost sight of and forgotten. Nobody in Falun remembered them. More than fifty years had gone by since Froebom's luckless wedding-day, when it chanced that some miners who were making a connection-passage between two shafts, found, at a depth of three hundred yards, buried in vitriolated water, the body of a young miner, which seemed, when they brought it to the daylight, to be turned to stone.

"The young man looked as if he were lying in a deep sleep, so perfectly preserved were the features of his lace, so wholly without trace of decay his new suit of miner's clothes, and even the flowers in his breast. The people of the neighbourhood all collected round the young man, but no one recognized him or could say who he had been, and none of the workmen missed any comrade.

"The body was going to be taken to Falun, when out of the distance an old, old woman came creeping slowly and painfully up on crutches.

"Here's the old St. John's Day grandmother!' the miners said. They had given her this name because they had noticed that she came always every year on St. John's Day up to the main shaft, and looked down into its depths, weeping, lamenting, and wringing her hands as she crept round it, then going away again.

"The moment she saw the body she threw away her crutches, lifted her arms to Heaven, and cried, in the most heartrending accents of the deepest lamentation:

"'Oh! Elis Froebom! Oh, my sweet, sweet bridegroom!'

"And she cowered down beside the body, took the stony hands and pressed them to her heart, chilled with age, but throbbing still with the fondest love, like some naphtha flame under the surface ice.

"Ah!" she said, looking round at the spectators, 'nobody, nobody among you all, remembers poor Ulla Dahlsjoe, this poor boy's happy bride fifty long years ago. When I went away, in my terrible sorrow and despair, to Ornaes, old Torbern comforted me, and told me I should see my poor Elis, who was buried in the rock upon our wedding-day, yet once more here upon earth. And I have come every year and looked for him, all longing and faithful love. And now this blessed meeting has been granted me this day. Oh, Elis! Elis! my beloved husband!'

"She wound her arms about him as if she would never part from him more, and the people all stood round in the deepest emotion.

"Fainter and fainter grew her sobs and sighs, till they ceased to be audible.

"The miners closed round. They would have raised poor Ulla, but she had breathed out her life upon her bridegroom's body. The spectators noticed now that it was beginning to crumble into dust. The appearance of petrification had been deceptive.

"In the church of Copparberg, where they were to have been married fifty years before, they laid in the earth the ashes of Elis Froebom, and with them the body of her who had been thus 'Faithful unto death.'"

"I see," said Theodore, when he had finished, and the friends sat looking straight before them in silence, "that you don't much like this story of mine. Perhaps, in your present mood of mind, it strikes you as too painful."

"It does produce a terribly melancholy effect upon one," said Ottmar, "and, to speak my candid opinion, I cannot say that I care about all the Swedish 'Fraelse' holders, the national festivities, the spectral miners, visions, and so forth. The simple account in Schubert's 'Night Side of Natural Science,' of the finding of a body in the Falun Mine, which an old woman recognized as her betrothed of fifty years before, affected me much more deeply."

"I must betake myself for aid to our patron, Serapion," said Theodore; "for the story of the miner really came to my fancy exactly as I have told it."

"Everybody has his own way of looking at things," said Lothair, "but perhaps it is as well that it was to us that you read this tale, inasmuch as we have all some knowledge of mining matters, of Falun, and of Swedish manners and customs. Other people might say you had sometimes been a little unintelligible from the use of too much mining phraseology; and it isn't everybody who would know that the 'Aehl' which you mention so often is simply a fine, strong sort of beer."

"Theodore's story has not displeased me so much as it has you, Ottmar," said Cyprian. "Writers very often show us people who perish in some disastrous way as having been at issue with themselves all through their lives, as if under the control of unknown powers of darkness. This is what Theodore has done; and I must say I approve of it, because I think it is exceedingly true to nature. I have known people who have suddenly seemed to alter and change completely--who have appeared to be suddenly petrified (so to speak) within themselves, or driven hither and thither by hostile powers, in constant unrest, till some fearful catastrophe has withdrawn them from life."

"Stop, stop!" cried Lothair. "If we give this spirit-seer Cyprian a chance, we shall be drawn into a regular labyrinth of dreams, presentiments, and all the rest of it. Allow me to dispel the gloomy tone which has come upon us at one stroke, by reading you--as a finale to our present sitting--a children's story which I wrote a short time ago, as I believe, under the direct inspiration of the tricky spirit Puck, himself."

"A children's story by you, Lothair!" they all cried.

"Even so," said Lothair. "It may seem to you a piece of insanity that I should write a children's story; but let me read it to you, and then give your verdicts."

Lothair took a carefully written MS. from his pocket, and read:--

"NUTCRACKER AND THE KING OF MICE.

"CHRISTMAS EVE.

"On the 24th of December Dr. Stahlbaum's children were not allowed, on any pretext whatever, at any time of all that day, to go into the small drawing-room, much less into the best drawing-room into which it opened. Fritz and Marie were sitting cowered together in a corner of the back parlour when the evening twilight fell, and they began to feel terribly eery. Seeing that no candles were brought, as was generally the case on Christmas Eve, Fritz, whispering in a mysterious fashion, confided to his young sister (who was just seven) that he had heard rattlings and rustlings going on all day, since early morning, inside the forbidden rooms, as well as distant hammerings. Further, that a short time ago a little dark-looking man had gone slipping and creeping across the floor with a big box under his arm, though he was well aware that this little man was no other than Godpapa Drosselmeier. At this news Marie clapped her little hands for gladness, and cried:

"Oh! I do wonder what pretty things Godpapa Drosselmeier has been making for us *this* time!"

"Godpapa Drosselmeier was anything but a nice-looking man. He was little and lean, with a great many wrinkles on his face, a big patch of black plaister where his right eye ought to have been, and not a hair on his head; which was why he wore a fine white wig, made of glass, and a very beautiful work of art. But he was a very, very clever man, who even knew and understood all about clocks and watches, and could make them himself. So that when one of the beautiful clocks that were in Dr. Stahlbaum's house was out of sorts, and couldn't sing, Godpapa Drosselmeier would come, take off his glass periwig and his little yellow coat, gird himself with a blue apron, and proceed to stick sharp-pointed instruments into the inside of the clock, in a way that made little Marie quite miserable to witness. However, this didn't really hurt the poor clock, which, on the contrary, would come to life again, and begin to whirr and sing and strike as merrily as ever; which caused everybody the greatest satisfaction. Of course, whenever he came he always brought something delightful in his pockets for the children--perhaps a little man, who would roll his eyes and make bows and scrapes, most comic to behold; or a box, out of which a little bird would jump; or something else of the kind. But for Christmas he always had some specially charming piece of ingenuity provided; something which had cost him infinite pains and labour--for which reason it was always taken away and put by with the greatest care by the children's parents.

"Oh! what can Godpapa Drosselmeier have been making for us *this* time.' Marie cried, as we have said.

"Fritz was of opinion that, this time, it could hardly be anything but a great castle, a fortress, where all sorts of pretty soldiers would be drilling and marching about; and then, that other soldiers would come and try to get into the fortress, upon which the soldiers inside would fire away at them, as pluckily as you please, with cannon, till every thing banged and thundered like anything.

"No, no,' Marie said. 'Godpapa Drosselmeier once told me about a beautiful garden, with a great lake in it, and beautiful swans swimming about with great gold collars, singing lovely music. And then a lovely little girl comes down through the garden to the lake, and calls the swans and feeds them with shortbread and cake.'

"Swans don't eat cake and shortbread,' Fritz cried, rather rudely (with masculine superiority); 'and Godpapa Drosselmeier couldn't make a whole

garden. After all, we have got very few of his playthings; whatever he brings is always taken away from us. So I like the things papa and mamma give us much better; we keep them, all right, ourselves, and can do what we like with them.'

"The children went on discussing as to what he might have in store for them this time. Marie called Fritz's attention to the fact that Miss Gertrude (her biggest doll) appeared to be failing a good deal as time went on, inasmuch as she was more clumsy and awkward than ever, tumbling on to the floor every two or three minutes, a thing which did not occur without leaving very ugly marks on her face, and of course a proper condition of her clothes became out of the question altogether. Scolding was of no use. Mamma too had laughed at her for being so delighted with Miss Gertrude's little new parasol. Fritz, again, remarked that a good fox was lacking to his small zoological collection, and that his army was quite without cavalry, as his papa was well aware. But the children knew that their elders had got all sorts of charming things ready for them, as also that the Child-Christ, at Christmas time, took special care for their wants. Marie sat in thoughtful silence, but Fritz murmured quietly to himself:

"All the same, I should like a fox and some hussars!"

"It was now quite dark; Fritz and Marie sitting close together, did not dare to utter another syllable; they felt as if there were a fluttering of gentle, invisible wings around them, whilst a very far away, but unutterably beautiful strain of music could dimly be heard. Then a bright gleam of light passed quickly athwart the wall, and the children knew that the Child-Christ had sped away, on shining wings, to other happy children. At this moment a silvery bell said, 'Kling-ling! Kling-ling!' the doors flew open, and such a brilliance of light came streaming from the drawing-room that the children stood rooted where they were with cries of 'Oh! Oh!'

"But papa and mamma came and took their hands, saying, 'Come now, darlings, and see what the blessed Child-Christ has brought for you.'

"THE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

"I appeal to yourself, kind reader (or listener)--Fritz, Theodore, Ernest, or whatsoever your name may chance to be--and I would beg you to bring vividly before your mind's eye your last Christmas table, all glorious with its various delightful Christmas presents; and then perhaps you will be able to form some idea of the manner in which the two children stood speechless with brilliant glances fixed on all the beautiful things; how, after a little, Marie, with a sigh, cried, 'Oh, how lovely! how lovely!' and Fritz gave several jumps of delight. The children had certainly been very, very good and well-behaved all the foregoing year to be thus rewarded; for never had so many beautiful and delightful things been provided for them as this time. The great Christmas tree on the table bore many apples of silver and gold, and all its branches were heavy with bud and blossom, consisting of sugar almonds, many-tinted bonbons, and all sorts of charming things to eat. Perhaps the prettiest thing about this wonder-tree, however, was the fact that in all the recesses of its spreading branches hundreds of little tapers glittered like stars, inviting the children to pluck its flowers and fruit. Also, all round the tree on every side everything shone and glittered in the loveliest manner. Oh, how many beautiful things there were! Who, oh who, could describe them all? Marie gazed there at the most delicious dolls, and all kinds of toys, and (what was the prettiest thing of all) a little silk dress with many-tinted ribbons was hung upon a projecting branch in such sort that she could admire it on all its sides; which she accordingly did, crying out several times, 'Oh! the lovely, the lovely, darling little dress. And I suppose, I do believe, I shall really be allowed to put it on!' Fritz, in the meantime, had had two or three trials how his new fox (which he had actually found on the table) could gallop; and now stated that he seemed a wildish sort of brute; but, no matter, he felt sure he would soon

get him well in order; and he set to work to muster his new squadron of hussars, admirably equipped, in red and gold uniforms, with real silver swords, and mounted on such shining white horses that you would have thought they were of pure silver too.

"When the children had sobered down a little, and were beginning upon the beautiful picture books (which were open, so that you could see all sorts of most beautiful flowers and people of every hue, to say nothing of lovely children playing, all as naturally represented as if they were really alive and could speak), there came another tinkling of a bell, to announce the display of Godpapa Drosselmeier's Christmas present, which was on another table, against the wall, concealed by a curtain. When this curtain was drawn, what did the children behold?

"On a green lawn, bright with flowers, stood a lordly castle with a great many shining windows and golden towers. A chime of bells was going on inside it; doors and windows opened, and you saw very small, but beautiful, ladies and gentlemen, with plumed hats, and long robes down to their heels, walking up and down in the rooms of it. In the central hall, which seemed all in a blaze, there were quantities of little candles burning in silver chandeliers; children, in little short doublets, were dancing to the chimes of the bells. A gentleman, in an emerald green mantle, came to a window, made signs thereat, and then disappeared inside again; also, even Godpapa Drosselmeier himself (but scarcely taller than papa's thumb) came now and then, and stood at the castle door, then went in again.

"Fritz had been looking on with the rest at the beautiful castle and the people walking about and dancing in it, with his arms leant on the table; then he said:

"Godpapa Drosselmeier, let me go into your castle for a little.'

"Drosselmeier answered that this could not possibly be done. In which he was right; for it was silly of Fritz to want to go into a castle which was not so tall as himself, golden towers and all. And Fritz saw that this was so.

"After a short time, as the ladies and gentlemen kept on walking about just in the same fashion, the children dancing, and the emerald man looking out at the same window, and Godpapa Drosselmeier coming to the door Fritz cried impatiently:

"Godpapa Drosselmeier, please come out at that other door!'

"That can't be done, dear Fritz,' answered Drosselmeier.

"Well,' resumed Fritz, 'make that green man that looks out so often walk about with the others.'

"And that can't be done, either,' said his godpapa, once more.

"Make the children come down, then,' said Fritz. 'I want to see them nearer.'

"Nonsense, nothing of that sort can be done,' cried Drosselmeier, with impatience. 'The machinery must work as it's doing now; it can't be altered, you know.'

"Oh,' said Fritz, 'it can't be done, eh? Very well, then, Godpapa Drosselmeier, I'll tell you what it is. If your little creatures in the castle there can only always do the same thing, they're not much worth, and I think precious little of them! No, give me my hussars. They've got to manoeuvre backwards and forwards just as I want them, and are not fastened up in a house.'

"With which he made off to the other table, and set his squadron of silver horse trotting here and there, wheeling and charging and slashing right and left to his heart's content. Marie had slipped away softly, too, for she was tired of the

promenading and dancing of the puppets in the castle, though, kind and gentle as she was, she did not like to show it as her brother did. Drosselmeier, somewhat annoyed, said to the parents--'After all, an ingenious piece of mechanism like this is not a matter for children, who don't understand it; I shall put my castle back in its box again.' But the mother came to the rescue, and made him show her the clever machinery which moved the figures, Drosselmeier taking it all to pieces, putting it together again, and quite recovering his temper in the process. So that he gave the children all sorts of delightful brown men and women with golden faces, hands and legs, which were made of ginger cake, and with which they were greatly content.

"MARIE'S PET AND PROTÉGÉE.

"But there was a reason wherefore Marie found it against the grain to come away from the table where the Christmas presents were laid out; and this was, that she had just noticed a something there which she had not observed at first. Fritz's hussars having taken ground to the right at some distance from the tree, in front of which they had previously been paraded, there became visible a most delicious little man, who was standing there quiet and unobtrusive, as if waiting patiently till it should be his turn to be noticed. Objection, considerable objection, might, perhaps, have been taken to him on the score of his figure, for his body was rather too tall and stout for his legs, which were short and slight; moreover, his head was a good deal too large. But much of this was atoned for by the elegance of his costume, which showed him to be a person of taste and cultivation. He had on a very pretty violet hussar's jacket, all over knobs and braiding, pantaloons of the same, and the loveliest little boots ever seen even on a hussar officer--fitting his dear little legs just as if they had been painted on to them. It was funny, certainly, that, dressed in this style as he was, he had on a little, rather absurd, short cloak on his shoulders, which looked almost as if it were made of wood, and on his head a cap like a miner's. But Marie remembered that Godpapa Drosselmeier often appeared in a terribly ugly morning jacket, and with a frightful looking cap on his head, and yet was a very very darling godpapa.

"As Marie kept looking at this little man, whom she had quite fallen in love with at first sight, she saw more and more clearly what a sweet nature and disposition was legible in his countenance. Those green eyes of his (which stuck, perhaps, a little more prominently out of his head than was quite desirable) beamed with kindness and benevolence. It was one of his beauties, too, that his chin was set off with a well kept beard of white cotton, as this drew attention to the sweet smile which his bright red lips always expressed.

"'Oh, papa, dear!' cried Marie at last, 'whose is that most darling little man beside the tree?'

"Well,' was the answer, 'that little fellow is going to do plenty of good service for all of you; he's going to crack nuts for you, and he is to belong to Louise just as much as to you and Fritz.' With which papa took him up from the table, and on his lifting the end of his wooden cloak, the little man opened his mouth wider and wider, displaying two rows of very white, sharp teeth. Marie, directed by her father, put a nut into his mouth, and--knack--he had bitten it in two, so that the shells fell down, and Marie got the kernel. So then it was explained to all that this charming little man belonged to the Nutcracker family, and was practising the profession of his ancestors. 'And,' said papa, 'as friend Nutcracker seems to have made such an impression on you, Marie, he shall be given over to your special care and charge, though, as I said, Louise and Fritz are to have the same right to his services as you.'

"Marie took him into her arms at once, and made him crack some more nuts; but she picked out all the smallest, so that he might not have to open his mouth so terribly wide, because that was not nice for him. Then sister Louise came, and he

had to crack some nuts for her too,' which duty he seemed very glad to perform, as he kept on smiling most courteously.

"Meanwhile, Fritz was a little tired, after so much drill and manœuvring, so he joined his sisters, and laughed beyond measure at the funny little fellow, who (as Fritz wanted his share of the nuts) was passed from hand to hand, and was continually snapping his month open and shut. Fritz gave him all the biggest and hardest nuts he could find, but all at once there was a 'crack--crack,' and three teeth fell out of Nutcracker's mouth, and all his lower jaw was loose and wobbly.

"Ah! my poor darling Nutcracker,' Marie cried, and took him away from Fritz.

"A nice sort of chap he is!' said Fritz. 'Calls himself a nutcracker, and can't give a decent bite--doesn't seem to know much about his business. Hand him over here, Marie! I'll keep him biting nuts if he drops all the rest of his teeth, and his jaw into the bargain. What's the good of a chap like him!'

"No, no,' said Marie, in tears; 'you shan't have him, my darling Nutcracker; see how he's looking at me so mournfully, and showing me his poor sore mouth. But you're a hard-hearted creature! You beat your horses, and you've had one of your soldiers shot.'

"Those things must be done,' said Fritz; 'and you don't understand anything about such matters. But Nutcracker's as much mine as yours, so hand him over!'

"Marie began to cry bitterly, and wrapped the wounded Nutcracker quickly up in her little pocket-handkerchief. Papa and mamma came with Drosselmeier, who took Fritz's part, to Marie's regret. But papa said, 'I have put Nutcracker in Marie's special charge, and as he seems to have need just now of her care, she has full power over him, and nobody else has anything to say in the matter. And I'm surprised that Fritz should expect further service from a man wounded in the execution of his duty. As a good soldier, he ought to know better than that.'

"Fritz was much ashamed, and, troubling himself no further as to nuts or nutcrackers, crept off to the other side of the table, where his hussars (having established the necessary outposts and videttes) were bivouacking for the night. Marie got Nutcracker's lost teeth together, bound a pretty white ribbon, taken from her dress, about his poor chin, and then wrapped the poor little fellow, who was looking very pale and frightened, more tenderly and carefully than before in her handkerchief. Thus she held him, rocking him like a child in her arms, as she looked at the picture-books. She grew quite angry (which was not usual with her) with Godpapa Drosselmeier because he laughed so, and kept asking how she could make such a fuss about an ugly little fellow like that. That odd and peculiar likeness to Drosselmeier, which had struck her when she saw Nutcracker at first, occurred to her mind again now, and she said, with much earnestness:

"Who knows, godpapa, if you were to be dressed the same as my darling Nutcracker, and had on the same shining boots--who knows whether you mightn't look almost as handsome as he does?'

"Marie did not understand why papa and mamma laughed so heartily, nor why Godpapa Drosselmeier's nose got so red, nor why he did not join so much in the laughter as before. Probably there was some special reason for these things.

"WONDERFUL EVENTS.

"We must now explain that, in the sitting-room, on the left-hand as you go in, there stands, against the wall, a high, glass-fronted cupboard, where all the children's Christmas presents are yearly put away to be kept. Louise, the elder sister, was still quite little when her father had this cupboard constructed by a very skilful workman, who had put in it such transparent panes of glass, and

altogether made the whole affair so splendid, that the things, when inside it, looked almost more shining and lovely than when one had them actually in one's hands. In the upper shelves, which were beyond the reach of Fritz and Marie, were stowed Godpapa Drosselmeier's works of art; immediately under them was the shelf for the picture-books. Fritz and Marie were allowed to do what they liked with the two lower shelves, but it always came about that the lower one of all was that in which Marie put away her dolls, as their place of residence, whilst Fritz utilized the shelf above this as cantonments for his troops of all arms. So that, on the evening as to which we are speaking, Fritz had quartered his hussars in his--the upper--shelf of these two, whilst Marie had put Miss Gertrude rather in a corner, established her new doll in the well-appointed chamber there, with all its appropriate furniture, and invited herself to tea and cakes with her. This chamber was splendidly furnished, everything on a first-rate scale, and in good and admirable style, as I have already said--and I don't know if you, my observant reader, have the satisfaction of possessing an equally well-appointed room for your dolls; a little beautifully-flowered sofa, a number of the most charming little chairs, a nice little tea-table, and, above all, a beautiful little white bed, where your pretty darlings of dolls go to sleep? All this was in a corner of the shelf, the walls of which, in this part, had beautiful little pictures hanging on them; and you may well imagine that, in such a delightful chamber as this, the new doll (whose name, as Marie had discovered, was Miss Clara) thought herself extremely comfortably settled, and remarkably well off.

"It was getting very late, not so very far from midnight, indeed, before the children could tear themselves away from all these Yuletide fascinations, and Godpapa Drosselmeier had been gone a considerable time. They remained riveted beside the glass cupboard, although their mother several times reminded them that it was long after bedtime. 'Yes,' said Fritz, 'I know well enough that these poor fellows (meaning his hussars) are tired enough, and awfully anxious to turn in for the night, though as long as I'm here, not a man-jack of them dares to nod his head.' With which he went off. But Marie earnestly begged for just a little while longer, saying she had such a number of things to see to, and promising that as soon as ever she had got them all settled she would go to bed at once. Marie was a very good and reasonable child, and therefore her mother allowed her to remain for a little longer with her toys; but lest she should be too much occupied with her new doll and the other playthings so as to forget to put out the candles which were lighted all round on the wall sconces, she herself put all of them out, leaving merely the lamp which hung from the ceiling to give a soft and pleasant light. 'Come soon to your bed, Marie, or you'll never be up in time in the morning,' cried her mother as she went away into the bedroom.

"As soon as Marie was alone, she set rapidly to work to do the thing which was chiefly at her heart to accomplish, and which, though she scarcely knew why, she somehow did not like to set about in her mother's presence. She had been holding Nutcracker, wrapped in the handkerchief, carefully in her arms all this time, and she now laid him softly down on the table, gently unrolled the handkerchief, and examined his wounds.

"Nutcracker was very pale, but at the same time he was smiling with a melancholy and pathetic kindness which went straight to Marie's heart.

"Oh, my darling little Nutcracker!" said she, very softly, 'don't you be vexed because brother Fritz has hurt you so: he didn't mean it, you know; he's only a little bit hardened with his soldiering and that, but he's a good, nice boy, I can assure you: and I'll take the greatest care of you, and nurse you, till you're quite, quite better and happy again. And your teeth shall be put in again for you, and your shoulder set right; Godpapa Drosselmeier will see to that; he knows how to do things of the kind----'

"Marie could not finish what she was going to say, because at the mention of Godpapa Drosselmeier, friend Nutcracker made a most horrible, ugly face. A sort of green sparkle of much sharpness seemed to dart out of his eyes. This was only

for an instant, however; and just as Marie was going to be terribly frightened, she found that she was looking at the very same nice, kindly face, with the pathetic smile which she had seen before, and she saw plainly that it was nothing but some draught of air making the lamp flicker that had seemed to produce the change.

"Well!" she said, 'I certainly am a silly girl to be so easily frightened, and think that a wooden doll could make faces at me! But I'm too fond, really, of Nutcracker, because he's so funny, and so kind and nice; and so he must be taken the greatest care of, and properly nursed till he's quite well.'

"With which she took him in her arms again, approached the cupboard, and kneeling down beside it, said to her new doll:

"I'm going to ask a favour of you, Miss Clara--that you will give up your bed to this poor sick, wounded Nutcracker, and make yourself as comfortable as you can on the sofa here. Remember that you're quite well and strong yourself, or you wouldn't have such fat, red cheeks, and that there are very few dolls indeed who have as comfortable a sofa as this to lie upon.'

"Miss Clara, in her Christmas full dress, looked very grand and disdainful, and said not so much as 'Muck!'

"Very well,' said Marie, 'why should I make such a fuss, and stand on any ceremony?'--took the bed and moved it forward; laid Nutcracker carefully and tenderly down on it; wrapped another pretty ribbon, taken from her own dress, about his hurt shoulder, and drew the bed-clothes up to his nose.

"But he shan't stay with that nasty Clara,' she said, and moved the bed, with Nutcracker in it, up to the upper shelf, so that it was placed near the village in which Fritz's hussars had their cantonments. She closed the cupboard, and was moving away to go to bed, when--listen, children! there begun a low soft rustling and rattling, and a sort of whispering noise, all round, in all directions, from all quarters of the room--behind the stove, under the chairs, behind the cupboards. The clock on the wall 'warned' louder and louder, but could not strike. Marie looked at it, and saw that the big gilt owl which was on the top of it had drooped its wings so that they covered the whole of the clock, and had stretched its cat-like head, with the crooked beak, a long way forward. And the 'warning' kept growing louder and louder, with distinct words: 'Clocks, clockies, stop ticking. No sound, but cautious "warning." Mousey king's ears are fine. Prr-prr. Only sing "poom, poom"; sing the olden song of doom! prr-prr; poom, poom. Bells go chime! Soon rings out the fated time!' And then came 'Poom! poom!' quite hoarsely and smothered, twelve times.

"Marie grew terribly frightened, and was going to rush away as best she could, when she noticed that Godpapa Drosselmeier was up on the top of the clock instead of the owl, with his yellow coat-tails hanging down on both sides, like wings. But she manned herself, and called out in a loud voice of anguish:

"Godpapa! godpapa! what are you up there for? Come down to me, and don't frighten me so terribly, you naughty, naughty Godpapa Drosselmeier!'

"But then there begun a sort of wild kickering and queaking, everywhere, all about, and presently there was a sound as of running and trotting, as of thousands of little feet behind the walls, and thousands of little lights began to glitter out between the chinks of the woodwork. But they were not lights; no, no! little glittering eyes; and Marie became aware that, everywhere, mice were peeping and squeezing themselves out through every chink. Presently they were trotting and galloping in all directions over the room; orderly bodies, continually increasing, of mice, forming themselves into regular troops and squadrons, in good order, just as Fritz's soldiers did when manœuvres were going on. As Marie was not afraid of mice (as many children are), she could not help being amused by this, and her first alarm had nearly left her, when suddenly there came such a

sharp and terrible piping noise that the blood ran cold in her veins. Ah! what did she see then? Well, truly, kind reader, I know that your heart is in the right place, just as much as my friend Field Marshal Fritz's is, itself, but if you had seen what now came before Marie's eyes, you would have made a clean pair of heels of it; nay, I consider that you would have plumped into your bed, and drawn the blankets further over your head than necessity demanded.

"But poor Marie hadn't it in her power to do any such thing, because, right at her feet, as if impelled by some subterranean power, sand, and lime, and broken stone came bursting up, and then seven mouse-heads, with seven shining crowns upon them, rose through the floor, hissing and piping in a most horrible way. Quickly the body of the mouse which had those seven crowned heads forced its way up through the floor, and this enormous creature shouted, with its seven heads, aloud to the assembled multitude, squeaking to them with all the seven mouths in full chorus; and then the entire army set itself in motion, and went trot, trot, right up to the cupboard--and, in fact, to Marie, who was standing beside it.

"Marie's heart had been beating so with terror that she had thought it must jump out of her breast, and she must die. But now it seemed to her as if the blood in her veins stood still. Half fainting, she leant backwards, and then there was a 'klirr, klirr, prr,' and the pane of the cupboard, which she had broken with her elbow, fell in shivers to the floor. She felt, for a moment, a sharp, stinging pain in her arm, but still, this seemed to make her heart lighter; she heard no more of the squeaking and piping. Everything was quiet; and though she didn't dare to look, she thought the noise of the glass breaking had frightened the mice back to their holes.

"But what came to pass then? Right behind Marie a movement seemed to commence in the cupboard, and small, faint voices began to be heard, saying:

'Come, awake, measures take;
Out to the fight, out to the fight;
Shield the right, shield the right;
Aim and away, this is the night.'

And harmonica-bells began ringing as prettily as you please.

"Oh! that's my little peal of bells!" cried Marie, and went nearer and looked in. Then she saw that there was bright light in the cupboard, and everything busily in motion there; dolls and little figures of various kinds all running about together, and struggling with their little arms. At this point, Nutcracker rose from his bed, cast off the bedclothes, and sprung with both feet on to the floor (of the shelf), crying out at the top of his voice:

'Knack, knack, knack,
Stupid mousey pack,
All their skulls we'll crack.
Mousey pack, knack, knack,
Mousey pack, crick and crack,
Cowardly lot of schnack!'

"And with this he drew his little sword, waved it in the air, and cried:

"Ye, my trusty vassals, brethren and friends, are ye ready to stand by me in this great battle?"

"Immediately three scaramouches, one pantaloon, four chimney-sweeps, two zither-players, and a drummer cried, in eager accents:

"Yes, your highness; we will stand by you in loyal duty; we will follow you to the death, the victory, and the fray!" And they precipitated themselves after Nutcracker (who, in the excitement of the moment, had dared that perilous leap) to the bottom shelf. Now *they* might well dare this perilous leap, for not only had they got plenty of clothes on, of cloth and silk, but besides, there was not much in

their insides except cotton and sawdust, so that they plumped down like little wool-sacks. But as for poor Nutcracker, he would certainly have broken his arms and legs; for, bethink you, it was nearly two feet from where he had stood to the shelf below, and his body was as fragile as if he had been made of elm-wood. Yes, Nutcracker would have broken his arms and legs, had not Miss Clara started up, at the moment of his spring, from her sofa, and received the hero, drawn sword and all, in her tender arms.

"Oh! you dear, good Clara!" cried Marie, 'how I did misunderstand you. I believe you were quite willing to let dear Nutcracker have your bed.'

"But Miss Clara now cried, as she pressed the young hero gently to her silken breast:

"Oh, my lord! go not into this battle and danger, sick and wounded as you are. See how your trusty vassals, clowns and pantaloons, chimney-sweeps, zithermen and drummer, are already arrayed below; and the puzzle-figures, in my shelf here, are in motion, and preparing for the fray! Deign, then, oh my lord, to rest in these arms of mine, and contemplate your victory from a safe coign of vantage.'

"Thus spoke Clara. But Nutcracker behaved so impatiently, and kicked so with his legs, that Clara was obliged to put him down on the shelf in a hurry. However, he at once sank gracefully on one knee, and expressed himself as follows:

"Oh, lady! the kind protection and aid which you have afforded me, will ever be present to my heart, in battle and in victory!'

"On this, Clara bowed herself so as to be able to take hold of him by his arms, raised him gently up, quickly loosed her girdle, which was ornamented with many spangles, and would have placed it about his shoulders. But the little man drew himself swiftly two steps back, laid his hand upon his heart, and said, with much solemnity:

"Oh, lady! do not bestow this mark of your favour upon me; for----' He hesitated, gave a deep sigh, took the ribbon, with which Marie had bound him, from his shoulders, pressed it to his lips, put it on as a cognizance for the fight, and, waving his glittering sword, sprang, like a bird, over the ledge of the cupboard down to the floor.

"You will observe, kind reader, that Nutcracker, even before he really came to life, had felt and understood all Marie's goodness and regard, and that it was because of his gratitude and devotion to her, that he would not take, or wear even, a ribbon of Miss Clara's, although it was exceedingly pretty and charming. This good, true-hearted Nutcracker preferred Marie's much commoner and more unpretending token.

"But what is going to happen, further, now? At the moment when Nutcracker sprang down, the queaking and piping commenced again worse than ever. Alas! under the big table, the hordes of the mouse army had taken up a position, densely massed, under the command of the terrible mouse with the seven heads. So what is to be the result?

"THE BATTLE.

"Beat the *Generale*, trusty vassal-drummer!" cried Nutcracker, very loud; and immediately the drummer began to roll his drum in the most splendid style, so that the windows of the glass cupboard rattled and resounded. Then there began a cracking and a clattering inside, and Marie saw all the lids of the boxes in which Fritz's army was quartered bursting open, and the soldiers all came out and jumped down to the bottom shelf, where they formed up in good order. Nutcracker hurried up and down the ranks, speaking words of encouragement.

"There's not a dog of a trumpeter taking the trouble to sound a call!' he cried in a fury. Then he turned to the pantaloon (who was looking decidedly pale), and, wobbling his long chin a good deal, said, in a tone of solemnity:

"I know how brave and experienced you are, General! What is essential here, is a rapid comprehension of the situation, and immediate utilization of the passing moment. I entrust you with the command of the cavalry and artillery. You can do without a horse; your own legs are long, and you can gallop on them as fast as is necessary. Do your duty!"

"Immediately Pantaloon put his long, lean fingers to his mouth, and gave such a piercing crow that it rang as if a hundred little trumpets had been sounding lustily. Then there began a tramping and a neighing in the cupboard; and Fritz's dragoons and cuirassiers--but above all, the new glittering hussars--marched out, and thru came to a halt, drawn up on the floor. They then marched past Nutcracker by regiments, with *guidons* flying and bands playing; after which they wheeled into line, and formed up at right angles to the line of march. Upon this, Fritz's artillery came rattling up, and formed action front in advance of the halted cavalry. Then it went 'boom-boom!' and Marie saw the sugar-plums doing terrible execution amongst the thickly-massed mouse-battalions, which were powdered quite white by them, and greatly put to shame. But a battery of heavy guns, which had taken up a strong position on mamma's footstool, was what did the greatest execution; and 'poom-poom-poom!' kept up a murderous fire of gingerbread nuts into the enemy's ranks with most destructive effect, mowing the mice down in great numbers. The enemy, however, was not materially checked in his advance, and had even possessed himself of one or two of the heavy guns, when there came 'pr-r-pr-r!' and Marie could scarcely see what was happening, for smoke and dust; but this much is certain, that every corps engaged fought with the utmost bravery and determination, and it was for a long time doubtful which side would gain the day. The mice kept on developing fresh bodies of their forces, as they were advanced to the scene of action; their little silver balls--like pills in size--which they delivered with great precision (their musketry practice being specially fine) took effect even inside the glass cupboard. Clara and Gertrude ran up and down in utter despair, wringing their hands, and loudly lamenting.

"Must I--the very loveliest doll in all the world--perish miserably in the very flower of my youth?" cried Miss Clara.

"Oh! was it for this,' wept Gertrude, 'that I have taken such pains to *conserve* myself all these years? Must I be shot here in my own drawing-room after all?"

"On this, they fell into each other's arms, and howled so terribly that you could hear them above all the din of the battle. For you have no idea of the hurly-burly that went on now, dear auditor! It went pr-r-pr-r-pooof, piff-schnetterdeng--schnetterdeng--boom-booroom--boom-booroom--boom all confusedly and higgledy-piggledy; and the mouse-king and the mice squeaked and screamed; and then again Nutcracker's powerful voice was heard shouting words of command, and issuing important orders, and he was seen striding along amongst his battalions in the thick of the fire.

'Pantaloon had made several most brilliant cavalry charges, and covered himself with glory. But Fritz's hussars were subjected--by the mice--to a heavy fire of very evil-smelling shot, which made horrid spots on their red tunics; this caused them to hesitate, and hang rather back for a time. Pantaloon made them take ground to the left, in *échelon*, and, in the excitement of the moment, he, with his dragoons and cuirassiers, executed a somewhat analogous movement. That is to say, they brought up the right shoulder, wheeled to the left, and marched home to their quarters. This had the effect of bringing the battery of artillery on the footstool into imminent danger, and it was not long before a large body of exceedingly ugly mice delivered such a vigorous assault on this position that the whole of the footstool, with the guns and gunners, fell into the enemy's hands. Nutcracker seemed much disconcerted, and ordered his right wing to commence a retrograde movement. A soldier of your experience, my dear Fritz, knows well

that such a movement is almost tantamount to a regular retreat, and you grieve, with me, in anticipation, for the disaster which threatens the army of Marie's beloved little Nutcracker. But turn your glance in the other direction, and look at this left wing of Nutcracker's, where all is still going well, and you will see that there is yet much hope for the commander-in-chief and his cause.

"During the hottest part of the engagement masses of mouse-cavalry had been quietly debouching from under the chest of drawers, and had subsequently made a most determined advance upon the left wing of Nutcracker's force, uttering loud and horrible queakings. But what a reception they met with! Very slowly, as the nature the *terrain* necessitated (for the ledge at the bottom of the cupboard had to be passed), the regiment of motto-figures, commanded by two Chinese Emperors, advanced, and formed square. These fine, brilliantly-uniformed troops, consisting of gardeners, Tyrolese, Tungoses, hairdressers, harlequins, Cupids, lions, tigers, unicorns, and monkeys, fought with the utmost courage, coolness, and steady endurance. This *bataillon d'élite* would have wrested the victory from the enemy had not one of his cavalry captains, pushing forward in a rash and foolhardy manner, made a charge upon one of the Chinese Emperors, and bitten off his head. This Chinese Emperor, in his fall, knocked over and smothered a couple of Tungoses and a unicorn, and this created a gap, through which the enemy effected a rush, which resulted in the whole battalion being bitten to death. But the enemy gained little advantage by this; for as soon as one of the mouse-cavalry soldiers bit one of these brave adversaries to death, he found that there was a small piece of printed paper sticking in his throat, of which he died in a moment. Still, this was of small advantage to Nutcracker's army, which, having once commenced a retrograde movement, went on retreating farther and farther, suffering greater and greater loss. So that the unfortunate Nutcracker found himself driven back close to the front of the cupboard, with a very small remnant of his army.

"'Bring up the reserves! Pantaloon! Scaramouch! Drummer! where the devil have you got to?' shouted Nutcracker, who was still reckoning on reinforcements from the cupboard. And there did, in fact, advance a small contingent of brown gingerbread men and women, with gilt faces, hats, and helmets; but they laid about them so clumsily that they never hit any of the enemy, and soon knocked off the cap of their commander-in-chief, Nutcracker, himself. And the enemy's chasseurs soon bit their legs off, so that they tumbled topsy-turvy, and killed several of Nutcracker's companions-in-arms into the bargain.

"Nutcracker was now hard pressed, and closely hemmed in by the enemy, and in a position of extreme peril. He tried to jump the bottom ledge of the cupboard, but his legs were not long enough. Clara and Gertrude had fainted; so they could give him no assistance. Hussars and heavy dragoons came charging up at him, and he shouted in wild despair:

"'A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!'

"At this moment two of the enemy's riflemen seized him by his wooden cloak, and the king of the mice went rushing up to him, squeaking in triumph out of all his seven throats.

"Marie could contain herself no longer. 'Oh! my poor Nutcracker!' she sobbed, took her left shoe off, without very distinctly knowing what she was about, and threw it as hard as she could into the thick of the enemy, straight at their king.

"Instantly everything vanished and disappeared. All was silence. Nothing to be seen. But Marie felt a more stinging pain than before in her left arm, and fell on the floor insensible.

"THE INVALID.

"When Marie awoke from a death-like sleep she was lying in her little bed; and the sun was shining brightly in at the window, which was all covered with frost-flowers. There was a stranger gentleman sitting beside her, whom she recognized as Dr. Wendelstern. 'She's awake,' he said softly, and her mother came and looked at her very scrutinizingly and anxiously.

"'Oh, mother!' whispered Marie, 'are all those horrid mice gone away, and is Nutcracker quite safe?'

"'Don't talk such nonsense, Marie,' answered her mother. 'What have the mice to do with Nutcracker? You're a very naughty girl, and have caused us all a great deal of anxiety. See what comes of children not doing as they're told! You were playing with your toys so late last night that you fell asleep. I don't know whether or not some mouse jumped out and frightened you, though there are no mice here, generally. But, at all events, you broke a pane of the glass cupboard with your elbow, and cut your arm so bally that Dr. Wendelstern (who has just taken a number of pieces of the glass out of your arm) thinks that if it had been only a little higher up you might have had a stiff arm for life, or even have bled to death. Thank Heaven, I awoke about twelve o'clock and missed you; and I found you lying insensible in front of the glass cupboard, bleeding frightfully, with a number of Fritz's lead soldiers scattered round you, and other toys, broken motto-figures, and gingerbread men; and Nutcracker was lying on your bleeding arm, with your left shoe not far off.'

"'Oh, mother, mother,' said Marie, 'these were the remains of the tremendous battle between the toys and the mice; and what frightened me so terribly was that the mice were going to take Nutcracker (who was the commander-in-chief of the toy army) a prisoner. Then I threw my shoe in among the mice, and after that I know nothing more that happened.'

"Dr. Wendelstern gave a significant look at the mother, who said very gently to Marie:

"'Never mind, dear, keep yourself quiet. The mice are all gone away, and Nutcracker's in the cupboard, quite safe and sound.'

"Here Marie's father came in, and had a long consultation with Dr. Wendelstern. Then he felt Marie's pulse, and she heard them talking about 'wound-fever.' She had to stay in bed, and take medicine, for some days, although she didn't feel at all ill, except that her arm was rather stiff and painful. She knew Nutcracker had got safe out of the battle, and she seemed to remember, as if in a dream, that he had said, quite distinctly, in a very melancholy tone:

"'Marie! dearest lady! I am most deeply indebted to you. But it is in your power to do even more for me still.'

"She thought and thought what this could possibly be; but in vain; she couldn't make it out. She wasn't able to play on account of her arm; and when she tried to read, or look through the picture-books, everything wavered before her eyes so strangely that she was obliged to stop. So that the days seemed very long to her, and she could scarcely pass the time till evening, when her mother came and sat at her bedside, telling and reading her all sorts of nice stories. She had just finished telling her the story of Prince Fakardin, when the door opened and in came Godpapa Drosselmeier, saying:

"'I've come to see with my own eyes how Marie's getting on.'

"When Marie saw Godpapa Drosselmeier in his little yellow coat, the scene of the night when Nutcracker lost the battle with the mice came so vividly back to her that she couldn't help crying out:

"'Oh! Godpapa Drosselmeier, how nasty you were! I saw you quite well when you were sitting on the clock, covering it all over with your wings, to prevent it from striking and frightening the mice. I heard you quite well when you called the

mouse-king. Why didn't you help Nutcracker? Why didn't you help *me*, you nasty godpapa? It's nobody's fault but yours that I'm lying here with a bad arm.'

"Her mother, in much alarm, asked what she meant. But Drosselmeier began making extraordinary faces, and said, in a snarling voice, like a sort of chant in monotone:

"Pendulums could only rattle--couldn't tick, ne'er a click; all the clockies stopped their ticking: no more clicking; then they all struck loud "cling-clang." Dollies! Don't your heads downhang! Hink and hank, and honk and hank. Doll-girls! don't your heads downhang! Cling and ring! The battle's over--Nutcracker all safe in clover. Comes the owl, on downy wing--Scares away the mouses' king. Pak and pik and pik and pook--clocks, bim-boom--grr-grr. Pendulums must click again. Tick and tack, grr and brr, prr and purr.'

"Marie fixed wide eyes of terror upon Godpapa Drosselmeier, because he was looking quite different, and far more horrid, than usual, and was jerking his right arm backwards and forwards as if he were some puppet moved by a handle. She was beginning to grow terribly frightened at him when her mother came in, and Fritz (who had arrived in the meantime) laughed heartily, crying, 'Why, godpapa, you *are* going on funnily! You're just like my old Jumping Jack that I threw away last month.'

"But the mother looked very grave, and said, 'This is a most extraordinary way of going on, Mr. Drosselmeier. What can you mean by it?'

"My goodness!' said Drosselmeier, laughing, 'did you never hear my nice Watchmaker's Song? I always sing it to little invalids like Marie.' Then he hastened to sit down beside Marie's bed, and said to her, 'Don't be vexed with me because I didn't gouge out all the mouse-king's fourteen eyes. That couldn't be managed exactly; but, to make up for it, here's something which I know will please you greatly.'

"He dived into one of his pockets, and what he slowly, slowly brought out of it was--Nutcracker! whose teeth he had put in again quite firmly, and set his broken jaw completely to rights. Marie shouted for joy, and her mother laughed and said, 'Now you see for yourself how nice Godpapa Drosselmeier is to Nutcracker.'

"But you must admit, Marie,' said her godpapa, 'that Nutcracker is far from being what you might call a handsome fellow, and you can't say he has a pretty face. If you like I'll tell you how it was that the ugliness came into his family, and has been handed down in it from one generation to another. Did ever you hear about the Princess Pirlipat, the witch Mouseyrinks, and the clever Clockmaker?'

"I say, Godpapa Drosselmeier,' interrupted Fritz at this juncture, 'you've put Nutcracker's teeth in again all right, and his jaw isn't wobbly as it was; but what's become of his sword? Why haven't you given him a sword?'

"Oh,' cried Drosselmeier, annoyed, 'you must always be bothering and finding fault with something or other, boy. What have I to do with Nutcracker's sword? I've put his mouth to rights for him; he must look out for a sword for himself.'

"Yes, yes,' said Fritz, 'so he must, of course, if he's a right sort of fellow.'

"So tell me, Marie,' continued Drosselmeier, 'if you know the story of Princess Pirlipat?'

"Oh no,' said Marie. 'Tell it me, please--do tell it me!'

"I hope it won't be as strange and terrible as your stories generally are,' said her mother.

"Oh no, nothing of the kind,' said Drosselmeier. 'On the contrary, it's quite a funny story which I'm going to have the honour of telling this time.'

"Go on then--do tell it to us," cried the children; and Drosselmeier commenced as follows:--

"THE STORY OF THE HARD NUT."

"Pirlipat's mother was a king's wife, so that, of course, she was a queen; and Pirlipat herself was a princess by birth as soon as ever she was born. The king was quite beside himself with joy over his beautiful little daughter as she lay in her cradle, and he danced round and round upon one leg, crying again and again,

""Hurrah! hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah! Did anybody ever see anything so lovely as my little Pirlipat?"

"And all the ministers of state, and the generals, the presidents, and the officers of the staff, danced about on one leg, as the king did, and cried as loud as they could, "No, no--never!"

"Indeed, there was no denying that a lovelier baby than Princess Pirlipat was never born since the world began. Her little face looked as if it were woven of the most delicate white and rose-coloured silk; her eyes were of sparkling azure, and her hair all in little curls like threads of gold. Moreover, she had come into the world with two rows of little pearly teeth, with which, two hours after her birth, she bit the Lord High Chancellor in the fingers, when he was making a careful examination of her features, so that he cried, "Oh! Gemini!" quite loud.

"There are persons who assert that "Oh Lord" was the expression he employed, and opinions are still considerably divided on this point. At all events, she bit him in the fingers; and the realm learned, with much gratification, that both intelligence and discrimination dwelt within her angelical little frame.

"All was joy and gladness, as I have said, save that the queen was very anxious and uneasy, nobody could tell why. One remarkable circumstance was, that she had Pirlipat's cradle most scrupulously guarded. Not only were there lifeguardsmen always at the doors of the nursery, but--over and above the two head nurses close to the cradle--there had always to be six other nurses all round the room at night. And what seemed rather a funny thing, which nobody could understand, was that each of these six nurses had always to have a cat in her lap, and to keep on stroking it all night long, so that it might never stop purring.

"It is impossible that you, my reader, should know the reason of all these precautions; but I do, and shall proceed to tell you at once.

"Once upon a time, many great kings and very grand princes were assembled at Pirlipat's father's court, and very great doings were toward. Tournaments, theatricals, and state balls were going on on the grandest scale, and the king, to show that he had no lack of gold and silver, made up his mind to make a good hole in the crown revenues for once, and launch out regardless of expense. Wherefore (having previously ascertained, privately, from the state head master cook that the court astronomer had indicated a propitious hour for pork-butching), he resolved to give a grand pudding-and-sausage banquet. He jumped into a state carriage, and personally invited all the kings and the princes--to a basin of soup, merely--that he might enjoy their astonishment at the magnificence of the entertainment. Then he said to the queen, very graciously:

""My darling, *you* know exactly how I like my puddings and sausages!"

"The queen quite understood what this meant. It meant that she should undertake the important duty of making the puddings and the sausages herself, which was a thing she had done on one or two previous occasions. So the chancellor of the exchequer was ordered to issue out of store the great golden sausage-kettle, and the silver *casseroles*. A great fire of sandal-wood was kindled,

the queen put on her damask kitchen apron, and soon the most delicious aroma of pudding-broth rose steaming out of the kettle. This sweet smell penetrated into the very council chamber. The king could not control himself.

""Excuse me for a few minutes, my lords and gentlemen," he cried, rushed to the kitchen, embraced the queen, stirred in the kettle a little with his golden sceptre, and then went back, easier in his mind, to the council chamber.

""The important juncture had now arrived when the fat had to be cut up into little square pieces, and browned on silver spits. The ladies-in-waiting retired, because the queen, from motives of love and duty to her royal consort, thought it proper to perform this important task in solitude. But when the fat began to brown, a delicate little whispering voice made itself audible, saying, "Give me some of that, sister! I want some of it, too; I am a queen as well as yourself; give me some."

""The queen knew well who was speaking. It was Dame Mouseyrinks, who had been established in the palace for many years. She claimed relationship to the royal family, and she was queen of the realm of Mousolia herself, and lived with a considerable retinue of her own under the kitchen hearth. The queen was a kind-hearted, benevolent woman; and, although she didn't exactly care to recognize Dame Mouseyrinks as a sister and a queen, she was willing, at this festive season, to spare her the tit-bits she had a mind to. So she said, "Come out, then, Dame Mouseyrinks; of course you shall taste my browned fat."

""So Dame Mouseyrinks came running out as fast as she could, held up her pretty little paws, and took morsel after morsel of the browned fat as the queen held them out to her. But then all Dame Mouseyrink's uncles, and her cousins, and her aunts, came jumping out too; and her seven sons (who were terrible ne'er-do-weels) into the bargain; and they all set-to at the browned fat, and the queen was too frightened to keep them at bay. Most fortunately the mistress of the robes came in, and drove these importunate visitors away, so that a little of the browned fat was left; and this, when the court mathematician (an ex-senior wrangler of his university) was called in (which he had to be, on purpose), it was found possible, by means of skilfully devised apparatus provided with special micrometer screws, and so forth, to apportion and distribute amongst the whole of the sausages, &c., under construction.

""The kettledrums and the trumpets summoned all the great princes and potentates to the feast. They assembled in their robes of state; some of them on white palfreys, some in crystal coaches. The king received them with much gracious ceremony, and took his seat at the head of the table, with his crown on, and his sceptre in his hand. Even during the serving of the white pudding course, it was observed that he turned pale, and raised his eyes to heaven; sighs heaved his bosom; some terrible inward pain was clearly raging within him. But when the black-puddings were handed round, he fell back in his seat, loudly sobbing and groaning.

""Every one rose from the table, and the court physician tried in vain to feel his pulse. Ultimately, after the administration of most powerful remedies--burnt feathers, and the like--his majesty seemed to recover his senses to some extent, and stammered, scarce audibly, the words: "Too little fat!"

""The queen cast herself down at his feet in despair, and cried, in a voice broken by sobs, "Oh, my poor unfortunate royal consort! Ah, what tortures you are doomed to endure! But see the culprit here at your feet! Punish her severely! Alas! Dame Mouseyrinks, her uncles, her seven sons, her cousins and her aunts, came and ate up nearly all the fat--and---

"Here the queen fell back insensible.

""But the king jumped up, all anger, and cried in a terrible voice, "Mistress of the robes, what is the meaning of this?"

"The mistress of the robes told all she knew, and the king resolved to take revenge on Dame Mouseyrinks and her family for eating up the fat which ought to have been in the sausages. The privy council was summoned, and it was resolved that Dame Mouseyrinks should be tried for her life, and all her property confiscated. But as his majesty was of opinion that she might go on consuming the fat, which was his appanage, the whole matter was referred to the court Clockmaker and Arcanist--whose name was the same as mine--Christian Elias Drosselmeier, and he undertook to expel Dame Mouseyrinks and all her relations from the palace precincts forever, by means of a certain politico-diplomatic procedure. He invented certain ingenious little machines, into which pieces of browned fat were inserted; and he placed these machines down all about the dwelling of Dame Mouseyrinks. Now she herself was much too knowing not to see through Drosselmeier's artifice; but all her remonstrances and warnings to her relations were unavailing. Enticed by the fragrant odour of the browned fat, all her seven sons, and a great many of her uncles, her cousins and her aunts, walked into Drosselmeier's little machines, and were immediately taken prisoners by the fall of a small grating; after which they met with a shameful death in the kitchen.

"Dame Mouseyrinks left this scene of horror with her small following. Rage and despair filled her breast. The court rejoiced greatly; the queen was very anxious, because she knew Dame Mouseyrinks' character, and knew well that she would never allow the death of her sons and other relatives to go unavenged. And, in fact, one day when the queen was cooking a *fricassée* of sheep's lights for the king (a dish to which he was exceedingly partial), Dame Mouseyrinks suddenly made her appearance, and said: "My sons and my uncles, my cousins and my aunts, are now no more. Have a care, lady, lest the queen of the mice bites your little princess in two! Have a care!"

"With which she vanished, and was no more seen. But the queen was so frightened that she dropped the *fricassée* into the fire; so this was the second time Dame Mouseyrinks spoiled one of the king's favourite dishes, at which he was very irate.

"'But this is enough for to-night; we'll go on with the rest of it another time.'

"Sorely as Marie--who had ideas of her own about this story--begged Godpapa Drosselmeier to go on with it, he would not be persuaded, but jumped up, saying, 'Too much at a time wouldn't be good for you; the rest to-morrow.'

"Just as Drosselmeier was going out of the door, Fritz said: I say, Godpapa Drosselmeier, was it really you who invented mousetraps?"

"'How can you ask such silly questions?' cried his mother. But Drosselmeier laughed oddly, and said: 'Well, you know I'm a clever clockmaker. Mousetraps had to be invented some time or other.'

"And now you know, children,' said Godpapa Drosselmeier the next evening, 'why it was the queen took such precautions about her little Pirlipat. Had she not always the fear before her eyes of Dame Mouseyrinks coming back and carrying out her threat of biting the princess to death? Drosselmeier's ingenious machines were of no avail against the clever, crafty Dame Mouseyrinks, and nobody save the court astronomer, who was also state astrologer and reader of the stars, knew that the family of the Cat Purr had the power to keep her at bay. This was the reason why each of the lady nurses was obliged to keep one of the sons of that family (each of whom was given the honorary rank and title of "privy councillor of legation") in her lap, and render his onerous duty less irksome by gently scratching his back.

"One night, just after midnight, one of the chief nurses stationed close to the cradle, woke suddenly from a profound sleep. Everything lay buried in slumber. Not a purr to be heard--deep, deathlike silence, so that the death-watch ticking in the wainscot sounded quite loud. What were the feelings of this principal nurse

when she saw, close beside her, a great, hideous mouse, standing on its hind legs, with its horrid head laid on the princess's face! She sprang up with a scream of terror. Everybody awoke; but then Dame Mouseyrinks (for she was the great big mouse in Pirlipat's cradle) ran quickly away into the corner of the room. The privy councillors of legation dashed after her, but too late! She was off and away through a chink in the floor. The noise awoke Pirlipat, who cried terribly. "Heaven be thanked, she is still alive!" cried all the nurses; but what was their horror when they looked at Pirlipat, and saw what the beautiful, delicate little thing had turned into. An enormous bloated head (instead of the pretty little golden-haired one), at the top of a diminutive, crumpled-up body, and green, wooden-looking eyes staring, where the lovely azure-blue pair had been, whilst her mouth had stretched across from the one ear to the other.

"Of course the queen nearly died of weeping and loud lamentation, and the walls of the king's study had all to be hung with padded arras, because he kept on banging his head against them, crying:

""Oh! wretched king that I am! Oh, wretched king that I am!"

"Of course he might have seen, then, that it would have been much better to eat his puddings with no fat in them at all, and let Dame Mouseyrinks and her folk stay on under the hearthstone. But Pirlipat's royal father thought not of that. What he did was to lay all the blame on the court Clockmaker and Arcanist, Christian Elias Drosselmeier, of Nürnberg. Wherefore he promulgated a sapient edict to the effect that said Drosselmeier should, within the space of four weeks, restore Princess Pirlipat to her pristine condition,--or, at least, indicate an unmistakable and reliable process whereby that might be accomplished,--or else suffer a shameful death by the axe of the common headsman.

"Drosselmeier was not a little alarmed; but he soon began to place confidence in his art, and in his luck; so he proceeded to execute the first operation which seemed to him to be expedient. He took Princess Pirlipat very carefully to pieces, screwed off her hands and her feet, and examined her interior structure. Unfortunately, he found that the bigger she got the more deformed she would be, so that he didn't see what was to be done at all. He put her carefully together again, and sank down beside her cradle--which he wasn't allowed to go away from--in the deepest dejection.

"The fourth week had come, and Wednesday of the fourth week, when the king came in, with eyes gleaming with anger, made threatening gestures with his sceptre, and cried:

""Christian Elias Drosselmeier, restore the princess, or prepare for death!"

"Drosselmeier began to weep bitterly. The little princess kept on cracking nuts, an occupation which seemed to afford her much quiet satisfaction. For the first time the Arcanist was struck by Pirlipat's remarkable appetite for nuts, and the circumstance that she had been born with teeth. And the fact had been that immediately after her transformation she had begun to cry, and she had gone on crying till by chance she got hold of a nut. She at once cracked it, and ate the kernel, after which she was quite quiet. From that time her nurses found that nothing would do but to go on giving her nuts.

""Oh, holy instinct of nature--eternal, mysterious, inscrutable Interdependence of Things!" cried Drosselmeier, "thou pointest out to me the door of the secret. I will knock, and it shall be opened unto me."

"He at once begged for an interview with the Court Astronomer, and was conducted to him closely guarded. They embraced, with many tears, for they were great friends, and then retired into a private closet, where they referred to many books treating of sympathies, antipathies, and other mysterious subjects. Night came on. The Court Astronomer consulted the stars, and, with the assistance of Drosselmeier (himself an adept in astrology), drew the princess's horoscope. This

was an exceedingly difficult operation, for the lines kept getting more and more entangled and confused for ever so long. But at last--oh what joy!--it lay plain before them that all the princess had to do to be delivered from the enchantment which made her so hideous, and get back her former beauty, was to eat the sweet kernel of the nut Crackatook.

"Now this nut Crackatook had a shell so hard that you might have fired a forty-eight pounder at it without producing the slightest effect on it. Moreover, it was essential that this nut should be cracked, in the princess's presence, by the teeth of a man whose beard had never known a razor, and who had never had on boots. This man had to hand the kernel to her with his eyes closed, and he might not open them till he had made seven steps backwards without a stumble.

"Drosselmeier and the astronomer had been at work on this problem uninterruptedly for three days and three nights; and on the Saturday the king was sitting at dinner, when Drosselmeier--who was to have been beheaded on the Sunday morning--burst joyfully in to announce that he had found out what had to be done to restore Princess Pirlipat to her pristine beauty. The king embraced him in a burst of rapture, and promised him a diamond sword, four decorations, and two Sunday suits.

"Set to work immediately after dinner," the monarch cried: adding, kindly, "Take care, dear Arcanist, that the young unshaven gentleman in shoes, with the nut Crackatook all ready in his hand, is on the spot; and be sure that he touches no liquor beforehand, so that he mayn't trip up when he makes his seven backward steps like a crab. He can get as drunk as a lord afterwards, if he likes."

Drosselmeier was dismayed at this utterance of the king's, and stammered out, not without trembling and hesitation, that, though the remedy was discovered, both the nut Crackatook and the young gentleman who was to crack it had still to be searched for, and that it was matter of doubt whether they ever would be got hold of at all. The king, greatly incensed, whirled his sceptre round his crowned head, and shouted, in the voice of a lion:

"Very well, then you must be beheaded!"

It was exceedingly fortunate for the wretched Drosselmeier that the king had thoroughly enjoyed his dinner that day, and was consequently in an admirable temper, and disposed to listen to the sensible advice which the queen, who was very sorry for Drosselmeier, did not spare to give him. Drosselmeier took heart, and represented that he really had fulfilled the conditions, and discovered the necessary measures, and had gained his life, consequently. The king said this was all bosh and nonsense; but at length, after two or three glasses of liqueurs, decreed that Drosselmeier and the astronomer should start off immediately, and not come back without the nut Crackatook in their pockets. The man who was to crack it (by the queen's suggestion) might be heard of by means of advertisements in the local and foreign newspapers and gazettes.'

Godpapa Drosselmeier interrupted his story at this point, and promised to finish it on the following evening.

Next evening, as soon as the lights were brought, Godpapa Drosselmeier duly arrived, and went on with his story as follows:--

Drosselmeier and the court astronomer had been journeying for fifteen long years without finding the slightest trace of the nut Crackatook. I might go on for more than four weeks telling you where all they had been, and what extraordinary things they had seen. I shall not do so, however, but merely mention that Drosselmeier, in his profound discouragement, at last began to feel a most powerful longing to see his dear native town of Nürnberg once again. And he was more powerfully moved by this longing than usual one day, when he happened to be smoking a pipe of kanaster with his friend in the middle of a great forest in Asia, and he cried:

""Oh, Nürnberg, Nürnberg! dear native town--he who still knows thee not, place of renown--though far he has travelled, and great cities seen--as London, and Paris, and Peterwardeen--knoweth not what it is happy to be--still must his longing heart languish for thee--for thee, O Nürnberg, exquisite town--where the houses have windows both upstairs and down!"

"As Drosselmeier lamented thus dolefully, the astronomer, seized with compassionate sympathy, began to weep and howl so terribly that he was heard throughout the length and breadth of Asia. But he collected himself again, wiped the tears from his eyes, and said:

""After all, dearest colleague, why should we sit and weep and howl here? Why not come to Nürnberg? Does it matter a brass farthing, after all, where and how we search for this horrible nut Crackatook?"

""That's true, too," answered Drosselmeier, consoled. They both got up immediately, knocked the ashes out of their pipes, started off, and travelled straight on without stopping, from that forest right in the centre of Asia till they came to Nürnberg. As soon as they got there, Drosselmeier went straight to his cousin the toy maker and doll-carver, and gilder and varnisher, whom he had not seen for a great many long years. To him he told all the tale of Princess Pirlipat, Dame Mouseyrinks, and the nut Crackatook, so that he clapped his hands repeatedly, and cried in amazement:

""Dear me, cousin, these things are really wonderful--very wonderful, indeed!"

"Drosselmeier told him, further, some of the adventures he had met with on his long journey--how he had spent two years at the court of the King of Dates; how the Prince of Almonds had expelled him with ignominy from his territory; how he had applied in vain to the Natural History Society at Squirreltown--in short, how he had been everywhere utterly unsuccessful in discovering the faintest trace of the nut Crackatook. During this narrative, Christoph Zacharias had kept frequently snapping his fingers, twisting himself round on one foot, smacking with his tongue, etc.; then he cried:

""Ee--aye--oh!--that really would be the very deuce and all."

"At last he threw his hat and wig in the air, warmly embraced his cousin, and cried:

""Cousin, cousin, you're a made man--a made man you are--for either I am much deceived, or I have got the nut Crackatook myself!"

"He immediately produced a little cardboard box, out of which he took a gilded nut of medium size.

""Look there!" he said, showing this nut to his cousin; "the state of matters as regards this nut is this. Several years ago, at Christmas time, a stranger man came here with a sack of nuts, which he offered for sale. Just in front of my shop he got into a quarrel, and put the sack down the better to defend himself from the nut-sellers of the place, who attacked him. Just then a heavily-loaded waggon drove over the sack, and all the nuts were smashed but one. The stranger man, with an odd smile, offered to sell me this nut for a twenty-kreuzer piece of the year 1796. This struck me as strange. I found just such a coin in my pocket, so I bought the nut, and I gilt it over, though I didn't know why I took the trouble quite, or should have given so much for it."

"All question as to its being really the long-sought nut Crackatook was dispelled when the Court Astronomer carefully scraped away the gilding, and found the word "Crackatook" graven on the shell in Chinese characters.

"The joy of the exiles was great, as you may imagine; and the cousin was even happier, for Drosselmeier assured him that *he* was a made man too, as he was sure of a good pension, and all the gold leaf he would want for the rest of his life

for his gilding, free, gratis, for nothing.

"The Arcanist and the Astronomer had both got on their nightcaps, and were going to turn into bed, when the astronomer said:

"I tell you what it is, dear colleague, one piece of good fortune never comes alone. I feel convinced that we've not only found the nut, but the young gentleman who is to crack it, and hand the beauty-restoring kernel to the princess, into the bargain. I mean none other than your cousin's son here, and I don't intend to close an eye this night till I've drawn that youngster's horoscope."

"With which he threw away his nightcap, and at once set to work to consult the stars. The cousin's son was a nice-looking, well-grown young fellow, had never been shaved, and had never worn boots. True, he had been a Jumping Jack for a Christmas or two in his earlier days, but there was scarcely any trace of this discoverable about him, his appearance had been so altered by his father's care. He had appeared last Christmas in a beautiful red coat with gold trimmings, a sword by his side, his hat under his arm, and a fine wig with a pigtail. Thus apparelled, he stood in his father's shop exceeding lovely to behold, and from his native *galanterie* he occupied himself in cracking nuts for the young ladies, who called him "the handsome nutcracker."

"Next morning the Astronomer fell, with much emotion, into the Arcanist's arms, crying:

"This is the very man!--we have got him!--he is found! Only, dearest colleague, two things we must keep carefully in view. In the first place, we must construct a most substantial pigtail for this precious nephew of yours, which shall be connected with his lower jaw in such sort that it shall be capable of communicating a very powerful pull to it. And next, when we get back to the Residenz, we must carefully conceal the fact that we have brought the young gentleman who is to shiver the nut back with us. He must not make his appearance for a considerable time after us. I read in the horoscope that if two or three others bite at the nut unsuccessfully to begin with, the king will promise the man who breaks it,--and, as a consequence, restores the princess her good looks,--the princess's hand and the succession to the crown."

"The doll-maker cousin was immensely delighted with the idea of his son's marrying Princess Pirlipat, and being a prince and king, so he gave him wholly over to the envoys to do what they liked with him. The pigtail which Drosselmeier attached to him proved to be a very powerful and efficient instrument, as he exemplified by cracking the hardest of peach-stones with the utmost ease.

"Drosselmeier and the Astronomer, having at once sent the news to the Residenz of the discovery of the nut Crackatook, the necessary advertisements were at once put in the newspapers, and, by the time that our travellers got there, several nice young gentlemen, among whom there were princes even, had arrived, having sufficient confidence in their teeth to try to disenchant the princess. The ambassadors were horrified when they saw poor Pirlipat again. The diminutive body with tiny hands and feet was not big enough to support the great shapeless head. The hideousness of the face was enhanced by a beard like white cotton, which had grown about the mouth and chin. Everything had turned out as the court astronomer had read it in the horoscope. One milksop in shoes after another bit his teeth and his jaws into agonies over the nut, without doing the princess the slightest good in the world. And then, when he was carried out on the verge of insensibility by the dentists who were in attendance on purpose, he would sigh:

"Ah dear, that was a hard nut."

"Now when the king, in the anguish of his soul, had promised to him who should disenchant the princess his daughter and the kingdom, the charming, gentle young Drosselmeier made his appearance, and begged to be allowed to

make an attempt. None of the previous ones had pleased the princess so much. She pressed her little hands to her heart and sighed:

""Ah, I hope it will be he who will crack the nut, and be my husband."

""When he had politely saluted the king, the queen, and the Princess Pirlipat, he received the nut Crackatook from the hands of the Clerk of the Closet, put it between his teeth, made a strong effort with his head, and--crack--crack--the shell was shattered into a number of pieces. He neatly cleared the kernel from the pieces of husk which were sticking to it, and, making a leg, presented it courteously to the princess, after which he closed his eyes and began his backward steps. The princess swallowed the kernel, and--oh marvel!--the monstrosity vanished, and in its place there stood a wonderfully beautiful lady, with a face which seemed woven of delicate lily-white and rose-red silk, eyes of sparkling azure, and hair all in little curls like threads of gold.

""Trumpets and kettledrums mingled in the loud rejoicings of the populace. The king and all his court danced about on one leg, as they had done at Pirlipat's birth, and the queen had to be treated with Eau de Cologne, having fallen into a fainting fit from joy and delight. All this tremendous tumult interfered not a little with young Drosselmeier's self-possession, for he still had to make his seven backward steps. But he collected himself as best he could, and was just stretching out his right foot to make his seventh step, when up came Dame Mouseyrinks through the floor, making a horrible weaking and squeaking, so that Drosselmeier, as he was putting his foot down, trod upon her, and stumbled so that he almost fell. Oh misery!--all in an instant he was transmogrified, just as the princess had been before: his body all shrivelled up, and could scarcely support the great shapeless head with enormous projecting eyes, and the wide gaping mouth. In the place where his pigtail used to be a scanty wooden cloak hung down, controlling the movements of his nether jaw.

""The clockmaker and the astronomer were wild with terror and consternation, but they saw that Dame Mouseyrinks was wallowing in her gore on the floor. Her wickedness had not escaped punishment, for young Drosselmeier had squashed her so in the throat with the sharp point of his shoe that she was mortally hurt.

""But as Dame Mouseyrinks lay in her death agony she queaked and cheeped in a lamentable style, and cried:

""Oh, Crackatook, thou nut so hard!--Oh, fate, which none may disregard!--Hee hee, pee pee, woe's me, I cry!--since I through that hard nut must die.--But, brave young Nutcracker, I see--you soon must follow after me.--My sweet young son, with sevenfold crown--will soon bring Master Cracker down.--His mother's death he will repay--so, Nutcracker, beware that day!--Oh, life most sweet, I feebly cry,--I leave you now, for I must die. Queak!"

""With this cry died Dame Mouseyrinks, and her body was carried out by the Court Stovellighter. Meantime nobody had been troubling themselves about young Drosselmeier. But the princess reminded the king of his promise, and he at once directed that the young hero should be conducted to his presence. But when the poor wretch came forward in his transmogrified condition the princess put both her hands to her face, and cried:

""Oh please take away that horrid Nutcracker!"

""So that the Lord Chamberlain seized him immediately by his little shoulders, and shied him out at the door. The king, furious at the idea of a nutcracker being brought before him as a son-in-law, laid all the blame upon the clockmaker and the astronomer, and ordered them both to be banished for ever.

""The horoscope which the astronomer had drawn in Nürnberg had said nothing about this; but that didn't hinder him from taking some fresh observations. And the stars told him that young Drosselmeier would conduct

himself so admirably in his new condition that he would yet be a prince and a king, in spite of his transmogrification; but also that his deformity would only disappear after the son of Dame Mouseyrinks, the seven-headed king of the mice (whom she had born after the death of her original seven sons) should perish by his hand, and a lady should fall in love with him notwithstanding his deformity.

"That is the story of the hard nut, children, and now you know why people so often use the expression "that was a hard nut," and why Nutcrackers are so ugly.'

"Thus did Godpapa Drosselmeier finish his tale. Marie thought the Princess Pirlipat was a nasty ungrateful thing. Fritz, on the other hand, was of opinion that if Nutcracker had been a proper sort of fellow he would soon have settled the mouse king's hash, and got his good looks back again.

"UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

"Should any of my respected readers or listeners ever have happened to be cut by glass they will know what an exceedingly nasty thing it is, and how long it takes to get well. Marie was obliged to stay in bed a whole week, because she felt so terribly giddy whenever she tried to stand up; but at last she was quite well again, and able to jump about as of old. Things in the glass cupboard looked very fine indeed--everything new and shiny, trees and flowers and houses--toys of every kind. Above all, Marie found her dear Nutcracker again, smiling at her in the second shelf, with his teeth all sound and right. As she looked at this pet of hers with much fondness, it suddenly struck her that all Godpapa Drosselmeier's story had been about Nutcracker, and his family feud with Dame Mouseyrinks and her people. And now she knew that her Nutcracker was none other than young Mr. Drosselmeier, of Nürnberg, Godpapa Drosselmeier's delightful nephew, unfortunately under the spells of Dame Mouseyrinks. For whilst the story was being told, Marie couldn't doubt for a moment that the clever clockmaker at Pirlipat's father's court was Godpapa Drosselmeier himself.

"But why didn't your uncle help you? Why didn't he help you?' Marie cried, sorrowfully, as she felt more and more clearly every moment that in the battle, which she had witnessed, the question in dispute had been no less a matter than Nutcracker's crown and kingdom. Wern't all the other toys his subjects? And wasn't it clear that the astronomer's prophecy that he was to be rightful King of Toyland had come true?'

"Whilst the clever Marie was weighing all these things in her mind, she kept expecting that Nutcracker and his vassals would give some indications of being alive, and make some movements as she looked at them. This, however, was by no means the case. Everything in the cupboard kept quite motionless and still. Marie thought this was the effect of Dame Mouseyrinks's enchantments, and those of her seven-headed son, which still were keeping up their power.

"'But,' she said, 'though you're not able to move, or to say the least little word to me, dear Mr. Drosselmeier, I know you understand me, and see how very well I wish you. Always reckon on my assistance when you require it. At all events, I will ask your uncle to aid you with all his great skill and talents, whenever there may be an opportunity.'

"Nutcracker still kept quiet and motionless. But Marie fancied that a gentle sigh came breathing through the glass cupboard, which made its panes ring in a wonderful, though all but imperceptible, manner--whilst something like a little bell-toned voice seemed to sing:

"Marie fine, angel mine! I will be thine, if thou wilt be mine!"

"Although a sort of cold shiver ran through her at this, still it caused her the keenest pleasure.

"Twilight came on. Marie's father came in with Godpapa Drosselmeier, and presently Louise set out the tea-table, and the family took their places round it, talking in the pleasantest and merriest manner about all sorts of things. Marie had taken her little stool, and sat down at her godpapa's feet in silence. When everybody happened to cease talking at the same time, Marie looked her godpapa full in the face with her great blue eyes, and said:

"I know now, godpapa, that my Nutcracker is your nephew, young Mr. Drosselmeier from Nürnberg. The prophecy has come true: he is a king and a prince, just as your friend the astronomer said he would be. But you know as well as I do that he is at war with Dame Mouseyrinks's son--that horrid king of the mice. Why don't you help him?"

"Marie told the whole story of the battle, as she had witnessed it, and was frequently interrupted by the loud laughter of her mother and sister; but Fritz and Drosselmeier listened quite gravely.

"Where in the name of goodness has the child got her head filled with all that nonsense?" cried her father.

"She has such a lively imagination, you see," said her mother; "she dreamt it all when she was feverish with her arm."

"It is all nonsense," cried Fritz, "and it isn't true! my red hussars are not such cowards as all that. If they were, do you suppose I should command them?"

"But godpapa smiled strangely, and took little Marie on his knee, speaking more gently to her than ever he had been known to do before.

"More is given to you, Marie dear," he said, "than to me, or the others. You are a born princess, like Pirlipat, and reign in a bright beautiful country. But you still have much to suffer, if you mean to befriend poor transformed Nutcracker; for the king of the mice lies in wait for him at every turn. But I cannot help him; you, and you only, can do that. So be faithful and true."

"Neither Marie nor any of the others knew what Godpapa Drosselmeier meant by these words. But they struck Dr. Stahlbaum--the father--as being so strange that he felt Drosselmeier's pulse, and said:

"There seems a good deal of congestion about the head, my dear sir. I'll just write you a little prescription."

"But Marie's mother shook her head meditatively, and said:

"I have a strong idea what Mr. Drosselmeier means, though I can't exactly put it in words."

"VICTORY.

"It was not very long before Marie was awakened one bright moonlight night by a curious noise, which came from one of the corners of her room. There was a sound as of small stones being thrown, and rolled here and there; and between whiles came a horrid cheeping and squeaking.

"Oh, dear me! here come these abominable mice again!" cried Marie, in terror, and she would have awakened her mother. But the noise suddenly ceased; and she could not move a muscle--for she saw the king of the mice working himself out through a hole in the wall; and at last he came into the room, ran about in it, and got on to the little table at her bed-head with a great jump.

"Hee-hehee!" he cried; "give me your sweetmeats! out with your cakes, marchpane and sugar-stick, gingerbread cakes! Don't pause to argue! If yield

them you won't, I'll chew up Nutcracker! See if I don't!

"As he cried out these terrible words he gnashed and chattered his teeth most frightfully, and then made off again through the hole in the wall. This frightened Marie so that she was quite pale in the morning, and so upset that she scarcely could utter a word. A hundred times she felt impelled to tell her mother or her sister, or at all events her brother, what had happened. But she thought, 'of course none of them would believe me. They would only laugh at me.'

"But she saw well enough that to succour Nutcracker she would have to sacrifice all her sweet things; so she laid out all she had of them at the bottom of the cupboard next evening.

"'I can't make out how the mice have got into the sitting-room,' said her mother. 'This is something quite new. There never were any there before. See, Marie, they've eaten up all your sweetmeats.'

"And so it was: the epicure mouse king hadn't found the marchpane altogether to his taste, but had gnawed all round the edges of it, so that what he had left of it had to be thrown into the ash-pit. Marie never minded about her sweetmeats, being delighted to think that she had saved Nutcracker by means of them. But what were her feelings when next night there came a queaking again close by her ear. Alas! The king of the mice was there again, with his eyes glaring worse than the night before.

"Give me your sugar toys,' he cried; give them you must, or else I'll chew Nutcracker up into dust!'

"Then he was gone again.

"Marie was very sorry. She had as beautiful a collection of sugar-toys as ever a little girl could boast of. Not only had she a charming little shepherd, with his shepherd looking after a flock of milk-white sheep, with a nice dog jumping about them, but two postmen with letters in their hands, and four couples of prettily dressed young gentlemen and most beautifully dressed young ladies, swinging in a Russian swing. Then there were two or three dancers, and behind them Farmer Feldkuemmel and the Maid of Orleans. Marie didn't much care about *them*; but back in the corner there was a little baby with red cheeks, and this was Marie's darling. The tears came to her eyes.

"'Ah!' she cried, turning to Nutcracker, 'I really will do all I can to help you. But it's very hard.'

"Nutcracker looked at her so piteously that she determined to sacrifice everything--for she remembered the mouse king with all his seven mouths wide open to swallow the poor young fellow; so that night she set down all her sugar figures in front of the cupboard, as she had the sweetmeats the night before. She kissed the shepherd, the shepherdess, and the lambs; and at last she brought her best beloved of all, the little red-cheeked baby from its corner, but did put it a little further back than the rest. Farmer Feldkuemmel and the Maid of Orleans had to stand in the front rank of all.

"'This is really getting too bad,' said Marie's mother the next morning; 'some nasty mouse or other must have made a hole in the glass cupboard, for poor Marie's sugar figures are all eaten and gnawed.' Marie really could not restrain her tears. But she was soon able to smile again; for she thought, 'What does it matter? Nutcracker is safe.'

"In the evening Marie's mother was telling her father and Godpapa Drosselmeier about the mischief which some mouse was doing in the children's cupboard, and her father said:

"'It's a regular nuisance! What a pity it is that we can't get rid of it. It's destroying all the poor child's things.'

"Fritz intervened, and remarked:

"The baker downstairs has a fine grey Councillor-of-Legation; I'll go and get hold of him, and he'll soon put a stop to it, and bite the mouse's head off, even if it's Dame Mouseyrinks herself, or her son, the king of the mice.'

"'Oh, yes!' said his mother, laughing, 'and jump up on to the chairs and tables, knock down the cups and glasses, and do ever so much mischief besides.'

"'No, no!' answered Fritz; 'the baker's Councillor-of-Legation's a very clever fellow. I wish I could walk about on the edge of the roof, as he does.'

"'Don't let us have a nasty cat in the house in the night-time,' said Louise, who hated cats.

"Fritz is quite right though,' said the mother; 'unless we set a trap. Haven't we got such a thing in the house?'

"Godpapa Drosselmeier's the man to get us one,' said Fritz; 'it was he who invented them, you know.' Everybody laughed. And when the mother said they did not possess such a thing, Drosselmeier said he had plenty; and he actually sent a very fine one round that day. When the cook was browning the fat, Marie--with her head full of the marvels of her godpapa's tale--called out to her:

"Ah, take care, Queen! Remember Dame Mouseyrinks and her people.' But Fritz drew his sword, and cried, 'Let them come if they dare! I'll give an account of them.' But everything about the hearth remained quiet and undisturbed. As Drosselmeier was fixing the browned fat on a fine thread, and setting the trap gently down in the glass cupboard, Fritz cried:

"'Now, Godpapa Clockmaker, mind that the mouse king doesn't play you some trick!'

"Ah, how did it fare with Marie that night? Something as cold as ice went tripping about on her arm, and something rough and nasty laid itself on her cheek, and cheeped and queaked in her ear. The horrible mouse king came and sat on her shoulder, foamed a blood-red foam out of all his seven mouths, and chattering and grinding his teeth, he hissed into Marie's ear:

"'Hiss, hiss!--keep away--don't go in there--ware of that house--don't you be caught--death to the mouse--hand out your picture-books--none of your scornful looks!--Give me your dresses--also your laces--or, if you don't, leave you I won't--Nutcracker I'll bite--drag him out of your sight--his last hour is near--so tremble for fear!--Fee, fa, fo, fum--his last hour is come!--Hee hee, pee pee--queak--queak!'

"Marie was overwhelmed with anguish and sorrow, and was looking quite pale and upset when her mother said to her next morning:

"'This horrid mouse hasn't been caught. But never mind, dear, we'll catch the nasty thing yet, never fear. If the traps won't do, Fritz shall fetch the grey Councillor of Legation.'

"As soon as Marie was alone, she went up to the glass cupboard, and said to Nutcracker, in a voice broken by sobs:

"'Ah, my dear, good Mr. Drosselmeier, what can I do for you, poor unfortunate girl that I am! Even if I give that horrid king of the mice all my picture-books, and my new dress which the Child Christ gave me at Christmas as well, he's sure to go on asking for more; so I soon shan't have anything more left, and he'll want to eat me! Oh, poor thing that I am! What shall I do? What shall I do?'

"As she was thus crying and lamenting, she noticed that a great spot of blood had been left, since the eventful night of the battle, upon Nutcracker's neck. Since she had known that he was really young Mr. Drosselmeier, her godpapa's

nephew, she had given up carrying him in her arms, and petting and kissing him; indeed, she felt a delicacy about touching him at all. But now she took him carefully out of his shelf, and began to wipe off this blood-spot with her handkerchief. What were her feelings when she found that Nutcracker was growing warmer and warmer in her hand, and beginning to move! She put him back into the cupboard as fast as she could. His mouth began to wobble backwards and forwards, and he began to whisper, with much difficulty:

"Ah, dearest Miss Stahlbaum--most precious of friends! How deeply I am indebted to you for everything--for *everything*! But don't, don't sacrifice any of your picture-books or pretty dresses for me. Get me a sword--a sword is what I want. If you get me that, I'll manage the rest--though--he may----'

"There Nutcracker's speech died away, and his eyes, which had been expressing the most sympathetic grief, grew staring and lifeless again.

"Marie felt no fear; she jumped for joy, rather, now that she knew how to help Nutcracker without further painful sacrifices. But where on earth was she to get hold of a sword for him? She resolved to take counsel with Fritz; and that evening, when their father and mother had gone out, and they two were sitting beside the glass cupboard, she told him what had passed between her and Nutcracker with the king of the mice, and what it was that was required to rescue Nutcracker.

"The thing which chiefly exercised Fritz's mind was Marie's statement as to the unexemplary conduct of his red hussars in the great battle. He asked her once more, most seriously, to assure him if it really was the truth; and when she had repeated her statement, on her word of honour, he advanced to the cupboard, and made his hussars a most affecting address; and, as a punishment for their behaviour, he solemnly took their plumes one by one out of their busbies, and prohibited them from sounding the march of the hussars of the guard for the space of a twelvemonth. When he had performed this duty, he turned to Marie, and said:

"As far as the sword is concerned, I have it in my power to assist Nutcracker. I placed an old Colonel of Cuirassiers on retirement on a pension, no longer ago than yesterday, so that he has no further occasion for his sabre, which is sharp.'

"This Colonel was settled, on his pension, in the back corner of the third shelf. He was fetched out from thence, and his sabre--still a bright and handsome silver weapon--taken off, and girt about Nutcracker.

"Next night Marie could not close an eye for anxiety. About midnight she fancied she heard a strange stirring and noise in the sitting-room--a rustling and a clanging--and all at once came a shrill 'Queak!'

"The king of the mice! The king of the mice!' she cried, and jumped out of bed, all terror. Everything was silent; but soon there came a gentle tapping at the door of her room, and a soft voice made itself heard, saying:

"Please to open your door, dearest Miss Stahlbaum! Don't be in the least degree alarmed; good, happy news!'

"It was Drosselmeier's voice--young Drosselmeier's, I mean. She threw on her dressing-gown, and opened the door as quickly as possible. There stood Nutcracker, with his sword, all covered with blood, in his right hand, and a little wax taper in his left. When he saw Marie he knelt down on one knee, and said:

"It was you, and you only, dearest lady, who inspired me with knightly valour, and steeled me with strength to do battle with the insolent caitiff who dared to insult you. The treacherous king of the mice lies vanquished and writhing in his gore! Deign, lady, to accept these tokens of victory from the hand of him who is, till death, your true and faithful knight.'

"With this Nutcracker took from his left arm the seven crowns of the mouse king, which he had ranged upon it, and handed them to Marie, who received them with the keenest pleasure. Nutcracker rose, and continued as follows:

"Oh! my best beloved Miss Stahlbaum, if you would only take the trouble to follow me for a few steps, what glorious and beautiful things I could show you, at this supreme moment when I have overcome my hereditary foe! Do--do come with me, dearest lady!"

"TOYLAND.

"I feel quite convinced, children, that none of you would have hesitated for a moment to go with good, kind Nutcracker, who had always shown himself to be such a charming person, and Marie was all the more disposed to do as he asked her, because she knew what her just claims on his gratitude were, and was sure that he would keep his word, and show her all sorts of beautiful things. So she said:

"I will go with you, dear Mr. Drosselmeier; but it mustn't be very far, and it won't do to be very long, because, you know, I haven't had any sleep yet."

"Then we will go by the shortest route," said Nutcracker, "although it is, perhaps, rather the most difficult."

"He went on in front, followed by Marie, till he stopped before the big old wardrobe. Marie was surprised to see that, though it was generally shut, the doors of it were now wide open, so that she could see her father's travelling cloak of fox-fur hanging in the front. Nutcracker clambered deftly up this cloak, by the edgings and trimmings of it, so as to get hold of the big tassel which was fastened at the back of it by a thick cord. He gave this tassel a tug, and a pretty little ladder of cedar-wood let itself quickly down through one of the arm-holes of the cloak.

"Now, Miss Stahlbaum, step up that ladder, if you will be so kind," said Nutcracker. Marie did so. But as soon as she had got up through the arm-hole, and begun to look out at the neck, all at once a dazzling light came streaming on to her, and she found herself standing on a lovely, sweet-scented meadow, from which millions of sparks were streaming upward, like the glitter of beautiful gems.

"This is Candy Mead, where we are now," said Nutcracker. "But we'll go in at that gate there."

"Marie looked up and saw a beautiful gateway on the meadow, only a few steps off. It seemed to be made of white, brown, and raisin-coloured marble; but when she came close to it she saw it was all of baked sugar-almonds and raisins, which--as Nutcracker said when they were going through it--was the reason it was called 'Almond and Raisin Gate.' There was a gallery running round the upper part of it, apparently made of barley-sugar, and in this gallery six monkeys, dressed in red doublets, were playing on brass instruments in the most delightful manner ever heard; so that it was all that Marie could do to notice that she was walking along upon a beautiful variegated marble pavement, which, however, was really a mosaic of lozenges of all colours. Presently the sweetest of odours came breathing round her, streaming from a beautiful little wood on both sides of the way. There was such a glittering and sparkling among the dark foliage, that one could see all the gold and silver fruits hanging on the many-tinted stems, and these stems and branches were all ornamented and dressed up in ribbons and bunches of flowers, like brides and bridegrooms, and festive wedding guests. And as the orange perfume came wafted, as if on the wings of gentle zephyrs, there was a soothing among the leaves and branches, and all the goldleaf and tinsel rustled and tinkled like beautiful music, to which the sparkling lights could not help dancing.

"Oh, how charming this is!" cried Marie, enraptured.

"This is Christmas Wood, dearest Miss Stahlbaum," said Nutcracker,

"Ah!" said Marie, "if I could only stay here for a little! Oh, it is so lovely!"

"Nutcracker clapped his little hands, and immediately there appeared a number of little shepherds and shepherdesses, and hunters and huntresses, so white and delicate that you would have thought they were made of pure sugar, whom Marie had not noticed before, although they had been walking about in the wood: and they brought a beautiful gold reclining chair, laid down a white satin cushion in it, and politely invited Marie to take a seat. As soon as she did so, the shepherds and shepherdesses danced a pretty ballet, to which the hunters and huntresses played the music on their horns, and then they all disappeared amongst the thickets.

"I must really apologize for the poor style in which this dance was executed, dearest Miss Stahlbaum," said Nutcracker. "These people all belong to our Wire Ballet Troupe, and can only do the same thing over and over again. Had we not better go on a little farther?"

"Oh, I'm sure it was all most delightful, and I enjoyed it immensely!" said Marie, as she stood up and followed Nutcracker, who was going on leading the way. They went by the side of a gently rippling brook, which seemed to be what was giving out all the perfume which filled the wood.

"This is Orange Brook," said Nutcracker; "but, except for its sweet scent, it is nothing like as fine a water as the River Lemonade, a beautiful broad stream, which falls--as this one does also--into the Almond-milk Sea."

"And, indeed, Marie soon heard a louder plashing and rushing, and came in sight of the River Lemonade, which went rolling along in swelling waves of a yellowish colour, between banks covered with a herbage and underwood which shone like green carbuncles. A remarkable freshness and coolness, strengthening heart and breast, exhaled from this fine river. Not far from it a dark yellow stream crept sluggishly along, giving out a most delicious odour; and on its banks sat numbers of pretty children, angling for little fat fishes, which they ate as soon as they caught them. These fish were very much like filberts, Marie saw when she came closer. A short distance farther, on the banks of this stream, stood a nice little village. The houses of this village, and the church, the parsonage, the barns, and so forth, were all dark brown with gilt roofs, and many of the walls looked as if they were plastered over with lemon-peel and shelled almonds.

"That is Gingerthorpe on the Honey River," said Nutcracker. "It is famed for the good looks of its inhabitants; but they are very short-tempered people, because they suffer so much from tooth-ache. So we won't go there at present."

"At this moment Marie caught sight of a little town where the houses were all sorts of colours and quite transparent, exceedingly pretty to look at. Nutcracker went on towards this town, and Marie heard a noise of bustle and merriment, and saw some thousands of nice little folks unloading a number of waggons which were drawn up in the market-place. What they were unloading from the waggons looked like packages of coloured paper, and tablets of chocolate.

"This is Bonbonville," Nutcracker said. "An embassy has just arrived from Paperland and the King of Chocolate. These poor Bonbonville people have been vexatiously threatened lately by the Fly-Admiral's forces, so they are covering their houses over with their presents from Paperland, and constructing fortifications with the fine pieces of workmanship which the Chocolate-King has sent them. But oh! dearest Miss Stahlbaum, we are not going to restrict ourselves to seeing the small towns and villages of this country. Let us be off to the metropolis."

"He stepped quickly onwards, and Marie followed him, all expectation. Soon a

beautiful rosy vapour began to rise, suffusing everything with a soft splendour. She saw that this was reflected from a rose-red, shining water, which went plashing and rushing away in front of them in wavelets of roseate silver. And on this delightful water, which kept broadening and broadening out wider and wider, like a great lake, the loveliest swans were floating, white as silver, with collars of gold. And, as if vieing with each other, they were singing the most beautiful songs, at which little fish, glittering like diamonds, danced up and down in the rosy ripples.

"'Oh!' cried Marie, in the greatest delight, 'this must be the lake which Godpapa Drosselmeier was once going to make for me, and I am the girl who is to play with the swans.'

"Nutcracker gave a sneering sort of laugh, such as she had never seen in him before, and said:

"'My uncle could never make a thing of this kind. You would be much more likely to do it yourself. But don't let us bother about that. Rather let us go sailing over the water, Lake Rosa here, to the metropolis.'

"THE METROPOLIS.

"Nutcracker clapped his little hands again, and the waves of Lake Rosa began to sound louder and to splash higher, and Marie became aware of a sort of car approaching from the distance, made wholly of glittering precious stones of every colour, and drawn by two dolphins with scales of gold. Twelve of the dearest little negro boys, with head-dresses and doublets made of humming-birds' feathers woven together, jumped to land, and carried first Marie and then Nutcracker, gently gliding above the water, into the car, which immediately began to move along over the lake of its own accord. Ah! how beautiful it was when Marie went onward thus over the waters in the shell-shaped car, with the rose-perfume breathing around her, and the rosy waves plashing. The two golden-scaled dolphins lifted their nostrils, and sent streams of crystal high in the air; and as these fell down in glittering, sparkling rainbows, there was a sound as of two delicate, silvery voices, singing, 'Who comes over the rosy sea?--Fairy is she. Bim-bim--fishes; sim-sim--swans; sfa-sfa--golden birds; tratrah, rosy waves, wake you, and sing, sparkle and ring, sprinkle and kling--this is the fairy we languish to see--coming at last to us over the sea. Rosy waves dash--bright dolphins play--merrily, merrily on!'

"But the twelve little black boys at the back of the car seemed to take some umbrage at this song of the water-jets; for they shook the sunshades they were holding so that the palm leaves they were made of clattered and rattled together; and as they shook them they stamped an odd sort of rhythm with their feet, and sang:

"'Klapp and klipp, and klipp and klapp, and up and down.'

"'Negroes are merry, amusing fellows,' said Nutcracker, a little put out; 'but they'll set the whole lake into a state of regular mutiny on my hands!' And in fact there did begin a confused, and confusing, noise of strange voices which seemed to be floating both in the water and in the air. However, Marie paid no attention to it, but went on looking into the perfumed rosy waves, from each of which a pretty girl's face smiled back to her.

"'Oh! look at Princess Pirlipat,' she cried, clapping her hands with gladness, 'smiling at me so charmingly down there! Do look at her, Mr. Drosselmeier.'

"But Nutcracker sighed, almost sorrowfully, and said:

"'That is not Princess Pirlipat, dearest Miss Stahlbaum, it is only yourself;

always your own lovely face smiling up from the rosy waves.' At this Marie drew her head quickly back, closed her eyes as tightly as she could, and was terribly ashamed. But just then the twelve negroes lifted her out of the car and set her on shore. She found herself in a small thicket or grove, almost more beautiful even than Christmas Wood, everything glittered and sparkled so in it. And the fruit on the trees was extraordinarily wonderful and beautiful, and not only of very curious colours, but with the most delicious perfume.

"Ah!" said Nutcracker, 'here we are in Comfit Grove, and yonder lies the metropolis.'

"How shall I set about describing all the wonderful and beautiful sights which Marie now saw, or give any idea of the splendour and magnificence of the city which lay stretched out before her on a flowery plain? Not only did the walls and towers of it shine in the brightest and most gorgeous colours, but the shapes and appearance of the buildings were like nothing to be seen on earth. Instead of roofs the houses had on beautiful twining crowns, and the towers were garlanded with beautiful leaf-work, sculptured and carved into exquisite, intricate designs. As they passed in at the gateway, which looked as if it was made entirely of macaroons and sugared fruits, silver soldiers presented arms, and a little man in a brocade dressing-gown threw himself upon Nutcracker's neck, crying:

"Welcome, dearest prince! welcome to Sweetmeatburgh!"

"Marie wondered not a little to see such a very grand personage recognise young Mr. Drosselmeier as a prince. But she heard such a number of small delicate voices making such a loud clamouring and talking, and such a laughing and chattering going on, and such a singing and playing, that she couldn't give her attention to anything else, but asked Drosselmeier what was the meaning of it all.

"Oh, it is nothing out of the common, dearest Miss Stahlbaum,' he answered. 'Sweetmeatburgh is a large, populous city, full of mirth and entertainment. This is only the usual thing that is always going on here every day. Please to come on a little farther.'

"After a few paces more they were in the great marketplace, which presented the most magnificent appearance. All the houses which were round it were of filagreeed sugar-work, with galleries towering above galleries; and in the centre stood a lofty cake covered with sugar, by way of obelisk, with fountains round it spouting orgeade, lemonade, and other delicious beverages into the air. The runnels at the sides of the footways were full of creams, which you might have ladled up with a spoon if you had chosen. But prettier than all this were the delightful little people who were crowding about everywhere by the thousand, shouting, laughing, playing, and singing, in short, producing all that jubilant uproar which Marie had heard from the distance. There were beautifully dressed ladies and gentlemen, Greeks and Armenians, Tyrolese and Jews, officers and soldiers, clergymen, shepherds, jack-puddings, in short, people of every conceivable kind to be found in the world.

"The tumult grew greater towards one of the corners; the people streamed asunder. For the Great Mogul happened to be passing along there in his palanquin, attended by three-and-ninety grandees of the realm, and seven hundred slaves. But it chanced that the Fishermen's Guild, about five hundred strong, were keeping a festival at the opposite corner of the place; and it was rather an unfortunate coincidence that the Grand Turk took it in his head just at this particular moment to go out for a ride, and crossed the square with three thousand Janissaries. And, as if this were not enough, the grand procession of the Interrupted Sacrifice came along at the same time, marching up towards the obelisk with a full orchestra playing, and the chorus singing:

"Hail! all hail to the glorious sun!"

"So there was a thronging and a shoving, a driving and a squeaking; and soon lamentations arose, and cries of pain, for one of the fishermen had knocked a Brahmin's head off in the throng, and the Great Mogul had been very nearly run down by a jack-pudding. The din grew wilder and wilder. People were beginning to shove one another, and even to come to fisticuffs; when the man in the brocade dressing-gown who had welcomed Nutcracker as prince at the gate, clambered up to the top of the obelisk, and, after a very clear-tinkling bell had rung thrice, shouted, very loudly, three several times:

"Pastrycook! pastrycook! pastrycook!"

"Instantly the tumult subsided. Everybody tried to save his bacon as quickly as he could; and, after the entangled processions had been got disentangled, the dirt properly brushed off the Great Mogul, and the Brahmin's head stuck off again all right, the merry noise went on just the same as before.

"'Tell me why that gentleman called out "Pastrycook," Mr. Drosselmeier, please,' said Marie.

"'Ah! dearest Miss Stahlbaum,' said Nutcracker, 'in this place "Pastrycook" means a certain unknown and very terrible Power, which, it is believed, can do with people just what it chooses. It represents the Fate, or Destiny, which rules these happy little people, and they stand in such awe and terror of it that the mere mention of its name quells the wildest tumult in a moment, as the burgomaster has just shown. Nobody thinks further of earthly matters, cuffs in the ribs, broken heads, or the like. Every one retires within himself, and says:

""What is man? and what his ultimate destiny?""

"Marie could not forbear a cry of admiration and utmost astonishment as she now found herself all of a sudden before a castle, shining in roseate radiance, with a hundred beautiful towers. Here and there at intervals upon its walls were rich bouquets of violets, narcissus, tulips, carnations, whose dark, glowing colours heightened the dazzling whiteness, inclining to rose-colour, of the walls. The great dome of the central building, as well as the pyramidal roofs of the towers, were set all over with thousands of sparkling gold and silver stars.

"'Aha!' said Nutcracker, 'here we are at Marchpane Castle at last!'

"Marie was sunk and absorbed in contemplation of this magic palace. But the fact did not escape her that the roof was wanting to one of the principal towers, and that little men, up upon a scaffold made of sticks of cinnamon, were busy putting it on again. But before she had had time to ask Nutcracker about this, he said:

"'This beautiful castle was a short time since threatened with tremendous havoc, if not with total destruction. Sweet-tooth the giant happened to be passing by, and he bit off the top of that tower there, and was beginning to gnaw at the great dome. But the Sweetmeatburgh people brought him a whole quarter of the town by way of tribute, and a considerable slice of Comfit Grove into the bargain. This stopped his mouth, and he went on his way.'

"At this moment soft, beautiful music was heard, and out came twelve little pages with lighted clove-sticks, which they held in their little hands by way of torches. Each of their heads was a pearl, their bodies were emeralds and rubies, and their feet were beautifully-worked pure gold. After them came four ladies about the size of Marie's Miss Clara, but so gloriously and brilliantly attired that Marie saw in a moment that they could be nothing but princesses of the blood royal. They embraced Nutcracker most tenderly, and shed tears of gladness, saying:

""Oh, dearest prince! beloved brother!'

"Nutcracker seemed deeply affected. He wiped away his tears, which flowed

thick and fast, and then he took Marie by the hand and said, with much pathos and solemnity:

"This is Miss Marie Stahlbaum, the daughter of a most worthy medical man, and the preserver of my life. Had she not thrown her slipper just in the nick of time--had she not procured me the pensioned Colonel's sword--I should have been lying in my cold grave at this moment, bitten to death by the accursed king of the mice. I ask you to tell me candidly, can Princess Pirlipat, princess though she be, compare for a moment with Miss Stahlbaum here in beauty, in goodness, in virtues of every kind? My answer is, emphatically "No."

"All the ladies cried 'No;' and they fell upon Marie's neck with sobs and tears, and cried:

"Ah! noble preserver of our beloved royal brother! Excellent Miss Stahlbaum!"

"They now conducted Marie and Nutcracker into the castle, to a hall whose walls were composed of sparkling crystal. But what delighted Marie most of all was the furniture. There were the most darling little chairs, bureaus, writing-tables, and so forth, standing about everywhere, all made of cedar or Brazil-wood, covered with golden flowers. The princesses made Marie and Nutcracker sit down, and said that they would themselves prepare a banquet. So they went and brought quantities of little cups and dishes of the finest Japanese porcelain, and spoons, knives and forks, graters and stew-pans, and other kitchen utensils of gold and silver. Then they fetched the most delightful fruits and sugar things--such as Marie had never seen the like of--and began to squeeze the fruit in the daintiest way with their little hands, and to grate the spices and rub down the sugar-almonds; in short, they set to work so skilfully that Marie could see very well how accomplished they were in kitchen matters, and what a magnificent banquet there was going to be. Knowing her own skill in this line, she wished, in her secret heart, that she might be allowed to go and help the princesses, and have a finger in all these pies herself. And the prettiest of Nutcracker's sisters, just as if she had read the wishes of Marie's heart, handed her a little gold mortar, saying:

"Sweet friend, dear preserver of my brother, would you mind just pounding a little of this sugar-candy?"

"Now as Marie went on pounding in the mortar with good will and the utmost enjoyment--and the sound of it was like a lovely song--Nutcracker began to relate, with much minuteness and prolixity, all that had happened on the occasion of the terrible engagement between his forces and the army of the king of the mice; how he had had the worst of it on account of the bad behaviour of his troops; how the horrible mouse king had all but bitten him to death, so that Marie had had to sacrifice a number of his subjects who were in her service, etc., etc.

"During all this it seemed to Marie as if what Nutcracker was saying--and even the sound of her own mortar--kept growing more and more indistinct, and going farther and farther away. Presently she saw a silver mistiness rising up all about, like clouds, in which the princesses, the pages, Nutcracker, and she herself were floating. And a curious singing and a buzzing and humming began, which seemed to die away in the distance; and then she seemed to be going up--up--up, as if on waves constantly rising and swelling higher and higher, higher and higher, higher and higher.

"CONCLUSION.

"And then came a 'pr-r-poof,' and Marie fell down from some inconceivable height.

"That was a crash and a tumble!

"However, she opened her eyes, and, lo and behold, there she was in her own bed! It was broad daylight, and her mother was standing at her bedside, saying:

"Well, what a sleep you have had! Breakfast has been ready for ever so long.'

"Of course, dear audience, you see how it was. Marie, confounded and amazed by all the wonderful things she had seen, had fallen asleep at last in Marchpane Castle, and the negroes or the pages, or perhaps the princesses themselves, had carried her home and put her to bed.

"Oh, mother darling,' said Marie, what a number of places young Mr. Drosselmeier has taken me to in the night, and what beautiful things I have seen!' And she gave very much the same faithful account of it all as I have done to you.

"Her mother listened, looking at her with much astonishment, and, when she had finished, said:

"You have had a long, beautiful dream, Marie; but now you must put it all out of your head.'

"Marie firmly maintained that she had not been dreaming at all; so her mother took her to the glass cupboard, lifted out Nutcracker from his usual position on the third shelf, and said:

"You silly girl, how can you believe that this wooden figure can have life and motion?'

"Ah, mother,' answered Marie, 'I know perfectly well that Nutcracker is young Mr. Drosselmeier from Nürnberg, Godpapa Drosselmeier's nephew.'

"Her father and mother both burst out into ringing laughter.

"It's all very well your laughing at poor Nutcracker, father,' cried Marie, almost weeping; 'but he spoke very highly of *you*; for when we arrived at Marchpane Castle, and he was introducing me to his sisters, the princesses, he said you were a most worthy medical man.'

The laughter grew louder, and Louise, and even Fritz, joined in it. Marie ran into the next room, took the mouse king's seven crowns from her little box, and handed them to her mother, saying:

"Look there, then, dear mother; those are the mouse king's seven crowns which young Mr. Drosselmeier gave me last night as a proof that he had got the victory.'

"Her mother gazed in amazement at the little crowns, which were made of some very brilliant, wholly unknown metal, and worked more beautifully than any human hands could have worked them. Dr. Stahlbaum could not cease looking at them with admiration and astonishment either, and both the father and the mother enjoined Marie most earnestly to tell them where she really had got them from. But she could only repeat what she had said before; and when her father scolded her, and accused her of untruthfulness, she began to cry bitterly, and said:

"Oh, dear me; what can I tell you except the truth, poor unfortunate girl that I am!'

"At this moment the door opened, and Godpapa Drosselmeier came in, crying:

"Hullo! hullo! what's all this? My little Marie crying? What's all this? what's all this?'

"Dr. Stahlbaum told him all about it, and showed him the crowns. As soon as he had looked at them, however, he cried out:

"Stuff and nonsense! stuff and nonsense! These are the crowns I used to wear

on my watch-chain. I gave them as a present to Marie on her second birthday. Do you mean to tell me you don't remember?'

"None of them *did* remember anything of the kind. But Marie, seeing that her father and mother's faces were clear of clouds again, ran up to her godpapa, crying:

"You know all about the affair, Godpapa Drosselmeier; tell it to them then. Let them know from your own lips that my Nutcracker is your nephew, young Mr. Drosselmeier from Nürnberg, and that it was he who gave me the crowns.' But Drosselmeier made a very angry face, and muttered, 'Stupid stuff and nonsense!' upon which Marie's father took her in front of him, and said, with much earnestness:

"Now just look here, Mario; let there be an end of all this foolish trash and absurd nonsense for once and for all; I'm not going to allow any more of it; and if ever I hear you say again that that idiotic, misshapen Nutcracker is your godpapa's nephew, I shall shy, not only Nutcracker, but all your other playthings--Miss Clara not excepted--out of the window.'

"Of course poor Marie dared not utter another word concerning that which her whole mind was full of, for you may well suppose that it was impossible for anyone who had seen all that she had seen to forget it. And I regret to say that even Fritz himself at once turned his back on his sister whenever she wanted to talk to him about the wondrous realm in which she had been so happy. Indeed, he is said to have frequently murmured, 'Stupid goose!' between his teeth, though I can scarcely think this compatible with his proved kindness of heart. This much, however, is matter of certainty, that, as he no longer believed what his sister said, he now, on a public parade, formally recanted what he had said to his red hussars, and, in the place of the plumes he had deprived them of, gave them much taller and finer ones of goose quills, and allowed them to sound the march of the hussars of the guard as before.

"Marie did not dare to say anything more of her adventures. But the memories of that fairy realm haunted her with a sweet intoxication, and the music of that delightful, happy country still rang sweetly in her ears. Whenever she allowed her thoughts to dwell on all those glories she saw them again, and so it came about that, instead of playing as she used to do, she sat quiet and meditative, absorbed within herself. Everybody found fault with her for being this sort of little dreamer.

"It chanced one day that Godpapa Drosselmeier was repairing one of the clocks in the house, and Marie was sitting beside the glass cupboard, sunk in her dreams and gazing at Nutcracker. All at once she said, as if involuntarily:

"Ah, dear Mr. Drosselmeier, if you really were alive, *I* shouldn't be like Princess Pirlipat, and despise you because you had had to give up being a nice handsome gentleman for my sake!'

"Stupid stuff and nonsense!' cried Godpapa Drosselmeier.

"But, as he spoke, there came such a tremendous bang and shock that Marie fell from her chair insensible.

"When she came back to her senses her mother was busied about her and said:

"How could you go and tumble off your chair in that way, a big girl like you? Here is Godpapa Drosselmeier's nephew come from Nürnberg. See how good you can be.'

"Marie looked up. Her godpapa had got on his yellow coat and his glass wig, and was smiling in the highest good-humour. By the hand he was holding a very small but very handsome young gentleman. His little face was red and white; he had on a beautiful red coat trimmed with gold lace, white silk stockings and shoes, with a lovely bouquet of flowers in his shirt frill. He was beautifully frizzed

and powdered, and had a magnificent queue hanging down his back. The little sword at his side seemed to be made entirely of jewels, it sparkled and shone so, and the little hat under his arm was woven of flocks of silk. He gave proof of the fineness of his manners in that he had brought for Marie a quantity of the most delightful toys--above all, the very same figures as those which the mouse king had eaten up--as well as a beautiful sabre for Fritz. He cracked nuts at table for the whole party; the very hardest did not withstand him. He placed them in his mouth with his left hand, tugged at his pigtail with his right, and crack! they fell in pieces.

"Marie grew red as a rose at the sight of this charming young gentleman; and she grew redder still when, after dinner, young Drosselmeier asked her to go with him to the glass cupboard in the sitting-room.

"Play nicely together, children,' said Godpapa Drosselmeier; 'now that my clocks are all nicely in order, I can have no possible objection.'

"But as soon as young Drosselmeier was alone with Marie, he went down on one knee, and spake as follows:

"Ah! my most dearly-beloved Miss Stahlbaum! 'see here at your feet the fortunate Drosselmeier, whose life you saved here on this very spot. You were kind enough to say, plainly and unmistakably, in so many words, that you would not have despised me, as Princess Pirlipat did, if I had been turned ugly for your sake. Immediately I ceased to be a contemptible Nutcracker, and resumed my former not altogether ill-looking person and form. Ah! most exquisite lady! bless me with your precious hand; share with me my crown and kingdom, and reign with me in Marchpane Castle, for there I now am king.'

"Marie raised him, and said gently:

"Dear Mr. Drosselmeier, you are a kind, nice gentleman; and as you reign over a delightful country of charming, funny, pretty people, I accept your hand.'

"So then they were formally betrothed; and when a year and a day had come and gone, they say he came and fetched her away in a golden coach, drawn by silver horses. At the marriage there danced two-and-twenty thousand of the most beautiful dolls and other figures, all glittering in pearls and diamonds; and Marie is to this day the queen of a realm where all kinds of sparkling Christmas Woods, and transparent Marchpane Castles--in short, the most wonderful and beautiful things of every kind--are to be seen--by those who have the eyes to see them.

"So this is the end of the tale of Nutcracker and the King of the Mice."

"Tell me, dear Lothair," said Theodore, "how you can call your 'Nutcracker and the King of the Mice' a children's story? It is impossible that children should follow the delicate threads which run through the structure of it, and hold together its apparently heterogeneous parts. The most they could do would be to keep hold of detached fragments, and enjoy those, here and there."

"And is that not enough?" answered Lothair. "I think it is a great mistake to suppose that clever, imaginative children--and it is only they who are in question here--should content themselves with the empty nonsense which is so often set before them under the name of Children's Tales. They want something much better; and it is surprising how much they see and appreciate which escapes a good, honest, well-informed papa. Before I read this story to you, I read it to the only sort of audience whom I look upon as competent critics of it, to wit, my sister's children. Fritz, who is a great soldier, was delighted with his namesake's army, and the battle carried him away altogether. He cried 'prrr and poof, and schmetterdeng, and boom booroom,' after me, in a ringing voice; jiggled about on his chair, and cast an eye towards his sword, as if he would go to Nutcracker's aid when he got into danger. He had never read Shakespeare, or the recent

newspaper accounts of fighting; so that all the significance of the military strategy and evolutions connected with that greatest of battles escaped him completely, as well as 'A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!' And in the same way dear little Eugenie thoroughly appreciated, in her kind heart, Marie's regard for little Nutcracker, and was moved to tears when she sacrificed her playthings and her picture-books--even her little Christmas dress--to rescue her darling; and doubted not for a moment as to the existence of the glittering Candy Mead on to which Marie stepped from the neck of the mysterious fox-fur cloak in her father's wardrobe. The account of Toyland delighted the children more than I can tell."

"That part of your story," said Ottmar, "keeping in view the circumstance that the readers or listeners are to be children, I think the most successful. The interpolation of the story of the Hard Nut, although the 'cement' of the whole lies there, I consider to be a fault, because the story is--in appearance at all events--complicated and confused by it, and it rather stretches and broadens the threads. You have declared that we are incompetent critics, and so reduced us to silence; but I cannot help telling you that, if you bring this tale before the public, many very rational people--particularly those who never have been children themselves (which is the case with many)--will shrug their shoulders and shake their heads, and say the whole affair is a pack of stupid nonsense; or, at all events, that some attack of fever must have suggested your ideas, because nobody in his sound and sober senses could have written such a piece of chaotic monstrosity."

"Very good," said Lothair, "to such a head-shaker I should make a profound reverence, lay my hand on my heart, and assure him that it is little service to an author if all sorts of fancies dawn upon him in a confused dream, unless he can discuss them with himself by the light of sound reason and judgment, and work out the threads of them firmly and soberly. Moreover, I would say that no description of work demands a clear and quiet mind more absolutely than just this; for, although it must have the effect of flashing out in all directions with the most arbitrary disregard of all rules, it must contain a firm kernel within it."

"Nobody can gainsay you in this," said Cyprian. "Still, it must always be a risky undertaking to bring the utterly fanciful into the domain of everyday life, and clap mad, enchanted caps on to the heads of grave and sober folks--judges, students, and Masters of the Rolls--so that they go gliding about like ghosts in broad daylight up and down the most frequented streets of the most familiar towns, and one does not know what to think of his most respectable neighbours. It is true that this brings with it a certain tone of irony, which acts as a spur to the lazy spirit, or rather entices it, unobservedly, with a plausible face, into this unaccustomed province."

"But the said tone of irony," said Theodore, "is capable of becoming a most dangerous pitfall; for the pleasantness of the plot and execution--which we have a right to demand in all tales of the kind--may very easily trip over it and go tumbling to the bottom."

"But I do not believe it is possible to lay down definite canons for the construction of stories of this kind," said Lothair. "Tieck, the profound and glorious master--the creator of the most delightful works of the 'tale' class--has only placed a very few scattered, instructive hints on the subject in the mouths of the characters in his 'Phantasmus.' According to them, the conditions are, a quietly progressive tone of the narrative; a certain guilelessness in the relation, which, like gently fantasising music, enters the soul without noise or din. There should be no bitter after-taste left behind by it, but only a sense of enjoyment, echoing on. But is this sufficient to define the only admissible tone for this species of literature? However, I don't wish to think any more about my 'Nutcracker.' I feel that it is pervaded by what I may call 'overflowing spirits' to too great an extent; and I have thought too much of grown-up people and their ways and doings; for the rest, I have had to promise the little critics in my sister's nursery to get another story ready for them by next Christmas, and I undertake to keep it in a

quieter tone. For to-day, I think we ought to be thankful that I have summoned you up out of the dreadful mine-shaft at Falun to the light of day, and restored you to the good humour and good spirits which become Serapion Brethren--particularly at the moment of parting, for I hear the clock striking twelve."

"May Serapion continue to protect and aid us," cried Theodore, rising and elevating his glass, "and enable us to describe what we have seen with the eye of the spirit, in graphic and apposite words."

The Brethren drank the toast, and parted.

SECTION THIRD.

"There can be no question," said Lothair, when the Serapion Brethren were next assembled, "that our Cyprian--just as was the case on the St. Serapion's Day when our Brotherhood was founded--has something strange occupying his mind and thoughts. He is pale and disturbed; listens to our conversation with only half an ear; and seems, though present in the body, to be far away in spirit."

"Then," said Ottmar, "the best thing he can do is to out with the story of the madman whose name-day he is probably celebrating."

"And discharge the contents of his brain in eccentric sparks just as he pleases," added Theodore; "for I know that he will then become humanly-minded again, and come back to our circle, which he will have to content himself with as best he may."

"You are doing me an injustice," said Cyprian; "for instead of my being preoccupied with anything relating to insanity, I bring you a piece of news which ought to delight you all. Our friend Sylvester has come back here to-day from his long stay in the country."

The friends welcomed this announcement with shouts; for they were all much attached to the quiet but brilliant and kindly Sylvester, whose inward poesy shone forth in the mildest and most beauteous radiance.

"No more worthy Serapion Brother than our Sylvester could possibly exist," said Theodore. "He is quiet and thoughtful: it is true it costs some trouble to kindle him up to the point of clear utterance; but probably there never was any one more susceptible of the work of other people. Though he is a man of few words himself, one reads in his face, in the clearest traits, the impression which the words of others produce upon him; and when his kindness and talent stream forth in his looks and whole being, I feel myself more kind and more clever in his presence--more free and more happy."

"The truth is," said Ottmar, "that Sylvester is a very remarkable man just on that account. The poets of the present day seem all to go storming, of set purpose, up above the level of that unpretending modesty which ought to be considered the most marked and essential quality of the true poet-nature; and even the better-minded among them have need to be careful that, in the mere maintenance of their rights, they should abstain from drawing that sword which the great majority of them never lay out of their hands. But Sylvester goes about weaponless, like a guileless child. We have often accused him of indolence, and told him that, considering the wealth of his intellect, he writes too little. But must people go on writing continually? When Sylvester sits down and fixes some inner image into words, there is sure to be some irresistible impulse constraining him to do so. He never writes anything that he has not most vividly felt, and seen; and therefore he must come amongst us as a perfect Serapion Brother."

"I have a dislike to all odd numbers," said Lothair, "except the mystic and pleasant number seven; and I think that five Serapion Brethren would never

answer, but that six, on the other hand, would sit very comfortably about this round table. Sylvester has arrived to-day; and very shortly that restless, wandering spirit, Vincent, will be casting anchor here too. We all know him; and we are aware that, except for the kindness of heart which he possesses in common with Sylvester, he is the most absolute contrast to him, in all respects, that it would be possible to find. Sylvester is quiet and meditative; whilst Vincent boils over with wit and high spirits. He has an inexhaustible faculty of clothing everything in bizarre imagery--the most everyday matters, as well as the most extraordinary; as, moreover, he says everything in a clear, almost piercing voice, and with the drollest pathos, his talk is often like a set of magic-lantern slides, carrying the attention along in constant, unresting alternation and change, without allowing it to pause and contemplate anything quietly."

"You have drawn a most striking portrait of Vincent," said Theodore; "but there is one of his characteristics which we must not lose sight of, that, with all his brilliant qualities, and constant firework-volley of humour, he is, heart and soul, devoted to mysticism of every kind, and introduces it into his pursuits in rich measure. You know he has taken up medicine as a profession?"

"Yes," said Ottmar; "and, by the way, he is the most eager champion of Mesmerism to be found, and I must say that I have heard from his lips the most acute and profound observations possible on that somewhat obscure subject."

"Ho ho!" said Lothair, laughing, "have you gone to be schooled by all the magnetisers since the days of Mesmer, that you can be so very certain as to 'the most acute and profound things possible' that can be said about Mesmerism? No doubt, if dreams and reveries have to be brought within the confines of any given system, Vincent, by reason of his clear-sightedness, is the very man to do it better than thousands of others. And he treats everything with a jovial good-temper which is always very delightful. Some time since he happened, in the course of his peregrinations, to be with me in a certain place, and it chanced that I had an unendurable nervous headache. Nothing would do it the slightest good. Vincent came in, and I told him what was the matter. 'What!' he cried, in that clear-toned voice of his, 'you have a headache?--a mere trifle! I can conjure headaches away in ten minutes' time; send them wherever you choose--into the arm-chair, or the ink-bottle, or out of the window!' And he began making his mesmeric passes. They did not do me the slightest good, but I could not help laughing most heartily; and Vincent, delighted, cried, 'See how I've conquered your headache in a moment!' Unfortunately I was compelled to answer that the headache was just as bad as ever. But Vincent said I was only feeling a sort of after-echo of the former pain. After-echo or not, it lasted for several days. I take this opportunity of declaring to my respected Serapion Brethren that I have not the slightest belief in the curative effects of Mesmerism; the most careful and ingenious researches on this subject seem to me to be much like the theorisings of the Royal Society of England on the question proposed to them by the King: why a vessel of water with a ten-pound fish in it should not weigh more than a similar vessel containing water alone? Several of the philosophers had solved the problem successfully, and were about to lay the results of their wisdom before the King, when one, a little more practical than the others, suggested that the experiment should be tried. When this was done, the fish weighed down the balance, as it could not but do. The basis of all the ingenious reasoning did not exist."

"Ah ha!" said Lothair, "incredulous, prosaic Schismatic! how was it, since you don't believe in Mesmerism,--how was it--but I must tell you, Cyprian and Theodore, this little story at full length, so that the shame of the contemptuous unbelief which Lothair has just avowed may return upon his head. You have probably heard that Lothair had an illness some time ago, the principal seat of which was in his nervous system. It came upon him in an indescribable manner; destroyed all his fine spirits and good temper, and spoilt all his enjoyment of life. I went one day to see him, all compassion and sympathy. I found him sitting in an arm-chair, with a cap drawn over his ears; pale, worn-out by a sleepless night, with his eyes closed. In front of him (whom Heaven has not endowed with the

most gigantic dimensions in the world), sat a personage almost as diminutive as himself, breathing upon him, drawing the tips of his fingers along his spine, laying his hand on his epigastrium, and asking him, in a soft, whispering voice:

"How do you feel now, Lothair?"

"And Lothair opened his eyes, smiled pathetically, and sighed out:

"Better, doctor; much better."

"In short, Lothair, who has no faith in the curative effects of Mesmerism; who says Mesmerism is all nonsense; who laughs the whole thing to scorn, and considers it all mere charlatanry and deception--Lothair was having himself mesmerized!"

Cyprian and Theodore laughed heartily over this rather grotesque picture.

"Pray don't talk of such things," said Lothair. "Man, by virtue of his wonderful organization, is, alas! such a feeble creature the physical element in him has such an injurious influence on the psychical that every illness, every abnormal condition, awakens an alarm and anxiety in him which, being a temporary insanity, causes him to do the most extraordinary things. Plenty of clever and rational men, when they have thought their doctors' prescriptions were not working as they expected them to do, have had recourse to old women's nostrums, or 'sympathetic media,' and I don't know what all. That I, at the time in question, when my nerves were all out of order, inclined to Mesmerism, is a proof of my weakness, but not of anything else."

"I," said Cyprian, "must beg you to allow me rather to believe that the doubts respecting Mesmerism which you have expressed to-night are only the results of some passing mental mood of the moment. What is Mesmerism, considered as to its curative effects, but the concentrated, increased, potentiated power of man's psychical element, empowered, by being thus concentrated and augmented, thoroughly to control the physical element; to know it, see it, and understand it through and through; to detect the minutest abnormal condition in it, and, by the very knowledge and perception of any such abnormal condition, to remove it? It is not possible that you can deny this power of our psychical element, or close your ears to the marvellous chords which come toning into us, and pass toning out from us--mysterious 'music of the spheres,'--the grand, unchangeable principle of Nature herself."

"You are talking in your usual strain," answered Lothair, "revelling in your mystic dreams as you always do. I admit at once that Mesmerism, stretching, as it undoubtedly does, into the domain of the ghostly, must always exercise a powerful attraction on poetic temperaments. I myself cannot deny that this mysterious subject has always penetrated to the very depths of my soul. But listen while I make my confession of faith in a few words. Who can penetrate, with foolhardy presumption, into the deepest mysteries of Nature? Who can understand, or even conjecture, with any sort of clearness, the nature of the mysterious bond which unites soul and body, and, in consequence, is the fundamental condition of our existence? Yet it is exactly upon the cognizance of this mystery that Mesmerism is wholly based; and so long as this cognizance is an impossibility, both the theory and the practice of Mesmerism (which are grounded upon isolated experiments, often illusory), are like the gropings of the born-blind. It is certain that there occur states of exaltation in which the spirit, ruling over the body and controlling its activity, acts with much power, and, in so acting, produces phenomena of the most extraordinary description. Dim presciences and fore-anticipations assume distinct shape and form; and we see and understand, with the fullest powers of comprehension, things as yet slumbering deep and motionless in our souls. Dreams (which are undoubtedly the most wonderful phenomena belonging to the human organism, and, as I consider, appear in their most potentiated form in what is called, in general terms, 'somnambulism') belong to this province. But it is also certain that such conditions presuppose the

existence of some abnormality in the relation between the psychical and the physical principles. The most distinct and vivid dreams come to us always when some diseased or morbid feeling is affecting the body. The spirit takes advantage of the inactive condition of its co-regent; taken possession of the throne, and turns that co-regent into a servile vassal. So that Mesmerism, also, is a result of some diseased or morbid condition of the body. It may also happen that Nature may frequently establish a psychical dualism, during which the mutual inter-play of the two principles produces highly remarkable phenomena. But I consider that it is Nature only which should produce this dualism, and that every attempt to produce it artificially, without Queen Nature's command, at one's own will and pleasure, is dangerous and rash, if not wicked. I go even further. I cannot deny that it is possible to produce this potentiated condition of the psychical element--of course all experience would be against me if I did. The psychical principle belonging to a given person can, in the process of mesmeric manipulation, become embodied, and can stream out from the mesmerizer in the form of some 'fluid' (or whatever one may choose to term it), and seize upon and govern the psychical principle of another--the person mesmerized--producing a state which is at variance with all the ordinary conditions of human life, and the usual rules of existence, and which, even in its celebrated 'ecstatic forms,' comprehends in itself all the awesomeness of the mysterious spirit realm. All this, I say, I can by no means deny; but I must always look upon this process as the blind exercise of an evil power, whose effects and results, in spite of all theory, cannot be predicted or relied upon. Mesmerism is somewhere defined as a dangerous weapon in the hands of a child; and with that definition I thoroughly agree. If human beings are to set to work to operate at will upon each other's spiritual elements, the doctrine of the Barbarini school of spiritualists, who work purely by faith and will, without any manipulations, seems to me to be much the purest and most innocuous. The fixing of the firm will is a discreet and sober question put to Nature whether the dualism of spirit is to be established or not in any particular case; and it is she alone who decides it and answers it. Similarly, people's magnetising themselves, at the 'Bacquet' (as it was called) without any intervention of a mesmerizer, may be considered less dangerous, inasmuch as no influence of a foreign possibly hostile or hurtful spiritual principle can then be exercised. But think of the hosts of people who now practise this most mysterious of all sciences if it is to be called a science light-mindedly, or in complete self-deception, where they do not do it altogether for parade or notoriety! Bartels, in his 'Physiology and Physics of Mesmerism,' quotes the saying of a foreign physician, in which he expresses his surprise that the German doctors treat, and experiment upon, mesmeric subjects, just as if they were pieces of lifeless apparatus. Unfortunately this is perfectly true, and therefore I prefer to disbelieve in the curative effects of mesmerism, at all events, than to entertain the idea that the uncanny exercise and influence of another person's spiritual principle might some day destroy my own life beyond the possibility of remedy."

"What results," said Theodore, "from what you have said not without much truth and profundity about mesmerism is, that you have made up your mind, from mere dread of the consequences, never to allow any mesmerist in the world to make any of his manipulations on the ganglia of your back, or elsewhere. So far as regards your dread of the effect of a foreign spiritual principle, I quite agree with you. And I beg to be allowed by way of an illustrative note to your confession of faith to add an account of my own experiences in mesmerism. A college friend of mine who was studying medicine was the first to introduce me to this mysterious subject. You, who know me so very intimately, will have no difficulty in understanding how it took entire possession of my mind. I read everything bearing on the subject that I could get hold of, and finally Klug's book on 'Mesmerism as a Curative Agent.' This book caused some doubts to arise in me, as, without being very luminously scientific in its mode of treating the subject, it is based chiefly on cases, besides mixing up proved facts with matter wholly legendary. My friend rebutted all my objections, and at last proved to me that the mere study of the theory would never awaken that faith which was essential, and which could only be attained by witnessing mesmeric experiments. At this time there was no opportunity of seeing any at the University; for even if a promising

mesmeric operator had been to be found, there did not appear to be any one with any disposition to become somnambulistic or clairvoyant.

"I went to the Residenz, and there mesmerism was in its fullest flower. Nobody talked of anything but the wonderful magnetic crises of a talented and accomplished lady of position, who, after some not very important nerve-attacks, had, almost of herself, become first a 'sonnambule,' and then the most remarkable clairvoyante that (by the verdict of all who were authorities on the subject) ever had been, or ever could be, seen. I managed to make the acquaintance of the doctor who attended and treated her; and, seeing that I was a student eager for knowledge, he promised to take me to this lady when she was in one of her crises. This he accordingly did. One day he said, 'Come to me at six this afternoon, for I know that my patient has just fallen into the magnetic sleep.' Full of the most eager anticipation, I went with him to the elegantly, nay, sumptuously, appointed room. Rose-coloured curtains were carefully drawn over the windows, so that the rays of the evening sun, passing through them, tinted everything with a magic roseate shimmer. The 'subject' was lying, dressed in a beautiful and becoming morning dress, stretched on the sofa, with her eyes fast closed, breathing gently as if in a profound sleep.

"In a wide circle around her, several devotees were ranged. There were one or two young ladies, who were rolling their eyes and sighing profoundly, and who would evidently have been but too happy to become subjects on the spot themselves, for the edification of the handsome officer and the other nice-looking young gentleman, who both seemed to be eagerly looking forward to this important moment; besides some elderly ladies who were watching, with bent heads and folded hands, every breath drawn by their sleeping friend.

The coming on of the highest condition of clairvoyance was expected momentarily. The mesmerizer, who did not take the trouble to place himself *en rapport* with his subject, as, he said, the *rapport* between them was continually in existence, went near her, and began to talk with her. She specified the times during the day when he had been thinking of her with special vividness, and mentioned many other circumstances which had occurred to him. At last she asked him to put away the ring which he had in his pocket in a red morocco case, and which he had never had with him before, because the gold of it, and particularly the diamond, affected her painfully. With every mark of the profoundest astonishment, the mesmerist stepped back, and took the described ring, in its case, out of his pocket. He had only got it that afternoon from the jeweller's, and the subject could have been conscious of its existence in no other way than by the *rapport* between them. This miracle had such an effect on the young ladies that they both sunk down into easy-chairs, sighing deeply; and a few passes by the mesmerizer speedily sent them both into a profound sleep.

"The fatal morocco case being got out of the way, the mesmerizer, chiefly for my edification, put his patient through some 'feats' (if I may so term them). She sneezed when he took snuff. She read a letter which he placed upon her pericardium, and so forth. At last he tried whether he could place me *en rapport* with her through himself, and succeeded admirably. She described me minutely from head to foot, and said she had known beforehand that her mesmerizer was going to bring a friend with him that day, and had long had a clear presentiment within her of him, and of the manner of man he was. She appeared to be well pleased with my proximity. Suddenly she ceased speaking, and raised herself into a partly sitting posture. I fancied I observed a trembling of her eyelids, and a slight twitching of her lips. The Mesmerizer told us she was passing into the fifth stage--that of self-contemplation and detachment from the external world. This distracted the attention of the two young gentlemen from the young ladies, just as they were beginning to be extremely interesting. One of them had got the length of stating that the hair of the officer (whom she had got *en rapport* with) was emitting a strange and beautiful light; the other announced that the general's lady, who occupied the floor below, was at that moment drinking very fine caravan tea, the aroma of which she could scent through the floor, and, moreover,

she prophesied, clairvoyantly, that she would wake from her mesmeric sleep in a quarter of an hour, and drink some tea herself, and also eat some tea-cake into the bargain. But the lady in the High Condition began to speak again, in an altogether altered voice, which had a strange, and, as I must admit, remarkably beautiful tone. What she said, moreover, was couched in such mystic phraseology, and extraordinary expressions, that I could make no sense of it. But the mesmerizer told us she was saying the most glorious, the most profound, and the most instructive things on the subject of her own stomach. This, of course, I had to take for granted. Quitting the theme of her stomach (to rely again upon her mesmerizer's interpretation), she soared away upon a loftier flight. Sometimes it seemed to me that there occurred whole passages which I had read somewhere or other; I had an idea that I had met with them in Novalis's 'Fragments,' perhaps, or in Schelling's 'Weltseele.' And then she fell back rigid upon her cushions. Her mesmerizer expected her to awake directly, and begged us to go away, because it might have a painful effect upon her if she found strangers about her when she awoke. So we were sent about our business. The two young ladies, about whom nobody had given themselves any further trouble, had thought it as well to wake up some little time before, and slip quietly away.

"You cannot imagine the odd impression this whole scene had produced upon me. To say nothing of the two silly girls--who, of course, would have been only too happy to emerge from their uninteresting position as mere spectators--I could not drive away the idea that the lady on the sofa was playing--with very considerable talent and ability--a thoroughly studied, well got-up, carefully rehearsed part. I was perfectly certain that the mesmerist was the most sincere and honourable of human beings, and would have abhorred any 'comedy' of the sort from the bottom of his heart; so that I was convinced that he--even from a desire to make converts to the true faith--would never for one moment have lent himself to anything in the shape of deception. Consequently, if there was any deception in the case, it must rest with the lady, whose acting was more than a match for the scientific doctor's powers of observation. I did not dare to ask myself what object she could have in subjecting herself to such a process of self-torture--for self-torture such a feigned condition of exaltation must certainly be. There have been, as we know, devil-possessed Ursulines--nuns who mewed like cats, horrible creatures who dislocated their own limbs; to say nothing of the woman in the hospital at Würzburg who, regardless of the frightful torture she endured, bored pieces of glass and needles into her lancet wounds, merely to astonish her doctor at the strangeness of the substances to be found within her. We know that there have, at all times, been hosts of women who have risked health and life, honour, fair fame, and freedom, solely that the world might look upon them as extraordinary beings, and talk of the marvels connected with them. But to return to the lady in question. I ventured, though with much diffidence, to formulate my doubts to the doctor. But he replied, with a smile, that doubts like these were nothing but the last feeble struggles of the vanquished intelligence. The lady, he said, had several times declared that my proximity affected her favourably, so that he had every reason to desire me to continue my visits, which, he was certain, would convince me in the end. In fact, after going to see her several times, I did begin to be more convinced, and my belief almost became absolute when, once that the mesmerizer had placed me *en rapport* with her in one of her higher conditions, she mentioned, in an incomprehensible manner, certain circumstances in my previous life, and spoke, particularly, of an affection of the nervous system into which I fell at a time when I had lost a beloved sister. It displeased me much, however, that the number of spectators kept increasing, and that the mesmerizer tried to convert the lady into a prophetess and sibyl, making her give oracular utterances about the health and circumstances of strangers with which he placed her *en rapport*.

"One day I found, among the spectators, an old doctor, a celebrated man, who was well known as the most strenuous and formidable opponent of, and sceptic concerning, the curative effects of mesmerism. Before his arrival the lady, in her magnetic sleep, had said that it would last longer this time than usual, and that she would not awake for fully two hours. Soon after this she attained the highest

stage of clairvoyance, and began her mystic utterances. The mesmerist told us that, in this highest grade, the subject was a wholly spiritual being, had completely stripped off the body, and was utterly insensible to physical pain. The old doctor thought this was an opportunity for making a decisive experiment in the cause of science, for the convincing of all the incredulous; and proposed that he should be allowed to burn the sole of the lady's foot with a red-hot iron, and see whether she would feel it or not. It seemed rather a terrible experiment, but abundant means of cure were at hand; he had brought them in his pocket, and a small iron for the purpose as well. These he at once produced.

"The mesmerizer averred that, on awaking, the lady would not mind any slight inconvenience which she might thus suffer in the cause of science, and ordered a chafing-dish to be brought. It came, and the doctor placed his iron in it to be heated. Just then the lady was seized with a sudden spasm, heaved a deep sigh, awoke, and complained of feeling uncomfortable. The old doctor cast a piercing glance at her, unceremoniously cooled his iron in some mesmerized water which happened to be on the table, put it in his pocket, took his hat and stick, and left the house. The scales fell from my eyes. I hastened to take my departure also, indignant at the vile deception which this fine lady was practising on her mesmerizer, and on us all.

"As a matter of course, neither the mesmerizer nor the devotees--who looked upon their visits as a species of mystic divine service--were in the slightest degree enlightened by what had occurred. It is equally a matter of course that I, for my part, was convinced that everything in the shape of mesmerism was the merest chimeric superstition, and would listen to nothing more on the subject.

"My destiny took me to B----. There, also, much was being said about mesmerism, but there was no mention of any experiments on it going on. It was said that a much esteemed old doctor, the director of the admirably ordered lunatic asylum there--like the one in the Residenz who, in a horrible manner, carried anti-somnambulistic irons about in his pockets--had declared himself decidedly against mesmerism as a cure, and strictly forbidden the doctors under his orders to practise it.

"My surprise was all the greater, therefore, to learn, after a time, that this very doctor himself was employing mesmerism, though quite secretly, in the lunatic asylum.

"When I had made his acquaintance, I tried to bring him on to the subject of mesmerism. He avoided it: but at last, as I persisted in talking of this wondrous science, and showed that I had a certain amount of practical knowledge on the subject, he asked what was being done at the Residenz in the direction of curative mesmerism. I told him, without ceremony, the story of the lady who came back so suddenly from the realms of celestial ecstasies to this sublunary world at the idea of being slightly burned. 'That is just it! that is just it!' he cried, whilst his eyes flashed lightnings; and he at once changed the subject. At last, when I had gained more of his confidence, he spoke out his mind concerning mesmerism, to the effect that he was convinced, from personal experience, of the existence of this mysterious natural power, and of its beneficial effects in particular cases, but considered the calling into action of this power to be the most dangerous experiment possible, which should only be permitted to doctors, in the most absolute serenity of their minds, and above any sort of passionate enthusiasm; that there was nothing in which there was a greater possibility of self-deception, or in which self-deception was easier; and that he considered no experiment satisfactory in which the person operated on had previously heard much of the marvels of mesmerism, and possessed sufficient intelligence and education to understand what it was all about. He considered that the charm of penetrating into a higher spirit-world was, for poetic temperaments, or those naturally 'exalted,' too alluring not to give rise, taken in connection with an eager desire to attain that condition, to illusory feelings of every kind. Moreover, he said that the magnetizer's dream of controlling the spiritual principle of another was a source

of deception, where he lends himself wholly to the fancies of excitable people, instead of throwing the most prosaic cold water over them, and thus keeping them in check as by bit and bridle. At the same time he would not deny that he made use of the curative powers of mesmerism himself, in his asylum, although he thought that the mode in which, from pure conviction, he allowed it to be applied, by doctors carefully selected under his own strict superintendence, obviated all risk of abuse, and, on the contrary, produced beneficial effects on the patients, as well as resulting increase of knowledge respecting this most mysterious of all curative agents. Although it was a breach of all regulations, he said he was willing, provided that I would promise him the strictest secrecy, so as to keep the curious at bay, to allow me to be present at a mesmeric cure, if a case of the kind should occur.

"Chance soon brought a very remarkable case of the kind under my observation, of which the circumstances are as follow:

"In a certain village about twenty miles from B--- the local medical man met with a country labourer's daughter, of about sixteen, whose condition her parents bewailed with bitter tears. They said their daughter could neither be said to be ill nor well. She suffered from no pain or illness, she ate and drank, slept--often for a whole day at a time--and yet she seemed to be wasting away, and getting weaker and feebler daily, so that she had been able to do no work for a long time past. The doctor convinced himself that some deep-seated affection of the nervous system was the root of the evil, and that mesmerism was clearly indicated as the remedy. He told the parents that it was impossible that their daughter could be cured there in the village, but that she could be put to rights completely if they would send her to the hospital in B---, where she would have the best of advice and treatment, and be given the necessary medicine without having to pay a farthing. After a hard struggle the parents did as they were advised.

"Before the mesmeric cure had been commenced I went with my friend to the hospital, and saw the patient. I found the girl in a lofty, well-lighted room, fitted up in the most careful manner with all imaginable comforts and conveniences. She was of very delicate build for her station in life, and her refined-looking face was almost to be called beautiful, had it not been for the dull, vacant eyes, the deadly pallor, the colourless lips. Probably her malady had impaired, for the time, her mental powers, but she seemed to be very limited in intelligence, appeared to have a good deal of difficulty in understanding questions put to her, and answered them in the broad, abominable, unintelligible jargon which the country people speak in her part of the world. The director had selected as her mesmerizer a young, robust medical student whose face expressed ingenuousness and kindness, and to whom he had ascertained that the girl had no dislike. The process began. There was no question in this case of visits by the curious, astonishing feats, or the like. Besides the mesmerizer, no one was present except the director (who watched the process with the minutest attention, and carefully observed the most trifling incidents) and me. At first the girl seemed but very slightly susceptible, but ere long she progressed rapidly from grade to grade, until in three weeks' time she reached the stage of true clairvoyance. Let me pass over the various wonderful phenomena which presented themselves in her several stages. It is sufficient if I assure you that here, where there was no possibility whatever of the smallest deception, I was convinced to the depths of my soul of the real occurrence of that state which mesmerists describe as the highest form of clairvoyance. In this stage, as Kluge says, the union with the mesmerizer is so absolute and complete that the subject not only knows instantly when the mesmerizer's thoughts are withdrawn from him (or her), but reads the thoughts which are in the mesmerizer's mind with the utmost minuteness. On the other hand, the clairvoyant is completely under the control of the mesmerizer's will, and can only think, speak, and act by means of, and through, the mesmerizer's psychical principle. This is exactly the condition in which this peasant girl was.

"I am unwilling to weary you with all that happened as between the mesmerizer and patient in this condition; I shall merely mention one circumstance--to my

mind the most convincing of all. While she was in this condition, the girl spoke the pure, educated dialect of her mesmerizer, and in her answers to his questions--often given with a most charming smile--she expressed herself in the choice and refined language of a person of intelligence and education; in fact, exactly as her mesmerizer was in the habit of expressing himself; and as she did so, her lips and cheeks bloomed into rosy colours, and her features and expression were ennobled in the most striking manner.

"I could not but be amazed. But this complete absence of individual will in the patient, this absolute surrender of her personality, this objectionable dependence upon the spiritual principle of another--this existence, in fact, conditioned solely by another's spiritual principle--filled me with horror and awe. Nay, I could not but feel the deepest and most heartrending pity for the poor thing, even after I was obliged to see and admit that the mesmerism was doing the patient a most wonderful amount of good, so that she bloomed forth into the finest and most robust health, and thanked her mesmerizer, the director--and even me--for all the benefit she had derived, saying all this in a broader and more unintelligible jargon than ever. The director seemed to observe my feeling, and to share it. We never came to any explanation about it; probably for the best of reasons. Never since then have I been able to persuade myself to witness any more mesmeric cures. I had no wish to see any experiments besides the one in question, which was so perfect in all its conditions as to remove all doubts of the wondrous power of mesmerism. At the same time, it had brought me to the brink of an abyss into which it was impossible to peer without profound alarm.

"From all which it results that I am entirely of Lothair's opinion."

"And," said Ottmar, "as I add that I am entirely of yours, it is clear that we are all of one mind on this mysterious subject. No doubt any clever doctor who is an advocate for mesmerism would refute all our arguments in a moment, and soundly rebuke us for setting our crude laymen's opinions up in opposition to convictions resulting from careful experiments and extensive experience. Do not let us forget, neither, that we ought not to be altogether unfavourably disposed towards mesmerism, since, in our Serapiontic essays it may frequently find its application as a most efficient lever for bringing little-understood spiritual powers into play. Even you, Lothair, have made use of this lever not seldom. In your very 'Nutmacker,' that most edifying story, Marie is sometimes a little 'sonnambule.' But, ah! how far we have wandered away from the subject of Vincent!"

"The transition was easy enough," said Lothair. "The path was traced all ready. If Vincent joins our Brotherhood, there is sure to be much dabbling in mysteries, for his head is full of them. However, Cyprian here has not been attending to what we have been saying for several minutes past; he has been turning over the leaves of a manuscript which he took from his pocket. He ought now to have an opportunity of disburdening his mind."

"The truth is," said Cyprian, "that your discussion on mesmerism seemed, to me, tedious and wearisome; and, if you like, I will read you a Serapiontic tale which was suggested to me by Wagenseil's 'Chronicles of Nürnberg.' Remember, that my object was not to write a critical, antiquarian treatise on the celebrated Contest on the Wartburg; I have merely, according to my wont, related the circumstances just as they arose before my mental vision."

He read:--

"THE SINGERS' CONTEST."

"At the season when spring and winter are bidding each other farewell--on the night of the Equinox--a reader sat in a lonely chamber with Johann Christoph Wagenseil's work on the glorious craft of the Master Singers open before him.

The storm, raging and roaring without, was clearing up the fields, dashing the heavy rain-drops against the windows, and whistling and howling the winter's wild adieu through the chimneys of the houses; whilst the beams of the full moon were dancing and playing like pallid spectres up and down on the wall. But the reader took no note of all this. He closed the book, and gazed, deep in thought, into the fire which was crackling on the hearth, given over wholly to contemplation of the magic forms of long-past times, which his book had evoked for him. It was as if some invisible being laid down veil after veil upon his head, so that the objects around him floated far away into thicker and thicker mists. The raging of the storm and the crackling of the fire turned to gentle, harmonious murmuring whispers, and a voice within him said,

""This is the dream, whose wings murmur so softly up and down, as it lays itself on man's breast like a loving child, awaking with a sweet kiss the inner sight--so that it beholds the beauteous forms of a higher life, which is all splendour and glory."

""A dazzling radiance burst forth like lightning-flash, and the veiled dreamer opened his eyes. But no veil--no mist cloud--now obscured his sight. He was lying on beds of flowers in the twilight dimness of a thick, beautiful forest. The brooks were murmuring, the thickets rustling, like the secret talk of lovers; and between whiles a nightingale complained in sweetest pain. The morning breeze awoke, and--rolling the clouds away--made straight the pathway of the glorious sunshine; and soon the sunlight gleamed upon all the green, green leaves, waking the sleeping birds, which fluttered from spray to spray, singing their joyous strains. Then came sounding from afar the tones of the merry horn. The deer sprang up from their lairs, and the harts and the roes peered out--shyly, with bright, wise eyes--through the leafy thickets, at him who lay on the flowers, and then dashed back in alarm into their coverts again. The horns were silent; but now the chords of harps were heard, and tones of voices, making a music so sweet, that it seemed to come straight from Heaven. Nearer and nearer approached the sound of these beautiful strains, and hunters armed with their boar-spears, with bright horns slung over their shoulders, rode forth from the forest shades. On a splendid cream-coloured charger rode onward a stately lord, dressed in old German garb, robed in a prince's mantle. By his side on a graceful palfrey, a lady of dazzling beauty, richly attired, rode along. After them came six cavaliers, riding on beautiful horses, each of a different colour; their marked and expressive faces spake of a long vanished time. They had laid their bridle reins over their horses' necks, and were playing on lutes and harps, and singing in clear-toned voices. Their horses, trained to the music, went prancing in time to the strains, after the royal pair along the woodland way. When the singing ceased for a time, the hunters sounded their horns, and the horses whinnied and neighed as if in gladness of heart. Pages and servitors richly attired brought up the rear of the stately procession, which wended its way along into the depths of the woods.

""He who had been sunk in amaze at this wondrous sight, rose from his flowery couch, and cried enraptured,

""Oh, Ruler of the Universe! have those grand old days arisen again from the grave? What were these glorious forms?"

""A deep voice spoke behind him: "Did you not recognize the men, whom you have had so vividly present to your mind?"

""He looked round, and saw a grave and stately man in a dark full-bottomed wig, dressed all in black, in the fashion of about the year 1680; and he recognized the learned old Professor Johann Christoph Wagenseil, who went on to speak as follows:

""You need have had no difficulty in seeing that the stately lord in the prince's mantle, was the doughty Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia. By his side rode the star of his court, Countess Mathilda, the youthful widow of Count Cuno of Falkenstein, who died advanced in years. The six who rode after them, singing to

lutes and harps, were the six great masters of song, whom the Landgrave--heart and soul devoted to the glorious singer's craft--has assembled at his Court. They are now engaged in the chase; but when that is over, they will meet in a beautiful meadow in the heart of the forest, and hold a singing contest. Thither let us repair, that we may be present when the hunt is over."

"Wherefore they went along; while the distant rocks and the woods re-echoed the notes of the horns, the cries of the hounds, and the shouts of the hunters. All turned out as Professor Wagenseil had desired. Scarcely had they come to the gold-green glittering meadow, when the Landgrave, the Countess, and the six masters came slowly up from the distance.

""Good friend!" said Wagenseil, "I shall now point out to you each of the masters, and call him by his name. You see the one who looks about him so joyfully, and, holding his chestnut horse well in hand, comes caracoling up so bravely? The Landgrave nods to him--he gives a happy smile--that is the cheerful, vigorous Walther of the Vogelweid. He with the broad shoulders and the strong, curly beard, with knightly blazon on his shield--riding quietly forward on the piebald--is Reinhard of Zweckhstein. Now, notice him there riding away from us into the woods on a small-sized dapple grey. He gazes thoughtfully before him, and smiles as if fair forms and pictures were rising before him out of the ground; that is the great Professor Heinrich Schreiber. He is probably far away in spirit, and thinks not of the meadow or of the singers' contest. For see how he pushes his way down the narrow woodland path, while the branches above him strike his head. There goes Johannes Bitterloff after him, that fine-looking man on the sorrel, with the short reddish beard. He calls to the professor, who wakes up from his reverie, and they come riding back together. But what is this wild commotion there amongst the trees; Can storm squalls be passing along down so low in the thickets? This is indeed a wild rider, spurring his horse till he bounds and rears, foaming and fretting. See the pale handsome lad; how his eyes flame, and the muscles of his face are drawn with pain--as if some invisible being were sitting behind him and torturing him--it is Heinrich of Ofterdingen. What can have changed him thus? He used to ride quietly on, joining with beautiful tones in the songs of the other masters. Oh look, now, at this grand cavalier on the white Arab! He is dismounting, and now he swings his bridle reins over his arm, and, with genuine knightly courtesy, holds his hand out to Countess Mathilda to help her from her saddle. See the grace with which he stands, his bright blue eyes beaming on the lady. It is Wolfframb of Eschinbach. But they are taking their places, and the contest is going to begin."

"Each of the masters in turn now sung a magnificent song. It was easy to see that they strove to surpass each other. But though none of them did altogether surpass the others--difficult as it was to decide which of them had sung the best--yet the Lady Mathilda bent to Wolfframb of Eschinbach with the garland, which she held in her hand, as the prize. But Heinrich of Ofterdingen sprang up from his seat, with a gleam of wild fire sparkling in his dark eyes; and as he stepped impetuously forward to the centre of the meadow, a gust of wind carried away his barret-cap, and the hair streamed up in spikes on his deadly pale forehead.

""Stay! stay!" he cried, "the prize has not been won! my song, my song has still to be heard; and then let the Landgrave say which of us wins the garland."

""With this there came to his hand--one scarce could tell how or whence--a lute of wonderful form, almost like some strange unearthly creature turned to wood. This lute he began to play and strike with such power, that all the distant woodlands trembled and shook to its tones. Then he sang to its chords in a voice of grandeur and power, in praise of a stranger prince, a mightier prince than all, whom every master must hail and lowly worship, and laud, on pain of shame and dismay, of speedy ruin and end. Often marvellous tones--sneering and harsh, and wild--seemed to sound from the lute, as he was singing this strain.

"The Landgrave's glances were angry as this wild singer sang. But the other masters sang all together, joining their voices in answer. Heinrich's wonderful

song was well-nigh lost in their singing. So that he swept his strings with more and more passionate swell, till they strained and shivered, and broke, uttering a cry as of pain. Then, in place of the lute, lo! a sudden, dark horrible form was seen to stand at his side; it grasped him with horrible talons, and rose with him up to the air. The songs of the masters ceased, and died away in faint echoes. Black clouds sunk down over forest and meadow, shrouding the scene in night. Then a star arose, shining in soft, gentle radiance, and passed along upon its heavenly way. And the masters floated after this star, resting on shining clouds, singing, and softly touching their strings. A glimmering radiance trembled up from the grass, the woodland voices awoke from their deep slumber, and toned forth, and joined in the masters' songs.

"And now you perceive, dear reader, that he who dreamed this dream is he who is about to lead you amongst these masters, to whose acquaintance Professor Johann Christian Wagenseil has introduced him.

"Often, when we see strange forms moving in the dimness of distance, our hearts beat with a painful anxiety to know what or whom they may be, and what they are doing. They come nearer and nearer; we can make out the colour of their dress, and see their faces. We hear their voices, although the words cannot be distinguished. But they dip down into the blue haze of some valley, and we can scarcely wait till they come up again and reach us, so eager are we to see them and talk with them, and know what those who seemed so wondrous in the distance may turn out to be when close at hand. May the dream above narrated give rise to similar feelings in you, dear reader, and may you consider that the narrator is doing you no unfriendly service in at once conducting you to the famous Wartburg, and the Court of Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia.

"THE MASTER SINGERS AT THE WARTBURG.

"It was about the year 1208, that the noble Landgrave of Thuringia, a zealous lover and active patron of the gracious singers-craft, had gathered six mighty masters of song together at his Court. These were Wolfframb of Eschinbach, Walther of the Vogelweid, Reinhardt of Zweckhstein, Heinrich Schreiber, Johannes Bitterolff--all of knightly rank--and Heinrich of Ofterdingen, burgher of Eisenach. The masters dwelt together in heartfelt amity and harmony, as priests of one and the same church, all their efforts being directed to maintaining the gift of song--the most precious wherewith the Lord hath blessed mankind--in full flower and in high honour. Each of them had a "manner" of his own, as it was called, a "style" as we should more probably term it; but just as each note of a harmony differs from all the rest, and yet they all unite in forming the beautiful chord, so the various "modes" or "styles" of these masters harmonized completely together, and seemed but diverse rays of the same star of love. Hence neither of them thought that his own "manner" was the best, but held those of the others in high esteem, and knew that his own "mode" would not sound so beautiful but for the others; just as any note of a chord does not acquire its full beauty, significance, and power until the others belonging to it awake and come lovingly to greet it.

"Whilst the songs of Walther of the Vogelweid (a lord of broad acres) were noble and elegantly turned, yet full of exuberant gladness, Reinhardt sung in curt and knightly phrases, employing words and forms of force and might; whilst Heinrich Schreiber was learned and profound, Johannes Bitterolff was full of glitter, and rich in ingenious similes and quaint conceits. Heinrich of Ofterdingen's songs went straight to the depths of the soul. Wasted and worn himself by pain and longing, he knew how to stir the deepest sorrow in the hearts of men; but often there rang through his music harsh accents coming from the torn and wounded breast, where bitter scorn and sorrow had taken their abode, stinging and gnawing like venomous insects. It was a mystery unknown to all why Heinrich had fallen into this condition. Wolfframb of Eschinbach was born in

Switzerland, his songs, breathing of grace and peaceful clearness, were like the pure blue skies of his beautiful native land, his "manner" had in it the sounds of the cattle-bells, and of herdsmen playing their reeden pipes; but yet the wild waterfalls lifted their voices, and the thunder among the mountains. As he sang, those who listened were borne floating along with him, on the glittering wavelets of some beautiful stream, now gliding gently, now battling with the storm-driven surges; anon, the storm over, and the danger past, steering in gladness to the wished-for haven. Notwithstanding his youth, Wolfframb of Eschinbach was the most experienced of the masters assembled at the Landgrave's Court. He had been wholly devoted to the singer's craft from his early childhood, and, as soon as he had grown to be a lad, he had travelled in quest of instruction through many countries, till he met with the great master whose name was Friedebrand. This master taught him faithfully in his art, and gave him many master poems in manuscript, which sent light into his inner spirit, enabling him to see and distinguish all that was formless and dim before. More especially at Siegebrunnen, in Scotland, Master Friedebrand gave him certain books from which he learned the histories which he rendered into German song. They related chiefly to Gamurret and his son Parcival, to the Markgrave Wilhelm of Narben and his doughty Rennewart. These poems another master singer, Ulrich of Tuerkheim, afterwards translated into more modern German verse, and enlarged into a thick book at the request of lords and ladies who could not rightly understand Eschinbach's poetry. Thus Wolfframb was renowned far and wide for the excellence of his art, and obtained the favour of many princes and great lords. He visited many courts, and received the richest rewards for his splendid mastership, till at length the enlightened Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, having heard of his fame from all quarters, invited him to his Court.

"Not only his greatness in his art, but his sweet disposition and his modesty, very shortly gained him the Landgrave's fullest favour and affection, and perhaps Heinrich of Ofterdingen, who had formerly enjoyed the full sunshine of the prince's favour had, in consequence, to step somewhat backwards into the shade; but notwithstanding, none of the masters clung to Wolfframb with such sincerity of affection as Heinrich of Ofterdingen. Wolfframb returned it from the depth of his soul; and thus they two stood united in the closest friendship, while the other masters formed a beautiful shining garland around them.

"HEINRICH OF OFTERDINGEN'S SECRET.

"Ofterdingen's wild and distracted condition increased upon him every day; gloomier and more restless grew his glance, paler and paler his cheek. Whilst the other masters, after singing the most sublime themes from holy writ, raised their glad voices in praise of fair ladies, and of their valiant prince, Ofterdingen's songs bewailed the immeasurable pain of earthly existence, and were often like the wailing cry of one who is mortally hurt, and longs in vain for death to deliver him. All believed him to be suffering from hopeless love; but none could succeed in wringing his secret from him. The Landgrave, who was devoted to him heart and soul, tried once, when they chanced to be alone together, to find out the cause of his trouble; he plighted his princely word that he would spare no effort in his power to avert any misfortune threatening him should that be the cause; or, by furthering any desire which might at that time seem hopeless, convert his bitter sufferings into joy and hope; but the Landgrave succeeded no better than the others in inducing young Heinrich to open his heart.

"Alas, my lord!" he said, while the hot tears came to his eyes, "I cannot myself tell what hellish monster has clutched me with fiery talons, and is holding me suspended halfway between heaven and earth. I belong no more to this world; and I thirst in vain for the joys up in the heaven above me. The heathen poets have told of the desolate shades of the dead, who do not belong to Elysium or to Orcus; they flit and wander to and fro on Acheron's banks, and the darksome air, where no star of hope can ever shine, resounds with their cries of sorrow; and the

terrible wailings of their inexpressible pain, their weeping, their prayers are vain; the inexorable ferryman drives them away when they try to enter the mysterious barge, and this condition of theirs--this frightful perdition--is mine."

"Soon after Heinrich had thus spoken with the Landgrave, he left the Wartburg in a state of real bodily sickness, and betook himself to Eisenach. The masters sorrowed that so fair a flower was lost from their garland, faded before its time, as if by the blight of some poisonous blast; but Wolfframb of Eschinbach by no means gave up all hope--rather he thought that, now that Ofterdingen's mental trouble had turned to a bodily sickness, recovery might be near at hand, for it is not seldom the case that the mind falls sick, presaging bodily pain, and it might be so with Ofterdingen, whom he determined to go and faithfully comfort and tend.

"So Wolfframb went at once to Eisenach, and when he went in to Ofterdingen, he found him stretched on his couch, deathly pale, with half-closed eyes; his lute was hung on the wall covered thickly with dust, and many of its strings were broken. When he saw his friend, he raised himself a little, and stretched out his hand to him with a melancholy smile. Wolfframb having taken a seat beside him, and delivered to him the hearty greetings of the Landgrave, and of the other masters; and spoken many other kindly words--Heinrich, in the languid voice of a sick man said, "Much that is strange has happened to me; doubtless I have borne myself as one bereft of his senses. Well might you all believe that some secret, penned up within my breast, was what was driving me so wildly hither and thither; but alas, my wretched state was a mystery even to myself; a raging torture was eating at my heart, but its cause I could not discover. All that I did seemed to me wretched and worthless. The songs which I held so high before, sounded toneless and weak, unworthy the feeblest learner; and yet, befooled by a vain presumption, I burned to outvie you all. A bliss unknown, the highest joy of heaven, shone far above me like a golden star. To it must I raise myself, or perish miserably. I raised my eyes, I stretched my longing arms; but ice-cold wings waved a chill to heart and soul, and a voice said 'What avails thy hope and longing? Is not thine eye blinded? Is not thy power lost? Thou canst not endure the ray of thy hope; thou canst not grasp and hold thy heavenly bliss.' But now, now my secret is plain, even to myself. It is true it gives me my death, but death in the highest of heavenly bliss. Sick and feeble I lay on my bed. It was sometime deep in the night, and the fever-wanderings, which had been driving me hither and thither for so long, left me at once. I felt myself at peace; and a gentle beneficent warmth went spreading through my frame. I seemed to be floating away through the deeps of heaven, borne upon dark clouds. Then a glittering levin-bolt seemed to come cleaving through the gloom, and I cried out--

""Mathilda! Mathilda!"

""Upon this I awoke. The dream was gone, my heart was throbbing with a strange sweet pain, and with a nameless joy I was conscious that I had cried 'Mathilda,' and I gave way to fear--for I thought that the woods and the meadows, and all the hills and the caves would re-echo that beauteous name--and that thousands of voices would tell her glorious self how deep and true and tender, even to the death, my adoration must always be, and that she is the marvellous star whose beams, streaming into my heart, awake those destroying pains of hopeless longing; and that now those passionate flames have burst into blazing night, that all my soul is athirst, and dies for her peerless beauty!

""You know all my secret now, Wolfframb; bury it deep in your breast. You see that I am peaceful and happy, and you believe me when I tell you that I would rather die than render myself despicable in your eyes--in the eyes of all. But to you--to you, whom Mathilda loves--I felt that I must tell all. As soon as I can rise from this couch, I shall wander away into some foreign land, with death in my heart. Should you hear that I am no more, you may tell Mathilda that I----"

"But Heinrich could speak no further. He sank back upon his couch, and turned his face to the wall. His bitter sobs betrayed the struggle within him.

"Wolfframb was greatly startled and surprised at that which Heinrich had disclosed to him. He sat with his eyes fixed on the ground, and considered how his friend might be rescued from the dominion of this mad and foolish passion, which must infallibly lead him to his destruction.

"He tried to speak words of comfort, and even to induce Heinrich to go back to the Wartburg, and return--with hope in his heart--into the sunshine which Mathilda shed around her. He even said that it was only by virtue of his songs that he himself had found favour in her eyes, and that Ofterdingen might well reckon upon equal good fortune. But poor Heinrich gazed at him sadly, and said:

""You will never see me, I think, at the Wartburg any more. Would you have me cast myself into the flames? I shall die a happier death afar from her--the sweet death of longing."

"Wolfframb departed, leaving Heinrich in Eisenach.

""WHAT HAPPENED FURTHER TO HEINRICH OF OTTERDINGEN.

"It sometimes comes to pass that the love-pain in our hearts, which at first threatened to tear them asunder, grows habitual after a time, so that we even come to cherish it with care; and the sharp cries of anguish which the nameless torture at first made us utter, turn to melodious plaints of gentle sorrow, which tone back like sweet echoes into our souls, laying themselves, like balm, on our bleeding wounds.

"And thus it was with Heinrich of Ofterdingen. His love was as warm and longing as ever, but he looked no more into the black, hopeless abyss. He lifted his eyes to the shimmering clouds of spring, and then it seemed to him as if his beloved was looking down at him with her beautiful eyes, inspiring him with the most glorious songs he had ever sung. He took his lute down from the wall, strung it with fresh strings, and went forth into the fair spring weather which had just commenced. Then he felt powerfully impelled towards the region of the Wartburg; and when he saw the towers of the castle shining in the distance, and reflected that he would never see Mathilda more--that his life would never be anything but a hopeless longing; that Wolfframb had won the peerless lady by the power of song--all his lovely visions of hope sank away into gloomy night, and the deathly pangs of despair and jealousy pierced his heart. Then he fled, as if pursued by evil spirits, back to his lonely chamber, and there he was able to sing songs which brought him delicious dreams, and, in them, the Beloved herself.

"For a long time he had succeeded in avoiding the sight of the towers of the Wartburg; but one day he got into the forest--he scarce could tell how--the forest which lies in front of the Wartburg, on going out of which one has the castle close before his sight. He had come to a part of the woods where strangely-shaped crags rise up, covered with many-tinted mosses, surrounded by thick copses and ugly, stunted, prickly underwood. With some difficulty he clambered halfway up these rocks, so that, through a cleft, he could see the towers of the Wartburg rising in the distance. There he sat himself down, and, vanquishing the pain of his gloomy fancies, lost himself in dreams of the sweetest hope.

"The sun had been some time set, and from out the gloomy clouds which had come down and spread upon the hill, the moon rose, red and fiery. The night wind began to sigh through the lofty trees, and, touched by its icy breath, the thicket shuddered and shivered like one in the chills of fever. The night birds rose screaming from the rocks, and began their wavering flight. The woodland streams rushed louder--the distant waterfalls lifted their voices. But as the moon began to shine more brightly through the trees, the tones of distant singing came faintly over the valley. Heinrich rose. He thought how the masters on the Wartburg were now beginning their pious evening hymns. He saw Mathilda, as she retired,

casting looks of affection at Wolframb--whom she loved--with a heart brimming over with fondness and longing. Heinrich took his lute and begun a song such as perhaps he had never sung before. The night wind paused; the thickets and trees kept silence; the tones went gleaming through the woodland shadows as if they were part of the moonlight. But as this song was dying away in sighs of bitter sorrow, a sudden burst of shrill, piercing laughter rang out behind him. He turned quickly round, startled, and saw a tall dark form, which, ere he could collect his thoughts, began to speak in a disagreeable, sneering tone:

""Aha! I have been searching about here for a considerable time to see who might be singing so beautifully at this hour of the night. So it is you, is it, Heinrich of Ofterdingen? Ha! I might have known that, for you are certainly by far the poorest (which is not saying little) of all the 'masters,' as folks call them, up on the Wartburg there; and that silly song, without either meaning or melody, could only have come from your mouth."

""Half still alarmed, half glowing in anger, Heinrich cried:

""And who may you be, who know me and think you can attack me here with contumely and scorn?" And he laid his hand on his sword. But the dark stranger gave another of his screaming laughs, and, as he did, a ray of moonlight fell upon his deathly pale face, so that Ofterdingen could see, with much distinctness, the wild-gleaming eyes, the sunken cheeks, the pointed, reddish beard, the mouth with its fixed sneering smile, and the barret-cap with its black feather.

""Heyday, young sir!" said the stranger; "are you going to come at me with lethal weapons because I criticise your songs? I know you singers do not like anything but praise, and expect to receive it for everything that drops from your renowned lips, though there be nothing good about it. But just because that is not my way, and because I tell you candidly that instead of being a master you are but a mediocre scholar and learner of the noble singer's craft, you ought to see that I am your true friend, and mean you kindly."

""How," said Ofterdingen, who felt a secret shudder run through him; "how can you, whom I do not remember to have seen before, be my friend and mean me kindly?"

""Without answering this question the stranger went on to say:

""This is a charming spot, and the night is delightful. I will sit down beside you in the friendly light of the moon; you are not going back to Eisenach just yet, so we can have a little chat together. Pay attention to what I am going to tell you, it may prove instructive."

""With this the stranger sat down on the large mossy rock, close beside Ofterdingen. The latter struggled with the strangest feelings. With all his fearlessness he could not, in the loneliness of the night, and in that desert place, overcome the profound shuddering which the stranger's voice and manner awakened in him. He felt as if he ought to throw him down the steep precipice into the woodland stream which roared beneath. Then, again, he felt as if paralyzed in all his members.

""Meanwhile the stranger came and sat quite close to Ofterdingen and spoke very softly, almost whispering in his ear.

""I have just come from the Wartburg," he said, "where I have been listening to the poor, homely, unskilled, schoolboy-like 'singing,' as it is by courtesy styled, of the so-called 'masters' up there. But the Countess Mathilda is peerless; she is more perfect and charming than any other lady on earth!"

""Mathilda!" Ofterdingen cried in a tone of the deepest sorrow.

""Hoho, young sir," cried the stranger; "it is there where the shoe pinches, is it? However, for the present we have lofty matters to discuss; we have to deal

with the noble craft of song. I have no doubt that you people up there mean your best with those songs of yours, and that they all come to you as smoothly and naturally as possible. But of the real, true, profound singer-craft not one of you has the most distant idea. I shall just give you one or two elementary notions on the subject, and then you will see that, on the path on which you are at present, you will never reach the goal you are aiming at."

"The dark stranger now began to speak of the true craft of song in very extraordinary language, which itself almost sounded like strange songs hitherto unheard. And as he spoke image after image arose in Heinrich's mind, and then vanished again as if borne away by some storm-wind. A new world seemed to be opening upon him, seething with voluptuous shapes. Each word of the stranger's kindled lightning gleams which flashed forth for an instant and then went out again. The full moon was now high above the trees. Heinrich and the stranger were both sitting in her full radiance, and the former now noticed that the face of the stranger was far from being as horrible as it had appeared at first. There was certainly a strange fire sparkling in his eyes, but Heinrich fancied that a pleasing smile played about his lips, and the great, hawk-like nose and the lofty brow gave the face an expression of immense power and strength.

"I cannot express to you," said Heinrich, "the strangeness of the effect which your words produce upon me. I seem to be only now, for the first time in my life, beginning to form some slight notion what singing really means--as if all that I have done hitherto, under the impression that it was singing, was utterly poor and miserable--and that the true singer's craft was only beginning to dawn upon me. You must certainly yourself be a mighty master of song. Perhaps you will favour me so far as to take me as your most zealous pupil. I most earnestly beg that you will do so."

"The stranger gave another of his disagreeable laughs. He rose from his seat and stood before Heinrich, of such giant stature, and with a face so altered, that Heinrich felt the same shudder as when the stranger had first appeared at his side. The latter said, in a voice of such power that it re-echoed amongst the rocks:

"You think I am a mighty master of song, do you? Perhaps I am at times, but the giving of lessons is a matter with which I can by no means be troubled. I have good advice at the service of all who are eager for knowledge, as you seem to be. Have you ever heard of the great master Klingsohr, who is renowned for his mastery of the singer's craft as well as in all other branches of knowledge? People say he is a magician, and has dealings with one who is not everywhere in the best of odour. But do not you be deceived. Things which people do not understand, and cannot themselves manipulate, they think to be supernatural, and pertaining either to Heaven or to Hell. Master Klingsohr will lead you to your goal. His home is in Siebenbürgen; go you to him there, and you will see how science and art have procured for him, in lavish measure, all that his heart could desire--honours and riches, and fair ladies' favour. Ay, my young sir, if Klingsohr were here you would see how little the Lady Mathilda would trouble herself about the gentle Wolfframb of Eschinbach, our sighing Swiss herdsman."

"Do not dare to mention her name!" cried Heinrich. "Begone, and leave me in peace; I shudder at your presence."

"Hoho!" laughed the stranger; "do not get out of temper, my little friend; the cause of your shuddering is the chilliness of the night breeze and the thinness of your doublet. You felt well and happy whilst I was sitting near you, diffusing warmth through your frame. Shuddering and terror! Nonsense! I have blood and fire at your command. As for the Lady Mathilda, what I tell you is that her favour may be gained by means of the singer's gift, such as Master Klingsohr possesses. I began by making light of your singing, to show you your own lack of skill. But the fact that you begin to see your own shortcomings when I give you some inklings of the true craft is sufficient to prove that you are possessed of good dispositions. Who knows? You may be destined to tread in Master Klingsohr's footsteps, and then you may sue for the Lady Mathilda's favour with some

reasonable hope of success. So make yourself ready; be off to Siebenbürgen. But stay; if you cannot start off at once I will give you a little book which you shall study diligently. It is a book written by Master Klingsohr, and it contains not only the rules of the true singer's craft, but also one or two admirable compositions of his own."

"With this the stranger had produced a little book in a blood-red cover, which glimmered and shone in the moonlight. He handed this book to Heinrich, and, as soon as he had done so, he stepped back and vanished amongst the underwood.

"Heinrich fell into a profound sleep. When he awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and, had it not been that the book was lying on his breast, he would have looked upon his adventure with the stranger as merely a vivid dream.

"OF THE LADY MATHILDA. EVENTS ON THE WARTBURG.

"Doubtless, dear reader, you have at some time or other found yourself in some circle composed of fair ladies and talented men, which might be likened to a fair garland of many-tinted flowers, vieing in colour and perfume. But, like the exquisite tones of a music breathing over the whole, and awaking joy and rapture in every breast, it was the special charm of some one lady in particular, which, outshining the rest of the circle, was the special determining cause of the perfection of harmony pervading the whole. The other ladies seemed more lovely and attractive, seen in the light of her beauty, joining in the music of her voice. It made the men's hearts grow wider, and enabled them to give play to the enthusiasm and inspiration which is shy to come to the light at ordinary times, so that it streamed forth in words or music, or in such form as the nature of the circumstances might suggest. And, however this "queen" of the circle might endeavour, in the kindness and simplicity of her thoughtful goodness and consideration for all, to apportion her favour to each in equal measure, one still could see that her glance singled out one youth in particular standing in silence near her, whose eyes, moist with tears of soft emotion, betrayed the blissfulness of the passion burning in his breast. Many might envy, but none could hate this fortunate being; nay, those who were his friends rather loved him the better for the sake of the love he felt.

"Thus it happened that, in the fair garland of ladies and poets at the Court of Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, the Countess Mathilda, widow of Count Cuno of Falkenstein (dead at an advanced age), was the fairest flower, surpassing the others in beauty and sweetness.

"Wolfframb of Eschinbach, deeply moved by her loveliness and charm, fell in love with her at first sight, and the other masters, inspired by her beauty, celebrated her in many a tuneful lay. Reinhardt of Zweckhstein called her the lady of his thoughts, for whom he was ready to tilt in the tourney, or perish in the fray. Walther of the Vogelweid burned with the most chivalrous passion for her, whilst Heinrich Schreiber and Johannes Bitterolff outvied each other in praising her in every variety of quaint and ingenious conceit. But Wolfframb's songs came from the depths of a loving soul, and found their way to Mathilda's heart like glittering, sharp-pointed arrows. The other masters knew this well, but they felt that Wolfframb's good fortune and happiness irradiated them all with a sunny shimmer, and gave even to their songs a peculiar sweetness and power.

"The first dark shadow that fell upon Wolfframb's radiant life was cast by Ofterdingen's unlucky secret, when he thought how all the other masters loved him, although they, too, were deeply impressed by Mathilda's beauty and grace. As it was only in Ofterdingen's mind that hostile rancour was associated with affection, driving him away into dreary and joyless solitude, he could not help feeling bitterly pained. Often he thought Ofterdingen was only affected by a temporary madness which would wear itself out. Then again he felt with much vividness that he himself would not have been able to endure it if he had sued for

Mathilda's favour in vain. "And," he said to himself, "what better claim to it have I? Am I in any way better than Ofterdingen? Am I wiser or handsomer? Where is the difference between us? That which presses him to earth is but the power of a hostile destiny, which might have been mine just as it is his; and I, his faithful friend, pass carelessly by on the other side, and never hold out a hand to help him."

"Such reflections brought him at last to the conviction that he must go to Eisenach, and use his utmost efforts to induce Ofterdingen to come back to the Wartburg; but when he arrived Heinrich was gone, no one knew where. Sorrowfully Wolfframb returned to the Wartburg, and told the Landgrave and the masters of Heinrich's disappearance. Then for the first time it was seen how was their affection for him, in spite of his disturbed condition, which was sometimes sullen even to bitterness. They mourned for him as for one dead, and long did this grief lie over all their songs like a gloomy veil, depriving them of all their splendour and tone, till at length the image of the lost one passed further and further away into the dimness of distance.

"The spring had come again, and with it all the joy and happiness of renewed life. On a pleasant place in the castle gardens, closed in by beautiful flowers, the masters were assembled to greet the young leaves and the buds and blossoms with festive songs. The Landgrave, with Mathilda and other ladies, had taken their seats in a circle round them, and Wolfframb of Eschinbach was about to begin a song, when a young man, with a lute in his hand, came forward from amongst the trees. With glad surprise they all recognized in him the long missing Heinrich of Ofterdingen. The masters went to meet him with greetings of the heartiest kindness; but, without taking much notice of them, he approached the Landgrave, to whom, and then to the Countess Mathilda, he made a lowly reverence. He said he was completely cured of the sickness which had been upon him, and begged, should there be any reasons precluding him from being readmitted to the circle of the masters, to be at least allowed to sing his compositions as well as the others. But the Landgrave said that, though he had been away from among them for a time, he was by no means withdrawn from the circle of the masters, and he did not know why he should imagine that that would be the case. He embraced him, and himself pointed out to him his former place, between Walther of the Vogelweid and Wolfframb of Eschinbach. It was soon apparent that Heinrich's looks and bearing were completely changed. Instead of hanging his head as formerly, and creeping about with eyes fixed on the ground, he now walked with a bold firm step, lifting his head on high. His face was as pale as ever, but his glance was firm and penetrating, instead of wavering and uncertain. On his brow, instead of the old deep melancholy, sat a proud, gloomy gravity; and a strange muscular play about his mouth and cheek at times expressed a most uncanny kind of scorn. He deigned no word to the masters, but sat down silent in his place. Whilst the others were singing, he looked at the sky, moved about on his seat, counted on his fingers, yawned--in short, gave every indication of tedium and impatience. Wolfframb of Eschinbach sung in praise of the Landgrave, and then alluded to the return of the dear friend so long absent, describing it so thoroughly out of the depths of his heart that all present were deeply affected. But Heinrich knitted his brows, and, turning away from Wolfframb, took his lute, and struck upon it the most wonderful and extraordinary chords. He advanced to the centre of the circle, and began a song, of which the "manner," wholly unlike anything that the others had sung, was so unprecedented, that every one was struck with the profoundest amazement, and at last consternation. It was as if he was knocking, with tones of might, at the dark portal of some strange mysterious realm, and conjuring forth the mystic secrets of the unknown power therein dwelling. Then he invoked the stars, and his lute's tones whispered soft and low, till one thought one heard the harmonies of the ringing measures of the spheres. Then the chords grew stronger, and rushed louder and louder; and glowing vapours seemed to rise round the assemblage, whilst forms as of voluptuous love-passion glowed in the opened Eden of the pleasures of sense. When he ended all were sunk in the deepest silence, till a burst of applause broke stormily forth; and Lady Mathilda rose

quickly from her seat, went up to him, and placed on his brow the garland which she had been holding as the prize.

"Ofterdingen's face grew red as fire. He fell on his knees, and pressed her hands to his breast with rapture. As he rose, his sparkling, penetrating glance fell upon the faithful Wolfframb, who was coming up towards him, but turned away, as if suddenly constrained to do so by some evil power.

"There was but one who did not join in the enthusiastic applause, and that was the Landgrave, who had become very grave and thoughtful during Ofterdingen's singing, and could scarce find a word of praise for the marvellous song. At this Ofterdingen seemed visibly annoyed.

"When the twilight was almost merging into night, Wolfframb, who had been seeking for Heinrich in vain, met with him in one of the garden alleys. He hastened to him, and after warmly embracing him said:

"Well, dearest brother, and so you have become the greatest master of song, as I suppose, that the world contains. Tell me how you have accomplished what all we others, nay, yourself of old, had not the faintest conception of? What spirit has stood at your command to teach you the marvellous music of another world?"

"It is well," said Heinrich of Ofterdingen coldly, "that you see the height to which I have risen above you, the so-called 'masters'; or rather how I, and I only, have landed, and feel at home, in that realm towards which you are all striving on mistaken paths. You will not blame me, then, for thinking you all somewhat tedious and uninteresting, as well as what you call your 'singing' into the bargain."

"Then," said Wolfframb, "you now altogether despise us, whom of old you held in high esteem--you will have nothing more in common with us. All friendship, all liking have passed away from your heart, because you are a greater master than we. Even me you hold no longer worthy of your regard, because I may not be able to soar as high in my songs as do you. Ah, Heinrich, if I were to tell you what I felt when I heard you sing!"

"Pray let me hear," said Heinrich with a scornful laugh, "perhaps it may teach me something of value."

"Heinrich," said Wolfframb, in a very earnest and serious tone, "it is true your song was couched in a very extraordinary 'manner,' quite unlike anything we had ever heard before, and the ideas soared high, even beyond the clouds. But something within me said that such a song could never come out of the pure human soul, but must be produced by supernatural agency--as necromancers manure the earth of home with magical substances, and it brings forth the strange plants of foreign lands. You have become a great master of song Heinrich, and are occupied in lofty matters; but do you still understand the sweet greeting of the evening wind when you wander through the deep forest shadows? Does your heart still throb with gladness at the rustling of the branches, and the voices of the mountain streams? Do the flowers still look up at you with the eyes of innocent children? Does the nightingale's complaining still make your heart well nigh faint with pain? Ah, Heinrich, there were many things in your song which filled me with a sense of unholy awe. I could not but think of the picture you drew of the poor disembodied shades wandering on the banks of Acheron, when the Landgrave once asked you the cause of your secret pain. I could but fancy that you had bidden farewell to love, and that what you have obtained in its place is but the useless hoard of the wanderer lost in the wilderness. Even now I cannot help fearing--pardon me for speaking so plainly--that you have bought your mastership with all that joy in life which is only vouchsafed to the pious and childlike of spirit. A dark presentiment seizes me. I think of what drove you from the Wartburg, and the circumstances in which you have returned. Many things may succeed with you, it is true; perhaps the beautiful star of hope to which I have been raising my eyes may set for me for ever. Still, Heinrich--here, take my

hand on it--never can any ill-will towards you find place in my heart. Notwithstanding the good fortune which is streaming over you now, should you one day suddenly find yourself on the brink of some deep, bottomless abyss, and the whirl of giddiness seizes you, and you are about to fall down and be destroyed, I shall be standing behind you, firm in heart, and I will hold you fast with my strong arms."

"Heinrich had listened in profound silence to all that Wolfframb said. He now covered his face with his mantle, and dashed rapidly in amongst the thick trees. And Wolfframb heard him sighing and gently sobbing as he sped quickly away.

"THE CONTEST ON THE WARTBURG.

"Much as at first the other masters marvelled at the haughty Heinrich's songs, and praised them, ere long they began to talk of spuriousness in the "manners," of emptiness and superficial display--nay, of absolute wickedness--in the works which he brought before them. Lady Mathilda, and she alone, had turned to the singer with her whole soul; and he praised her charms in a "manner" which all the other masters (except Wolfframb of Eschinbach, who reserved his opinion) declared to be heathenish and abominable. Before very long Lady Mathilda became a wholly altered creature. She looked down upon the other masters with scornful arrogance, and even withdrew her favour from Wolfframb of Eschinbach. She carried matters so far as to ask Heinrich of Ofterdingen to give her instruction in the craft of song, and began to write compositions herself quite in the style of his. From this time all beauty and attractiveness seemed to abandon this poor deluded lady. Discarding everything which serves to adorn noble ladies, and leaving off all womanly ways, she became an uncanny creature, neither woman nor man, detested by the women and laughed at by the men. The Landgrave, fearing that this disorder of hers might infect the other ladies of the Court, issued strict commands that no lady should occupy herself in composition under pain of banishment, and for this the men, who were much horrified at Mathilda's state, thanked him warmly. Countess Mathilda left the Wartburg, and repaired to a castle not far from Eisenach, whither Heinrich of Ofterdingen would have followed her had not the Landgrave ordered that he should go through with the contest to which the other masters had challenged him.

"Heinrich of Ofterdingen," the Landgrave said to this overweening minstrel, "you have in ugly fashion broken up and disturbed, by those unholy songs of yours, the fair and happy circle which I had collected in this place. Me you could never beguile; I saw clearly, from the beginning, that your songs did not come out of the depths of a pure, honest singer's heart, but were the fruits of the teaching of some false master. What avails outward ornamentation, glitter, and brilliance, when what it covers is merely a lifeless corpse? You sing of lofty matters, of mysteries of the universe, it is true, not as they dawn in the hearts of men, as sweet presciences of a higher life, but as the presumptuous astrologer tries to comprehend them, and reduce and measure them with compass and scale. You should blush, Heinrich of Ofterdingen, to think at what you have arrived, that your brave, honest spirit has bent itself to serve an unworthy master."

"I know not, my Lord," said Heinrich, "how far I merit your displeasure and your reproaches. You may possibly alter your opinion when you hear who the master was who opened to me that province of song which is his own special home. I left your Court in a condition of the deepest melancholy; and it may have been that the pain, which then threatened to destroy me, was in truth only caused by the powerful effort of the germ within me to burst its way towards the fertilizing breath of a higher life. In a strange and remarkable manner a little book came to my hands, in which the greatest master of song on earth had expounded, with the profoundest science, the principles of the art, adding one or two compositions of his own. The more I read and studied in this book, the clearer it became to me what a wretched affair it is when the singer cannot go beyond

expressing in words merely that which he fancies he feels in his heart. But, more than this, I felt by degrees as though I were becoming gradually linked on to higher powers, who often sang through me, instead of its being I myself who sang, although I was, in absolute truth, the singer at the same time. My longing to see this great master himself, and listen to the profound wisdom and the critical judgments streaming from his very lips, became irresistible. I went, therefore, to Siebenbürgen, for, pray let me tell you, my Lord, it was to Master Klingsohr himself that I repaired; it is to him I am indebted for the super-earthly scope of my compositions, and perhaps you may now take a more favourable view of my feeble efforts."

""The Duke of Austria," the Landgrave said, "has told and has written me much in praise of your master. Master Klingsohr is versed in profound and secret sciences. He calculates the courses of the stars, and distinguishes the wonderful connection existing between them and the destinies of men. The secrets of the metals, the plants, and the gems are laid open to him, and at the same time he is skilled in the conduct of mundane affairs, and aids the Duke of Austria in action, as well as with advice and counsel. But what all this may have to do with the singer's pureness of heart I do not know, and I believe, moreover, that this is exactly the reason why Master Klingsohr's music, artfully and cleverly thought out and constructed as it doubtless is, has not the smallest power to touch or move my heart. However that may be, Heinrich of Ofterdingen, my masters, enraged, nay outraged, at your arrogant, overbearing demeanour, desire to sing against you for the prize, for several days together, and that shall now take place."

"So the masters' contest began, but whether it was that Ofterdingen's spirit, confounded by false teaching, could no longer find its way by that pure light which served for truthful minds, or whether the interest of the occasion redoubled the powers of the other masters, the result was that each one who sang against him overcame him and gained the prize, in spite of his utmost efforts. Ofterdingen was very angry over this disgrace, and began songs which, with contemptuous allusions to Landgrave Hermann, extolled the Duke of Austria to the skies, calling him the only glorious sun that had arisen upon art. Moreover, he attacked the ladies of the Court with insolent and scornful words, and went on to praise only the charms and beauty of Lady Mathilda, in heathenish and reprobate style. It could not be but that all the masters--the gentle Wolfframb of Eschinbach included--fell into just and righteous indignation at this, so that they trod Heinrich of Ofterdingen's mastership into the mire in the most fervent and unsparing songs. Heinrich Schreiber and Johannes Bitterolff stripped off the false and deceptive outward glitter from Ofterdingen's compositions, and clearly demonstrated the febleness of the skeleton form hidden beneath. But Walther of the Vogelweid, and Reinhard of Zweckhstein, went further. They maintained that Ofterdingen's conduct was worthy of condign punishment, which they were prepared and eager to inflict upon him, sword in hand.

"Thus Heinrich of Ofterdingen saw his mastership contemptuously trodden into the mire, and found even his very life in danger. Full of despair and fury, he appealed to the Landgrave for protection; nay more, to entrust the decision of the contest for the mastership to Master Klingsohr, the most renowned master of the time.

"The Landgrave said:

""Matters now have come, between you and the masters, to such a point that it is no longer merely a question of mastership in the singer-craft. In those wild, insane songs of yours you have outraged me, as well as the noble ladies of my Court; therefore my honour and theirs is involved in the question. But it must be decided in singing contest, and I agree to this Master Klingsohr of yours being the arbiter. One of my masters, who shall be chosen by lot, shall contend with you, and the subject you shall treat of shall be left to your own selection. But the headsman shall stand behind you with drawn sword, and he who is vanquished

shall be beheaded on the spot. About it, therefore, arrange for Master Klingsohr's arrival at the Wartburg within a year and a day, that he may settle the issue of this trial for life and death."

"Heinrich departed, and peace returned to the Wartburg for the time.

"The songs which at this time the masters sang in contest with Heinrich were spoken of as "the war of the Wartburg."

"MASTER KLINGSOHR ARRIVES AT EISENACH.

"Nearly a year had elapsed when news came to the Wartburg that Master Klingsohr had arrived at Eisenach, and taken up his abode in the house of a citizen named Helgreffe, who lived near the St. George's Gate. The masters were much relieved in their minds that now their bitter quarrel with Heinrich of Ofterdingen would be brought to an end; but none of them was so eager to see this world-renowned master face to face as Wolfframb of Eschinbach. "It may be," he said to himself, "that, as the people say, Klingsohr is devoted to unholy arts, that the powers of evil are at his command, and have aided him to the acquisition of his mastership in all branches of knowledge. But the noblest wine is grown upon congealed lava. What recks the thirsty traveller that the grapes which quench his thirst are nourished by the very fires of hell? I can profit and delight myself by the masters deep knowledge and skilful tuition without asking further questions, only assimilating so much of it as a pure and pious heart may accept."

"Wolfframb went off at once to Eisenach. When he came in front of the citizen Helgreffe's house, he found a crowd of people assembled, all staring, in eager expectancy, up at the balcony. He recognized amongst them many young men, scholars of the singer's craft, who kept on quoting this or that saying of the great master. One of them had written down the words he uttered when he went into Helgreffe's house; another knew exactly what he had had for dinner; a third averred that the master had actually looked at him with a smile, because he knew him to be a singer by his barret-cap, which he wore just as Klingsohr did his. A fourth began a song which he said was in Klingsohr's "manner." In short, it was a great excitement and commotion.

"Wolfframb of Eschinbach at last succeeded in forcing his way with difficulty through the crowd, and in getting into the house. Helgreffe welcomed him courteously, and, at his desire, went upstairs to announce to the master his arrival. The master, however, was engaged in his studies, and could not receive any one just then. He might come back in a couple of hours. Wolfframb had to swallow this rebuff. He came back in some two hours' time, and had to wait an hour longer. After this, Helgreffe was allowed to usher him in. A strange-looking servant, dressed in silks of many colours, opened the door of the room, and Wolfframb went in. He saw before him a tall stately man, dressed in a robe of dark-red samite, with wide arms, richly trimmed with sable, pacing up and down the chamber with long solemn steps. His face was much like that which classical sculptors have given to their representations of Jupiter, such a domineering gravity sat on the brow, such a formidable fire flashed out of the great eyes. His cheeks and chin were covered by a black curling beard, and on his head was what was either a barret-cap of strange form or a cloth wound round it in a peculiar fashion; it was hard to determine which. He had his arms folded over his breast, and, as he paced up and down, he spoke, in a clear, ringing voice, words which to Wolfframb were incomprehensible. On looking round the chamber, which was full of books and quantities of extraordinary-looking apparatus, Wolfframb saw in one corner a little old pallid mannikin, scarce three feet high, sitting upon a tall stool, busied in writing down, as hard as he could, all that the master was saying, on a leaf of parchment, with a silver pen. When this had been going on for a considerable time, the master's glance fell upon Wolfframb, and, stopping in his walk, he stood still in the centre of the chamber. Wolfframb greeted him with

pleasant verses, in a light playful style, explaining that he was come to be edified by Klingsohr's masterly skill and knowledge, and begging him to respond to him in a similar vein, so as to display his powers. The master measured him from head to foot with a wrathful glance, and said:

""Heyday! and who may you be, young sir, who have the impertinence to come here, pitting yourself against me with your idiotic rhymes, as if actually having the overweening presumption to challenge me to a prize-singing? Ah! I see! you can be none other than Wolfframb of Eschinbach, the most unfledged, ignorant laic of those who style themselves masters of the singer's craft up on the Wartburg. No, no, boy! You will have to grow a little ere you can hope to pit yourself against me."

""Wolfframb had not looked for a reception of this kind. His blood boiled at Klingsohr's insulting words. He felt the power with which the heavens had gifted him awaking within him more vividly than was usual. He looked the master straight in the eyes, gravely and firmly, and said:

""Master Klingsohr, you do not well in assuming this hard and bitter tone, in place of answering me kindly and frankly, as I addressed you. I know you are my superior in science, and probably also in the singer's craft; but that does not justify you in these arrogant vauntings, which you ought to think beneath you. I tell you to your face, Master Klingsohr, that I now believe that, as the people say, you have power over evil spirits, and intercourse with infernal beings, through the unholy arts which you practise. It is because you can call up dark spirits from the abyss that your mastership is so great. The mind of man stands aghast at them, and it is the terror of them which makes you prevail; not that profound love which streams forth from a pure singer's soul into the heart of the sympathetically-minded. This is why you are arrogant, as no singer, whose heart is untainted, ever can be."

""Hoho!" answered Master Klingsohr, "Hoho, young sir! Do not get on your high horse in this manner. As for my supposed intercourse with powers of evil, be silent. It is beyond your comprehension; it is but the idle chatter of childish idiots that it is from such a source that my skill in sing-craft is derived. But, let me ask you, whence did you derive what small knowledge on the subject you possess? Do you suppose I do not know that at Siegebrennen, in Scotland, Master Friedebrand lent you certain books, which you, with base ingratitude, did not return, but kept, and that all your songs are taken from them? Ha ha! if I have the devil to thank, you have to thank your own ingrained ingratitude."

""Wolfframb was aghast at this horrible accusation. He laid his hand on his heart, and said:

""May God be mine aid!--Amen. The spirit of falsehood is mighty within you, Master Klingsohr. How could I have so shamefully cozened my great master, Friedebrand, of his precious writings? Let me tell you that I kept these manuscripts only just as long as Master Friedebrand wished me to do so, and then gave them back to him again. Have you never learned anything from the writings of other masters?"

""Be that as it may," Klingsohr replied, without paying much attention to what Wolfframb said, "whencesoever you may have derived your art, what warrants you in attempting to place yourself on a level with me? Are you aware how diligently I have studied in Rome, in Paris, in Cracow; that I have travelled to the distant east, and learned the secrets of the wise Arabs; that I have sucked the essence of every school of the singer's craft that exists, and wrung the prize from every one who has competed with me; that I am a master of the Seven Liberal Arts? Whereas you, who have spent your days in far-off Switzerland, at a distance from everything in the shape of art and science, you, who are a mere laic, ignorant of all book-knowledge, cannot by any possibility have acquired even the rudiments of the true craft of song."

"During this speech of Klingsohr's, Wolfframb's anger had quite calmed down. The cause may have been that, at Klingsohr's braggart language, the precious gift of song within him shone forth more jubilantly bright, as do the sunbeams when they break victoriously through the heavy clouds which the storm has brought driving up on its wings. A gentle and pleasant smile spread over his face, and he said, in a quiet tone of self-command, to the irritated Master Klingsohr:

"Nay, good master, I might reply that though I have never studied at Rome or Paris, nor sought out the wise Arabs in their own distant land, I have known many singers of fame and skill (to say nothing of my master, Friedebrand, whom I followed into the heart of Scotland) whose instruction has much profited me; and that-like yourself-I have gained the singer's prize at the courts of many of our exalted princes in Germany. But I hold that all instruction, and all intercourse with the greatest masters would have availed me nothing, had not the eternal might of heaven placed within me the spark which has blazed up into the glorious beams of song; had I not held--and did I not still hold--afar from me all that is false or base; did I not strive, with all my strength, to sing nothing other than that which truly fills my heart."

"And here he began--he scarcely knew how, or why--to sing a glorious song, in the "Golden Tone," which he had shortly before composed.

"Master Klingsohr paced up and down full of wrath. Then he paused before Wolfframb, gazing at him with his fixed, gleaming eyes, as if he would pierce him through and through. When Wolfframb had ended, Klingsohr laid his hands on his shoulders, and said, gently and quietly, "Well, since you will not have it otherwise, Wolfframb, let us sing against one another, in all the tones and manners. But we will go elsewhere; this chamber is not fit for the like. Besides, you must drink a cup of good wine with me."

"At this instant the little mannikin who had been writing tumbled down from his stool, and, as he fell hard on to the floor, he gave a little delicate cry of pain. Klingsohr turned quickly round, and pushed the little creature with his foot into a sort of cupboard under the desk, which he closed upon him. Wolfframb heard the mannikin making a low whimpering and sobbing. After this, Klingsohr shut all the books which were lying about open; and each time that he closed one, a strange, awe-inspiring sound, like a death sigh, passed through the room. Next he took up in his hands wonderful roots; which, as he took them, had the appearance of strange unearthly creatures, and struggled with their stems and fibres, as if with arms and legs. Indeed, often a little, distorted human-looking countenance would come jerking out grinning and laughing in a horrible manner. At the same time it grew unquiet in the cupboards round the room, and a great bird appeared, flapping about in wavering, irregular flight with whirring wings that glittered like gold. Darkness was falling fast, and Wolfframb began to feel profound alarm. Klingsohr took a stone out of a case, which immediately diffused a light as bright as the sun through the room. On this all grew still, and Wolfframb saw and heard no more of that which had caused his uneasiness.

"Two servants, dressed in the same strange fashion, in many-coloured silks, as the one who had opened the door at first, came in with magnificent garments, in which they dressed their master. And then Klingsohr and Wolfframb went out together to the Town-Cellar.

"They drank to friendship and reconciliation, and they sang against each other in all the most skilful and artful "manners." There was no other master present to decide which of them was the victor, but had there been one he would doubtless have declared that Klingsohr had the worst of it. For with the utmost efforts of his art and intelligence he never in the least attained to the power and sweetness of the simple songs which Wolfframb sung.

"The latter had just ended one of his most successful essays when Master Klingsohr leaned back in his chair, and said, in a low, gloomy tone:

""You called me vain and braggart, Master Wolfframb; but you would much mistake me if you supposed that I was so blinded by vanity that I should not recognize the true art of song wherever I come across it--were it in the wilderness, or in the master's hall. There is none here to judge between you and me; but I tell you that you have vanquished me Master Wolfframb: and, by my so saying, you may recognize the genuineness of my art."

""Oh, good Master Klingsohr," said Wolfframb, "it may be that a certain special sense of happiness which I feel within me to-night may have made my efforts more successful than they may be at other times. Far be it from me to rank myself higher than you on that account. Perhaps your heart was heavy to-day--how often it happens that a heavy weight seems to lie upon one, like mists resting upon a meadow, and hindering the flowers from lifting up their heads. You may say you are vanquished to-night, but nevertheless I admired much in your beautiful songs, and you may very probably gain the victory to-morrow."

""What does that single-hearted modesty of yours avail you?" cried Master Klingsohr, who started up quickly from his seat, and turning his back to Wolfframb, placed himself at the lofty window, through which he gazed in silence at the pale moonbeams falling from on high.

"After some minutes of this he turned, walked up to Wolfframb and said, in a loud voice, while his eyes glared with anger:

""You were right, Wolfframb of Eschinbach. My skill and knowledge are backed up by powers of darkness; and your nature and mine must ever be at variance. You have vanquished me: but in the night which follows this I will send one to you who is called Nasias. Sing against him; and have a care that he does not vanquish you."

"With which Master Klingsohr went storming out of the Town-Cellar.

""NASIAS COMES BY NIGHT TO VISIT WOLFFRAMB OF ESCHINBACH.

""Wolfframb lodged in Eisenach over against the Bread House with a burgher of the name of Gottschalk: a kindly, pious man who held him in great honour. Although Klingsohr and Eschinbach had thought they were alone and unobserved in the Town-Cellar, it might well have been that many of the young scholars of song who dogged and watched every step of the celebrated master, and strove to catch every word and syllable that fell from his lips, might have found means to listen to the two masters singing against each other. At all events, the news that Wolfframb of Eschinbach had overcome the great Master Klingsohr had spread abroad in Eisenach, so that Gottschalk had come to hear of it. He hastened to his lodger full of joy, and asked him how it could possibly have happened that this haughty master should have consented to undertake a prize-singing in the Town-Cellar. Wolfframb told him all that had happened, not concealing the circumstance that Master Klingsohr had threatened to set one of the name of Nasias at him in the night. At this Gottschalk turned pale with terror, beat his hands together, and cried in a lamentable tone:

""Ah! gracious heavens, good sir, do you not know that Master Klingsohr has dealings with evil spirits, which are subject to him and obliged to execute his commands? Helgreffe, in whose house Master Klingsohr has taken up his abode, tells his neighbours the strangest tales as to what goes on there. It seems that often in the night time one would think a large concourse of people were collected in his room, although no one is ever seen to go in; and then there begins a wild, extraordinary singing, and the strangest goings on of all kinds--all the windows streaming with dazzling light. Very likely this Nasias may be the very evil one in person, and will carry you off to perdition--you ought to set off, dearest master. Do not wait for this terrible visitor--get away, I implore you."

""What?" answered Wolfframb. "My good landlord Gottschalk, why would you have me go away as if I was afraid to sing against this same Nasias? That would not be conduct for a master singer by any means. Be Master Nasias an evil spirit or not, I await him patiently and tranquilly. He may sing me down with his acherontic 'manners,' but he will strive in vain to beguile my pious heart, or to do hurt to my immortal soul!"

""I am well aware," said Gottschalk, "that you are a valiant gentleman, and have not the slightest fear of the very devil himself. But if you are determined to stay here, at least allow my servant Jonas to be in the room with you. He is a pious, stalwart, broad-shouldered fellow, and doesn't mind the singing one hair's breadth. And if you chance to get a little spent, and feel a trifle faint with all the devilish howling--so that Nasias should be like to get the better of you and come at you--Jonas will give a shout, and we will come in with holy water and consecrated candles. And they say the devil cannot endure the stink of musk which a Capuchin friar has worn on his breast in a bag. I'll have some of that handy, and will make such a fumigation that Master Nasias won't have enough breath left to sing a bar."

""Wolfframb of Eschinbach laughed at his landlord's kindly anxiety, and said he was now quite ready, and only wished the trial between him and Nasias were over. Jonas, however--the pious man with the broad shoulders, proof against all singing, of whatsoever kind--might stay and be welcome.

"The fateful night arrived. At first all was quiet; till the works of the church clock whirred and rattled, and it struck twelve. Then a gust of wind came breezing through the house, ugly voices howled in confusion and a wild croaking scream as of pain and terror--like that of some frightened night-bird--was heard. Wolfframb had been immersed in beautiful, pure, pious poets' fancies, and had almost forgotten the evil visit in store for him. But now icy shudders ran through his veins; yet he pulled himself together and went to the centre of the room. The door burst open with a tremendous crash, which shook the whole house; and a tall form, surrounded with fiery light, stood before him, and gazed at him with gleaming, malignant eyes. This form was of such terrible aspect that doubtless many a man would have lost his courage, nay, fallen to the ground in wild apprehension; but Wolfframb stood firm, and asked in a grave and emphatic manner:

""What is your will and business in this place?"

"The form answered, in a horrible, yelling voice:

""I am Nasias, come to contend with you in the singer's craft."

"Nasias opened his large cloak, and Wolfframb saw that he had a number of books under his arms, which he let fall on the table beside him. He then at once began a wonderful song, which treated of the Seven Planets and the music of the Heavenly Spheres, as described in Scipio's Dream, and he rang the changes on the most ingenious and complicated "tones" and "manners." Wolfframb, who had seated himself in his armchair, listened calmly, with downcast eyes; and when he had quite finished began a beautiful "tone" or "manner" upon religious themes. At this Nasias jumped hither and thither, and tried to interrupt Wolfframb with howlings, and to throw the heavy books he had brought with him at the singer. But the clearer and the stronger that Wolfframb's song streamed forth, the paler grew Nasias's fieriness, and the more his form crumbled and shrunk together, so that at last he was running up and down on the cupboards, with his little red cloak and the thick ruff at the throat of it, no more than a span long--weaking and squeaking. Wolfframb, when he had ended his song, was going to catch hold of him, but he shot out at once to his original size, and breathed out flames of fire all round him.

""Hei! hei!" he cried, in a terrible voice, "none of these tricks on me, young sir; very likely you may be a great authority on theology, and well versed in the

doctrines and subtleties of your fat book; but you are not therefore a singer fit to measure himself against me and my master. Let us have a nice love song, and see where your mastership will be then."

"He then sang a song concerning Fair Helen, and the marvellous delights of the Venusberg. And indeed this song was fascinating; and it was as if the flames which Nasias emitted turned to perfume, breathing voluptuous passion, delight, and desire, amid which the beautiful sounds floated up and down, like love gods at play. Wolfframb had listened to this song as to the former one quietly, with his eyes fixed on the ground. But soon there came to him a sense as though he were wandering along the shady alleys of some beautiful garden, while lovely tones of an exquisite music came floating over the beds of flowers, breaking through the leafy shadows like the dawning red of morning; and the songs of the Evil Thing sunk away before them into night, as the birds of darkness plunge terrified into some deep ravine, croaking at the coming of the day. And as those tones streamed clearer and clearer, his heart throbbed with sweet anticipation and ineffable longing. Soon she who was his life came forth from the thick bushes, in all the splendour of her beauty and grace; and the leaves rustled, and the clear streams plashed, greeting the fairest of women with a thousand sighs of love. She came floating onward, borne on the pinions of song, as on the outstretched wings of a beautiful swan; and when her heavenly glance touched him all the bliss of the purest love-rapture awoke in his heart. In vain he strove to find words, or tones of music. But, when she vanished, he threw himself down on the flowery mead, he called her name to the breezes, he embraced the tall lilies, he kissed the roses on their glowing lips; and all the flowers understood his rapture, and the morning wind, the brooks, and the bushes talked with him of the nameless ecstasy of pure affection.

"Thus, while Nasias was going on with his vain and empty love songs, Wolfframb was thinking of the moment when he saw Lady Mathilda for the first time in the garden at the Wartburg; just as she had appeared to him then, he saw her before him now in all her beauty, looking at him with the self-same eyes of love.

"Thus he had heard none of that which the Evil Thing was singing, and when it was done he himself began a song which treated of the bliss of a pious singer's pure affection in the most glorious strains of power.

"The Evil Thing grew more and more restless, till at last he began to bleat like a goat, and do all manner of mischief in the room. Then Wolfframb arose, and commanded him, in the name of Christ and the saints, to take himself off. Nasias, spurting out fiery flames around him, gathered his books together, and cried, with mocking laughter:

"Schnib! Schnab! what are you but an ignorant laic?--yield the mastership to Klingsohr!" he stormed out like a hurricane, and a stifling stench of sulphur filled the room.

"Wolfframb opened the windows; the fresh morning air streamed in, and cleared away all traces of the Evil Thing. Jonas woke up from the deep sleep into which he had fallen, and wondered not a little to learn that all was over. He called his master, to whom Wolfframb related all that occurred. And if Gottschalk had honoured the noble Wolfframb before, he now looked upon him as a very saint, whose pious power could baffle the denizens of hell itself. When he chanced to cast his eyes towards the ceiling of the room, what was his astonishment to see, written in letters of fire above the door, the words:

"Schnib! Schnab! what are you but an ignorant laic?--yield the mastership to Klingsohr!"

"The Evil Thing had written there the last words he spoke when he took his departure, by way of an eternal defiance. "Not a single happy hour," said Gottschalk, "can I spend in this house while that devilish writing--an affront to my

dear Master Wolfframb of Eschinbach--keeps on burning there on the wall." He went off straight and fetched masons to plaster the words over with lime. It was so much labour wasted.

"They put on a finger's depth of lime, and still the writing was as plain as ever. And when they took it all off again and came to the bare bricks the writing was burning upon them as brightly as before. Gottschalk uttered loud complaints, and begged Wolfframb to sing something which should constrain Nasias to remove the horrible writing himself. Wolfframb said, laughing, that this might not be in his power, but that Gottschalk should wait patiently, and see if the writing might perhaps disappear when he had gone away.

"It was high noon when Wolfframb of Eschinbach left Eisenach in the happiest possible frame of mind, and the highest spirits, like one who sees the brightest and most hopeful of prospects dawning before him. Not far from the town there came, meeting him, Count Meinhard of Muehlberg, and Walther of Bargel, the cupbearer, dressed in the richest attire, on gaily caparisoned horses, attended by a numerous retinue. Wolfframb saluted them, and learned that Landgrave Hermann had despatched them to Eisenach to escort the renowned Master Klingsohr to the Wartburg. On the previous night Klingsohr had repaired to a high window of Helgreffe's house, and consulted the stars with great care. When he drew his astrological figures, one or two students of astrology, who had joined him, saw from his looks and manner that some important secret which he had read in the stars was filling his mind. They did not hesitate to inquire of him concerning it. Then Klingsohr rose from his seat, and said, in a solemn tone:

""Know that, this night, a daughter will be born to Andreas the Second, King of Hungary. Her name will be Elizabeth; and, for her goodness and virtues, she will be canonized, in after time, by Pope Gregory the Ninth. And this Saint Elizabeth will be the wife of Ludwig, the son of your Landgrave Hermann."

"This prophecy was at once communicated to the Landgrave, who was beyond measure delighted thereat. And he altered his opinion concerning the renowned master, whose mysterious knowledge had announced the rising of so fair a star of hope. Wherefore he had determined that Klingsohr should be conducted to the Wartburg with the pomp and ceremony due to a prince.

"Wolfframb thought that now, in all probability, the decision of the singers' life-and-death trial would be postponed on this account, especially as Heinrich of Ofterdingen had not made his appearance as yet. But the knights said that the Landgrave had received news of Heinrich's arrival, that the inner court of the castle was chosen as the scene of the contest, and Stempel, the executioner from Eisenach, ordered to be in attendance.

""MASTER KLINGSOHR QUITS THE WARTBURG, AND THE SINGERS-CONTEST IS DECIDED.

"In a fair and lofty chamber of the Wartburg sat Landgrave Hermann and Klingsohr in confidential converse together. Klingsohr again assured the Landgrave that he had distinctly seen and carefully read the meaning of the constellations on the previous night, and ended by advising him to despatch an Embassy at once to the King of Hungary to beg that the infant princess might be betrothed to his son, then eleven years of age. This counsel pleased the Landgrave well, and, as he now extolled the master's wisdom, Klingsohr began to discourse so beautifully of the secrets of nature, and of the macrocosm and the microcosm, that the Landgrave (himself not unversed in such matters) was filled with the profoundest admiration.

""Master Klingsohr," said the Landgrave, "I would fain continue in the enjoyment of your skilled and wise society. Leave the inhospitable Siebenbürgen, and take up your abode at this Court of mine, where, as you must admit, Art and

Science are more highly prized and more truly cherished than elsewhere. The masters of song will look upon you as their lord, for I make no doubt that you are as highly gifted in their art as in astrology and other profound sciences. Remain here, therefore, and think not of returning to Siebenbürgen."

"Nay," most gracious Prince," said Master Klingsohr, "on the contrary, I must crave your permission to return to Siebenbürgen this very hour. The country is not so inhospitable as you may suppose. And then, it is thoroughly meet for my studies. Consider, moreover, that I may not offend my own king, Andreas the Second, from whom I draw a yearly allowance of three thousand silver marks, on account of my knowledge of mining matters, whereby I have discovered for him many most valuable lodes of metal; so that I live in that peace and freedom which are essential to the due cultivation of science and art. Whereas here--even could I forego my yearly allowance--I should be involved in continual questions and disputes with your masters. My art is based upon other foundations than theirs, and its inward and outward forms are totally different. It may be that their pious minds, and what they term their rich imaginations, suffice to them for the composition of their works, and that, like timid children, they are afraid to enter upon another province of their art. I do not say that I think slightly of them on that account, but to take my place amongst them is for ever impossible."

"At all events," said the Landgrave, "you will consent to be present, as arbiter and judge, at the great contest between your pupil Heinrich of Ofterdingen and the other masters."

"Your Highness must pardon me," said Master Klingsohr. "How were it possible for me to do this thing? And even were it possible, I should never desire to do it. Yourself, noble Prince, should decide this contest, merely confirming the popular voice, which will assuredly make itself heard. But call not Heinrich of Ofterdingen my pupil. He seemed, at one time, to possess power and courage enough; but he merely gnawed at the bitter shell, and never got so far as to savour the sweetness of the kernel. Fix the day for the contest, therefore; I will take care that Heinrich of Ofterdingen appears with all due punctuality." The most urgent entreaties of the Landgrave were powerless to soften the master's obduracy. He stuck to his resolve, and left the Wartburg laden with rich reward.

"The fateful day had arrived on which the singers'-contest was to begin and end. In the castle court lists had been set, almost as if for a tourney. In the centre of the arena there were two seats, draped with black, for the contending singers, and behind them a lofty scaffold. The Landgrave had chosen two noble gentlemen, versed in the singer's craft (they were the same who had escorted Master Klingsohr to the Wartburg), and appointed them arbiters. For them and the Landgrave lofty seats were erected over against those of the contending masters, and beside them were the places for the ladies and other spectators. The masters were to take their places on a bench draped with black, near the contending singers and the scaffold.

"Thousands of spectators filled the space, and from all the windows and roofs of the Wartburg an eager throng looked down. The Landgrave, with the arbiters, entered by the castle gate, to the sound of trumpets and muffled drums, and took their seats. The masters, in habits of ceremony, headed by Walther of the Vogelweid, approached, and occupied the seats allotted to them. Upon the scaffold stood Stempel the executioner from Eisenach, with his attendants. He was a gigantic man, of wild, arrogant aspect, wrapped in a wide, blood-red mantle, from the folds of which peeped out the glittering hilt of his enormous sword. Father Leonard, the Landgrave's confessor, took his place in front of the scaffold, to stand by the vanquished in the hour of death.

"A silence of anticipation lay upon the vast assemblage, till the Landgrave's Marshal, wearing the insignia of his office, stepped forward to the centre of the arena, and read aloud the conditions of the contest, and the Landgrave's irreversible decree that he who was vanquished should have his head struck off by the sword. Father Leonard raised the crucifix, and all the masters rose from

their seats, and on bended knees vowed, bareheaded, to submit, gladly and readily, to the Landgrave's decree. Stempel then swung his broad, flashing sword three times through the air, and cried, in a voice which echoed through the arena:

""Him who is delivered into my hands I will despatch according to the best of my power and conscience."

""The trumpets now sounded; the Marshal advanced to the centre of the arena, and cried aloud, three times running:

""Heinrich of Ofterdingen! Heinrich of Ofterdingen! Heinrich of Ofterdingen!"

"And as though Heinrich had been standing unobserved close to the barriers, waiting till the sound of the Marshal's words should die away, he suddenly stood at his side, in the centre of the arena. He made a lowly reverence to the Landgrave, and said, in a firm voice, he was ready to contend, according to the decree, with the master appointed as his adversary, and to submit to the arbiters' award.

"The Marshal then passed along in front of the masters, holding a silver vase, out of which each of them had to draw a lot. When Wolfframb of Eschinbach unfolded that which he had drawn, he found it marked with the sign indicating that he was the master chosen for the contest. A deadly terror well-nigh unmanned him at the thought of having thus to enter upon a life-and-death contest with his friend. But soon he felt that it was of Heaven's mercy that the lot had fallen on him. If vanquished he would gladly die; but if victor, far sooner would he go to the death than suffer Heinrich of Ofterdingen to perish by the sword of the headsman. With a gladsome heart and a serene and pleasant countenance, he took his appointed place. When he had seated himself opposite to his friend, a strange feeling, akin to fear, took possession of him. For he was certainly looking upon the face of his friend; but out of the deadly pale countenance uncanny eyes were gleaming at him, and he could not help remembering Nasias.

""Heinrich of Ofterdingen began his songs, and Wolfframb was greatly startled when he recognised them to be the same which Nasias had sung on the night when he came to him. But he collected himself with all his might, and replied to his antagonist with a magnificent song, in such sort that the acclamations of the thousand voices of the audience rang through the air, and the people at once accorded him the victory. But the Landgrave ordered that Heinrich of Ofterdingen should sing again, and Heinrich went on with songs which, in the marvellousness of their "manners," were so pregnant with the joy of the animalism of life, that the listeners sank into a species of gentle intoxication, as if under the influence of "the drowsy syrups of the East." Even Wolfframb felt himself drawn as into a foreign province of existence. He could think no more of his own songs, nor even of himself.

"At this moment a sound arose at the gate leading to the arena, and the crowd parted and made way. An electric stroke seemed to penetrate Wolfframb; he awoke from his reverie and looked in the direction of this interruption. Oh, Heaven! Lady Mathilda appeared, advancing in all the simple grace and beauty which had adorned her when first he saw her in the Wartburg garden. She looked at him with a glance of the deepest affection; and the blissfulness of heaven and the most glowing rapture soared jubilantly forth in his song, as had been the case on the night when he vanquished the Evil Thing. With the stormiest enthusiasm the listeners proclaimed him the victor. The Landgrave and the arbiters rose, the trumpets sounded. The Marshal took the garland from the Landgrave's hand to crown the victorious master.

"Then the executioner prepared to do his duty. But when the apparitors went up to seize the vanquished singer, they found themselves grasping at a cloud of black smoke, which rose up, rushing and crackling and suddenly vanished in the air. Heinrich of Ofterdingen had disappeared, none knew how.

"The crowd ran wildly hither and thither in confusion, with consternation and terror on their pale faces. People spoke of diabolical forms--of unholy enchantment; but the Landgrave assembled the masters around him, and said:

""I now understand what Master Klingsohr meant when he spoke so strangely and mysteriously on the subject of the singers' contest, and would on no account undertake the deciding of it himself; and I have cause to be grateful to him that all has turned out as it has. Whether it was Heinrich of Ofterdingen who took the place appointed for him in the arena, or one whom Klingsohr sent in his pupil's stead, matters not. The contest is decided in your favour, my trusty masters, and we can now honour the glorious craft of song, and cultivate it to the best of our ability in peace."

"Certain of the Landgrave's retainers who had been on warders' duty at the castle said that, at the very time when Wolfframb of Eschinbach won the prize and conquered the ostensible Heinrich of Ofterdingen, a figure much resembling Master Klingsohr had been seen to dash out of the gateway on a foaming steed.

""CONCLUSION.

"Meanwhile Countess Mathilda had gone into the garden of the Wartburg, and Wolfframb of Eschinbach had followed her.

"And when he found her there, seated on a flowery bank of moss, with hands folded in her lap and her lovely head drooping sadly towards the ground, he threw himself at her beloved feet, unable to utter a word. Mathilda put her arms about him, and both of them shed hot tears of sweet sorrow and lovers' pain.

""Ah! Wolfframb," she cried, "what an evil dream has befooled me! How have I, a foolish, unreasoning, blinded child, abandoned myself to the snares of the Evil One who was lying in wait to compass my destruction! Ah! how I have failed in my duty to you! Is it possible that you can pardon me?"

"Wolfframb clasped her to his heart, and, for the first time, pressed burning kisses on her rosy lips. He assured her that she had always dwelt in his heart, that he had ever been faithful to her in spite of the powers of evil; that it was she, the lady of his thoughts, alone, who had been his inspiration in the song with which he vanquished them.

""Oh, my beloved!" she said, "let me tell you in what a wonderful manner you rescued me from the snares of the Wicked One which were set for me. There came a night, not very long ago, when strange and terrible ideas took hold upon me. Whether it was bliss or pain that so powerfully oppressed me that I scarce could breathe, I cannot tell. But, driven by an impulse which I could not resist, I began to write a song which was altogether in the 'manner' of my weird master. As I wrote, I heard a strange music, partly beautiful, partly repulsive and horrible, which benumbed my senses, and it was as if, instead of the song, what I had written was some terrible formula, some spell which the powers of darkness must obey. A wild, terrible form started up; it clasped me with burning arms, and was carrying me away to the black abyss. Then a song came shining through the darkness, whose tones had the mild, soft radiance of the light of stars. At this the dark form was compelled to loose its clasp of me, yet it stretched its arms towards me in fury. It could not touch me, but only the song I had been writing. It clutched that, and plunged screaming with it into the abyss. It was your song which saved me, the same which you sung to-day when you won the contest. Now I am wholly yours. My songs are all faithful love for you, whose inexpressible blissfulness no words have power to tell."

"The lovers again fell into each other's arms, and could not cease talking of the tortures they had undergone, and the bliss of their reunion.

"But in the night when Wolframb overcame Nasias, Mathilda had distinctly heard, and comprehended--in a dream--the song which Wolframb, in the height of his inspired affection, was singing; the one which he repeated afterwards at the Wartburg contest.

"Wolframb was sitting in his chamber at late eventide thinking of new songs, when his landlord Gottschalk came in full of joy, crying:

"Ah! noble sir, how you have vanquished the Evil One by the power of your art and skill! The horrible writing in your chamber has gone out of its own accord, God be praised and thanked for the same! I have brought something which was left at my house to be conveyed to you." With which he produced a folded letter, well sealed with wax. It was from Heinrich of Ofterdingen, and to the following effect.

"I greet you, my trusty Wolframb, as one who has recovered from some terrible sickness which threatened his death. Many marvellous things have happened to me. But I would fain keep silence as to the evils of a time, which lies behind me now like a dark, impenetrable mystery. Doubtless you remember the words you spoke, when I was boasting of the inward power which elevated me above you and the other masters. You said then, that perhaps I should find myself on the brink of some terrible abyss, a prey to giddiness, ready to fall down into it; and that then you would hold me back with your strong arms. Wolframb, that which your prophetic soul foresaw, was that which came to pass! I stood on the brink of an abyss, and you held me fast when the fatal giddiness had wellnigh benumbed my senses. It was your splendid victory which annihilated my adversary, and restored me to life and happiness. Yes, Wolframb! before your love the mighty veils which enwrapped me fell away, and I looked up again to the bright heavens. Can my affection for you be otherwise than redoubled? You recognized Klingsohr as a great master--and that he is. But woe to him who--not endowed with that peculiar strength which he possesses--ventures, like him, to strive towards the dark realm, which he has laid open to himself. I have renounced him, and totter on the brink of the Hell-river, helpless and wretched, no longer. I am restored to the joys of home.

"Mathilda, ah no! Doubtless it was never that glorious lady. It was some foul enchantment, which filled me with deceptive visions of a paradise on earth--of vain, mundane pleasure. May all that I did in my days of madness be forgotten. Greet the masters, and tell them how it is with me now. Fare thee well, most sincerely beloved Wolframb. Peradventure you may hear tidings of me ere long."

"After some time news came to the Wartburg that Heinrich was at the Court of Leopold the Seventh, Duke of Austria, singing many beautiful songs. Soon afterwards Landgrave Hermann received copies of the same, together with the "manners" to which they were to be sung. All the masters were heartily delighted, and convinced that Heinrich of Ofterdingen had renounced all that was false, and preserved his pure singer's heart inviolate, through all the Evil One's attempts upon him.

"Thus it was Wolframb of Eschinbach's high art of song, as it streamed from the depths of his purest of souls, which, in glorious victory over his enemy, rescued his beloved and his friend from utter perdition."

The friends gave diverse verdicts as to Cyprian's tale, Theodore disapproved of it altogether, and said Cyprian had utterly marred for him the beautiful picture, which Novalis had drawn of the grandly inspired Heinrich of Ofterdingen. But his chief objection was that the singers never actually got the length of any singing, for sheer continual preparation to sing. Ottmar supported him; but, at the same time, considered that the introductory vision might be admitted to be Serapionitic; although, at the same time, Cyprian ought to be careful for the future not to dip into Ancient Chronicles, because reading of that sort was apt--as the present

instance proved--to lead him into an unfamiliar province, in which--not being native to the soil, nor endowed with a strong bump of locality--he wandered astray and lost himself, without being able to find the real path.

Cyprian, putting on a face of vexation, jumped hastily up, went to the fire, and was going to throw his manuscript into it. But Lothair went up to him, seized him by the shoulders, turned him about, and said with solemnity:

"Cyprian, Cyprian! withstand strenuously the foul fiend of author's pride, which, is vexing you, and whispering all manner of ugly things in your ear. I will address you in the formula of conjuration employed by the doughty Tobias von Ruelp, 'Come, come--tuck, tuck--it is contrary to all respectability, man, to play at pitch and toss with the Devil. Away with the ugly sweep!' Ha! your face lightens up! You are smiling! See what power over the demons I possess; and now I have some healing balm to drop upon the wounds, which your friends' adverse verdicts have inflicted. If Ottmar thinks your introduction is Serapionitic, I may say as much for Klingsohr, and the fiery demon Nasias. Also the little automatic secretary strikes me as by no means lightly to be esteemed. If Theodore objects to the way in which you have portrayed Heinrich of Ofterdingen, at all events the suggestion of your portrait of him is to be found in Wagenseil. If he thinks it a fault that the singers never arrive at any actual singing from continual preparation for the same, I must confess that I do not quite know what he means. Perhaps he does not quite know, himself, what he means. I should scarcely think he would have wished you to introduce little verses of poetry, as being the masters' songs. The very fact of your not having done so, but left their words to our imaginations, redounds greatly to your credit in my opinion. I can never tolerate the introducing of verses into a story. They always seem to go along in it so lamely and limpingly, and interrupt its progress in an unnatural sort of manner. The writer--keenly impressed with the feebleness of his matter at some particular point--grasps at the crutch of verse. But if he manages, in this fashion, to prop himself along for a time, this sort of uniform, monotonous, tottery, pit-a-pat movement is very different from the firm tread of vigorous health; and, probably, it is a frequent error of our modern writers, that they seek their salvation exclusively in the outward, metrical form, forgetting that it is the poetic matter only which gives the metric pinions their due swing. Well-sounding verses have the power of inducing a species of somnambulistic intoxication; but this is very much like the effect of the sound of a mill, or of other similar, regular and monotonous noises. They procure one a sound sleep. All this I merely say en passant, for the behoof of our musical Theodore, who is very often deluded ('bribed' was the word I was going to employ) by the sweet sound of meaningless verses; and, indeed, he is often attacked by a sort of 'sonnetical' mania, under the influence of which he brings into the world the strangest automaton-like little monsters. But now for you again, Cyprian. I do not think you ought to plume yourself much on your 'Singers' Contest.' I cannot say that I am altogether satisfied with it, though it certainly does not deserve death by fire. The laws of the land declare that abortions are not to be put to death if they have human heads; and in my opinion, this child of yours is not only not an abortion at all, but it is fairly well-shapen, though it may be a little weak about the limbs."

Cyprian pocketed his manuscript, and said, with a smile:

"My dear friends, you know my little peculiarity. When I get a little annoyed, because some fault is found with any of my feeble efforts, this is merely because I am so well aware how thoroughly the censure is deserved, and how much my productions merit it. Do not let us say another word on the subject of this story of mine."

After this the friends went back to the subject of Vincent, and his bent towards the marvellous. Cyprian's view was, that such a bent must of necessity be inherent in all poetic temperaments, and that this was why Jean Paul has said so many magnificent things on the subject of mesmerism, that a whole universe of hostile doubt would sink into insignificance in comparison with them; that

poetical persons are the pet children of Nature, and that it is silly to suppose she can be displeased when those darlings of hers try to discover secrets which she has shrouded with her veil--as a fond mother hides from her children some valuable gift, only that she may afford them the greater pleasure by disclosing it to them.

"But, to speak practically," said Cyprian, "and this principally to please you, Ottmar: who that has looked carefully into the history of the human race--can have failed to be struck by the circumstance that, as soon as some disease makes its appearance like a ravaging monster, Nature herself comes to the front with the weapons necessary to vanquish it; and, as soon as it has been overcome, another monster makes its appearance, with fresh powers of destruction; and new weapons are discovered again? And so goes on the everlasting contest which is a condition of the process of life--of the organic structure of the entire world. How if, in these times, when everything is spiritualized--when the interior relationship, the mysterious interdependence and interplay of the physical and psychical principles, are coming more and more clearly and importantly into evidence; when every bodily malady is found to have its corresponding expression in the psychic organism--how, I say, if mesmerism were the weapon--forged in the spirit--which Nature herself presents to us, as the means of combatting the evil which is located in the spirit?"

"Stay, stay!" cried Lothair, "where are we getting to? We have talked far too much already on a subject which must always remain a foreign province for us; in which we can, at most, pluck for poetic purposes a few fruits, tempting by their colour and aroma; or transplant a pretty little tree or so into our poetic garden. I was delighted when Cyprian's story interrupted our wearisome discussion on this subject, and now we seem to be in danger of getting deeper into it than ever. Let us turn to something else. But wait a moment. First, I should like to give you a little '*pezzo*' of our friend's mystical experiments, which I am sure you will enjoy. It is briefly this:--A considerable time ago I was invited to a little evening gathering, where our friend was, along with some others. I was detained by business, and did not arrive till very late. All the more surprised was I not to hear the very slightest sound as I came up to the door of the room. Could it be that nobody had been able to go? Thus cogitating, I gently opened the door. There sat Vincent, over against me, with the others, round a little table; and they were all staring, stiff and motionless like so many statues, in the profoundest silence, up at the ceiling. The lights were on a table at some distance, and nobody took any notice of me, I went nearer, full of amazement, and saw a glittering gold ring swinging backwards and forwards in the air, and presently beginning to move in circles. One and another then said, 'Wonderful!' 'Very wonderful!' 'Most inexplicable!' 'Curious thing!' etc. I could no longer contain myself, and cried out, 'For Heaven's sake, tell me what you are about?'

"At this they all jumped up. But Vincent cried, in that shrill voice of his:

"'Recreant! obscure Nicodemus, coming slinking in like a sleep-walker, interrupting the most important and interesting experiments. Let me tell you that a phenomenon which the incredulous have, without a moment's hesitation, classed in the category of the fabulous has just been verified by the present company. We wished to try whether the pendulum-oscillations of a suspended ring could be controlled by the concentrated human will. I undertook to fix my will upon it; and thought steadfastly of circular-shaped oscillations. The ring--fixed to the ceiling by a silk thread--remained motionless for a very long time. But at last it began to swing, in an acute angle with reference to my position, and it was just beginning to swing in circles when you came in and interrupted us.'"

"'But what if it were not your will,' I said, so 'much as the draught of air when I opened the door, which set the contumacious ring in motion?'

"'Prosaic wretch!' cried Vincent: but everybody laughed."

"The pendulum-oscillations of rings drove me nearly crazy at one time," said

Theodore. "Thus much is matter of absolute certainty, and any one can convince himself of it, that the oscillations of a plain gold ring, suspended by a fine thread over the palm of the hand held level, unquestionably take the direction which the unuttered will directs them to take. I cannot tell you how profoundly, and how eerily, this phenomenon affected me. I used to sit for hours at a time making the ring go swinging in the most various directions, as I willed it to do; and at last I went the length of making a regular oracle of it. I would say, in my mind, if such and such a thing is going to happen, the ring will swing in the direction between the little finger and the thumb; if it is not going to happen, it will swing at right angles to that direction, and so on."

"Delightful!" said Lothair, "you set up, within your own self, a higher spiritual principle, which, conjured up in mystic fashion by yourself, should make utterances to you. Here we have the true "spiritus familiaris," the socratic dæmon! from hence there is only a very short step to the region of ghost, and haunting stories, which might easily have their *raison d'être* in the influence of some exterior spiritual principle."

"And I mean to actually take this step," said Cyprian, "by telling you, on the spot, the most awful and terrible supernatural story I have ever heard of. The peculiarity of this story is, that it is amply vouched for by persons of credibility, and that the manner in which it has been brought to my knowledge, or recollection, has to do with the excited, or (if you prefer to say so) disordered condition which Lothair observed me to be in a short time ago."

Cyprian stood up; and, as was his habit when his mind was full of something, so that he had to take a little time to arrange his words in order to express it, he walked several times up and down the room. Presently he sat down, and began:--

"You may remember that some little time ago, just before the last campaign, I was paying a visit to Colonel Von P---- at his country house. The colonel was a good-tempered, jovial man, and his wife quietness and simpleness personified. At the time I speak of the son was away with the army, so that the family circle consisted, besides the colonel and his lady, of two daughters, and an elderly French lady, who was trying to persuade herself that she was fulfilling the duties of a species of governess though the young ladies appeared to be beyond the period of being "governessed." The elder of the two was a most lively and cheerful creature, vivacious even to ungovernability; not without plenty of brains, but so constituted that she could not go five yards without cutting at least three "entrechats." She sprung, in the same fashion, in her conversation, and in all that she did, restlessly from one thing to another. I myself have seen her, within the space of five minutes, work at needlework, read, draw, sing, and dance, or cry about her poor cousin who was killed in battle, one moment, and while the bitter tears were still in her eyes, burst into a splendid, infectious burst of laughter when the French-woman spilt the contents of her snuff-box over the pug, who at once began to sneeze frightfully, and the old lady cried, "Ah, che fatalita! Ah carino! Poverino!"

"For she always spoke to the dog in Italian because he was born in Padua. Moreover, this young lady was the loveliest blonde ever seen, and, in all her odd caprices, full of the utmost charm, goodness, kindness and attractiveness, so that, whether she would or no, she exerted the most irresistible charm over every one.

"The younger sister was the greatest possible contrast to her (her name was Adelgunda). I strive in vain to find words in which to express to you the extraordinary impression which this girl produced upon me when first I saw her. Picture to yourselves the most exquisite figure, and the most marvellously beautiful face; but the cheeks and lips wear a deathly pallor, and the figure moves gently, softly, slowly, with measured steps; and then, when a low-toned word is heard from the scarce opened lips and dies away in the spacious chamber, one feels a sort of shudder of spectral awe; of course I soon got over this eery feeling, and, when I managed to get her to emerge from her deep self-absorbed condition

and converse, I was obliged to admit that the strangeness, the eeriness, was only external, and by no means came from within. In the little she said there displayed themselves a delicate womanliness, a clear head, and a kindly disposition. There was not a trace of over-excitability, though her melancholy smile, and her glance, heavy as with tears, seemed to speak of some morbid bodily condition producing a hostile influence on her mental state. It struck me as very strange that the whole family, not excepting the French lady, seemed to get into a state of much anxiety as soon as any one began to talk to this girl, and tried to interrupt the conversation, often breaking into it in a very forced manner. But the most extraordinary thing of all was that, as soon as it was eight o'clock in the evening, the young lady was reminded, first by the French lady and then by her mother, sister, and father, that it was time to go to her room, just as little children are sent to bed that they may not overtire themselves. The French lady went with her, so that they neither of them ever appeared at supper, which was at nine o'clock. The lady of the house, probably remarking my surprise at those proceedings, threw out (by way of preventing indiscreet inquiries) a sort of sketchy statement to the effect that Adalgunda was in very poor health, that, particularly about nine in the evening, she was liable to feverish attacks, and that the doctors had ordered her to have complete rest at that time. I saw there must be more in the affair than this, though I could not imagine what it might be; and it was only this very day that I ascertained the terrible truth, and discovered what the events were which have wrecked the peace of that happy circle in the most frightful manner.

"Adalgunda was at one time the most blooming, vigorous, cheerful creature to be seen. Her fourteenth birthday came, and a number of her friends and companions had been invited to spend it with her. They were all sitting in a circle in the shrubbery, laughing and amusing themselves, taking little heed that the evening was getting darker and darker, for the soft July breeze was blowing refreshingly, and they were just beginning thoroughly to enjoy themselves. In the magic twilight they set about all sorts of dances, pretending to be elves and woodland sprites. Adalgunda cried, "Listen, children! I shall go and appear to you as the White Lady whom our gardener used to tell us about so often while he was alive. But you must come to the bottom of the garden, where the old ruins are." She wrapped her white shawl round her, and went lightly dancing down the leafy alley, the girls following her, in full tide of laughter and fun. But Adalgunda had scarcely reached the old crumbling arches, when she suddenly stopped, and stood as if paralyzed in every limb. The castle clock struck nine.

"Look, look!" cried she, in a hollow voice of the deepest terror. "Don't you see it? the figure--close before me--stretching her hand out at me. Don't you see her?"

"The children saw nothing whatever; but terror came upon them, and they all ran away, except one, more courageous than the rest, who hastened up to Adalgunda, and was going to take her in her arms. But Adalgunda, turning pale as death, fell to the ground. At the screams of the other girl every body came hastening from the castle, and Adalgunda was carried in. At last she recovered from her faint, and, trembling all over, told them that as soon as she reached the ruins she saw an airy form, as if shrouded in mist, stretching its hand out towards her. Of course every one ascribed this vision to some deceptiveness of the twilight; and Adalgunda recovered from her alarm so completely that night that no further evil consequences were anticipated, and the whole affair was supposed to be at an end. However, it turned out altogether otherwise. The next evening, when the clock struck nine, Adalgunda sprung up, in the midst of the people about her, and cried--

"There she is! there she is. Don't you see her--just before me?"

"Since that unlucky evening, Adalgunda declared that, as soon as the clock struck nine, the figure stood before her, remaining visible for several seconds, although no one but herself could see anything of it, or trace by any psychic sensation the proximity of an unknown spiritual principle. So that poor Adalgunda

was thought to be out of her mind; and, in strange perversion of feeling, the family were ashamed of this condition of hers. I have told you already how she was dealt with in consequence. There was, of course, no lack of doctors, or of plans of treatment for ridding the poor soul of the "fixed idea," as people were pleased to term the apparition which she said she saw. But nothing had any effect; and she implored, with tears, that she might be left in peace, inasmuch as the form which, in its vague, uncertain traits, had nothing terrible or alarming about it, no longer caused her any fear; although, for a time after seeing it she felt as if her inner being and all her thoughts and ideas were turned out from her, and were hovering, bodiless, about, outside of her. At last the colonel made the acquaintance of a celebrated doctor, who had the reputation of being specially clever in the treatment of the mentally afflicted. When this doctor heard Adelgunda's story he laughed aloud, and said nothing could be easier than to cure a condition of the kind, which resulted solely from an over-excited imagination. The idea of the appearing of the spectre was so intimately associated with the striking of nine o'clock, that the mind could not dissociate them. So that all that was necessary was to effect this separation by external means; as to which there was no difficulty, as it was only necessary to deceive the patient as to the time, and let nine o'clock pass without her being aware of it. If the apparition did not then appear, she would be convinced, herself, that it was an illusion; and measures to give tone to the general system would be all that would then be necessary to complete the cure. This unfortunate advice was taken. One night all the clocks at the castle were put back an hour--the hollow, booming tower clock included--so that, when Adelgunda awoke in the morning, she found herself an hour wrong in her time. When evening came, the family were assembled, as usual, in a cheerful corner room; no stranger was present, and the mother constrained herself to talk about all sorts of cheerful subjects. The colonel began (as was his habit, when in specially good humour) to carry on an encounter of wit with the old French lady, in which Augusta, the elder of the daughters, aided and abetted him. Everybody was laughing, and more full of enjoyment than ever. The clock on the wall struck eight (so that it was really nine o'clock) and Adelgunda fell back in her chair, pale as death; her work dropped from her hands; she rose, with a face of horror, stared before her into the empty part of the room, and murmured, in a hollow voice--

""What! an hour earlier! Don't you see it? Don't you see it? Right before me!"

""Every one rose up in alarm. But as none of them saw the smallest vestige of anything, the colonel cried--

""Calm yourself, Adelgunda, there is nothing there! It is a vision of your brain, a deception of your fancy. We see nothing, nothing whatever; and if there really were a figure close to you we should see it as well as you! Calm yourself."

""Oh God!" cried Adelgunda, "they think I am out of my mind. See! it is stretching out its long arm, it is making signs to me!"

""And, as though she were acting under the influence of another, without exercise of her own will, with eyes fixed and staring, she put her hand back behind her, took up a plate which chanced to be on the table, held it out before her into vacancy, and let it go, and it went hovering about amongst the lookers on, and then deposited itself gently on the table. The mother and Augusta fainted; and these fainting fits were succeeded by violent nervous fever. The colonel forced himself to retain his self-control, but the profound impression which this extraordinary occurrence made on him was evident in his agitated and disturbed condition.

""The French lady had fallen on her knees and prayed in silence with her face turned to the floor, and both she and Adelgunda remained free from evil consequences. The mother very soon died. Augusta survived the fever; but it would have been better had she died. She who, when I first saw her, was an embodiment of vigorous, magnificent youthful happiness, is now hopelessly insane, and that in a form which seems to me the most terrible and gruesome of

all the forms of fixed idea ever heard of. For she thinks she is the invisible phantom which haunts Adelgunda; and therefore she avoids every one, or, at all events, refrains from speaking, or moving if anybody is present. She scarce dares to breathe, because she firmly believes that if she betrays her presence in any way every one will die. Doors are opened for her, and her food is set down, she slinks in and out, eats in secret, and so forth. Can a more painful condition be imagined?

"The colonel, in his pain and despair, followed the colours to the next campaign, and fell in the victorious engagement at W----. It is remarkable, most remarkable that, since then, Adelgunda has never seen the phantom. She nurses her sister with the utmost care, and the French lady helps her. Only this very day Sylvester told me that the uncle of these poor girls is here, taking the advice of our celebrated R----, as to the means of cure to be tried in Augusta's case. God grant that the cure may succeed, improbable as it seems."

When Cyprian finished, the friends all kept silence, looking meditatively before them. At last Lothair said,

"It is certainly a very terrible ghost story. I must admit it makes me shudder, although the incident of the hovering plate is rather trifling and childish."

"Not so fast, dear Lothair," Ottmar interrupted. "You know my views about ghost stories, and the manner in which I swagger towards visionaries; maintaining, as I do, that often as I have thrown down my glove to the spirit world, overweeningly enough, to enter the lists with me, it has never taken the trouble to punish me for my presumption and irreverence. But Cyprian's story suggests another consideration. Ghost stories may often be mere chimeras; but, whatever may have been at the bottom of Adelgunda's phantom, and the hovering plate, thus much is certain, that, on that evening, in the family of Colonel Von P---- there happened something which produced, in three of the persons present, such a shock to the system that the result was the death of one and the insanity of another; if we do not ascribe, at least indirectly, the colonel's death to it too. For I happen to remember that I heard from officers who were on the spot, that he suddenly dashed into the thick of the enemy's fire as if impelled by the furies. Then the incident of the plate differs so completely from anything in the ordinary *mise en scene* of supernatural stories. The hour when it happened is so remote from ordinary supernatural use and wont, and the thing so simple, that it is exactly in the very probability which the improbability of it thereby acquires that the gruesomeness of it lies for me. But if one were to assume that Adelgunda's imagination carried away, by its influence, those of her father, mother and sister--that it was only within her brain that the plate moved about--would not this vision of the imagination striking three people dead in a moment, like a shock of electricity, be the most terrible supernatural event imaginable?"

"Certainly," said Theodore, "and I share with you, Ottmar, your opinion that the very horror of the incident lies in its utter simpleness. I can imagine myself enduring, fairly well, the sudden alarm produced by some fearful apparition; but the weird actions of some invisible thing would infallibly drive me mad. The sense of the most utter, most helpless powerlessness must grind the spirit to dust. I remember that I could scarce resist the profound terror which made me afraid to sleep in my room alone, like a silly child, when I once read of an old musician who was haunted in a terrible manner for a long time (almost driving him out of his mind) by an invisible being which used to play on his piano in the night, compositions of the most extraordinary kind, with the power and the technique of the most accomplished master. He heard every note, saw the keys going up and down, but never any form of a player."

"Really," Cyprian said, "the way in which this class of subject is flourishing amongst us is becoming unendurable, I have admitted that the incident of that accursed plate produced the profoundest impression on me. Ottmar is right; if events are to be judged by their results, this is the most terrible supernatural story conceivable. Wherefore I pardon Cyprian's disturbed condition which he

displayed earlier in the evening, and which has passed away considerably now. But not another word on the subject of supernatural horrors. I have seen a manuscript peeping for some time out of Ottmar's breast-pocket, as if craving for release; let him release it therefore."

"No, no," said Theodore, "the flood which has been rolling along in such stormy billows must be gently led away. I have a manuscript well adapted for that end, which some peculiar circumstances led to my writing at one time. Although it deals pretty largely with the mystical, and contains plenty of psychical marvels and strange hypotheses, it links itself on pretty closely to affairs of every-day life." He read:

"AUTOMATONS.

"The talking Turk" was attracting universal attention, and setting the town in commotion. The hall where this automaton was exhibited was thronged by a continual stream of visitors, of all sorts and conditions, from morning till night, all eager to listen to the oracular utterances which were whispered to them by the motionless lips of that wonderful quasi-human figure. The manner of the construction and arrangement of this automaton distinguished it in a marked degree from all puppets of the sort usually exhibited. It was, in fact, a very remarkable automaton. About the centre of a room of moderate size, containing only a few indispensable articles of furniture, at this figure, about the size of a human being, handsomely formed, dressed in a rich and tasteful Turkish costume, on a low seat shaped as a tripod, which the exhibitor would move if desired, to show that there was no means of communication between it and the ground. Its left hand was placed in an easy position on its knee, and its right rested on a small movable table. Its appearance, as has been said, was that of a well-proportioned, handsome man, but the most remarkable part of it was its head. A face expressing a genuine Oriental astuteness gave it an appearance of life rarely seen in wax figures, even when they represent the characteristic countenances of talented men. A light railing surrounded the figure, to prevent the spectators from crowding too closely about it; and only those who wished to inspect the construction of it (so far as the Exhibitor could allow this to be seen without divulging his secret), and the person whose turn it was to put a question to it, were allowed to go inside this railing, and close up to it. The usual mode of procedure was to whisper the question you wished to ask into the Turk's right ear; on which he would turn, first his eyes, and then his whole head, towards you; and as you were sensible of a gentle stream of air, like breath coming from his lips, you could not but suppose that the low reply which was given to you did really proceed from the interior of the figure. From time to time, after a few answers had been given, the Exhibitor would apply a key to the Turk's left side, and wind up some clockwork with a good deal of noise. Here, also, he would, if desired, open a species of lid, so that you could see inside the figure a complicated piece of mechanism consisting of a number of wheels; and although you might not think it probable that this had anything to do with the speaking of the automaton, still it was evident that it occupied so much space that no human being could possibly be concealed inside, were he no bigger than Augustus's dwarf who was served up in a pasty. Besides the movement of the head, which always took place before an answer was given, the Turk would sometimes also raise his right hand, and either make a warning gesture with the finger, or, as it were, motion the question away with the whole hand. When this happened, nothing but repeated urging by the questioner could extract an answer, which was then generally ambiguous or angry. It might have been that the wheel work was connected with, or answerable for, those motions of the head and hands, although even in this the agency of a sentient being seemed essential. People wearied themselves with conjectures concerning the source and agent of this marvellous Intelligence. The walls, the adjoining room, the furniture, everything connected with the exhibition, were carefully examined and scrutinised, all

completely in vain. The figure and its Exhibitor were watched and scanned most closely by the eyes of the most expert in mechanical science; but the more close and minute the scrutiny, the more easy and unconstrained were the actions and proceedings of both. The Exhibitor laughed and joked in the furthest corner of the room with the spectators, leaving the figure to make its gestures and give its replies as a wholly independent thing, having no need of any connection with him. Indeed he could not wholly restrain a slightly ironical smile when the table and the figure and tripod were being overhauled and peered at in every direction, taken as close to the light as possible, and inspected by powerful magnifying glasses. The upshot of it all was, that the mechanical geniuses said the devil himself could make neither head nor tail of the confounded mechanism. And a hypothesis that the Exhibitor was a clever ventriloquist, and gave the answers himself (the breath being conveyed to the figure's mouth through hidden valves) fell to the ground, for the Exhibitor was to be heard talking loudly and distinctly to people among the audience at the very time when the Turk was making his replies.

"Notwithstanding the enigmatical, and apparently mysterious, character of this exhibition, perhaps the interest of the public might soon have grown fainter, had it not been kept alive by the nature of the answers which the Turk gave. These were sometimes cold and severe, while occasionally they were sparkling and jocular--even broadly so at times; at others they evinced strong sense and deep astuteness, and in some instances they were in a high degree painful and tragical. But they were always strikingly apposite to the character and affairs of the questioner, who would frequently be startled by a mystical reference to futurity in the answer given, only possible, as it would seem, in one cognizant of the hidden thoughts and feelings which dictated the question. And it happened not seldom that the Turk, questioned in German, would reply in some other language known to the questioner, in which case it would be found that the answer could not have been expressed with equal point, force, and conciseness in any other language than that selected. In short, no day passed without some fresh instance of a striking and ingenious answer of the wise Turk becoming the subject of general remark.

"It chanced, one evening, that Lewis and Ferdinand, two college friends, were in a company where the talking Turk was the subject of conversation. People were discussing whether the strangest feature of the matter was the mysterious and unexplained human influence which seemed to endow the figure with life, or the wonderful insight into the individuality of the questioner, or the remarkable talent of the answers. They were both rather ashamed to confess that they had not seen the Turk as yet, for it was *de rigueur* to see him, and every one had some tale to tell of a wonderful answer to some skilfully devised question.

"All figures of that description," said Lewis, "which can scarcely be said to counterfeit humanity so much as to travesty it--mere images of living death or inanimate life are in the highest degree hateful to me. When I was a little boy, I ran away crying from a waxwork exhibition I was taken to, and even to this day I never can enter a place of the sort without a horrible, eerie, shuddery feeling. When I see the staring, lifeless, glassy eyes of all the potentates, celebrated heroes, thieves, murderers, and so on, fixed upon me, I feel disposed to cry with Macbeth

""Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.'

And I feel certain that most people experience the same feeling, though perhaps not to the same extent. For you may notice that scarcely any one talks, except in a whisper, in those waxwork places. You hardly ever hear a loud word. But it is not reverence for the Crowned Heads and other great people that produces this universal pianissimo; it is the oppressive sense of being in the presence of something unnatural and gruesome; and what I most of all detest is anything in the shape of imitation of the motions of Human Beings by machinery. I feel sure this wonderful, ingenious Turk will haunt me with his rolling eyes, his turning

head, and his waving arm, like some necromantic goblin, when I lie awake of nights; so that the truth is I should very much prefer not going to see him. I should be quite satisfied with other people's accounts of his wit and wisdom."

""You know," said Ferdinand, "that I fully agree with you as to the disagreeable feeling produced by the sight of those imitations of Human Beings. But they are not all alike as regards that. Much depends on the workmanship of them, and on what they do. Now there was Enslar's rope dancer, one of the most perfect automatons I have ever seen. There was a vigour about his movements which was most effective, and when he suddenly sat down on his rope, and bowed in an affable manner, he was utterly delightful. I do not suppose any one ever experienced the gruesome feeling you speak of in looking at him. As for the Turk, I consider his case different altogether. The figure (which every one says is a handsome-looking one, with nothing ludicrous or repulsive about it) the figure really plays a very subordinate part in the business, and I think there can be little doubt that the turning of the head and eyes, and so forth, go on merely that our notice may be directed to them, for the very reason that it is elsewhere that the key to the mystery is to be found. That the breath comes out of the figure's mouth is very likely, perhaps certain; those who have been there say it does. It by no means follows that this breath is set in motion by the words which are spoken. There cannot be the smallest doubt that some human being is so placed as to be able, by means of acoustical and optical contrivances which we do not trace, to see and hear the persons who ask questions, and whisper answers back to them; that not a soul, even amongst our most ingenious mechanics, has the slightest inkling, as yet, of the process by which this is done, shows that it is a remarkably ingenious one; and that, of course, is one thing which renders the exhibition very interesting. But much the most wonderful part of it, in my opinion, is the spiritual power of this unknown human being, who seems to read the very depths of the questioner's soul; the answers often display an acuteness and sagacity, and, at the same time, a species of dread half-light, half-darkness, which do really entitle them to be styled 'oracular' in the highest sense of the term. Several of my friends have told me instances of the sort which have fairly astounded me, and I can no longer refrain from putting the wonderful seer-gift of this unknown person to the test, so that I intend to go there to-morrow forenoon; and you must lay aside your repugnance to 'living puppets,' and come with me."

""Although Lewis did his best to get off, he was obliged to yield, on pain of being considered eccentric, so many were the entreaties to him not to spoil a pleasant party by his absence, for a party had been made up to go the next forenoon, and, so to speak, take the miraculous Turk by the very beard. They went accordingly, and although there was no denying that the Turk had an unmistakable air of Oriental *grandezza*, and that his head was handsome and effective, yet, as soon as Lewis entered the room, he was struck with a sense of the ludicrous about the whole affair, and when the Exhibitor put the key to the figure's side, and the wheels began their whirring, he made some rather silly joke to his friends about "the Turkish gentleman's having a roasting-jack inside him." Every one laughed; and the Exhibitor--who did not seem to appreciate the joke very much--stopped winding up the machinery. Whether it was that the hilarious mood of the company displeased the wise Turk, or that he chanced not to be "in the vein" on that particular day, his replies--though some were to very witty and ingenious questions--seemed empty and poor; and Lewis, in particular, had the misfortune to find that he was scarcely ever properly understood by the oracle, so that he received for the most part crooked answers. The Exhibitor was clearly out of temper, and the audience were on the point of going away, ill-pleased and disappointed, when Ferdinand said--

""Gentlemen, we none of us seem to be much satisfied with the wise Turk, but perhaps we may be partly to blame ourselves, probably our questions may not have been altogether to his taste; the fact that he is turning his head round at this moment, and raising his arm" (the figure was really doing so), "seems to indicate that I am not mistaken. A question has occurred to me to put to him; and if he gives one of his apposite answers to it, I think he will have quite redeemed his

character."

"Ferdinand went up to the Turk, and whispered a word or two in his ear. The Turk raised his arm as unwilling to answer. Ferdinand persisted, and then the Turk turned his head towards him.

"Lewis saw that Ferdinand instantly turned pale; but after a few seconds he asked another question, to which he got an answer at once. It was with a most constrained smile that Ferdinand, turning to the audience, said--

""I can assure you, gentlemen, that as far as I am concerned at any rate, the Turk has redeemed his character. I must beg you to pardon me if I conceal the question and the answer from you; of course the secrets of the Oracle may not be divulged."

"Though Ferdinand strove hard to hide what he felt, it was but too evident from his efforts to be at ease that he was very deeply moved, and the cleverest answer could not have produced in the spectators the strange sensation, amounting to a species of awe, which his unmistakable emotion gave rise to in them. The fun and the jests were at an end; hardly another word was spoken, and the audience dispersed in uneasy silence.

""Dear Lewis," said Ferdinand, as soon as they were alone together, "I must tell you all about this. The Turk has broken my heart; for I believe I shall never get over the blow he has given me until I do really die of the fulfilment of his terrible prophecy."

"Lewis gazed at him in the profoundest amazement; and Ferdinand continued--

""I see, now, that the mysterious being who communicates with us by the medium of the Turk, has powers at his command which compel our most secret thoughts with magic might; it may be that this strange intelligence clearly and distinctly beholds that germ of the future which fructifies within us in mysterious connection with the outer world, and is thus cognizant of all that is to come upon us in distant days, like those persons who are endowed with that unhappy seer-gift which enables them to predict the hour of death."

""You must have put an extraordinary question," Lewis answered; "but I should think you are tacking on some unduly important meaning to the Oracle's ambiguous reply. Mere chance, I should imagine, has educed something which is, by accident, appropriate to your question; and you are attributing this to the mystic power of the person (most probably quite an every-day sort of creature) who speaks to us through the Turk."

""What you say," answered Ferdinand, "is quite at variance with all the conclusions you and I have come to on the subject of what is ordinarily termed 'chance.' However, you cannot be expected to comprehend the precise condition in which I am, without my telling you all about an affair which happened to me some time ago, as to which I have never breathed a syllable to any one living till now. Several years ago I was on my way back to B---, from a place a long way off in East Prussia, belonging to my father. In K---, I met with some young Courland fellows who were going back to B--- too. We travelled together in three post carriages; and, as we had plenty of money, and were all about the time of life when people's spirits are pretty high, you may imagine the manner of our journey. We were continually playing the maddest pranks of every kind. I remember that we got to M--- about noon, and set to work to plunder the landlady's wardrobe. A crowd collected in front of the inn, and we marched up and down, dressed in some of her clothes, smoking, till the postilion's horn sounded, and off we set again. We reached D--- in the highest possible spirits, and were so delighted with the place and scenery, that we determined to stay there several days. We made a number of excursions in the neighbourhood, and so once, when we had been out all day at the Karlsberg, finding a grand bowl of punch waiting for us on our return, we dipped into it pretty freely. Although I had not taken more of it than

was good for me, still, I had been in the grand sea-breeze all day, and I felt all my pulses throbbing, and my blood seemed to rush through my veins in a stream of fire. When we went to our rooms at last, I threw myself down on my bed; but, tired as I was, my sleep was scarcely more than a kind of dreamy, half-conscious condition, in which I was cognizant of all that was going on about me. I fancied I could hear soft conversation in the next room, and at last I plainly made out a male voice saying--

""Well, good night, now; mind and be ready in good time.'

""A door opened and closed again, and then came a deep silence; but this was soon broken by one or two chords of a pianoforte.

""You know the magical effect of music sounding in that way in the stillness of night. I felt as though some beautiful spirit voice was speaking to me in these chords. I lay listening, expecting something in the shape of a fantasia--or some such piece of music--to follow; but fancy what it was when a most gloriously, exquisitely beautiful lady's voice sang, to a melody that went to one's very heart, the words I am going to repeat to you--

""Mio ben ricordati
S' avvien ch' io mora
Quanto quest' anima
Fedel t' amo;
Lo se pur amano
Le fredde ceneri,
Nel urna ancora
T' adorero'."3

""How can I ever hope to give you the faintest idea of the effect of those long-drawn swelling and dying notes upon me. I had never imagined anything approaching it. The melody was marvellous--quite unlike any other. It was, itself, the deep, tender sorrow of the most fervent love. As it rose in simple phrases, the clear upper notes like crystal bells, and sank till the rich low tunes died away like the sighs of a despairing plaint, a rapture which words cannot describe took possession of me--the pain of a boundless longing seized my heart like a spasm; I could scarcely breathe, my whole being was merged in an inexpressible, super-earthly delight. I did not dare to move; could only listen; soul and body were merged in ear. It was not until the tones had been for some time silent that tears, coming to my eyes, broke the spell, and restored me to myself. I suppose that sleep then came upon me, for when I was roused by the shrill notes of a posthorn, the bright morning sun was shining into my room, and I found that it had been only in my dreams that I had been enjoying a bliss more deep, a happiness more ineffable, than the world could otherwise have afforded me. For a beautiful lady came to me--it was the lady who had sung the song--and said to me, very fondly and tenderly--

""Then you *did* recognize me, my own dear Ferdinand! I knew that I had only to sing, and I should live again in you wholly, for every note was sleeping in your heart.'

""Then I recognized, with rapture unspeakable, that she was the beloved of my soul, whose image had been enshrined in my heart since childhood. Though an adverse fate had torn her from me for a time, I had found her again now; but my deep and fervent love for her melted into that wonderful melody of sorrow, and our words and our looks grew into exquisite swelling tones of music, flowing together into a river of fire. Now, however, that I had awakened from this beautiful dream, I was obliged to confess to myself that I could trace no association of former days connected with it. I never had seen the beautiful lady before.

""I heard some one talking loudly and angrily in front of the house, and rising mechanically, I went to the window. An elderly gentleman, well dressed, was

rating the postilion, who had damaged something about an elegant travelling carriage; at last this was put to rights, and the gentleman called upstairs to some one, 'We're all ready now; come along, it's time to be off.' I found that there had been a young lady looking out of the window next to mine; but as she drew quickly back, and had on a broad travelling hat, I did not see her face; when she went out, she turned round and looked up at me. Heavens! she was the singer! she was the lady of my dream! For a moment her beautiful eyes rested upon me, and the beam of a crystal tone seemed to pierce my heart like the point of a burning dagger, so that I felt an actual physical smart: all my members trembled, and I was transfixed with an indescribable bliss. She got quickly into the carriage, the postilion blew a cheerful tune as if in jubilant defiance, and in a moment they had disappeared round the corner of the street. I remained at the window like a man in a dream. My Courland friends came in to fetch me for an excursion which had been arranged: I never spoke; they thought I was ill. How could I have uttered a single word connected with what had occurred? I abstained from making any inquiries in the hotel about the occupants of the room next to mine; I felt that every word relating to her uttered by any lips but mine would be a desecration of my tender secret. I resolved to keep it always faithfully from thenceforth, to bear it about with me always, and to be for ever true to her--my only love for evermore--although I might never see her again. You can quite understand my feelings. I know you will not blame me for having immediately given up everybody and everything but the most eager search for the very slightest trace of my unknown love. My jovial Courland friends were now perfectly unendurable to me; I slipped away from them quietly in the night, and was off as fast as I could travel to B---, to go on with my work there. You know I was always pretty good at drawing. Well, in B--- I took lessons in miniature painting from good masters, and got on so well that in a short time I was able to carry out the idea which had set me on this tack--to paint a portrait of her, as like as it could be made. I worked at it secretly, with locked doors. No human eye has ever seen it; for I had another picture the exact size of it framed, and put her portrait into the frame instead of it, myself. Ever since, I have worn it next my heart.

""I have never mentioned this affair--much the most important event in my life--until to-day; and you are the only creature in the world, Lewis, to whom I have breathed a word of my secret. Yet this very day a hostile influence--I know not whence or what--comes piercing into my heart and life! When I went up to the Turk, I asked--thinking of my beloved--

""'Will there ever be a time again for me like that which was the happiest in my life?'

""The Turk was most unwilling to answer me, as I daresay you observed; but at last, as I persisted, he said--

""'I am looking into your breast; but the glitter of the gold, which is towards me, distracts me. Turn the picture round.'

""Have I words for the feeling which went shuddering through me? I am sure you must have seen how I was startled. The picture was really placed on my breast in the way the Turk had said; I turned it round, unobserved, and repeated my question. Then the figure said, in a sorrowful tone--

""'Unhappy man! At the very moment when next you see her, she will be lost to you for ever!''

""Lewis was about to try to cheer his friend, who had fallen into a deep reverie, but some mutual acquaintances came in, and they were interrupted.

""The story of this fresh instance of a mysterious answer by the Turk spread in the town, and people busied themselves in conjectures as to the unfavourable prophecy which had so upset the unprejudiced Ferdinand. His friends were besieged with questions, and Lewis had to invent a marvellous tale, which had all the more universal a success that it was remote from the truth. The coterie of

people with whom Ferdinand had been induced to go and see the Turk was in the habit of meeting once a week, and at their next meeting the Turk was necessarily the topic of conversation, as efforts were continually being made to obtain, from Ferdinand himself, full particulars of an adventure which had thrown him into such an evident despondency. Lewis felt most deeply how bitter a blow it was to Ferdinand to find the secret of his romantic love, preserved so long and faithfully, penetrated by a fearful, unknown power; and he, like Ferdinand, was almost convinced that the mysterious link which attaches the present to the future must be clear to the vision of that power to which the most hidden secrets were thus manifest. Lewis could not help believing the Oracle; but the malevolence, the relentlessness with which the misfortune impending over his friend had been announced, made him indignant with the undiscovered Being which spoke by the mouth of the Turk, so that he placed himself in persistent opposition to the Automaton's many admirers; and whilst they considered that there was much impressiveness about its most natural movements, enhancing the effect of its oracular sayings, he maintained that it was those very turnings of the head and rollings of the eyes which he considered so absurd, and that this was the reason why he could not help making a joke on the subject; a joke which had put the Exhibitor out of temper, and probably the invisible agent as well. Indeed the latter had shown that this was so by giving a number of stupid and unmeaning answers.

""I must tell you," said Lewis, "that the moment I went into the room the figure reminded me of a most delightful Nutcracker which a cousin of mine once gave me at Christmas time when I was a little boy. The little fellow had the gravest and most comical face ever seen, and when he had a hard nut to crack there was some arrangement inside him which made him roll his great eyes, which projected far out of his head, and this gave him such an absurdly life-like effect that I could play with him for hours; in fact, in my secret soul, I almost thought he was real. All the marionettes I have seen since then, however perfect, I have thought stiff and lifeless compared to my glorious Nutcracker. I had heard much of some wonderful automatons in the Arsenal at Dantzic, and I took care to go and see them when I was there some years ago. Soon after I got into the place where they were, an old-fashioned German soldier came marching up to me, and fired off his musket with such a bang that the great vaulted hall rang again. There were other similar tricks which I forget about now; but at length I was taken into a room where I found the God of War--the terrible Mars himself--with all his suite. He was seated, in a rather grotesque dress, on a throne ornamented with arms of all sorts; heralds and warriors were standing round him. As soon as we came before the throne, a set of drummers began to roll their drums, and fifers blew on their fifes in the most horrible way--all out of tune--so that one had to put one's fingers in one's ears. My remark was that the God of War was very badly off for a band, and every one agreed with me. The drums and fifes stopped; the heralds began to turn their heads about, and stamp with their halberds, and finally the God of War, after rolling his eyes for a time, started up from his seat, and seemed to be coming straight at us. However, he soon sank back on his throne again, and after a little more drumming and fifing, everything reverted to its state of wooden repose. As I came away from seeing these automatons, I said to myself, 'Nothing like my Nutcracker!' And now that I have seen the sage Turk, I say again, 'Give me my Nutcracker.'

""People laughed at this, of course; though it was believed to be 'more jest than earnest,' for, to say nothing of the remarkable cleverness of many of the Turk's answers, the indiscoverable connection between him and the hidden Being who, besides speaking through him, must produce the movements which accompanied his answers, was unquestionably very wonderful, at all events a masterpiece of mechanical and acoustical skill."

""Lewis was himself obliged to admit this; and every one was extolling the inventor of the automaton, when an elderly gentleman who, as a general rule, spoke very little, and had been taking no part in the conversation on the present occasion, rose from his chair (as he was in the habit of doing when he did finally say a few words, always greatly to the point) and began, in his usual polite

manner, as follows--

""Will you be good enough to allow me, gentlemen--I beg you to pardon me. You have reason to admire the curious work of art which has been interesting us all for so long; but you are wrong in supposing the commonplace person who exhibits it to be the inventor of it. The truth is that he really has no hand at all in what are the truly remarkable features of it. The originator of them is a gentleman highly skilled in matters of the kind--one who lives amongst us, and has done so for many years--whom we all know very well, and greatly respect and esteem."

""Universal surprise was created by this, and the elderly gentleman was besieged with questions, on which he continued;

""The gentleman to whom I allude is none other than Professor X---. The Turk had been here a couple of days, and nobody had taken any particular notice of him, though Professor X--- took care to go and see him at once, because everything in the shape of an Automaton interests him in the highest degree. When he had heard one or two of the Turk's answers, he took the Exhibitor apart and whispered a word or two in his ear. The man turned pale, and shut up his exhibition as soon as the two or three people who were then in the room had gone away. The bills disappeared from the walls, and nothing more was heard of the Talking Turk for a fortnight. Then new bills came out, and the Turk was found with the fine new head, and all the other arrangements as they are at present--an unsolvable riddle. It is since that time that his answers have been so clever and so interesting. But that all this is the work of Professor X--- admits of no question. The Exhibitor, in the interval, when the figure was not being exhibited, spent all his time with him. Also it is well known that the Professor passed several days in succession in the room where the figure is. Besides, gentlemen, you are no doubt aware that the Professor himself possesses a number of most extraordinary automatons, chiefly musical, which he has long vied with Hofrath B--- in producing, keeping up with him a correspondence concerning all sorts of mechanical, and, people say, even *magical* arts and pursuits, and that, did he but choose, he could astonish the world with them. But he works in complete privacy, although he is always ready to show his extraordinary inventions to all who take a real interest in such matters."

""It was, in fact, matter of notoriety that this Professor X---, whose principal pursuits were natural philosophy and chemistry, delighted, next to them, in occupying himself with mechanical research; but no one in the assemblage had had the slightest idea that he had had any connection with the "Talking Turk," and it was from the merest hearsay that people knew anything concerning the curiosities which the old gentleman had referred to. Ferdinand and Lewis felt strangely and vividly impressed by the old gentleman's account of Professor X---, and the influence which he had brought to bear on that strange automaton.

""I cannot hide from you," said Ferdinand, "that a hope is dawning upon me that, if I get nearer to this Professor X---, I may, perhaps, come upon a clue to the mystery which is weighing so terribly upon me at present. And it is possible that the true significance and import of the relations which exist between the Turk (or rather the hidden entity which employs him as the organ of its oracular utterances) and myself might, could I get to comprehend it, perhaps comfort me, and weaken the impression of those words, for me so terrible. I have made up my mind to make the acquaintance of this mysterious man, on the pretext of seeing his automatons; and as they are musical ones, it will not be devoid of interest for you to come with me."

""As if it were not sufficient for me," said Lewis, "to be able to aid you, in your necessity, with counsel and help! But I cannot deny that even to-day, when the old gentleman was mentioning Professor X---'s connection with the Turk, strange ideas came into my mind; although perhaps I am going a long way about in search of what lies close at hand, could one but see it. For instance, to look as close at hand as possible for the solution of the mystery, may it not be the case that the

invisible being knew that you wore the picture next your heart, so that a mere lucky guess might account for the rest? Perhaps it was taking its revenge upon you for the rather uncourteous style in which we were joking about the Turk's wisdom."

""Not one human soul," Ferdinand answered, "has ever set eyes on the picture; this I told you before. And I have never told any creature but yourself of the adventure which has had such an immensely important influence on my whole life. It is an utter impossibility that the Turk can have got to know of this in any ordinary manner. Much more probably, what you say you are 'going a long roundabout way' in search of may be much nearer the truth."

""Well then," said Lewis, "what I mean is this; that this automaton, strongly as I appeared to-day to assert the contrary, is really one of the most extraordinary phenomena ever beheld, and that everything goes to prove that whoever controls and directs it has at his command higher powers than is supposed by those who go there simply to gape at things, and do no more than wonder at what is wonderful. The figure is nothing more than the outward form of the communication; but that form has been cleverly selected, as such, since the shape, appearance, and movements of it are well adapted to occupy the attention in a manner favourable for the preservation of the secret, and, particularly, to work upon the questioners favourably as regards the intelligence, whatsoever it is, which gives the answers. There cannot be any human being concealed inside the figure; that is as good as proved, so that it is clearly the result of some acoustic deception that we think the answers come from the Turk's mouth. But how this is accomplished--how the Being who gives the answers is placed in a position to hear the questions and see the questioners, and at the same time to be audible by them--certainly remains a complete mystery to me. Of course all this merely implies great acoustic and mechanical skill on the part of the inventor, and remarkable acuteness, or, I might say, systematic craftiness, in leaving no stone unturned in the process of deceiving us. And I admit that this part of the riddle interests me the less, inasmuch as it falls completely into the shade in comparison with the circumstance (which, is the only part of the affair which is so extraordinarily remarkable) that the Turk often reads the very soul of the questioner. How, if it were possible to this Being which gives the answers, to acquire by some process unknown to us, a psychic influence over us, and to place itself in a *spiritual rapport* with us, so that it can comprehend and read our minds and thoughts, and more than that, have cognizance of our whole inner being; so that, if it does not clearly speak out the secrets which are lying dormant within us, it does yet evoke and call forth, in a species of *extasis* induced by its *rapport* with the exterior spiritual principle, the suggestions, the outlines, the shadowings of all which is reposing within our breasts, clearly seen by the eye of the spirit, in brightest illumination! On this assumption the psychical power would strike the strings within us, so as to make them give forth a clear and vibrating chord, audible to us, and intelligible by us, instead of merely murmuring, as they do at other times; so that it is we who answer our own selves; the voice which we hear is produced from within ourselves by the operation of this unknown spiritual power, and vague presentiments and anticipations of the future brighten into spoken prognostications--just as, in dreams, we often find that a voice, unfamiliar to us, tells us of things which we do not know, or as to which we are in doubt, being, in reality, a voice proceeding from ourselves, although it seems to convey to us knowledge which previously we did not possess. No doubt the Turk (that is to say, the hidden power which is connected with him) seldom finds it necessary to place himself *en rapport* with people in this way. Hundreds of them can be dealt with in the cursory, superficial manner adapted to their queries and characters, and it is seldom that a question is put which calls for the exercise of anything besides ready wit. But by any strained or exalted condition of the questioner the Turk would be affected in quite a different way, and he would then employ those means which render possible the production of a psychic *rapport*, giving him the power to answer from out of the inner depths of the questioner. His hesitation in replying to deep questions of this kind may be due to the delay which he grants himself to gain a few moments for the bringing into play of the

power in question. This is my true and genuine opinion; and you see that I have not that contemptuous notion of this work of art (or whatever may be the proper term to apply to it) that I would have had you believe I had. But I do not wish to conceal anything from you; though I see that if you adopt my idea, I shall not have given you any real comfort at all."

""You are wrong there, dear friend," said Ferdinand. "The very fact that your opinion does chime in with a vague notion which I felt, dimly, in my own mind, comforts me very much. It is only myself that I have to take into account; my precious secret is not discovered, for I know that you will guard it as a sacred treasure. And, by-the-by, I must tell you of a most extraordinary feature of the matter, which I had forgotten till now. Just as the Turk was speaking his latter words, I fancied that I heard one or two broken phrases of the sorrowful melody, '*mio ben ricordati*,' and then it seemed to me that one single, long-drawn note of the glorious voice which I heard on that eventful night went floating by."

""Well," said Lewis, "and I remember, too, that, just as your answer was being given to you, I happened to place my hand on the railing which surrounds the figure. I felt it thrill and vibrate in my hand, and I fancied also that I could hear a kind of musical sound, for I cannot say it was a vocal note, passing across the room. I paid no attention to it, because, as you know, my head is always full of music, and I have several times been wonderfully deceived in a similar way; but I was very much astonished, in my own mind, when I traced the mysterious connection between that sound and your adventure in D----."

""The fact that Lewis had heard the sound as well as himself, was to Ferdinand a proof of the psychic *rapport* which existed between them; and as they further diseased the marvels of the affair, he began to feel the heavy burden which had weighed upon him since he heard the fatal answer lifted away, and was ready to go forward bravely to meet whatsoever the future might have in store.

""It is impossible that I can lose her," he said. "She is my heart's queen, and will always be there, as long as my own life endures."

""They went and called on Professor X----, in high hope that he would be able to throw light on many questions relating to occult sympathies and the like, in which they were deeply interested. They found him to be an old man, dressed in old-fashioned French style, exceedingly keen and lively, with small grey eyes which had an unpleasant way of fixing themselves on one, and a sarcastic smile, not very attractive, playing about his mouth.

""When they had expressed their wish to see some of his automatons, he said, "Ah! and you really take an interest in mechanical matters, do you? Perhaps you have done something in that direction yourselves? Well, I can show you, in this house here, what you will look for in vain in the rest of Europe: I may say, in the known world."

""There was something most unpleasant about the Professor's voice; it was a high-pitched, screaming sort of discordant tenor, exactly suited to the mountebank tone in which he proclaimed his treasures. He fetched his keys with a great clatter, and opened the door of a tastefully and elegantly furnished hall, where the automatons were. There was a piano in the middle of the loom, on a raised platform; beside it, on the right, a life-sized figure of a man, with a flute in his hand; on the left, a female figure, seated at an instrument somewhat resembling a piano; behind her were two boys, with a drum and a triangle. In the background our two friends noticed an orchestrion (which was an instrument already known to them), and all round the walls were a number of musical clocks. The Professor passed, in a cursory manner, close by the orchestrion and the clocks, and just touched the automatons, almost imperceptibly; then he sat down at the piano, and began to play, *pianissimo*, an *andante* in the style of a march. He played it once through by himself; and as he commenced it for the second time the flute-player put his instrument to his lips, and took up the melody; then one of the boys drummed softly on his drum in the most accurate time, and the other just

touched his triangle, so that you could hear it and no more. Presently the lady came in with full chords, of a sound something like those of a harmonica, which she produced by pressing down the keys of her instrument; and now the whole room kept growing more and more alive; the musical clocks came in one by one, with the utmost rhythmical precision; the boy drummed louder; the triangle rang through the room, and lastly the orchestrion set to work, and drummed and trumpeted *fortissimo*, so that the whole place shook again; and this went on till the Professor wound up the whole business with one final chord, all the machines finishing also, with the utmost precision. Our friends bestowed the applause which the Professor's complacent smile (with its undercurrent of sarcasm) seemed to demand of them. He went up to the figures to set about exhibiting some further similar musical feats; but Lewis and Ferdinand, as if by a preconcerted arrangement, declared that they had pressing business which prevented their making a longer stay, and took their leave of the inventor and his machines.

""Most interesting and ingenious, wasn't it?" said Ferdinand; but Lewis's anger, long restrained, broke out.

""Oh! confusion on that wretched Professor!" he cried. "What a terrible, terrible disappointment! Where are all the revelations we expected? What became of the learned, instructive discourse which we thought he would deliver to us, as to disciples at Sais?"

""At the same time," said Ferdinand, "we have seen some very ingenious mechanical inventions, curious and interesting from a musical point of view. Clearly, the flute-player is the same as Vaucanson's well-known machine; and a similar mechanism applied to the fingers of the female figure is, I suppose, what enables her to bring out those really beautiful tones from her instrument. The way in which all the machines work together is really astonishing."

""It is exactly that which drives me so wild," said Lewis. "All that machine-music (in which I include the Professor's own playing) makes every bone in my body ache. I am sure I do not know when I shall get over it! The fact of any human being's doing anything in association with those lifeless figures which counterfeit the appearance and movements of humanity has always, to me, something fearful, unnatural, I may say terrible, about it. I suppose it would be possible, by means of certain mechanical arrangements inside them, to construct automatons which should dance, and then to set them to dance with human beings, and twist and turn about in all sorts of figures; so that we should have a living man putting his arms about a lifeless partner of wood, and whirling round and round with her, or rather it. Could you look at such a sight, for an instant, without horror? At all events, all machine-music is to me a thing altogether monstrous and abominable; and a good stocking-loom is, in my opinion, worth all the most perfect and ingenious musical clocks in the universe put together. For is it the breath, merely, of the performer on a wind-instrument, or the skilful, supple fingers of the performer on a stringed instrument, which evoke those tones which lay upon us a spell of such power, and awaken that inexpressible feeling, akin to nothing else on earth, the sense of a distant spirit world, and of our own higher life therein? Is it not, rather, the mind, the soul, the heart, which merely employ those bodily organs to give forth into our external life that which is felt in our inner depths? so that it can be communicated to others, and awaken kindred chords in them, opening, in harmonious echoes, that marvellous kingdom from whence those tones come darting, like beams of light? To set to work to make music by means of valves, springs, levers, cylinders, or whatever other apparatus you choose to employ, is a senseless attempt to make the means to an end accomplish what can result only when those means are animated and, in their minutest movements, controlled by the mind, the soul, and the heart. The gravest reproach you can make to a musician is that he plays without expression; because, by so doing, he is marring the whole essence of the matter. Yet the coldest and most unfeeling executant will always be far in advance of the most perfect of machines. For it is impossible that no impulse whatever, from the inner man shall ever, even for a

moment, animate his rendering; whereas, in the case of a machine, no such impulse can ever do so. The attempts of mechanics to imitate, with more or less approximation to accuracy, the human organs in the production of musical sounds, or to substitute mechanical appliances for those organs, I consider tantamount to a declaration of war against the spiritual element in music; but the greater the forces they array against it, the more victorious it is. For this very reason, the more perfect that this sort of machinery is, the more I disapprove of it; and I infinitely prefer the commonest barrel-organ, in which the mechanism attempts nothing but to be mechanical, to Vaucauson's flute-player, or the harmonica girl.

""I entirely agree with you," said Ferdinand, "and indeed you have merely put into words what I have always thought; and I was much struck with it to-day at the Professor's. Although I do not so wholly live and move and have my being in music as you do, and consequently am not so sensitively alive to imperfections in it, I, too, have always felt a repugnance to the stiffness and lifelessness of machine-music; and, I can remember, when I was a child at home, how I detested a large, ordinary musical clock, which played its little tune every hour. It is a pity that those skilful mechanics do not try to apply their knowledge to the improvement of musical instruments, rather than to puerilities of this sort."

""Exactly," said Lewis. "Now, in the case of instruments of the keyboard class a great deal might be done. There is a wide field open in that direction to clever mechanical people, much as has been accomplished already; particularly in instruments of the pianoforte genus. But it would be the task of a really advanced system of the 'mechanics of music' to closely observe, minutely study, and carefully discover that class of sounds which belong, most purely and strictly, to Nature herself, to obtain a knowledge of the tones which dwell in substances of every description, and then to take this mysterious music and enclose it in some description of instrument, where it should be subject to man's will, and give itself forth at his touch. All the attempts to bring music out of metal or glass cylinders, glass threads, slips of glass, or pieces of marble; or to cause strings to vibrate or sound, in ways unlike the ordinary ways, seem to me to be interesting in the highest degree: and what stands in the way of our real progress in the discovery of the marvellous acoustical secrets which lie hidden all around us in nature is, that every imperfect attempt at an experiment is at once held up to laudation as being a new and utterly perfect invention, either for vanity's sake, or for money's. This is why so many new instruments have started into existence--most of them with grand or ridiculous names--and have disappeared and been forgotten just as quickly."

""Your 'higher mechanics of music' seems to be a most interesting subject," said Ferdinand, "although, for my part, I do not as yet quite perceive the object at which it aims."

""The object at which it aims," said Lewis, "is the discovery of the most absolutely perfect kind of musical sound; and according to my theory, musical sound would be the nearer to perfection the more closely it approximated to such of the mysterious tones of nature as are not wholly dissociated from this earth."

""I presume," said Ferdinand, "that it is because I have not penetrated so deeply into this subject as you have, but you must allow me to say that I do not quite understand you."

""Then," said Lewis, "let me give you some sort of an idea how it is that all this question exhibits itself to my mind."

""In the primeval condition of the human race, while (to make use of almost the very words of a talented writer--Schubert--in his 'Glimpses at the Night Side of Natural Science') mankind as yet was dwelling in its pristine holy harmony with nature, richly endowed with a heavenly instinct of prophecy and poetry; while, as yet, Mother Nature continued to nourish from the fount of her own life, the wondrous being to whom she had given birth, she encompassed him with a holy

music, like the afflatus of a continual inspiration; and wondrous tones spake of the mysteries of her unceasing activity. There has come down to us an echo from the mysterious depths of those primeval days--that beautiful notion of the music of the spheres, which, when as a boy, I first read of it in 'The Dream of Scipio,' filled me with the deepest and most devout reverence. I often used to listen, on quiet moonlight nights, to hear if those wondrous tones would come to me, borne on the wings of the whispering airs. However, as I said to you already, those nature-tones have not yet all departed from this world, for we have an instance of their survival, and occurrence in that 'Music of the Air' or 'Voice of the Demon,' mentioned by a writer on Ceylon--a sound which so powerfully affects the human system, that even the least impressionable persons, when they hear those tones of nature imitating, in such a terrible manner, the expression of human sorrow and suffering, are struck with painful compassion and profound terror! Indeed, I once met with an instance of a phenomenon of a similar kind myself, at a place in East Prussia. I had been living there for some time; it was about the end of autumn, when, on quiet nights, with a moderate breeze blowing, I used distinctly to hear tones, sometimes resembling the deep, stopped, pedal pipe of an organ, and sometimes like the vibrations from a deep, soft-toned bell. I often distinguished, quite clearly, the low F, and the fifth above it (the C), and not seldom the minor third above, E flat, was perceptible as well; and then this tremendous chord of the seventh, so woeful and so solemn, produced on one the effect of the most intense sorrow, and even of terror!

""There is, about the imperceptible commencement, the swelling and the gradual dying of those nature-tones a something which has a most powerful and indescribable effect upon us; and any instrument which should be capable of producing this would, no doubt, affect us in a similar way. So that I think the harmonica comes the nearest, as regards its tone, to that perfection, which is to be measured by its influence on our minds. And it is fortunate that this instrument (which chances to be the very one which imitates those nature-tones with such exactitude) happens to be just the very one which is incapable of lending itself to frivolity or ostentation, but exhibits its characteristic qualities in the purest of simplicity. The recently invented 'harmonichord' will doubtless accomplish much in this direction. This instrument, as you no doubt know, sets strings a-vibrating and a-toning (not bells, as in the harmonica) by means of mechanism, which is set in motion by the pressing down of keys, and the rotation of a cylinder. The performer has, under his control, the commencement, the swelling out, and the diminishing, of the tones much more than is the case with the harmonica, though as yet the harmonichord has not the tone of the harmonica, which sounds as if it came straight from another world."

""I have heard that instrument," said Ferdinand, "and certainly the tone of it went to the very depths of my being, although I thought the performer was doing it scant justice. As regards the rest, I think I quite understand you, although I do not, as yet, quite see into the closeness of the connection between those 'nature-tones' and music."

""Lewis answered--"Can the music which dwells within us be any other than that which lies buried in nature as a profound mystery, comprehensible only by the inner, higher sense, uttered by instruments, as the organs of it, merely in obedience to a mighty spell, of which we are the masters? But, in the purely psychical action and operation of the spirit--that is to say, in dreams--this spell is broken; and then, in the tones of familiar instruments, we are enabled to recognise those nature-tones as wondrously engendered in the air, they come floating down to us, and swell and die away."

""I think of the Æolian harp," said Ferdinand. "What is your opinion about that ingenious invention?"

""Every attempt," said Lewis, "to tempt Nature to give forth her tones is glorious, and highly worthy of attention. Only, it seems to me that, as yet, we have only offered her trifling toys, which she has often shattered to pieces in her

indignation. Much grander idea than all those playthings (like Æolian harps) was the 'storm harp' which I have read of. It was made of thick chords of wire, which were stretched out at considerable distances apart, in the open country, and gave forth great, powerful chords when the wind smote upon them.

""Altogether, there is still a wide field open to thoughtful inventors in this direction, and I quite believe that the impulse recently given to natural science in general will be perceptible in this branch of it, and bring into practical existence much which is, as yet, nothing but speculation."

"Just at this moment there came suddenly floating through the air an extraordinary sound, which, as it swelled and became more distinguishable, seemed to resemble the tone of a harmonica. Lewis and Ferdinand stood rooted to the spot in amazement, not unmixed with awe; the tones took the form of a profoundly sorrowful melody sung by a female voice. Ferdinand grasped Lewis by the hand, whilst the latter whisperingly repeated the words,

""Mio ben, ricordati, s' avvien ch' io mora."

"At the time when this occurred they were outside of the town, and before the entrance to a garden which was surrounded by lofty trees and tall hedges. There was a pretty little girl--whom they had not observed before--sitting playing in the grass near them, and she sprang up crying, "Oh, how beautifully my sister is singing again! I must take her some flowers, for she always sings sweeter and longer when she sees a beautiful carnation." And with that she gathered a bunch of flowers, and went skipping into the garden with it, leaving the gate ajar, so that our friends could see through it. What was their astonishment to see Professor X-- standing in the middle of the garden, beneath a lofty ash-tree! Instead of the repellant grin of irony with which he had received them at his house, his face wore an expression of deep melancholy earnestness, and his gaze was fixed upon the heavens, as if he were contemplating that world beyond the skies, whereof those marvellous tones, floating in the air like the breath of a zephyr, were telling. He walked up and down the central alley, with slow and measured steps; and, as he passed along, everything around him seemed to waken into life and movement. In every direction crystal tones came scintillating out of the dark bushes and trees, and, streaming through the air like flame, united in a wondrous concert, penetrating the inmost heart, and waking in the soul the most rapturous emotions of a higher world. Twilight was falling fast; the Professor disappeared among the hedges, and the tones died away in *pianissimo*. At length our friends went back to the town in profound silence; but, as Lewis was about to quit Ferdinand, the latter clasped him firmly, saying--

""Be true to me! Do not abandon me! I feel, too clearly, some hostile foreign influence at work upon my whole existence, smiting upon all its hidden strings, and making them resound at its pleasure. I am helpless to resist it, though it should drive me to my destruction! Can that diabolical, sneering irony, with which the Professor received us at his house, have been anything other than the expression of this hostile principle? Was it with any other intention than that of getting his hands washed of me for ever, that he fobbed us off with those automatons of his?"

""You are very probably right," said Lewis; "for I have a strong suspicion myself that, in some manner which is as yet an utter riddle to me, the Professor does exercise some sort of power or influence over your fate, or, I should rather say, over that mysterious psychical relationship, or affinity, which exists between you and this lady. It may be that, being mixed up in some way with this affinity, in his character of an element hostile to it, he strengthens it by the very fact that he opposes it: and it may also be that that which renders you so extremely unacceptable to him is the circumstance that your presence awakens, and sets into lively movement all the strings and chords of this mutually sympathetic condition, and this contrary to his desire, and, very probably, in opposition to some conventional family arrangement."

"Our friends determined to leave no stone unturned in their efforts to make a closer approach to the Professor, with the hope that they might succeed, sooner or later, in clearing up this mystery which so affected Ferdinand's destiny and fate, and they were to have paid him a visit on the following morning as a preliminary step. However, a letter, which Ferdinand unexpectedly received from his father, summoned him to B---; it was impossible for him to permit himself the smallest delay, and in a few hours he was off, as fast as post-horses could convey him, assuring Lewis, as he started, that nothing should prevent his return in a fortnight, at the very furthest.

"It struck Lewis as a singular circumstance that, soon after Ferdinand's departure, the same old gentleman who had at first spoken of the Professor's connection with "the Talking Turk," took an opportunity of enlarging to him on the fact that X---'s mechanical inventions were simply the result of an extreme enthusiasm for mechanical pursuits, and of deep and searching investigations in natural science; he also more particularly lauded the Professor's wonderful discoveries in music, which, he said, he had not as yet communicated to any one, adding that his mysterious laboratory was a pretty garden outside the town, and that passers by had often heard wondrous tones and melodies there, just as if the whole place were peopled by fays and spirits.

"The fortnight elapsed, but Ferdinand did not come back. At length, when two months had gone by, a letter came from him to the following effect--

""Read and marvel; though you will learn only that which, perhaps, you strongly suspected would be the case, when you got to know more of the Professor--as I hope you did. As the horses were being changed in the village of P---, I was standing, gazing into the distance, not thinking specially of anything in particular. A carriage drove by, and stopped at the church, which was open. A young lady, simply dressed, stepped out of the carriage, followed by a young gentleman in a Russian Jaeger uniform, wearing several decorations; two gentlemen got down from a second carriage. The innkeeper said, 'Oh, this is the stranger couple our clergyman is marrying to-day.' Mechanically I went into the church, just as the clergyman was concluding the service with the blessing. I looked at the couple--the bride was my sweet singer. She looked at me, turned pale, and fainted. The gentleman who was behind her caught her in his arms. It was Professor X---. What happened further I do not know, nor have I any recollection as to how I got here; probably Professor X--- can tell you all about it. But a peace and a happiness, such as I have never known before, have now taken possession of my soul. The mysterious prophecy of the Turk was a cursed falsehood, a mere result of blind groping with unskilful antennæ. Have I lost her? Is she not mine for ever in the glowing inner life?

""It will be long ere you hear of me, for I am going on to K---, and perhaps to the extreme north, as far as P---."

"Lewis gathered the distracted condition of his friend's mind, only too plainly, from his language, and the whole affair became the greater a riddle to him when he ascertained that it was matter of certainty that Professor X--- had not quitted the town.

""How," thought he, "if all this be but a result of the conflict of mysterious psychical relations (existing, perhaps, between several people) making their way out into everyday life, and involving in their circle even outward events, independent of them, so that the deluded inner sense looks upon them as phenomena proceeding unconditionally from itself, and believes in them accordingly? It may be that the hopeful anticipation which I feel within me will be realised--for my friend's consolation. For the Turk's mysterious prophecy is fulfilled, and perhaps, through that very fulfilment, the mortal blow which menaced my friend is averted.""

"Well," said Ottmar, as Theodore came to a sudden stop, "is that all? Where is the explanation? What became of Ferdinand, the beautiful singer, Professor X---, and the Russian officer?"

"You know," said Theodore, "that I told you at the beginning that I was only going to read you a fragment, and I consider that the story of the Talking Turk *is* only of a fragmentary character, essentially. I mean, that the imagination of the reader, or listener, should merely receive one or two more or less powerful impulses, and then go on swinging, pendulum-like, of its own accord, as it chooses. But if you, Ottmar, are really anxious to have your mind set at rest over Ferdinand's future condition, remember the dialogue on opera which I read to you some time since. This is the same Ferdinand who appears therein, sound of mind and body; in the 'Talking Turk' he is at an earlier stage of his career. So that probably his somnambulistic love-affair ended satisfactorily enough."

"To which," said Ottmar, "has to be added that our Theodore used, at one time, to take a wonderful delight in exciting people's imaginations by means of the most extraordinary--nay, wild and insane--stories, and then suddenly break them off. Not only this, but everything he did, at that time, assumed a fragmentary form. He read second volumes only, not troubling himself about the firsts or thirds; saw only the second and third acts of plays; and so on."

"And," said Theodore, "that inclination I still have; to this hour nothing is so distasteful to me as when, in a story or a novel, the stage on which the imaginary world has been in action comes to be swept so clean by the historic besom that there is not the smallest grain or particle of dust left on it; when one goes home so completely sated and satisfied that one has not the faintest desire left to have another peep behind the curtain. On the other hand, many a fragment of a clever story sinks deep into my soul, and the continuance of the play of my imagination, as it goes along on its own swing, gives me an enduring pleasure. Who has not felt this over Goethe's 'Nut-brown Maid'! And, above all, his fragment of that most delightful tale of the little lady whom the traveller always carried about with him in a little box always exercises an indescribable charm upon me."

"Enough," interrupted Lothair. "We are not to hear any more about the Talking Turk, and the story was really all told, after all. So let Ottmar begin without more ado."

Ottmar took out his manuscript, and read:

"THE DOGE AND THE DOGARESSA.

"This was the title given in the catalogue of the works exhibited at the Berlin Academy, in September, 1816, to a picture by that admirable painter C. Kolbe, which attracted every one with such an irresistible charm, that the space before it was always crowded with admirers. A doge, in rich robes of state, with his dogaressa, equally richly attired, were represented pacing forward on a balustraded balcony; he an old man with grey beard, strangely mingled traits in his brown-red face, indicative of strength, weakness, pride, and arrogance, as well as kindness; she, a young creature, with longing sadness and dreamy desirings in her looks, and in the entire expression of her figure. Behind them, an elderly lady, and a man holding a sunshade. Sideways on the balcony, a young man blowing a shell-shaped horn; and in front of them, the sea with a richly ornamented gondola flying the Venetian ensign, with two gondoliers on board of it. In the background the ocean, alive with hundreds and hundreds of sails, and a view of the towers and palaces of gorgeous Venice rising above the waves; to the left San Marco distinguishable, and more to the right--towards the foreground--San Giorgio Maggiore. On the frame of the picture were the words:

""Ah' senza amare

Andar sulla mare
Col' sposo del mare
Non puo consolare.

""To sail upon the sapphire sea
With him, the consort of the ocean,
Where love is not, and cannot be,
Wakes in the heart no soft emotion."

""There arose, one day, before this picture, a somewhat idle discussion as to whether, in painting it, the painter's intention had been merely to portray a momentary situation (adequately represented by the picture) of an old man, incapable, notwithstanding all his magnificence and splendour, of satisfying the longings of a young and loving heart, or to record an actual historical event. Weary of this discussion the members of the group dispersed, till at length only two staunch lovers of the noble painter's craft were left.

""I do not know," the one of them began, "why it is that people spoil all their own enjoyment by these perpetual childish explainings and explainings. Not only do I consider that I see perfectly well what the painter meant by his doge and dogaressa--the idea which he intended them to express--but I am struck, and impressed, in a quite unusual degree, by the shimmer of richness and power which is spread over the whole of this work. Look at that flag with the winged lion, how it seems to control the world as it flutters in the breeze. Oh! glorious Venice!"

""And he began to repeat Truandot's riddle concerning the Lion of the Adriatic.

""Dimmi qual sei quella terribil fera," &c., &c.

""Scarcely had he finished doing this, when a sonorous male voice broke in with Calaf's answer to the said riddle:

""Tu, quadrupede fera," &c.

""Unnoticed by the friends, a man had taken up his position behind them; a man of very distinguished appearance, having a grey cloak cast, artist-like, over his shoulders, who was contemplating the picture with sparkling eyes. A conversation commenced between them, and the stranger said, in a tone which was almost solemn:

""It is a strange mystery that, often, a picture dawns in a painter's mind, of which the characters--previously mere irrecognizable, bodiless mist, driving about in the atmosphere--seem, for the first time, to assume form in his brain, and to find their home there, and, of a sudden, the picture binds itself up with the past, or perhaps with the future, and represents something which has happened, or is to happen hereafter. Kolbe may not be aware himself, as yet, that in that picture of his he has painted none other than the Doge Marino Falieri and his wife, Annunziata."

""The stranger paused; but the two friends begged him to solve this riddle for them as he had done that of the Lion of the Adriatic."

""So he said, "If you have the necessary patience, gentlemen, I will at once give you the solution of the riddle, in the shape of the story of Falieri. The question is, *have* you the necessary patience? For I mean to be exceedingly circumstantial; because, were I not to be so, I should much prefer not to speak of these matters at all--though they are as vividly present to my eyes as if I had actually witnessed them. There is nothing strange in this; for every historian (and *I* am a historian) is a species of ghost, telling of things bygone."

""The friends accompanied the stranger to a room at some little distance; where, without further prelude, he went on, as follows:--

""A long, long time ago--if I mistake not, it was in the month of August of the year 1354--the great Genoese General Paganino Doria had utterly routed the Venetians, and taken their town of Parenzo by storm. In the gulf, close before Venice, his well-manned galleys were cruising up and down, like hungry beasts of prey running backwards and forwards, watching how best to grasp their quarry. Deadly terror took possession of the Signoria and populace. Everybody who could carry arms took to their weapons or to their oars. They collected their forces and treasure at the harbour of San Nicolo. Ships and trees were sunk, and chains fastened together, to block the passage against the enemy. Whilst the weapons and the armour clanged and clattered, and the heavy masses went thundering down into the sea, agents of the Signoria were to be seen on the Rialto wiping the perspiration from their pale foreheads, and offering, in hoarse accents and with distracted faces, cent, per cent. for ready cash; for even of that the troubled republic was in urgent need. But it was decreed in the mysterious councils of Eternal Providence that just at this season of the extremest trouble and necessity the faithful shepherd of this distracted flock should be taken away from them. The Doge, Andrea Dandolo, whom his people styled 'The dear little Count' (*Il caro Contino*)--because he was always kind and good, and never crossed the square of San Marco without being prepared with money or good advice for all who needed either--died, worn out by fatigue and anxiety. And as those who are disheartened by misfortune feel doubly every blow, which at another time they would scarcely notice, the people were overwhelmed with sorrow when they heard the bells of San Marco announcing in hollow tones of sadness the death of their ruler. Their hope and stay was gone; they cried aloud that they would have to bow their necks to the yoke of Genoa; although, as concerned the warlike operations, the death of Dandolo did not seem such a great disaster. For the little Count liked to live in peace and comfort; he was fonder of watching the mysterious courses of the stars than of studying the enigmatic turnings and windings of statecraft; he knew better how to duly order an Easter procession than how to lead an army to battle. The desideratum now was the choice of a Doge who should possess both the generalship and the diplomatic skill necessary to rescue Venice from the clutches of her enemy, more daring every day and hour. The Senators met; but nothing was seen save troubled faces, eyes fixed on the ground, and heads leaned on the hand. Where should a man be found capable of grasping the helm with vigorous, strenuous hand, and steering the vessel of the State safe through the storm?

"At length the oldest of the senators, Marino Badoeri, began to speak.

""Here," he said, "around us or about us, he is not to be found. But turn your eyes to Avignon, to Marino Falieri, whom we sent to congratulate Pope Innocent on his election. He might be better employed now. If we make him Doge he will weather this storm. You will say he is well on to his eightieth year, with his hair and his beard turned to silver; that his vigorous aspect, his gleaming eyes, and the rosy tint of his nose and cheeks are due (as evil tongues choose to say) more to good Cyprus wine than to toughness of constitution. What matter! Remember the brilliant courage he displayed when he was Proveditor of the Black Sea Fleet. Think of the deserts which moved the procurators of San Marco to reward him with the rich Countship of Valdemarino."

""Thus did Badoeri paint Falieri's merits in the most brilliant colours, and refute, in advance, all objections to him, till every vote was at length given in his favour. It is true many had a good deal to say of his violent temper, his lust for power, and his self-will. But on the other hand it was urged, "It is because all *that* has, in his old age, passed away from him that we choose the aged--not the youthful--Falieri." Hostile voices such as these fell silent as soon as the populace, on hearing of his election, broke forth into boundless rejoicing. In time of danger, disquiet, and anxiety, any decision, so long as it is a decision, is looked upon as a divine inspiration.

""So the "dear little Count," with all his gentleness and kindness, was clean forgotten, and everybody cried:

""By Saint Mark, this Marino ought to have been our Doge long ago; and then we should not have had this presumptuous Doria upon our shoulders." And maimed soldiers held up their arms, and cried:

""This is that Falieri who vanquished Morbassan; this is the valiant leader whose victorious banners waved in the breezes of the Black Sea." Wherever the populace were collected some one would tell of old Falieri's heroic deeds; the sky rang with wild shouts of joy, as if Doria were beaten already. Moreover, Nicolo Pisani (who--heaven only knew why--had sailed quietly off to Sardinia, instead of going with his fleet to encounter Doria) came back at last. Doria withdrew from the gulf; and what the return of Pisani's fleet had effected was unanimously ascribed to the terrible name "Falieri." The populace and the Signoria were seized by a sort of fanatical ecstasy at the fortunate selection; and it was determined that the new Doge should be welcomed on his arrival as if he were some messenger of heaven bringing with him honour, wealth, and victory. The Signoria sent twelve nobles, each escorted by a numerous and brilliant retinue, to Verona, where the envoys of the Republic were to announce to Falieri, on his arrival, his elevation to the leadership of the State. Fifteen richly decorated galleys, prepared for the occasion by the Podesta of Chioggia, and under command of his son, Taddeo Giustiniani, received the Doge and his following at Chiozzo. He thence proceeded to St. Clemens (where the Bucentoro was waiting for him) in a triumphal procession like those of the mightiest and most victorious monarchs.

"Just at this time, namely, when Marino Falieri was about to step on board the Bucentoro (and this was on the evening of the third of October, as the sun was beginning to set), a poor unfortunate fellow was lying stretched out upon the marble pavement under the pillars of the Palace. A few rags of striped canvas, whose colour had ceased to be distinguishable, and which seemed to have belonged to a costume such as the commonest sort of boatmen and porters wear, hung about his attenuated limbs. Nothing in the nature of a shirt was visible save the poor fellow's own skin, which peeped out everywhere, but was so fine and white and delicate that the very noblest in the land might have displayed it without shyness or shame. Also the very leanness of his limbs set off the pureness of their symmetry. And when one saw the bright chestnut locks, all wild and dishevelled, which shaded the beautiful forehead; the blue eyes, darkened only by comfortless poverty; the aquiline nose; the delicately formed mouth, of this unfortunate, it was clear that it must have been some most adverse fate which had sent this well-born stranger crashing down in amongst the lower classes of the people.

"As we have said, this poor youth was lying in front of the pillars of the Palace, with his head resting on his right arm, gazing motionless far out to seaward with a fixed gaze, from which thought was absent. One would have thought that life had left him, and that the death-agony had turned him into a stone image, had he not sighed deeply now and then, as in the most unutterable sorrow. This was probably from the pain in his left arm, which he had stretched out on the pavement, and, being wrapped in blood-stained rags, seemed to be badly hurt.

"All labour was at rest, the noise of business was silent; all Venice was afloat in boats and gondolas, going to meet and welcome the much-prized Falieri. Thus the unfortunate youth in question was sighing forth his sufferings in uncomforted helplessness. But even as his weary head sank back on the pavement, and he seemed near to fainting, a hoarse, grating voice called, several times:

""Antonio! my dear Antonio!"

"At length he raised himself into a half-sitting position, and, turning his head towards the pillars of the Palace, from behind which the voice seemed to proceed, he said, in a faint, weary voice, scarcely audible:

""Who is it who calls me? Who has come to cast my body into the sea? For it will soon be all over with me."

"Then an old, old woman, coughing and wheezing, and leaning on a stick, came hobbling up to him, and, as she leant over him, broke out into a repulsive, unpleasant kicking and laughing.

"Silly boy!" she whispered; "going to die here, just when golden good-fortune is dawning upon you? Look before you; look before you there! That is all I ask of you! Look at those flames that light up the evening sky. They are *zecchini* for you. But you must eat, dear Antonio; you must eat and drink. It is nothing but hunger-fasting--that has brought you so low, and laid you down here on the cold stones. Your arm is better now; better again now."

"Antonio recognised in this old woman the strange beggar wife, who was always sitting on the steps of the Franciscan Church, asking alms of the pious, always chuckling and laughing as she did so; and to whom he had often, from a strange indescribable inward inclination, thrown a hard-earned *quattrino*: he had not a great many to spare.

"Leave me in peace, crack-brained creature!" he said. "I suppose it is fasting, more than the hurt, which makes me weak and miserable. I haven't earned a single *quattrino* for the last three days. I wanted to go over to the monastery, to see if I could get a spoonful or two of soup; but the comrades are all away. Not a soul would take me into his boat for compassion. So I have fallen down here; very likely I shall never get up again."

"He-he-he-he!" snickered the old woman: "why despair at once and lose heart? You are hungry and thirsty. There's help at hand for that. Here's some nice dried fish, bought this morning at the Zecca. Here's lemon-juice, and a nice white loaf. Eat, my son; eat and drink, my son! and then we'll have a look at the wounded arm."

"She had taken the fish, the bread, and the lemon-juice out of the sort of bag which she wore at her back, sticking up over her head something like a cowl. As soon as Antonio had moistened his lips with the lemon-juice his hunger awoke with redoubled might, and he eagerly devoured the fish and the bread. The old woman meanwhile was busily removing the bandages from his arm, when it was evident that, though the hurt had been severe, it was healing now, fast. As she rubbed it with a salve which she took out of a little box, warming it with her breath, she said:

"Who was it who gave you the blow, poor little son?"

"Antonio, refreshed, and aglow with new fire of life, had risen upright. Raising his clenched right hand, he cried, with gleaming eyes:

"That scoundrel Nicolo wanted to kill me, because he grudges and envies me every *quattrino* which any benevolent hand gives me. You know that I used to gain a hard-earned livelihood by carrying cargo from the ships and boats to the German's warehouse, the Fontego, as they call it; you know the building, of course?"

"When Antonio pronounced the word "Fontego," the old woman began to kick and laugh in a horrible manner, and went on repeating the word "Fontego, Fontego, Fontego," in a chattering, senseless way.

"Silence that nonsensical laughter of yours, old lady, if I am to go on with my story," Antonio cried. She was silent at once, and he continued.

"Well, I had earned a *quattrino* or two, bought a new jacket, and came among the gondoliers as one of themselves. And, because I was always in good spirits, worked hard, and knew plenty of nice songs, I earned many a *quattrino* more than the others. And this awakened their envy; they slandered me to my master, and he turned me away. Wherever I went they cried "German dog! damned heretic!" after me; and three days ago, when I was helping to haul a boat on shore near San Sebastiano, they set upon me with stones and sticks. I defended myself like a

man, but that brute of a Nicolo hit at me with an oar, grazing my head, and struck me so hard on the arm that he knocked me down. But now you have filled me with a good meal, old lady; and there can be no doubt that I feel your salve has done my arm good. See how I can move it; I shall be able to row as well as ever almost directly."

"He had risen from the ground, and was swinging his hurt arm backwards and forwards vigorously. But the old woman cackled and laughed loud again, and cried, tripping and dancing about in narrow circles, in a strange way:

""Row! row! my little son! Row, like a man! It is coming! it is coming!--the bright gold, glowing in grand flames! Row! row! like a man!--just *once* more, and then, never again."

"Antonio was paying no further attention to the old woman's proceedings, for a splendid spectacle had now begun to be visible to his eyes. Up from San Clemens the Bucentoro was advancing with resounding stroke of oars, and the Lion of the Adriatic on her fluttering standard; like some golden swan of powerful pinions, surrounded by thousands of boats and gondolas, she seemed, as she lifted her proud, royal head on high, to lord it over a jubilant multitude which had arisen, with glittering heads, from the deep abysses of the ocean. The evening sun was casting glowing rays over the sea, and over Venice, so that everything lay steeped in naming fire. But as Antonio, in utter forgetfulness of his troubles, was gazing at this sight, the glow grew bloodier and bloodier. A sullen hum came through the air, given back like some fearful echo by the deeps of the sea. A storm came sweeping up on black clouds, shrouding everything in thick darkness; the waves rose higher and higher, like hissing, foaming monsters, threatening to overwhelm everything. The boats and the gondolas were driven in all directions, like feathers before a gale. The Bucentoro, unfit, from her build, to weather the squall, drove hither and thither. Instead of the glad festive tones of the trumpets and cornets, rose cries of terror from those in danger on board of her.

"Antonio looked before him in amazement. Close to him he heard a clanking of chains. He looked down, and saw that there was a little skiff made fast to the quay, bounding up and down on the surges. Like a lightning-flash a thought struck his mind. He jumped into the skiff; cast it adrift; took hold of the oars, and stood bravely out to sea, making straight for the Bucentoro. The nearer he got to it, the more distinctly he heard the cries for help of those on board--

""Save the Doge!--Save the Doge!"

"It is well known that, in squalls of this description, small boats such as the one he was in are much more sea-worthy, and easier to handle, than such large craft as the Bucentoro; and consequently many of them came hurrying up from every direction to save the beloved Marino Falieri. But it is the case, in this life, that the Eternal Power always vouchsafes the success of a brave action to one alone, so that others cumber themselves about it in vain. On this occasion the rescue of the new Doge was allotted to Antonio, and therefore he, and nobody else, succeeded in making his way, in his little fishing-boat, to the Bucentoro. Old Falieri, well accustomed to dangers of this kind, stepped with much coolness out of the magnificent but dangerous Bucentoro into Antonio's boat, which bore him, lightly as a dolphin, over the breaking waves, and landed him in a few minutes safe and sound on the Piazza di San Marco. With dripping clothes, and great salt-drops in his grey beard, the old man was taken into the church, where the nobles, pale with alarm, concluded the ceremony of his triumphal entry. The populace, as well as the Signoria, were wholly upset by this unfortunate break-down of the triumphal entry. And, in addition to this, the Doge, in his hurry and confusion, was led through between the two columns where malefactors were usually put to death. In consequence, Signoria and populace grew silent in the midst of their rejoicing. The day, which had begun in such festivity, ended in sadness and gloom.

"On the Doge's preserver nobody seemed to bestow a thought. Antonio himself

was not thinking about the matter; he was lying in the entrance of the ducal palace, tired to death, half fainting from pain. It was all the more marvellous to him when, as it was almost dark night, a ducal halberdier took hold of him by the shoulder, and, with the words "Come along, good friend," pushed him into the palace, and to the Doge's chamber. The old man came up to him in a friendly manner, and, pointing to several well-filled purses which were on the table, said:

""You have behaved like a man, my good son. Here, take these three thousand *zecchini*. If you want more, say so. But do me the favour never to let me see your face again."

"As he spoke those latter words, sparks blazed from the old man's eyes, and the point of his nose grew even redder than it was before. Antonio did not see the old man's drift, but he did not let that circumstance much trouble him; so he took up, with some difficulty, the purses, thinking he had earned them very fairly.

"Shining in all the radiance of his newly-attained dignity, old Falieri looked down next morning upon the populace, from one of the windows of his palace, as they were crowding and thronging about, practising warlike exercises and the carriage of weapons. Soon Bodoeri who had been his most intimate friend from his earliest days--arrived; and as Falieri was so absorbed in himself and in his grandeur that he did not seem to notice him, he clapped his hands crying:

""Hey, hey, Falieri! what are the sublime ideas brooding in that head of yours, now that it wears the Doge's cap?"

"As if awakening from a dream, Falieri came to meet Bodoeri, constraining himself to an appearance of friendliness. He felt that it was to Bodoeri that he owed the cap in question, and his words had the effect of being a slight reminder of that circumstance. But every obligation pressed like an intolerable burden on his proud, overbearing spirit, and as he could not turn upon the senior member of the Council, and his own oldest friend, in the way in which he had sent Antonio about his business, he constrained himself to a word or two of thanks, and at once began to talk of the measures to be adopted against the overweening enemy.

"Bodoeri gave a significant smile. "That," he said, "and the other matters demanded of you by the State, we will maturely consider and discuss, in full Council, an hour or two hence. I have not come here, at this early hour of the day, to discover, with you, the measures necessary for the checking of the presumptuous Doria, or for the bringing to reason of Ludwig the Hungarian, whose chops are watering for our Dalmatian sea-ports again. No, Falieri; I have been thinking of yourself only--and, in fact, of what perhaps you would not imagine I had been thinking of--of your marriage."

""How could you think of such a thing?" said the Doge, in anger; and, turning his back to Bodoeri, he looked out of the window. "It is a long time to Ascension Day. By that time, I trust--the enemy being conquered--victory, honour, new wealth, and brighter power will have fallen to the share of the sea-born Lion of the Adriatic. My chaste bride should find her bridegroom worthy of her."

""Ah!" said Bodoeri; "you are speaking of the grand Feast of Ascension, when you have to cast the golden ring from the Bucentoro into the waves, and consider that you wed yourself to the Adriatic Sea. But, Marino, you, who are the sea's kinsman, can you think of no other bride than that cold, treacherous element, which you fancy you command, but which rebelled against you in such a threatening manner only yesterday? What pleasure can you imagine there should be found in the arms of such a bride--a foolish, self-willed thing who, as soon as you, gliding along in the Bucentoro, did but gently caress her chill, blue cheek, rose up in storm and wrath? No, no, Marino; *my* notion is that you should marry the loveliest daughter of earth that can be discovered."

""My old friend," said Falieri, in a murmur, "this is a mere senile dream of yours." As he spoke, he still looked out of the window. "An old man of eighty, bent

and worn with labour and anxiety, who has never been married, can hardly be capable of love."

""Stay," answered Bodoeri; "do not calumniate yourself. Does not winter, for all his rawness and cold, at last stretch arms all longing towards the beautiful goddess who comes to him borne on the wings of the warm, gentle zephyrs? And when he clasps her to his chilled breast, and the soft rapture runs through his members, where are his ice and snow? You say you are nearly eighty; and it is true. But do you reckon man's age merely by his years? Do you not hold your head as high and walk with as firm a tread as you did forty years ago? Or perhaps you feel (though I know you do not) that your strength has begun to fail; that you have to wear a lighter sword; that a rapid pace wearies you; that you cough and fetch breath as you mount the steps of the ducal palace?"

""By Heaven, I do not!" Falieri interrupted his friend, leaving the window, and striding up to him with a rapid, vigorous step. "No, by Heaven! I trace nothing of that."

""Well then," said Bodoeri, "enjoy, with an old man's enjoyment, and with all *your* capacity for enjoyment, all the earthly pleasures which are appointed for you. Take to you, as your Dogaressa, the wife whom I have found for you; and in her the ladies of Venice will have to recognise their first and foremost, in beauty and in every virtue, just as the men must acknowledge you their master in valour, intellect, and power."

"Here Bodoeri began to sketch the portrait of a lady; and he blended the colours with such skill, and laid them on with such vividness, that old Falieri's eyes sparkled, and his lips smacked as if he were savouring beaker after beaker of fiery wine of Syracuse.

""And who," he enquired, "is this paragon of loveliness?"

""No other than my beloved niece," Bodoeri answered.

""Your niece!" cried Falieri. "Why she was married to Bertuccio Nenolo when I was Podesta of Treviso."

""Ah," said Bodoeri, "you are thinking of my niece Francesca. But it is her daughter whom I am talking of. You remember that the war brought the rough, fierce Nenolo to his end, at sea. Francesca, in her sorrow, immured herself in a convent at Rome, and I brought up little Annunziata in deep retirement at my villa at Treviso."

""What?" Falieri again impatiently interrupted; "you propose that I should marry your niece's daughter? How long is it since Nenolo's marriage? Let us see! Annunziata must be, at the outside, a child of about ten! Nenolo's marriage was not even dreamt of when I was appointed Podesta of Treviso; and that must be----"

""Five-and-twenty years ago," cried Bodoeri. "Time has passed so quickly with you that you forget how long that time was ago. Annunziata is a girl of nineteen, beautiful as the sun, modest, gentle, inexperienced in love, for she has scarcely seen a man. She will cling to you with child-like affection, and utter devotion."

""I must see her; I must see her," the Doge cried. The portrait of her, limned by the astute Bodoeri, came back to his mind's eye.

"His wish was gratified that same day; for scarce had he returned from the Council to his own abode when Bodoeri (who had abundant reasons of his own for desiring to see his niece Dogaressa) brought the lovely Annunziata to him in private. When old Falieri saw this beautiful young creature he was astounded at her marvellous loveliness, and was scarcely able, in stammering, unintelligible words, to ask her to marry him. Annunziata, doubtless schooled beforehand by Bodoeri, fell on her knees before the aged prince, with deep blushes on her cheeks. She took his hand, pressed it to her lips, and said:

""Oh, my liege! would you so far honour me as to raise me to your side on this throne? I will revere you from the depths of my soul, and be your true maid and servant till my life's end."

""Old Falieri was beside himself with rapture. When she took his hand he felt all his members thrill; and then he began so to shake and tremble with his head, and all his body, that he had to seat himself in his great chair as quickly as ever he could. It seemed as though Bodoeri's views concerning the greenness of the Doge's age were about to be controverted. And he could not repress a strange smile which twitched about his lips. The innocent Annunziata remarked nothing, and there was no one present besides. It may have been that old Falieri felt the undesirability of posing before the populace as the bridegroom of a girl of nineteen; that a sense arose within him that there was a certain risk in furnishing the Venetians--fond of fun and jesting--with a subject such as this for their sallies; and that it was best to keep the critical point of the date of his marriage in the shade. At all events, it was determined, with Bodoeri's consent, that the wedding should be celebrated in the profoundest secrecy, and that the Dogaressa should, some days afterwards, be presented to the Signoria and populace as having been long since married to Falieri, and recently come from Treviso, where she had been waiting whilst he was absent on his mission to the Papal Court.

""Let us turn our glance to this well-dressed young gentleman, classically handsome, who is walking up and down the Rialto, with a purse of *zecchini* in his hand, talking with Jews, Turks, Greeks, and Armenians; who turns aside his gloomy brow, stops, and at last steps into a gondola and bids the gondoliers take him to the Palazzo di San Marco. Arrived there, he strolls up and down, with folded arms, and devious, uncertain step, with eyes fixed on the ground, unobservant, not dreaming that many a whisper, many a clearing of the throat, from many a window, and many a richly-draped balcony, are love-signals directed to his address. It is not so very easy to recognize in this youth the Antonio who, a few days ago, was lying in rags, poor and miserable, on the marble pavement of the Dogana.

""Little son!--my golden little son Antonio!--good-day! good-day!" the old beggar-woman called out to him from the steps of St. Mark's, where she was sitting, as he was pacing past her without taking any notice of her. Turning quickly round and seeing her, he put his hand in his purse and brought it out full of *zecchini*, which he was about to throw to her.

""Let your money stay where it is," she cried, with her usual cackling laughter. "What do I want it for? Am I not rich enough? If you really want to do me a kindness, get me a new hood; this one won't hold out much longer against wind and weather. Yes! do that, my golden little son. But keep away from the Fontego!--keep away from the Fontego!"

""He stared into her pale yellow face, where the wrinkles were all twitching and working in a strange, gruesome fashion; and, as she went on clapping her withered, "bony hands, and gabbling out, in a whining tone, accompanied with her odd, repulsive chuckling,

""Keep away from the Fontego!"

""Antonio cried,

""Will nothing induce you to cease your idiotic nonsense, and behave like a reasonable being, you old witch?"

""But the instant he uttered this, the old woman rolled from the top to the bottom of the flight of lofty marble steps where she was sitting, as if struck by a flash of lightning. Antonio darted up to her and caught her in his arms, breaking her heavy fall.

""Oh, little son! what a terrible word you used!" cried the old woman, in a

faint, tearful voice. "Oh! kill me rather than say that terrible word again! Ah! you do not know how dreadfully you hurt me!--me, who bear you so faithfully in my heart. Ah! you do not know----"

"She broke off suddenly, covered her head with the corner of her old cloak, and sighed and whimpered as in the deepest sorrow. Antonio was strangely moved: he took her in his arms, and carried her up the steps to the portico of the church, where he set her down on a marble bench.

"You were very kind to me," he said, releasing her head from the folds of the cloak. "You were very kind to me. It is you whom I have to thank for my good fortune. For if you had not helped me in my dire necessity I should have been at the bottom of the sea at this moment. I should never have rescued the Doge; I should never have got the *zecchini*. But even if you never had done anything for me, I feel that I must always have a strange, strong liking for you all my days, though that extraordinary cackle of yours and your senseless style of behaviour often make me feel plenty of inward gruesomeness with regard to you. The fact is, old woman, that in the days when I was gaining a mere livelihood by portering and rowing I always felt that I must work harder than I otherwise should have had to do, just that I might have a spare *quattrino* now and then to give to you."

"Oh, my Tonino! my golden little son!" she cried, lifting her hands to heaven, so that her staff fell clattering down the marble steps, and rolled far away; "oh, my Tonino! I know that, whatever you think, you must always be devoted to me with your whole heart, because----silence--silence--silence!"

"She bent stiffly down, in search of her staff; Antonio fetched it; she leant her sharp chin upon it, and, fixing her eyes on the ground, said, in a subdued, hollow voice:

"Tell me, my child, have you no remembrance of the earlier time?--how it passed?--how things were with you before you became a poor wretched fellow here, scarce able to keep body and soul together?"

"Antonio heaved a profound sigh, sat down beside her, and said:

"Ah, mother! I know but too well that my parents were in the most prosperous circumstances; but as to who they were, or how I lost them, not the faintest remembrance remains to me, or could remain to me. I distinctly remember a tall, handsome man, who used to take me up in his arms, and pet me, and give me sweetmeats; and also I recollect a kind, pretty woman, who dressed me and undressed me, put me into a little soft bed every evening, and was good to me in every way. They both talked to me in a rich-sounding foreign language, and I myself used to stammer many words of this language after them. In the days when I was a boatman, my comrades--who hated me--used to say always that, from my hair, my eyes, and the build of my body, I must be of German blood. I think so too, and I have little doubt that the language of those people who cared for me (I am certain the man was my father) was German. My most vivid remembrance of those times is a picture of terror; of a night when I was roused from a deep sleep by screams of anguish. People were hurrying up and down in the house; doors kept opening and shutting. I grew terribly frightened, and began to cry. Then the woman who took care of me came rushing in, lifted me from my bed, stopped my mouth, wrapped me in clothes, and ran with me from thence. From that moment my memory is a blank, till I find myself again in a fine house, surrounded by beautiful country. The image of a man comes out, whom I called 'father,' and who was a stately gentleman, noble-looking and kind. He, and every one in the house, spoke Italian. Once, when there had been several weeks when I had not seen him, a day came when repulsive-looking strangers arrived, who made a great disturbance, turning everything upside down. When they saw me they asked who I was, and what I was doing there. I said I was Antonio, the son of the house. On my repeating this they laughed in my face, tore the clothes off my back, and turned me out of doors, telling me that I should be beaten if I showed my face there any more. I ran away, crying loudly. Scarce a hundred paces from

the house an old man met me whom I recognized as one of my foster-father's servants. 'Come, Antonio; come, poor boy!' he cried, taking me by the hand. 'That house is closed to both of us for ever. We must do the best we can to get a bit of bread.' This old man brought me here. Scarce had we come when I saw that he pulled out *zecchini* from his ragged doublet, and went up and down all day on the Rialto, doing business, sometimes as a broker, sometimes as a merchant. I had to be always close at his heels; and whenever he did a bit of business, he always asked for a trifle for the *figliulo*, as he called me. Everybody whom I looked boldly in the eyes would pull out a *quattrino* or two, which he used to pocket with much satisfaction, stroking my cheeks, and saying he was saving them up to buy me a new doublet. I was happy enough with this old man, whom people called 'Father Bluenose,' I don't know why.

""You remember that terrible time when one day the earth began to tremble; when the palaces and the towers wavered backwards and forwards as if shaken to their foundations, and the bells tolled as if swayed by invisible giant arms. It must be about seven years ago; or not quite so long. Fortunately the old man and I escaped in safety from the house where we were living; it fell almost about our ears. But this terrible event was merely the announcement of the coming of the monster which soon breathed its poison over town and country. It was known that the plague, which had been brought to Sicily from the Levant, had reached Tuscany. Venice was still free from it. One day Father Bluenose was bargaining on the Rialto with an Armenian. They settled their business, and shook hands warmly. Bluenose had sold some goods at a favourable rate to the Armenian, and, as usual, asked for a trifle for the '*figliulo*.' The Armenian--a big strong man, with a thick, curly beard (I see him before me at this moment)--looked kindly at me, kissed me, and took out a *zecchino* or two, which he put into my hand, and which I quickly pocketed. We took a gondola to go over to San Marco. As we were crossing, the old man asked me to give him the money, and I don't know why it was that I came to maintain that I ought to keep it myself, because the Armenian had wished me to do so. The old man was angry; but, as he was arguing with me, I noticed that his face took on a horrible, earthy-yellow colour, and that he mixed up all sorts of wild incoherent things in what he was saying. When we landed at the Piazza he staggered about like a drunken man, till, just in front of the Ducal Palazzo, he fell down dead. I threw myself on his body with loud outcries of grief. The people came running up; but the terrible cry 'The plague! the plague!' broke out, and they all went scattering away in every direction. At the same instant I was seized by a dull stupefaction, and my senses left me. When I awoke from this condition I found myself in a spacious chamber, on a little mattress, covered with a woollen rug. Around me some twenty or thirty pale forms were lying, on similar mattresses. Afterwards I learned that some compassionate monks, who happened to be passing at the time of my seizure, finding some traces of life in me, had taken me to a gondola and over to the Monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, where the Benedictines had established an hospital. But how can I ever describe to you, old woman, that moment when I came back to consciousness? The fury of the disease had completely taken away from me all memory of the past. As if life had suddenly come to some statue, I possessed only the consciousness of the present moment, knitted on to nothing besides. You may fancy what disconsolateness this condition--only to be called a consciousness floating in vacant space, with nothing to hold on to--brought to me. The monks could only tell me that I had been found beside Father Bluenose, whose son I was supposed to be. My thoughts collected themselves by slow degrees, so that I remembered something of my former life. But what I have told you is all I know of it; nothing but one or two detached pictures, without connection or coherency. Alas! this disconsolate sense of being alone in the world keeps me from all happiness, well as things are going with me now."

""Tonino, my dear! content yourself with what the bright present-time affords you," the old woman said.

""Be quiet," he answered. "There is something more, which makes my life wretched, continually tortures me, and will, sooner or later, be my destruction.

Ever since I awoke to consciousness in the hospital, an unutterable longing, a yearning, which consumes my very heart, for a something which I can neither name nor understand, has continually filled my whole being. When I used to throw myself down at night on my hard bed, poor and wretched, worn and broken by the bitter labour of the day, there came a dream, fanning my fevered brow, and giving back to me, in gentle whisperings, all the bliss of a brief moment of utter happiness, which the Eternal Power permitted me to realize in my fancy--for the consciousness that I did once possess it rests ever in the depths of my heart. I sleep on soft cushions now, and bitter labour no longer consumes my strength. But when I awake from my dream, or when, in the waking state, the consciousness of that moment comes into my soul, I feel that my poor, wretched existence is, to me, now as then, an unbearable burden which I long to shake away from me. All reflection, all researching, are in vain. I can not fathom what, so gorgeously happy, occurred to me in my early life, of which the dim reflected echo--incomprehensible to me, alas!--fills me with such delight. But this delight becomes burning torture when I am compelled to recognize the truth that every hope of finding that Eden again--nay, of even searching for it--is over. Can there be traces of that which has disappeared *without* a trace?"

"Antonio ceased speaking, and sighed profoundly from the depths of his heart.

"During his narration the old woman had borne herself as one who is wholly carried away by the pain of another, and, like a mirror, reflects every movement to which that other is constrained by his suffering.

""Tonino! dear Tonino!" she now said, in a tearful voice; "why do you despair because something delightful, of which you have lost the memory, happened to you in early life? Silly boy! Silly boy! Listen! he, he, he."

"And she commenced her usual disagreeable kicking and laughing, as she danced about on the marble pavement. People came--she crouched down again--they gave her alms.

""Antonio, Antonio!" she cried, "take me to the sea, take me to the sea!"

"Antonio, scarce knowing what he was doing, lifted her in his arms and carried her slowly across the Piazza di San Marco. As they went, she murmured, softly and solemnly--

""Antonio, you see those dark stains of blood on the ground here? Yes, yes; quantities of blood, everywhere! But he, he, he! out of the blood grow roses--beautiful red roses! garlands for you, for your darling! Oh, thou Lord of Life! what a beautiful angel comes to him, with the loveliest smiles, opening her lily arms to take him to her heart! Oh, Antonio, fortunate boy, play the man, play the man! and myrtle shall you gather in the sweet evening tide. Myrtle for your bride--for the virgin widow--he, he, he! Myrtle gathered in the red light of evening, to blossom in the deep midnight. List to the whisper of the night wind, to the longing sighs of the summer sea! Row! Row! Work your oar, doughty boatman! Row, row! sturdily on!"

"Antonio was filled with a sense of deep awe at those words of the old woman, which she murmured in a strange voice, different from her usual one, chuckling all the while. They had come to the pillar which bears the Adriatic Lion. The old woman, murmuring still, wanted to be carried further; but Antonio, pained at her behaviour, and jeered at by the passers-by on the score of this strange 'dama' of his, stopped, and said, rather harshly--

""There, old woman! I shall set you down on those steps. Oh *do* stop that chatter of yours! I feel as though it would turn my head! It is true you saw my *zecchini* in the flame-pictures of the clouds; but just for that reason, what are you chattering of an angel, a bride, a virgin widow, roses, myrtles? Would you befool me, horrible creature, so that some mad deed shall hurl me down into the abyss? A new cloak you shall have, bread, *zecchini*, everything you want. But let *me*

alone!"

"He was making rapidly off, but she seized him by the mantle, and cried out in piercing tones--

""Tonino, my Tonino, only look at me carefully once again, or I must crawl to the brink of the Piazza there, and throw myself into the sea."

"Antonio, to avoid drawing more enquiring regards upon him than those which were bent upon him already, paused in his flight.

""Tonino," she said, "sit down beside me here. It is breaking my heart. I *must* tell it to you. Oh, sit down here beside me!"

"He sat down therefore on the steps with his back turned to her, and took out his pocket-book, of which the blank leaves shewed how little attention he paid to his business transactions on the Rialto.

""Tonino," she said, "when you look at this wrinkled face of mine, does not the faintest gleam dawn within you of a sense that you may have known me in your very early days?"

""I have told you already," he answered, in a whisper like her own, "that I feel drawn to you in a manner inexplicable to myself; but your ill-favoured, wrinkled face has nothing to do with that. Rather, when I look at your strange black flashing eyes, your pointed nose, your blue lips, your long chin, your streaming ice-grey hair--when I listen to your horrible cackling and laughing, and the strange, incoherent things you say, I could almost turn from you with horror, and fancy that it is some unholy art which you have at your command that draws me to you."

""Oh, Lord of Heaven!" she cried; "what evil spirit of hell suggests such thoughts to you? Ah, Tonino! the woman who cared for you and tended you in your infancy, who saved your life on that night of terror, was I!"

"In the sudden terror of his amazement he turned quickly round. But when he looked in her horrible face, he angrily cried--

""Do you think you can befool me thus, you wicked old lunatic? The few pictures from my childhood which remain with me are vivid and fresh. That fine, handsome woman who took care of me--oh! I see her before my eyes distinctly. She had a full face, with a rich colour, eyes with a gentle, mild look in them, beautiful dark-brown hair, pretty hands; she could not have been more than thirty; and you--an old hag of ninety----"

""Oh, all ye saints!" she interrupted, with sobs; "what am I to do to get my Tonino to believe that I am his faithful Margareta?"

""Margareta!" murmured Antonio; "Margareta! the name falls upon my ear like music heard long ago, and long forgotten. But can it be possible? It *cannot* be possible."

"She went on more tranquilly, with eyes fixed on the ground, on which she traced marks and figures with the point of her staff. "The tall, handsome man who petted you, carried you in his arms, and gave you sweetmeats really was your father, Antonio; and it *was* the beautiful rich-toned German that we spoke. He was a well-known merchant of Augsburg. His beautiful wife died when you were born. He left the place because he could not bear to stay where she was buried, and came to Venice, bringing one, your nurse, your faithful foster-mother, with him. On that terrible night, which you remember, your father sank beneath a dreadful fate, which threatened you also. I managed to save you. A Venetian noble adopted you; and as I had nothing to live on, I was obliged to stay on in Venice. My father, a surgeon, whom people accused of practising forbidden arts as well, taught me hidden secrets of Nature. As we roamed through the fields and meadows he told

me the properties of many a health-giving plant, of many an insignificant-looking moss, the hours when they ought to be gathered, the different ways of mingling their juices. But to this knowledge was added a special gift, with which Heaven, in its inscrutable providence, has endowed me. I have the power of often seeing future events, as it were, in a far-away dim mirror; and, almost without any will of my own, at such times the unknown Power, which I cannot resist, constrains me to speak what I thus see, in words often unintelligible to myself. Left alone in Venice, abandoned by all the world, I bethought me of gaining my bread by this power of mine. I cured the most dangerous diseases and maladies in a very short time; and as the mere sight of me produced a favourable effect upon the sick, a gentle stroking with my hands often brought on a favourable crisis in a few moments. So my fame was soon noised abroad through the place, and abundance of money flowed in upon me. Then awoke the envy of the doctors, the *ciarlatani*, who sold their pills and potions on the Rialto, the Piazza di San Marco, and the Zecca, and poisoned the sick instead of curing them. They said I was in league with the Evil One, and the superstitious folk believed them. Soon I was apprehended, and brought before the ecclesiastical tribunals. Oh, my Antonio! how terrible were the tortures with which they tried to make me admit that this accusation was true. But I was steadfast. My hair turned white, my body crumpled up to a mummy, my feet and my hands were paralysed. Then came the rack--that most ingenious of all inventions of the Spirit of Hell. And this dragged from me an avowal at the thought of which I still shudder with horror. They were going to burn me; but when the earthquake shook the foundations of the palaces and the great prison, the doors of the underground cell where I was opened of themselves, and I tottered out of that deep grave through among the stones and rubbish. Ah, Tonino! you called me an old hag of ninety; but I am scarcely more than fifty at this day. This skeleton of a body, these crippled feet, this snow-white hair--ah! not years, but unspeakable tortures transformed the strong robust woman to a scarecrow in a few moons. And this repulsive cackling laughter was forced out of me by that final terrible torture, at the remembrance of which my hair still stands on end, and my body burns as in a coat of red-hot mail. Ever since then it comes upon me involuntarily, like a continual, irresistible spasm. Don't be afraid of me any more, my Tonino. Ah, your heart told you long since that you lay upon my breast as a little boy."

""Woman," said Antonio, "I feel that I must believe you. But who was my father? What was his name? What was the terrible destiny which overwhelmed him on that awful night? Who was he who adopted me? What was it which happened in my life that still controls all my being, like some mighty spell from some strange, unknown world, so that all my thoughts flow away from me into some dark ocean of night? Answer all these questions, mysterious woman; and then I shall believe you."

""Tonino," she said, "for your own sake I *must* keep silence; but soon, soon it will be time. The Fontego! the Fontego! Keep away from the Fontego!"

""Ah!" he cried angrily; "I want no more of your dark sayings, to tempt me with your unholy arts. My heart will break! You *shall* speak--or----"

""No, no," she pleaded, "don't threaten me! I am your nurse--your foster-mother----"

""But, not waiting to hear further, Antonio rose and hurried quickly away. From a distance he called to her, "You shall have your new cloak, and *zecchini* into the bargain, as many as you like."

""To see the old Doge Marino Falieri with his youthful consort was a wonderful sight enough. He, strong and robust enough, no doubt, but with his grey beard, and his bronzed red face covered with a thousand wrinkles, stepping pathetically along, keeping his head and neck erect with some difficulty; she, loveliness personified, an angelic expression of goodness and kindness in her heavenly face, charm, irresistible in her longing eyes, nobleness and dignity on her open, lily forehead, shaded by the dark tresses, sweet smiles upon lips and cheeks, her

little head bending in exquisite meekness; bearing her slender figure gracefully and lightsomely as she moved along--a beautiful creature, belonging to another, higher world. You know the type of angel which the old painters had the skill to imagine and represent. Such was Annunziata. No one who saw her could fail to be amazed and enraptured. The hearts of the fiery youths among the Signoria blazed up in brightest flame; each, as he surveyed the old man with mocking glances, vowed in his own breast to play the Mars to this Vulcan, at whatever cost. Annunziata was soon the centre of a group of adorers to whose flattering speeches she listened in courteous silence, without paying much heed to them, one way or another. Her angelic purity had suffered her to form no other conception of her relation to her aged, princely consort than to reverence him as her lord and master, and cleave to him with the unconditional faithfulness of a submissive handmaid. He was kind--nay, tender with her. He pressed her to his icy breast, called her fond names, gave her every sort of costly present; what more could she desire of him? what further claim had she upon him? The idea of being faithless to him could take no form within her. All that lay beyond the restricted circle of the relationship above set forth was a foreign region, whose forbidden boundaries lay shrouded in dark mist, unseen, undreamt of by this pure and pious child. All suit for her favour was fruitless. But none of her adorers was so violently fired by love for the beautiful Dogaressa as Michael Steno. Young as he was, he held the important and influential position of a member of the Council of Forty. Building upon this, and upon his personal beauty, he was certain of victory. Of old Falieri he felt no fear. Indeed the latter seemed, as soon as he was married, to have wholly laid aside his fierce ebullient irritability and his rough untameable wildness of disposition. He would sit by the fair Annunziata's side, dressed out in the richest attire, smiling and smirking, appearing to ask people, with gentle glances of his grey eyes (to which the tears would often rise), if any of *them* could boast of such a wife. In place of his former domineering style of talking, he now spoke very gently, scarcely moving his lips, calling every one "*Carissimo Mio*," and granting the most preposterous petitions. Who would have recognized, in this tender, affectionate old man, that Falieri who, in Treviso, on the feast of Corpus Christi, smote the bishop on the face, in a rage--the conqueror of the formidable Morbassan? This ever-increasing gentleness stimulated Michael Steno to the maddest undertakings. Annunziata had no comprehension of what Michael--who persecuted and pursued her continually with words and glances--wanted of her. She maintained her uniform, gentle peacefulness; and the very hopelessness engendered by this constantly unchanging attitude of hers drove him to despair. He planned the vilest measures. He succeeded in establishing a love affair with Annunziata's most trusted lady-in-waiting, who at last allowed him to pay her nocturnal visits. He thought this was a paving of the way to Annunziata's own unprofaned chamber; but it was Heaven's will that this vileness should recoil on the head of him who devised it.

"It chanced, one night, that the Doge--who had just received the news of Nicolo Pisani's having been beaten in the engagement with Doria at Portelongo--was walking about the halls of the palace in much distress and anxiety, unable to sleep. He saw a shadow, apparently coming from Annunziata's chamber, creeping towards the staircase. He hastened up to it; it was Michael Steno, coming from his innamorata. A terrible thought struck Falieri; with a cry of "Annunziata," he rushed at Steno with a naked stiletto. But Steno--stronger and more active than the old man--avoided the thrust, threw the Doge to the ground by a smart blow of his fist, and dashed down the steps, laughing aloud, and crying "Annunziata! Annunziata!" The old man raised himself, and made for Annunziata's chamber, with flames of hell in his heart. Everything there was silent as the grave. He knocked. A stranger lady-in-waiting--not the one who usually slept near Annunziata's room--opened the door.

"What are my princely consort's wishes at this late, unwonted hour of the night?" said Annunziata, in a calm, angelically sweet voice, as she came out, hurriedly attired in a light night-robe. The old man gazed hard at her--then raised his hands to heaven, and cried--

""No! It is impossible, it is impossible!"

""What is impossible, my lord?" she asked, amazed at the Doge's hollow, solemn accents. But Falieri, without answering her, turned to the lady-in-waiting--

""Why is it you are sleeping here to-night instead of Luigia?"

""Your Highness," the girl answered, "Luigia wished to exchange duties with me to-night; she is sleeping in the front chamber on the staircase."

"The Doge hastened to the room indicated. Luigia opened to his loud knocking, and when she saw her master's face glowing with anger, and his eyes flashing fire, she fell on her knees and confessed her fault, as to which an elegant pair of gentleman's gloves on a chair (their perfume of ambergris betrayed their owner) left no room for doubt. Much irritated at Steno's atrocious licentiousness, the Doge wrote to him next morning, commanding him to avoid all approach to the palace and the Dogaressa, on pain of banishment. Steno was furious at the miscarriage of his deep-laid plot, and the shame of banishment from his idol. And as he could not but see, from his enforced distance, that the Dogaressa spoke gently and courteously (as was her nature) with other young members of the Signoria, his envy and the wicked violence of his passion made him think that she had refused to listen to him because others had been before him, with better fortune. He had the effrontery to speak of this loudly and in public.

"Whether it was that old Falieri heard of these shameless sayings, that the remembrance of that night came to him in the guise of a warning hint of destiny, or that, whilst fully convinced of his lady's uprightness, and while savouring to the full all the comfort and happiness falling to his share, he nevertheless saw, in a clear light, the extent of the danger arising from the unnatural relations between them, the fact was that he became sullen and irritable. All the thousand demons of jealousy tortured him sorely. He shut Annunziata up in the inner chambers, and nobody was allowed to see her. Bodoeri took his grandniece's part, and took Falieri soundly to task. But he would hear of no alteration in his system of conduct.

"All this happened shortly before Giovedi Grasso. Now it was the custom that, on that great Festa, which the populace celebrated on the Piazza di San Marco, the Dogaressa sat beside the Doge under a canopy erected over one of the lesser galleries overlooking the Piazza. Bodoeri reminded him of this, and thought and urged that if he excluded Annunziata from taking her part in this ceremony, against all use and wont, it would be in very bad taste, and he would be much ridiculed by both Signoria and populace for his preposterous jealousy.

"Old Falieri's sense of honour suddenly woke up. "Think you," he said, "that I am such an idiotic old fool as to hesitate to shew my precious jewel, lest I should not be able to keep thievish hands at bay with my good sword? No, old lord, you are mistaken. To-morrow I and Annunziata shall cross the Piazza di San Marco, in habits of ceremony; the people shall see their Dogaressa; and on Giovedi Grasso she shall receive from the hands of the daring gondolier who lowers himself down to her through the air the flowers which it is the custom she should so accept."

"The old custom which the Doge was alluding to was that, on Giovedi Grasso, some daring man of the people ascended, by ropes extending from the water to the top of the tower of San Marco, in a machine in the form of a little ship, and then shot down, with the speed of an arrow, to where the Doge and Dogaressa were seated, and handed her a bouquet of flowers. If the Doge were alone, it was handed to him.

"Next day the Doge did as he had said he would. Annunziata had to put on her most gorgeous robes of state and pass, with Falieri, escorted by the Signoria, and attended by guards and pages of honour, across the crowded Piazza di San Marco. People shoved and crowded their lives out almost to get a glance at the beautiful Dogaressa, and, when they saw her, they thought they had been in

Paradise, and beheld the loveliest of all the angels therein. According to the nature of the Venetians, amid all the wildest outbreaks of the maddest delight, plenty of facetious and jocular sayings and rhymes were to be heard, touching outspokenly enough on the theme of the old Falieri and his young wife. He seemed to pay no heed to them, however, pacing along as pathetically as you please at Annunziata's side, divested, for the time, of all jealousy (although he saw glances of burning admiration bent upon her on every side), every feature of his face smirking and smiling with complacency. Before the principal gate of the palace the guards had some difficulty in dividing the crowd, so that when the Doge passed in with his consort there were only small groups standing about of the better dressed citizens, whom it was not so easy to keep out of the inner court. And, at the moment when the Dogaressa entered this inner court, a young man, who was standing there in the pillared passage, with a few other persons, suddenly cried, "Oh, Thou God of Heaven!" and fell down senseless on the marble pavement. Everybody rushed up and surrounded him, so that the Dogaressa could not see him. But when he fell, a glowing dagger-thrust went through her heart; she turned pale, and tottered; and nothing but the scent bottles of the women who hurried up to her prevented her from fainting. Old Falieri, shocked and terrified, wished the young man in question, and this attack of his, at the devil, and helped his Annunziata--hanging her head, with closed eyes, over her breast, like a wounded dove--up the stairway, into the inner chamber.

"Meanwhile a strange sight was seen by those of the crowd who had crushed into the inner court of the palace. The young man (who was supposed to be dead) was about to be carried away, when an old, hideous beggar-woman, in rags, came hobbling up with loud outcries of sorrow, elbowed a passage for herself through the thickest of the crowd, and, on reaching the young man, who was lying insensible, cried--

""Let him alone, you fools! let him alone! He is not dead." She cowered down, took his head into her lap, and stroked his brow, calling him by the fondest names.

"At sight of the horrible, hideous face of the old hag bending over the beautiful features of the young man, which seemed to be petrified in death (whereas a repulsive muscular twitching played over hers); her dirty rags fluttering above the handsome dress which he had on; her withered, brown-yellow arms trembling about his brow and his bared bosom, everyone thrilled with an inward horror. It seemed as though he was lying in the arms of the grinning form of Death itself. The people who were standing round crept, one by one, away, and but a very few were left when at length he opened his eyes with a deep sigh. At the old woman's request they carried him to the Grand Canal, where he was placed in a gondola, and, with the old woman, conveyed across the water to the house which she indicated as his dwelling.

"I need not explain to you that the young man was Antonio, and the old woman the beggar who said she was his old nurse.

"When he had come to his senses, and saw by his bedside the old woman (who had given him some strengthening drops), he said--after fixing for a long while a melancholy gaze upon her--in a hollow voice, sustained with difficulty:

""You are with me, Margareta! That is well. Where should I find a more faithful nurse? Oh! forgive me, mother, that I--a weak, foolish boy--should have doubted, even for a moment, what you revealed to me. Yes, yes! you *are* that Margareta who nursed me. I always knew that it was so. But the Devil confused my thoughts. I have seen *her*--it was she--it was she! I told you that there was some dark spell within me, controlling me in a manner that I could not comprehend. It has come gleaming out of the darkness now, with noonday brilliance, to annihilate me, in nameless rapture. I know all now--everything! Was not Bertuccio Nenolo my foster-father, who brought me up at a country house near Treviso?"

""Ah, yes!" she said; "Bertuccio Nenolo it was, the grand sea-hero, whom the

ocean swallowed, just as he thought to place the laurel-wreath on his brow."

"Do not interrupt me," he continued. "Hear me patiently out. Things went well with me while I lived with Bertuccio Nenolo. I wore fine clothes. Whenever I was hungry, the table was always laid. When I had said my three little prayers, I might go out and roam about in the woods and meadows as I chose. Close to the house there was a dark wood of pines, full of perfume and music. I lay down there one evening, as the sun was sinking, weary with running about, under a great tree, and gazed up at the blue sky. Whether it was the earthy scent of the herbs that was the cause I do not know, but my eyes closed, and I sunk into a dreamy reverie, from which I was roused by the sound of something striking the ground close beside me, in the grass. I started up. A child, with the face of an angel, was standing beside me. She looked down upon me with a heavenly smile, and said in a sweet voice--

"How softly and quietly you were sleeping, you dear boy; and yet death was very near to you--a horrible death."

"Close to my breast I saw a small black snake, with its head shattered. The girl had killed it with the branch of a nut tree just as it was going to strike at me. I trembled, in a delicious awe. I knew that angels often came from Heaven to rescue human beings from the attacks of enemies. I fell on my knees. I raised my clasped hands. "Ah! you are an angel," I cried, "whom the Lord hath sent to deliver me from death! "The beautiful creature stretched her arms to me, and whispered, with rosy blushes suffusing her cheeks--

"No, you dear boy! I am not an angel. I am only a girl--a child, like yourself."

"My reverential awe passed into unspeakable rapture. I rose; we clasped each other in our arms; we pressed our lips upon each other's, speechless, weeping, sobbing, in delicious, nameless pain. A voice, clear as silver, culled through the trees, 'Annunziata! Annunziata!'

"I must leave you now, you darling boy; my mother is calling me," whispered the girl. An unspeakable pain pierced my heart.

"Oh, I do so love you!" I sobbed out, while the girl's hot tears fell burning on my cheeks.

"I am so fond of you, darling boy," the girl cried, pressing a parting kiss on my lips.

"Annunziata!" the voice called again, and the girl disappeared among the trees. Margareta! that was the moment when that mighty love flame passed into my soul, which will for ever burn on there, always kindling fresh flame. A few days after this I was driven away from that house. Father Bluenose said (when I could never cease talking of the angel that had appeared to me, whose sweet voice I heard in the rustling of the trees, in the purling of the streams, in the mystic sighs of the sea) that the girl could have been none other than Nenolo's daughter Annunziata, who had come with her mother the day before, and had gone away on the day following. "Oh, mother Margareta! this Annunziata is the Dogaressa!"

"Antonio hid his face in his pillow, and sobbed and wept in inexpressible pain.

"Dear Tonino," the old woman answered, "be a man, and resist this foolish pain bravely. No one should despair in love troubles. To whom do Hope's golden blossoms bloom but to those who love? At evening one docs not know what the morning will bring. What we see in dreams comes to pass in our lives. The castle which floated in the clouds stands, all in a moment, on the earth, bright and glorious. You do not believe in my sayings; but my little finger tells me (and somebody else, I dare say, into the bargain) that the bright banner of Love is coming fluttering towards you, with gladsome wavings, over the sea. Have patience, my son Tonino, have patience."

"In such sort did the old woman try to comfort poor Antonio, to whom her words sounded like beautiful music. He did not allow her to quit him any more. The beggar of the Franciscan porch disappeared, and in her stead people saw Antonio's housekeeper, in good clothes, limping about San Marco, and buying the household necessities.

"Giovedì Grasso came; the fêtes in celebration of it were to be more brilliant than usual. In the middle of the lesser Piazza di San Marco a lofty scaffold was erected for a special display of fireworks, of a sort unseen hitherto, which a Greek, versed in the mysteries of such matters, was going to exhibit. When the evening came, old Falieri mounted to the gallery with his beautiful wife, mirroring himself in the splendour of her loveliness, and of his own happiness, with radiant glances, challenging all beholders to amazed admiration. Just as he was about to seat himself on his throne, however, he saw that Michaele Steno was in the same gallery, so placed that he had the Dogressa continually in his sight, and that she must necessarily see him. Burning with wild anger and mad jealousy, Falieri screamed out imperiously that Steno must be immediately turned out of that gallery. Steno raised his arm at Falieri; but the guards forced him away, gnashing his teeth in fury, and threatening vengeance with frightful imprecations.

"Meanwhile Antonio, whom the sight of his beloved Annunziata had set wholly beside himself, had made his way through the crowd, and, with a thousand torments in his heart, was pacing alone in the dark night, up and down beside the sea. He was thinking whether it would not be better to extinguish the flame which consumed him in the ice-cold waves than to be slowly tortured to death by inconsolable sorrow and pain. A small thing would have made him throw himself into the sea. He was standing on the last of the steps which led down to it, when a voice, coming from a little boat, cried:

""Ah! a fair good evening, Signor Antonio!"

"In the light reflected from the palace, Antonio recognised the merry Pietro, one of his former comrades, standing in the boat, feathers and gold leaf on his shining head-dress, his new striped jacket decked with gay ribbons, and a great, beautiful bouquet of exquisite flowers in his hand.

""Good evening, Pietro," answered Antonio. "What grand folks are you going to row to-night, that you are dressed so gaily?"

""Well, Signor Antonio," said Pietro, getting up, so that the boat rocked under him, "I'm going to earn three *zecchini*. I'm bound for the top of the tower of San Marco, and then down again, to hand those flowers to the beautiful Dogressa."

""Is not this to risk your neck, comrade Pietro?" Antonio enquired.

""Well," said Pietro, "of course one risks one's neck more or less. And then, *this* time, one has to go up in the middle of all those confounded fireworks! The Greek *does* say that they won't singe a hair of one's whiskers. Still----" and Pietro gave a shrug.

"Antonio had got into the boat beside him, and now saw that he was close to the machinery, and the rope which rose out of the sea. Other ropes, for moving the machinery, went disappearing off in the darkness.

""Listen, comrade Pietro," said Antonio, after a brief silence; "would it not suit you better to earn ten *zecchini*, and not risk your life?"

""Of course," said Pietro, with a hearty laugh.

""Well," said Antonio, "here are ten *zecchini*; change clothes with me, and let me take your place. I'll go aloft instead of you. Do, now, good comrade Pietro!"

"Pietro shook his head dubiously, and, weighing the money in his hand, said: "You are very kind, Signer Antonio, to call a poor devil like me your comrade still;

and you are generous too. I want the money, of course; but what one risks his neck for is the putting the flowers into the beautiful Dogaressa's hand, and hearing her sweet voice. But however, as it is *you*, Signer Antonio, be it as you wish."

"They changed clothes rapidly, and scarcely was this done when Pietro cried, "Get into the machine; there goes the signal!"

"At that moment the sea glowed with the flaming reflection of thousands of flashes, and the shores re-echoed to thousands of crackling detonations. Antonio flew up, with the rapidity of the storm-wind, amongst the crackling, hissing fireworks, reached the gallery without so much as a singe, and hovered before the Dogaressa, She had risen and come forward; he felt her breath on his cheek--he handed her the flowers; but, blissful as that instant was with the most unutterable rapture of heaven, the burning torture of love seized him as with red-hot arms. Out of his senses--mad with longing, rapture, torture--he seized the Dogaressa's hand, pressed burning kisses on it, and cried, in a tone of inconsolable sorrow, "Annunziata!" Then the machinery, like a blind minister of destiny, tore him away from her, down to the sea, where he fell into Pietro's arms--who was waiting for him in the boat--stupefied and exhausted.

"Meanwhile in the Doge's gallery all was uproar and confusion. A little written paper had been found, fastened to the Doge's chair, on which were the following words, in the popular dialect of Venice:

""Il Dose Falier della bella muier,
I altri la gode, e lui la mantien."

""The Doge, old Falier, sits in state with the fair
Who of love takes her fill, while my lord pays the bill."

"Old Falieri started up in glowing anger, and swore that the direst punishment should be the lot of the person who committed this insulting outrage. As he looked round him, his eyes lighted on Michael Steno standing below the gallery, on the Piazza, in the full blaze of the illuminations. He immediately ordered the guards to seize him, as the culprit. Every one protested against this order; for the Doge, by thus yielding to his anger, was outraging both the Signoria and the populace--interfering with the privileges of the former, spoiling the Festa for the latter. The Signoria quitted their places, Bodoeri alone remaining, and mingling with the populace, speaking eagerly of the bitter insult to the Chief of the State, and trying to turn all the anger upon Steno. Falieri had not been mistaken; for it was the truth that Steno, when ordered away from the Doge's gallery, had hurried home and written the paper in question, which he had afterwards fastened to the Doge's seat when all eyes were fixed on the fireworks, and then gone away again unnoticed. He had devised this resentful trick very artfully and maliciously; it struck at the hearts of both Doge and Dogaressa, wounding them to the core. He at once admitted his deed, laying all the blame on the Doge, who had insulted him so bitterly in the first instance. The Signoria had long been dissatisfied with a chief who, instead of fulfilling the just expectations of the State, daily gave proof that the fiery, warlike spirit in his chilled and enfeebled heart was too much like the train of sparks which rush crackling out of the rocket, but immediately die away into dead, useless spots of black charcoal. In addition to this, his marriage to his lovely wife (it had long been discovered that it had only taken place after his appointment as Doge), and his jealousy, made him much more the old "*Pantalone*" than the warlike general; so that the Signoria, nourishing all this poison in their hearts, were more disposed to side with Steno than with the Doge. The Council of Ten referred the matter to the Council of Forty, of which Steno was one of the chiefs. This Council decided that Steno had suffered enough already, and that a month's banishment was ample punishment for his offence. And this embittered Falieri afresh, and more strongly against a Signoria which not only did not take his side, but punished repeated outrages upon him as

offences of the most trivial kind.

"Now, as it is wont to happen that a lover upon whom has beamed one single ray of love-fortune goes on dreaming heavenly dreams for days, weeks, and months, enwrapped in a golden shimmer, so could Antonio scarce recover from his stupefaction of amazement at his instant of bliss. The old woman had rated him soundly for his rashness, and muttered and muttered unceasingly about the utter needlessness of what he had done. But one day she came in skipping and dancing on her stick, as she did when under the influence of her strange spell. She paid no attention to Antonio's questions, went on chuckling and laughing, lighted a little fire in the fire-place, set a little pan on it, cooked a salve, throwing in ingredients from all sorts of phials, of various shapes and colours, put it in a small box, and limped away with it, snickering and laughing as she went. She did not return till late in the evening, when she threw herself into an arm-chair, coughing and wheezing. At last, as if coming to herself from great exhaustion, she began:

""Tonino! Tonino, my dear son, where have I been, do you think? Whom have I been seeing? Try if you can guess!"

"Antonio stared at her, full of a strange presentiment.

""Well," she continued, "I come from herself, from the beautiful dove, the lovely Annunziata!"

""Do not drive me frantic!" Antonio cried.

""What? what?" she went on. "I am always thinking of you, my Tonino! So, this morning, as I was bargaining in the pillared passage of the Palace, the people were murmuring about the misfortune which had befallen the beautiful Dogaressa. I asked and asked, and then a great uncouth, red-looking fellow, who was leaning against one of the pillars, chewing a lemon, said: 'Why, a little young scorpion tried his teeth on the little finger of her left hand, and, you see, that got into her blood a bit. But Signer Dottore Giovanni Baseggio went up to her a few minutes ago; he will have the little hand off by this time finger and all.' And just as the big fellow was saying this a great scream sounded from the broad staircase, and a little, very little gentleman came rolling down it like a ball, impelled by the kicks of the guards, right in amongst our feet, crying and lamenting. The people gathered round him, laughing loud. He struggled and stamped with his legs, unable to rise; but the big red fellow ran and lifted the little doctor, took him in his arms, and made off with him as hard as he could (he still shrieking and howling) to the canal, where he put him in his gondola, and rowed away with him. What I thought had happened was, that when Signor Baseggio was going to put his knife into the pretty little hand, the Doge had had him kicked downstairs. But I thought something else besides. 'Quick! quick!' I thought; as quick as I could off home, make my salve, and be off with it in my hand to the Palace. When I got there with it, old Falieri was just coming down. He flashed out at me with 'What is this old hag doing here?' I made a curtsy deep, deep down to the ground as well as I could, and said I had a medicine which would cure the beautiful Dogaressa very speedily. When the old fellow heard that, he gazed steadfastly at me with most terrible eyes, and stroked his grey beard smooth. Then he seized me by the shoulders, and dragged me up to her chamber in such a way that I nearly fell down all my length on the floor of it. Ah, Tonino! there lay the pretty young creature stretched on her couch, pale as a corpse, sighing and groaning with pain, and gently complaining, 'Ah! I am certain I am poisoned through and through!' But I set to work in a moment and took off the stupid doctor's useless plaster. Oh, heaven! the beautiful delicate hand! swollen, red as blood! Well, well! my ointment cooled it--eased the pain. 'That is very comforting!' the little dove whispered. 'A thousand *zecchini* are yours if you save the Dogaressa,' old Falieri cried, as he left the room. When I had been sitting there for three hours, with the little hand in mine, stroking and nursing it, the little soul awoke from a slumber into which she had fallen, and felt no further pain. When I had put on a fresh bandage, she looked at me with eyes sparkling

with gladness. Then I said:

""Ah, gracious Lady Dogaressa! you once saved a boy's life, when you killed a serpent which was going to strike him while he was sleeping."

""Tonino! you should have seen how her pale cheeks glowed red, as if a beam of the evening sun had shone in upon them--how her eyes flashed with sparkling fire."

""Ah! yes! old woman,' she cried. 'I was only a child, at my father's place in the country. Ah! he was a dear, beautiful boy! Oh, how I think of him still! It seems to me as if nothing happy had ever come into my lot since that day.'

""Then I spoke of you; told her that you were in Venice that your heart is still full of all the love and blissfulness of that moment, and that you risked your life on Giovedi Grasso merely to look into the eyes of your guardian angel, and put the flowers into her hand."

""Tonino! Tonino!' she cried, enthusiastically; 'I knew it! I knew it! I felt it! When he pressed his lips on my hand, when he called me by my name--I did not know what it was that pierced my heart so strangely. Perhaps it was happiness--but it was pain too. Bring him here to me, the beautiful boy.'

"When the old woman said this, Antonio threw himself on his knees, and cried out like one bereft of his senses:

""Oh, Lord of Heaven! only let me not perish *now, now*, in my terrible destiny, until I have seen her and pressed her to my heart." He implored her to take him to the Dogaressa the very next day. But she strongly advised him against this, inasmuch as old Falieri went to see her almost hourly.

"Many days had elapsed. The Dogaressa was almost completely cured by the old woman, but it was still impossible to take Antonio to see her. The old woman comforted him as well as she could, always repeating how she spoke with the Dogaressa of him whose life she had saved, and who loved her so fervently. Antonio, tortured by a thousand torments of longing, passed his time as best he might, in gondolas, and in wandering about the Piazzas. His steps always led him, involuntarily, towards the Ducal Palace. One day, by the bridge at the back of it, he came upon Pietro, leaning on a gaily painted oar near a gondola, which was dancing on the waves, made fast to a pillar. It was a small gondola, but beautifully carved and ornamented, and flying the Venetian standard almost as if it had been the Bucentoro.

"When Pietro saw his old comrade, he cried out, "A thousand fair greetings to you, Signor Antonio! Those *zecchini* of yours brought me good luck." Antonio, thinking of other matters, asked what the luck was, and learned nothing less than that Pietro took the Doge and Dogaressa nearly every evening across to the Giudecca, in this gondola; for the Doge had a country house there, over against San Giorgio Maggiore. Antonio gazed hard at Pietro, and burst out quickly:

""You can earn other ten *zecchini*, comrade, and more, if you like. Let me take your place, and row the Doge over!"

"Pietro thought this could not be managed, as the Doge knew him, and would trust himself to nobody else. But at length, when Antonio, in all the wild passion which sparkled from his heart, tortured with a thousand pains of love, swore that he would spring after the gondola, and drag it over into the sea, Pietro cried, laughing:

""Eh! Signer Antonio, how the Dogaressa's beautiful eyes have turned that head of yours!" and agreed to take Antonio on board as his assistant, under the pretext that he was unwell, and unable to do the heavy work alone. For the Doge never thought the gondola went quick enough. Antonio hurried away; and scarcely had he got back in a mean suit of boatman's clothes, with his face stained

brown, and a long drooping moustache, when the Doge and the Dogaressa came down, both splendidly dressed. "Who is this stranger?" the Doge asked; and it was only when Pietro swore by all the saints that he was unfit to row that day without somebody to help him that the Doge could be persuaded to let Antonio remain.

"It is sometimes the case that the very excess of happiness so invigorates the mind that it can control itself, and keep a command over the fires of its passion, such that they shall not burst forth visibly. Antonio managed to control himself (though he was so close to Annunziata that the very hem of her garment touched him) by giving his whole attention to his rowing, and avoiding any more adventurous proceeding than an occasional rapid glance at her. Old Falieri chuckled and laughed, kissed and stroked Annunziata's little white hand, and put his arm about her slender waist. When they were half-way across, and magnificent Venice was spread out before them with all her towers and palaces, he raised his head and said:

""Is it not a fine thing, my darling, to be on the sea with her ruler and consort? Do not be jealous, sweet one, of this Lady of mine who bears us on her bosom so meekly and submissively. Listen how sweetly the waves splash and murmur! She is whispering words of love to the consort who rules her. You, my darling, wear my ring on your finger; but *she* cherishes the betrothal ring which I cast to her in the profoundest depths of her heart.'

""How can the cold, treacherous sea be your consort, my noble lord?" said Annunziata. "I cannot help a shudder at the thought of your being betrothed to that arrogant, domineering element."

"Old Falieri laughed; his beard and chin went up and down.

""Have no anxiety, little one," he said; "rest in your soft, tender arms is sweeter than on the icy breast of that consort beneath us; yet it is fine to float on the sea, with the sea's lord and master."

"As he spoke, distant music floated across the water, and the tones of a soft male voice came near, singing the words--

""Ah, senza amare andar sulla mare,
Col sposo del mare non può consolare."

"Other voices joined in, and the words were repeated again and again till they died away over the sea at last, like the breath of the breeze. Old Falieri seemed to pay no attention. He was telling Annunziata, at much length, about the ceremony of the Doge's betrothal to the sea, when he throws a ring into it from the Bucentoro on Ascension Day. He spoke of the victories of the Republic, of the time when the ceremony was first instituted, after the taking of Istria and Dalmatia, under Peter Urseolus the Second. If the words of the song made no impression on Falieri, the tale he told was utterly lost on the Dogaressa. She sat with all her attention fixed upon the sweet tones floating over the sea. When the song ceased, she gazed before her with the expression of one who awakes from a dream, and is still striving to see and understand its images.

""*Senza Amare*," she whispered gently. "*Senza Amare--non può consolare*." Tears, like pearls, rose in her heavenly eyes; sighs heaved her breast, which rose and fell, oppressed. Still chuckling and laughing, the old Doge landed with her at the verandah of his house opposite San Giorgio Maggiore, not observing Annunziata, how she stood beside him in silence, moved by the dim sensations awaking within her, her gaze, heavy with tears, fixed upon a distant realm. A young man, dressed as a boatman, blew a shell-shaped horn, whose tones echoed far over the waters. At this signal another gondola came up, a man, carrying a sunshade, and a woman appeared, and, attended by them, the Doge and Dogaressa went into the palace. The second gondola came to the shore, and from it there landed Bodoeri and other persons, amongst whom were merchants, artists, and people of the lower classes even. These followed the Doge.

"Antonio could scarcely wait for the next evening, for he expected some private message from his beloved Annunziata. At last, however, the old woman came hobbling in, set herself down, coughing, in the arm-chair, clapped her bony, withered hands two or three times, and cried--

""Ah, Tonino! what has happened to our poor little dove? When I went to her to-day, she was lying on her cushions, with half-shut eyes, leaning her head on her arm, neither sleeping nor waking, neither ill nor well. 'What has befallen you, gracious Lady Dogaressa?' I cried. 'Is it your wound, not quite whole yet, which is paining you?' But she looked at me with eyes such as I had never seen in her, and scarce had I peeped into these moist moonbeams than they hid themselves behind silken lashes, as if amongst dark clouds. And then she heaved a deep sigh, turned her beautiful face to the wall, and whispered softly, very softly, but so mournfully that it went sharply to my very heart--

""*Amare! Amare! Ah! Senza Amare!*

""I got a little stool and sat down beside her. I began to talk of *you*. She hid her face in the cushions. Her breathing came quicker and quicker, till it became sighing. I told her that you had been in the gondola, disguised; that you were dying of love and longing, and that I should bring you to her at once.

""No, no! for the love of Christ and the saints, I implore you tell him I must never see him again--never! Tell him he must leave Venice immediately.'

""Then my darling Tonino must die,' I interrupted. She fell back in the most unspeakable pain, and sobbed, in a voice hidden in tears:

""And I must die too, the bitterest of deaths!' Just then the old Doge came in, and I was obliged to leave."

""She spurns me," cried Antonio, in wild despair. "Away! away! to the sea!"

"The old woman cackled and laughed as usual. "You silly child!" she cried. "Do you not see that she loves you with the most fervent love and torment that ever fired a woman's heart? Tomorrow night, when it is dark, I will slip you into the Ducal Palace. You will find me in the second gallery on the left of the great staircase, and then we shall see what happens further."

"When Antonio crept up the great staircase the following evening, it suddenly struck him that he was on the brink of a monstrous misdeed. He could scarce mount the stair. He had to lean against a pillar close before the indicated gallery. Suddenly a bright light shone round him, and before he could move away, old Bodoeri stood before him, attended by some domestics carrying torches. Bodoeri looked him in the face, and said--"Ha! you are Antonio; I knew you were to be brought here. You have only to follow me." Antonio, convinced that his meeting with the Dogaressa had got wind, followed, with some hesitation. What was his astonishment when, as soon as they had reached a chamber at some distance, Bodoeri embraced him, and told him of an important duty which was allotted to him that night, and which he was to execute with courage and determination. But his astonishment turned to dread and horror when he learned that a conspiracy had been formed against the Signoria, with the Doge himself at its head, and that it had been arranged, at Falieri's house at the Giuclecca, that on that very night the Signoria should be overthrown, and Falieri elected Sovereign Duke of Venice.

"Antonio gazed at Bodoeri in speechless amazement. Bodoeri took the youth's silence to be hesitation as to taking part in this fell deed, and cried, in anger--

""Cowardly fool! you cannot now get out of this place. You must either die or take up arms with us. But, before you decide, speak with *him*."

"A tall, noble form now advanced from the dark background of the chamber. As soon as Antonio recognised the features of this man's face he fell on his knees crying, "Oh, my father and benefactor, Bertuccio Nonolo!"

"Nenolo raised him, took him in his arms, and said, in gentle tones--

""Yes, I am that Bertuccio Nenolo whom you believed to be buried in the ocean depths, and who has just escaped from the captivity in which he has been held by Morbassan; the same Bertuccio Nenolo who adopted you, and could never have supposed that the silly servants whom Bodoeri sent to take possession of the house (which he had bought) would have driven you out into the world. Blind youth! do you hesitate to take up arms against the despotic caste which murdered your father? Go to the Fontego, and you will see the stains of your father's blood on the stones of its flooring to this hour. When the Signoria made over the building which you know by the name of the Fontego to the German merchants, every one to whom chambers in it were allotted was forbidden to take his keys away with him when he went on any journey. This law your father contravened, and, by so doing, had rendered himself liable to severe punishment. But when his chambers were opened, on his return, a chest full of counterfeit Venetian money was found among his effects. It was in vain that he protested his innocence; it was but too clear that some malicious devil or other--very probably the Fontegaro himself--had placed the chest there, with a view to your father's destruction. The inexorable judges, satisfied with the evidence that the chest had been found in your father's rooms, sentenced him to death. He was executed in the court of the Fontego; and you would have been no more if the faithful Margareta had not saved you. I, being your father's most faithful friend, adopted you; and your father's name was concealed from you that you might not, yourself, betray yourself to the Signoria. But now, Anton Dalbirger, the time has come. Take up arms, and avenge your father's shameful end."

"Antonio, inspired by revenge, swore fidelity to the conspirators. It is known that an insult which Bertuccio Nenolo received from Dandulo--who was at the head of the naval armaments--(he struck him on the face during an argument)--moved him to conspire, with his son-in-law, against the Signoria. Both Nenolo and Bodoeri desired that Falieri should be raised to the supreme power, that they might rise along with him. The arrangement was, that a rumour should be circulated that the Genoese fleet was close outside the Lagoons; and that then the great bell of San Marco should be tolled, in the night, to call the populace to an imaginary defence. At this signal, the conspirators--who were numerous, and in all quarters of the city--were to possess themselves of the Piazza di San Marco and the principal parts of the place, put the chiefs of the Signoria to death, and proclaim Falieri the sovereign ruler of Venice. But it was not the will of Heaven that this murderous project should be accomplished, and the fundamental constitution of the State trodden under foot by aid Falieri's arrogant pride. The meetings at the Doge's house had not escaped the notice of the Council of Ten, although it had been impossible to learn anything with certainty. One of the conspirators, a furrier from Pisa, had qualms of conscience; he wished to save his friend Niccolò Leoni, a member of the Council of Ten. He went to him in the evening twilight, and implored him not to leave his house that night, whatever happened. Leoni would not let the furrier go, and managed to extract from him an account of the whole project. In company with Giovanni Gradenigo and Marco Cornaro, he assembled the Council of Ten at San Salvador; and there, in less than three hours, measures were concerted for the thwarting of all the proceedings of the conspirators.

"The duty allotted to Antonio was to go, with a troop, to San Marco, and set the bell ringing. But when he arrived there he found the building strongly occupied by troops from the arsenal, who stopped him with their halberds. His followers dispersed, and he himself escaped in the darkness. Close behind him he heard the steps of a man pursuing him; then he felt himself seized. As he was about to run his captor through the body, he suddenly, in the dim light, recognized him to be Pietro, who cried--

""Save yourself, Antonio! get into my gondola. Everything is discovered. Bodoeri and Nenolo are in the hands of the Signoria. The Palace doors are guarded; the Doge is shut up in his rooms, watched like a criminal by his own

faithless body-guard. Away! away!"

"Half unconscious, Antonio suffered himself to be slipped into the gondola. There were distant voices, clangour of weapons, one or two cries of terror, and then, with the deepest darkness of the night, heavy, soundless silence.

"Next morning the populace, broken with deadly fear, saw a terrible spectacle, which made the blood in all veins run cold. During the night the Council of Ten had passed sentence of death on all of the conspirators who had been taken; they were strangled, and thrown down to the Lesser Piazza di San Marco, from the gallery whence the Doge used to witness the festivities--alas! where Antonio had hovered before the beautiful Dogaressa when he handed her the flowers. Among the bodies were those of Marino Bodoeri and Bertuccio Nenolo. Two days afterwards old Marino Falieri was sentenced by the Council of Ten, and executed on the so-called Giant Staircase of the Palace.

"Antonio had been creeping about, almost unconscious. He was not apprehended, for no one knew that he was one of the conspirators. When he saw Falieri's grey head fall, he awoke as from a heavy dream. With a cry of the wildest terror, and a shout of "Annunziata!" he burst into the Palace and ran through the galleries. No one stopped him. The guards stared at him, like men stupefied with the horrors which had been going on. The old woman came limping up to meet him, weeping, and loudly lamenting. She took him by the hand. In a few paces he was in Annunziata's chambers. She was lying senseless on the couch.

"Antonio rushed to her, covered her hands with glowing kisses, and called her by the fondest and tenderest names. Slowly she opened her beautiful eyes. She saw Antonio; but at first it cost her an effort to realise who he was. But suddenly she rose, put both her arms about him, pressed him to her heart, bedewed him with hot tears, kissed his cheeks, his lips.

"Antonio!" she cried, "my Antonio, I cannot tell you how I love you! There is still a heaven here on earth! What are the deaths of my father, my uncle, my husband, in comparison with your love! Oh, come, let us fly from this scene of murder!"

"With bitterest sorrow and most fervent love, with thousand kisses and thousand tears, they vowed eternal truth, and forgot the frightful events of that terrible time. Turning their sight from earth, they raised their eyes and looked into the heaven of love which had opened to them. The old woman advised flight to Chiozza. Antonio wished to gain the mainland, and thence reach his own country. Friend Pietro found him a boat, and it was waiting for them at the bridge behind the Palace. When it was night, Annunziata, deeply cloaked, crept down the steps with her lover and old Margareta, whose cloak was filled with jewel cases. They got on board; Antonio took the oars and away they fled, at a rapid, vigorous rate. Before them upon the waters the bright moonlight danced, like a gladsome herald of Love.

"When they reached the open sea a strange hissing and whistling began to make itself heard in the air overhead; dark shadows gathered and came over the bright face of the moon, hanging like gloomy shrouds. The dancing shimmer the gleaming herald of Love--sank down into the dark depths, pregnant with hollow thunders. A storm arose, and, in angry rage, drove dark clouds before it. The boat laboured violently, and plunged up and down.

"Help! Oh Lord of Heaven!" the old woman screamed. Antonio, unable to work the oars, clasped Annunziata to his heart. Animated by his burning kisses, she pressed him to her heart in the most blissful rapture. "Oh, my Antonio!" "Oh, my Annunziata!" they cried, heedless of the raging tempest. Then the sea the jealous widow of beheaded Falieri--lifted up her foaming billows, like great, gigantic arms, grasped the lovers, and dragged them, with the old woman, down, down, to the fathomless abyss.'

"When the man in the cloak had thus ended his tale, he rose quickly, and left the room with strong, rapid steps. The friends looked after him in speechless amazement, and then went back again to examine the picture. The Doge still chuckled at them, in silly ostentation, and senile vanity. But when they looked closely into the face of the beautiful Annunziata, they saw that the shadow of a sorrow--unknown as yet, merely in the form of a presentiment--was upon her lily brow; that longing love-dreams shone under her dark eyelashes, and hovered about her beautiful lips. From the distant sea a hostile power seemed to threaten destruction and death; and from the misty clouds which lay over San Marco, and partly concealed it, the deeper meaning of the picture slowly dawned upon them, whilst all the sorrow of the love-tale of Antonio and Annunziata filled their hearts with sweet awe."

The friends applauded this story, and unanimously voted that Ottmar had utilised, in true Serapiontic fashion, the veracious history of the proud and unfortunate Doge, Marino Falieri.

"He spared himself no trouble over writing it," said Lothair. "For, besides being inspired to it by Kolbe's picture, Le Bret's 'History of Venice' was always open on his table, and he had views of the streets and palaces of Venice hanging all about his room; heaven only knows where he had got hold of them all. That is why the story is so bright with local colouring."

Midnight having tolled, the friends separated in the most genial frame of mind, and in true Serapiontic manner.

SECTION FOURTH.

Vincent and Sylvester having joined the Brotherhood, Lothair delivered a long harangue to them, in which he set forth, in most entertaining fashion, at great length, and with much minuteness, the duties incumbent upon a true Serapion Brother. "And now," he concluded, "give me your solemn word, dear and worthy novices of our Order, confirming the same by solemn handgrip, that you will faithfully observe and follow the rule of Saint Serapion; that is to say, that you will, at all times, and in all circumstances, devote your every endeavour to be--at the meetings of the Brotherhood--as genial, witty, kindly, and sympathetic as may be in your power."

"I, for my part," said Vincent, "enter into this undertaking with all my heart. I mean to pay over my entire stock of brains and imagination into the coffers of the Brotherhood; expecting to be therefrom, at all times, and on all occasions, not only fed and supported, but actually crammed. On every occasion when I purpose to come among you I shall--according to the proverb--give my ape a full allowance of sugar, that he may be sufficiently primed for the execution of the merriest capers. And, inasmuch as our patron saint has acquired his fame and glory from a decided *quantum* of insanity, I shall copy him, in this respect, to the utmost of my power, so that the Brotherhood may never have to complain of an absence of this important element of their being. I am prepared, if that should be your desire, to dish you up a most varied and extensive assortment of the most interesting 'fixed ideas.' I can imagine myself to be a Roman emperor, like Professor Titel; or a cardinal, like Father Scambati. I can believe, like the woman mentioned by Trallianus, that the universe is upheld upon my left thumb; or that my nose is made of glass, and irradiates the walls and the ceiling with beautiful prismatic colours. Also, I can think I am a looking-glass, like the little Scotchman, Donald Munro, and reflect, and copy all the glances, grimaces, and postures of those who look into my face. More than this, I feel capable of convincing myself, as the Chevalier D'Epernay did, that my anima sensitiva has shorn my head bare, so that I shall merely have to rely upon the hair or two left on my lips to inspire you with

a certain amount of respect. As true Serapion brethren, you will know how to indulge, and give due honour to all these little delusions. And pray don't think of curing me, by applying the remedies recommended by Boerhaave, Mercurialis, Antius of Amyda, Friedrich Kraft, and Herr Richter; inasmuch as they all prescribe a considerable amount of castration, or, at all events, gentle slapping of the face, and boxing of the ears. And the fact is, without doubt, that a certain amount of threshing has a beneficial effect on both heart and mind, and awakens the activity of some of the most important functions of the body. I just ask you, what would have become of us--should we ever have learnt a single one of our lessons, in the fifth form, but for a due amount of threshing? I recollect quite well that when, at the age of twelve, I read the 'Sorrows of Werther,' I went off and immediately fell in love with a young lady of thirteen, and wanted to shoot myself. Luckily my father cured me of this super-excitation of my heart on the system of treatment recommended by Rhases and Valuscus de Taranta, who prescribed castigation as a sovereign remedy for love. At the same time the old gentleman shed warm, paternal tears of joy on discovering that I was not an ass: for experience proves that love, in said animal, increases in proportion as he is beaten."

"Oh, most delightful of all fabulists!" cried Theodore. "How you are caprioling and curvetting! Please to go on doing so always! Flash your lightnings in amongst us whenever the atmosphere is growing sultry, in all the quaintest of your phrases. And, above all, freshen our Sylvester up a little; for, after his usual wont, he has not uttered a single word as yet."

"The fact is," said Ottmar, "that I can scarcely convince myself that it really *is* Sylvester who is sitting in that chair, smiling at us so benignantly. It seems to me almost incredible that he can have come away, so soon from his country dwelling, which he so much preferred to our city life; and I keep believing that he is merely some pleasing apparition, presently to vanish from our sight amongst those clouds which he is blowing from his cigar."

"Heaven forefend!" cried Sylvester, laughing. "Do you suppose that a quiet, happy personage, such as I am, has assumed the form of an enchanter, and is deluding honest folks with his mere *simulacrum*? Do you think I have anything of the Philadelphia, or the Swedenborg about me? If you blame me for my silence, Theodore, let me say that I am sparing my breath because I want to read you a story, suggested to me by one of Kolbe's pictures, which I wrote during my long stay in the country. If it surprises you, Ottmar, that I have come back here, although I am so fond of the quiet and the leisure of the country, remember that, though the constant turmoil, and the endless, empty business of this great town are uncongenial to my whole nature, still, if I am to turn my being a poet and a writer to any account, I stand in need of many incitements which I can meet with here only. The tale which I wish to read to you--and which I believe to possess a certain amount of merit--would never have been written if I had not seen Kolbe's picture at the Exhibition, and then worked the affair out in the quiet of the country."

"Sylvester is right," said Lothair, "in seeking--as a writer of plays and tales--suggestions and incitements in the whirl of city life, and then in giving quiet leisure to his mind, in which to work those suggestions out. Of course he might have seen the picture in the country; but he would not have seen, there, the living characters whom it inspired with life and movement, and into whom the people portrayed in the picture passed and entered. A poet such as he is ought not to retire into solitude. He ought to live in the most stirring and varied society, so as to see, and grasp, its endlessly manifold aspects."

"Ha!" cried Vincent, "as Jaques, in 'As You Like It,' calls out when he sees Touchstone,

'A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest,
A motley fool; oh, lamentable world!'

So I cry 'a poet! a poet! I met a poet! He came stumbling out of the third wineshop at high noon, looked up with his moist, drunken eyes at the sun, and cried, in his inspiration "Oh, sweet, gentle moon, how fall thy rays upon my heart, illumining, in marvellous sort, that universe which lives and moves within this soul of mine. Lead on before me, thou brave luminary, that I may steer my course to where experience of life and knowledge of mankind stream towards my ken, in rich abundance, for advantageous employment! Character-studies, lifelike drawing--not possible without living models! Glorious drink! Noble, splendid ardour, opening the heart and kindling the fancy! Yes, that man eating sausages in there lives within my soul! He is tall and lean, has on a blue frock coat with gilt buttons, English boots, takes snuff out of a black lacquered snuff-box, speaks German fluently, and is consequently a German, in spite of his boots and the Italian sausages; a glorious, lifeful German character for my next novel! But, more knowledge of mankind! More character!" And with that my poet sailed, with a fair wind, into the harbour of the fourth wineshop."

"Stop! you Oliver Martext," cried Lothair. "I call you so, because you have completely marred *my* text. I know well enough what you are driving at with your poet who collects experience of life in wineshops, and by his man in the blue frock coat; and I don't care to expatiate further on the Thema. But there are other, very different, people too, who think that, when they have accurately described the personality of this or that unimportant 'subject' they have drawn a strikingly lifelike character. The peculiar pigtail which this or that old man wears--the colours in which this or that girl dresses--are not enough. It requires a certain special faculty, and a penetrating eye, to see the forms of life in their deeper individuality. And even this seeing is not enough. It is the poet's spirit--that spirit which dwells within every true poet--which brings the pictures which he has seen, in their endlessly, infinitely, varied changefulness, as they have shown themselves to him--on to the stage. And then, by a process like chemical precipitation, those forms appear as *substrata* belonging to life and the world in their complete extension. Such are those wonderful characters--wholly unconnected with place and time--whom every one knows, and looks upon as friends, who move on amongst us for ever, in perfect fulness of life. Need I instance Sancho Panza and Falstaff? And as you, Vincent, spoke of a blue frock coat, it is rather curious that forms, which a true poet has drawn in the way I have just instanced, appear to *costume* themselves of their own accord, just in the way most appropriate to their characters."

"Yes," said Ottmar, "and that is the case in actual life as well. Doubtless we have all felt most distinctly, with respect to characters we have met, that those people could not have been dressed differently, to be in keeping with their inner being; that such and such a man could not have had on another sort of hat or coat than he actually had. That this is the case is not so wonderful, as that we should see that it is so."

"But don't you think it is only because we notice it, that it happens?" interrupted Cyprian.

"Oh! unapproachable subtlety!" cried Vincent.

"I cordially agree with all that Lothair has maintained on this subject," cried Sylvester. "Don't forget, however, that--besides our meetings and conversations--there is another source of enjoyment which I miss in the country--one which greatly penetrates and elevates me. I mean the musical performances, the renderings of the glorious works of musicians. This very day I heard Beethoven's Mass in C in the Catholic Church. It made a deep impression on me."

"And that," said Cyprian, moodily, "does not surprise me, just because to have to do without things of the kind makes one enjoy them the more. Hunger is the best sauce. To speak candidly, Beethoven--in his Mass in C--has given us a very charming, I may, perhaps, say a genial, work; but it is not a Mass. Where is the strict ecclesiastical style?"

"I know, Cyprian," said Theodore, "you only care for the old composers, and are horrified at the sight of a black note in a church-score; and that you are unjustly strict and severe in your opinions about the more modern church music."

"At the same time," said Lothair, "I think there is too much of the jubilant--of earthly rejoicing--in Beethoven's Mass. I should very much like to know wherein the utter diverseness of the spirit in which the masters have composed the different portion of the Mass lies; they contrast with each other in their treatment of it so completely!"

"Exactly," said Sylvester, "that is what has so often struck me, too, as inexplicable. One would suppose, for example, that the words, '*Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini*' could only be set in the same sort of pious, tranquil style. Yet, I not only know that they have been set in the most diverse manners by the greatest masters, but also that--penetrated by the most diverse feelings--I can never think the setting of them, by this or by the other great writer, to be in any way a mistake. Theodore might, perhaps, enlighten us to this."

"I should be glad to do so as far as I can," said Theodore, "but I should have to deliver a little lecture on the subject, and I fear it would be too serious to fit well in with the facetious tone in which our conversation began."

"It is true Serapionism that jest and earnest should alternate," said Ottmar; "so please to deliver yourself confidently, Theodore, on a subject in which we are all so deeply interested; except, perhaps, Vincent, who knows nothing about music."

Theodore accordingly went on, as follows:

"Prayer and worship doubtless affect the mind according to its predominant, or even momentary, mood, or tuning--as this results from physical or mental well-being, comfort, happiness, or suffering. So that, at one time, prayer or worship is inward contrition--even to self-despite and shame, grovelling in the dust before the lightnings of the Lord of the worlds, angry with the sinner; and, at another time, vigorous elevation towards the infinite; child-like trust in the mercy of the Omnipotent, anticipation of the promised bliss. The words of the Mass present--in their cycle--merely the occasion--the opportunity--or, at highest, the *clue*, for devotion, and will awaken the due concord in the soul, according to its frame of thought at the time. In the Kyrie, God's mercy is implored; the Gloria celebrates His omnipotence and majesty; the Credo gives expression to the faith on which the pious soul firmly builds; and after--in the Sanctus and the Benedictus--the holiness of God has been exalted, and blessings promised to those who approach Him in confident faith; prayer is offered, in the Agnus and the Dona, to the Mediator, that He may send down His peace and gladness to the believing soul. Now even (to begin with), on account of this very universality (which in no way encroaches upon the inner significance, and the deeper application which each one lays into it, according to his own peculiar condition of mind and conscience), the text lends and adapts itself to the most infinite variety of musical treatment; and this is the reason why there are Kyries, Glorias, &c., so widely dissimilar in character, tone, and the rest. For instance, one has but to compare the Kyries in Haydn's Masses in C major and D minor; also his Benedictuses. From this it follows that the composer who (as ought always to be the case) sets to work, inspired with true devoutness, to write a Mass, will let the individual religious attunement of his own mind predominate (all the words being ready to adapt themselves to that); not suffering himself to be led away in the Miserere, the Gloria, Qui Tollis, and so forth, into a many-tinted medley of the most heart-rending sorrow of the contrite heart, with jubilant clangour and jingle. All works of the latter sort, which, in recent times, there have been numbers of, carpentered together in the most frivolous fashion, are abortions, engendered by impure minds; and I reject them just as unhesitatingly as Cyprian does. But I render deep admiration to the glorious church compositions of Michael and Joseph Haydn, Hasse, Neumann, and others, not forgetting the old works of the pious Italian masters, Leo, Durante, Benevoli, Perli, and others, whose lofty, beautiful, noble simplicity, whose wonderful power of impressing the very depths

of the soul by their simple modulations, wholly devoid of strikingness of display, seem to constitute an art which is altogether lost in recent (and *most* recent,) times. Without desiring to adhere to the early, primitive, pure church style, merely because what is holy disdains the varied dress of mundane niceties of subtlety, one cannot--to begin with--doubt that *simple* music has a better effect, musically speaking, in churches, than that which is elaborate; for the more rapidly notes succeed one another the more they are lost in the lofty spaces of buildings, so that the whole effect becomes confused and unintelligible. Hence, in a measure, the grand effect of Chorales in church. I unconditionally agree with you, Cyprian, as to the superiority of the noble church music of ancient times over that of recent date, just on account of its constantly maintaining its truly holy style. At the same time, I think that the richness and fulness which music has gained in more recent times--chiefly by the introduction of instruments--should be made use of in churches, not to produce mere idle display, but in a noble and worthy manner. Perhaps the bold simile--that the old church music of the Italians holds somewhat the same relation to that of the more modern Germans as Saint Peter's at Rome holds to Strasburg Cathedral--may not be inapt. The grandiose proportions of Saint Peter's elevate the mind, because it finds them commensurable; but the beholder gazes with a strange inward disquiet upon the Strasburg Minster, as it soars aloft in the most daring curves, and the most wondrous interfacings of varied, fantastic forms and ornamentation. And this very unrest awakens a sense of the Unknown, the Marvellous; and the spirit readily yields itself to this dream, in which it seems to recognise the Super-earthly, the Unending. Now this is exactly the effect of that purely romantic element which pervades Mozart and Haydn's compositions. It is easy to see that it would not, now, be a very simple matter for a composer to write a church composition in the lofty, simple style of the old Italians. Without saying that the real, pious faith which gave to those masters the power to proclaim the holiest of the holy in those earnest, noble strains may probably seldom dwell in the hearts of artists in more modern times, it is enough to refer to that incapacity which results from the lack of true genius, and, similarly, from the absence of self-renunciation. Is it not in the most absolute simplicity that real genius plies its pinions the most wonderfully? But who does not take delight in letting the treasure which he possesses glitter before the eyes of all? Who is content with the approval of the rare *knowers*--the few in whose eyes that which is truly good and successful work is the more precious--or rather, the only precious, work? The reason why there is scarcely what can be termed 'a style' remaining, is that people have everywhere taken to employing the same means of expression. We often hear solemn Themes stalking majestically along in comic operas, playful little ditties in opera seria, and masses and oratorios of operatic cut in the churches. Now the proper application--ecclesiastically--of musical figuration, and all the resources of instrumentation, demands a rare degree of genius, and an exceptional profundity of intellect. Mozart--gallant and courtier-like as he is in his two well-known Masses in C major--has, nevertheless, solved this problem magnificently in his Requiem. For that is romantic sacred music, proceeding from the depths of the master's heart and soul; and I have no need to say how finely Haydn, too, speaks in his Masses of the highest and holiest things; although he cannot be acquitted of a good deal of trifling--writing for writing's sake--here and there. As soon as I knew that Beethoven had written a Mass, and before I had heard or read a note of it, I felt certain that, as regards the style and general moulding, the master had taken old Joseph Haydn as his model. Yet I found I was wrong, as regards the manner in which he had apprehended the text of the Mass. His genius generally prefers to employ the levers of awe and terror; so, thought I, the vision of the super-earthly will have filled his soul with awe, and this is what he will speak out in his music. On the contrary, the whole work expresses a mind filled with childlike clearness and happiness, which, building on its purity, confides in faith on the grace of God, and prays to Him as to a father who wills the best for his children, and hears their petitions. From this point of view, the general character of the composition, its inner structure, and intelligent instrumentation, are quite worthy of the master's genius, when considered as a composition meant to be employed in the service of the Church."

"Still," urged Cyprian, "that point of view is, in my opinion, a wrong one altogether, capable of leading to desecration of the highest things. Let me explain my views about church music, and you will see that I am, at all events, clear on the subject in my own mind. What I think is, that no art proceeds so thoroughly out of the spiritualization of mankind, and demands such pure and spiritual modes and means of expression, as music. The sense of the existence of what is highest and holiest, of that spiritual power which kindles the life of all nature, utters itself audibly in music, which--(at all events vocal music)--is the expression of the highest fulness of existence, *i.e.*, the praise of the Creator. Wherefore, as regards its special inner life, music is an act of religious service, and its fountain-head is to be sought, and to be found, only in religion in the Church. Passing thence onwards into life, ever richer and mightier, music poured forth its inexhaustible treasures over mankind, so that even the secular (or, as it is sometimes styled, the 'profane') might, in childlike delight, adorn itself in that splendour wherewith music illuminated life, through and through, even in all its little, petty, mundane relations. But, when thus adorned, even the secular appeared to be longing for the heavenly, higher realm, and striving to enter in amidst its phenomena. Just by reason of this, its special peculiarity of nature, music could not be the property of the antique world, where everything proceeded from corporalization manifest to the senses; it had to be reserved for more modern times. The two opposite artistic poles of Heathenism and Christianity are Sculpture and Music. Christianity destroyed the former and created the latter (along with painting, which is nearest akin to it). In painting, the ancients knew neither perspective nor colouring; in music, neither melody nor harmony (I use the word 'melody' here in its highest sense, to express an uttering of inward feeling, without reference to words and their rhythmic relationships). But beyond this particular imperfection, which may perhaps indicate only the narrower footing upon which music and painting at that time stood, the germs of those arts could not develop themselves in that unfruitful soil; not until the advent of Christianity could they grow gloriously, and bring forth flowers and fruit in luxurious profusion. Both music and painting maintained their place only in appearance in the antique world; they were kept down by the power of sculpture, or rather they could take no adequate form amid the mighty masses of sculpture. Both those arts were not in the least what we now call 'music' and 'painting.' Just so sculpture disappeared from bodily life by means of the Christian tendency which strives against all corporeal embodiment to the senses, volatilising this into what is spiritual. But the very earliest germ of the music of the present day (in which was enclosed a holy mystery, solveable only by the Christian world), could serve the ancients only according to its essential characteristic specialty, namely, as religious cult. For nothing else were, in those earliest times, their dramas, which were festal representations of the joys and sorrows of a god. The declamation of those dramas was supported by instrumental accompaniments, and even this fact proves that the music of the ancients was purely rhythmic, were it not otherwise demonstrable that (as I have said already) melody and harmony, the two pivots on which our modern music moves, were quite unknown to them. Therefore, though Ambrosius, and afterwards Gregory, based Christian hymns, about the year 1591, on ancient hymns, and that we come upon the traces of that purely rhythmic music in what are called the 'Canto Fermo' and the 'Antiphones,' this is nothing but that they made use of germs which had been handed down to them. And it is certain that a deeper study of that ancient music can interest only the curious antiquary. Whereas, for the practical musician, the most sacred depths of his glorious, truly Christian art were laid open only when Christianity was shining in its brightest splendour in Italy, and the mighty masters, in the consecration of the highest inspiration, proclaimed the holiest mysteries of religion, in tones before unheard. It is noticeable that, not long afterwards, when Guido D'Arezzo had penetrated deeper into the mysteries of the musical art, that art was misunderstood by the uncomprehending, and thought to be a subject for mathematical speculation, so that its true essence was utterly misapprehended, just as it was barely commencing to unfold itself. The marvellous tones of this spiritual language were awakened, and went sounding forth over the world. The means of seizing them and holding them fast were discovered. The 'hieroglyphics' of music (consisting as it does of an intertwining of melody and harmony) were invented; I mean, the

mode of writing down music in notes. But soon this mode of indication passed current for the tiling indicated; the masters sunk themselves in harmonic subtleties, and in this manner music, distorted into a speculative science, would have ceased to be music when those subtleties should have attained their highest development. Worship was desecrated by that which was upon it under the name of music, although, to the heart penetrated by that holy art, music itself was alone the true 'worship.' So that there could be but a brief contest, which ended by the glorious victory of an eternal verity over the untrue. Just when Pope Marcellus the Second was on the point of expelling all music from the Church, and so depriving divine worship of its most glorious adornment, the great Master Palestrina revealed to him the sacred mystery and wonder of the tone-art in its most individual and specially characteristic qualities. And from that time music became the most specific feature of the 'Cultus' of the Catholic Church. Thus it was that at that time the most profound comprehension of the true inward life of music dawned and brightened in the masters' pious hearts, and their inimitable, immortal compositions streamed from their souls in holy inspiration. You, Theodore, well know that the Mass for six voices, which Palestrina at that time--I think it was in 1555--composed, in order that the angry Pontiff might hear real music, became widely known by the title of 'Missa Papae Marcelli.' With Palestrina commenced, indisputably, the most glorious era of ancient ecclesiastical music, and, consequently, of all music. This lasted for nearly two hundred years, maintaining its pristine pious dignity and forcibility, although it cannot be denied that, even in the first century after Palestrina, that lofty, inimitable simplicity and dignity lost itself to some extent in a certain 'elegance' which the composers began to aim at. What a master is Palestrina! Without the smallest ornament, without anything approaching melodic sweep, his works consist mainly of chords of the simplest kind, succeeding each other in perfect concords of chords of the triad, by the forcibility and the boldness of which consonances the mind is grasped with indescribable might, and lifted up to the very highest love: *i.e.*, the attunement and consonance of the spiritual with nature (as promised to the Christian), speaks itself out in the *chord*, which, consequently, came first into existence under the Christian 'dispensation.' So that the chord, and harmony (in contradistinction to mere melody), are the images and expressions of spiritual union, and *communion* of union, and incorporation with the eternal, the ideal, which thrones above us, and yet encompasses and surrounds us. Therefore the holiest, purest, most ecclesiastical music must be that which flows from the soul as the uncontaminated expression of the love in question, disregarding, nay despising, all that is mundane. And such are Palestrina's simple, majestic compositions, which, conceived in the highest fervour of piety and love, proclaim the godlike with might and glory. To his music truly applies what the Italians apply to the writings of many composers who are shallow and miserable compared to him; it is, of a truth, 'music of another world'--*musica dell' altro mondo*. Successions of consonant perfect chords of the triad have nowadays become so strange and unfamiliar to us, in our effeminacy, that many an one whose soul is wholly closed to the holy sees nothing in them but helpless unskilfulness of technical construction. But, looking away from those higher considerations, and adverting merely to what we are used to call 'effect,' it is clear as day (as you said already, Theodore), that, in a church, in a great resonant building, everything in the nature of the blending of chord with chord by means of 'transition notes,' weakens the power of the music. In Palestrina's music each chord strikes upon the listener with all its force; the most elaborate modulations could never affect the mind as do those bold, weighty chords, which burst upon us like dazzling beams of light. Palestrina is simple, true, childlike in piety; as strong and mighty, as genuinely Christian in his works as are, in painting, Pietro of Cortona and Albrecht Duerer. For him composition was an act of religion. But I do not forget the great masters Caldara, Barnabei, Scarlatti, Marcello, Lotti, Porpora, Bernardo, Leo, Valotti, and others, who all kept themselves simple, dignified, and forcible. Vividly, at this moment, awakes in me the remembrance of that Mass of Alessandro Scarlatti's for seven voices, 'Alla Capella,' which you, Theodore, once had sung by your own good pupils under your own conductorship. It is a model specimen of the true, grand, and powerful ecclesiastical style, although it has a commencement of the melodic 'swing' which

music had acquired by the time it was written, 1705."

"And the mighty Haendel," said Theodore, "the inimitable Hasse, the profound and thoughtful Sebastian Bach; have you not a thought for them?"

"Certainly," answered Cyprian; "I reckon them among the sacred bands whose hearts were strengthened by the power of faith and love. It was this power which brought to them that inspiration by virtue of which they entered into communion with the Highest, and were fired to those works which serve not worldly aims, but are, of necessity, nothing but praise of, and honour to, the loftiest things. This is why those works of theirs bear the impress of veracious truth, and why no anxious striving after 'effect,' no laboured apings of other things, defile and desecrate that of the Heavenly which has revealed itself to them, pure, and clear, and undefiled. This is why there is, in their writings, none of those so-called 'striking' modulations, varied 'figurations,' or effeminate 'melodies,'--none of those powerless, confusing rushes of instrumentation, the object of which is to benumb the intelligence of the listeners so that they may not detect the emptiness of this music. Hence it is that only the works of the masters just mentioned (and of the few in more recent times, who, like them, have remained true servants of that faithful 'Church' which exists no more here below), truly elevate and edify pious souls. Let me here mention the glorious master Fasch, who belongs to the old pious times, and whose profound and reverent writings have found so little favour with the frivolous crowd that his Mass for sixteen voices could not be published for want of due support. You would do me much injustice, Theodore, if you supposed that my mind is shut up with reference to the more modern music. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven have, in very truth, unfolded a new art, whose germ, perhaps, began to show itself in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was not the fault of those masters that frivolity and lack of comprehension prized the treasures already in existence so lightly that coiners of false money tried to give to their base metal the semblance of true currency. It is true that nearly in the same degree in which instrumental music gained in importance, vocal music became neglected, and that the complete disappearance of the true old choral music (which the result of sundry ecclesiastical changes--dissolution of the monasteries, and so forth), kept pace therewith. Of course it is quite clear that, now, it is not possible to go back to Palestrina's simplicity and grandeur, but it is still a question how far our new gains and progress can be brought into use in churches. The spirit which rules this world drives onward and onward continually; and although the forms which are lost and gone can never come back just as they were when they moved in our life-atmosphere, what is true is everlasting, imperishable, immortal; and a wondrous spiritual communion gently binds a mysterious band around the past, the present, and the future. The sublime old masters are still alive, in the spirit. 'They being dead, yet speak.' Their music has not died away into silence, although in the roaring, tumultuous strife of the ungovernable which has broken in upon us, it is difficult to hear it. May the time of the fulfilling of our hopes be not far off! May a life of piety, peace, and joy begin, when Music, plying her Seraph-pinions freely and joyously once more, may enter upon her flight to the life beyond this, to that world which is her home, and whence comfort and salvation beam down into the unresting hearts of men."

Cyprian spoke those words with an unction which showed that they came truly from his heart of hearts. The friends, deeply moved by them, kept silence for some moments.

Then Sylvester said, "Although I am not a musician as Theodore and Cyprian are, I can assure you that I have thoroughly followed all you have said about Beethoven's Mass, and Church music in general. But, just as Cyprian complains that it may almost be said that there is no such person in existence at the present moment as a genuine ecclesiastical composer, I think I might assert that it would be hard to find a poet able to write worthy words for a Church composition."

"Quite true," said Theodore; "and the German words published with this very Mass of Beethoven's are but too clear a proof of it."⁴

"But now," said Vincenz, rising from his chair, "like a second irate Pope Marcellus, I banish all further talk about music from the chapel of the Holy Saint Serapion. Both Theodore and Cyprian have spoken very finely, but let me move 'the previous question'--let us return to the strict rule of the Order, for which I, being a novice, am a great stickler."

"Vincenz is right," said Theodore. "Our dissertations have not been very interesting to the unskilled in music, wherefore it is well to bring them to a conclusion. Let Sylvester read us the tale he has brought with him."

This was agreed to, and Sylvester began, without further prelude, as follows:--

MASTER MARTIN, THE COOPER, AND HIS MEN.

Dear reader, doubtless you, like others, feel your heart swell with emotion when you wander about some spot where the glorious monuments of old German art bear witness, in eloquent language, to the brightness, the pious, diligent industry, the truthfulness of beautiful days which are no more. Does not it seem as though you were entering some old, deserted dwelling? The pious book which the good house-father had been reading is still lying open on the table; the mother's needlework is still in the place where she left it; cherished presents, given on birthdays, and other festivals, stand about in carefully-kept cupboards. You feel as though some members of the household would come in presently and greet you with cordial hospitality. But you wait for them in vain. The ever-rolling wheel of time has carried them away. You may give yourself up to the sweet dream which brings the old masters back to you, so that you hear them talking to you with a pious energy which goes to the very marrow of your bones. And it is then that you begin to understand the deep meaning of their labours; for you are living in their days, and you understand the period which produced them and their works. But alas! what happens is, that just as you would clasp this beautiful dream-image to your heart with loving arms, it flies away coyly on the light clouds of the morning, scared at the noise and uproar of the day, and you gaze at its vanishing after-shimmer with eyes filled with burning tears. Hard beset by the surges of the life around you, you wake suddenly from the beautiful dream, and all that remains to you is the deep, endless longing which penetrates your heart with thrills of sweet emotion. Feelings such as those, dear reader, have at all times filled the breast of him who writes those pages for you, when his way has led him to the world-renowned town of Nürnberg. Delaying before the wondrous fabric of the fountain in the market-place, or contemplating the monument in St. Sebald, or the Pyx in St. Laurenz, or Albert Dürer's works of deep meaning in the Rathhaus, he has yielded himself wholly to the sweet dreams which took him back into the midst of the glories of the old Imperial free-town; and many a picture of the doughty burgher-life of those old days, when art and handicraft held out hands of help and friendship to each other in eager emulation, has risen up in clearness, and impressed itself on his mind with a peculiar pleasure and serenity of cheerfulness. Let it please you, dear reader, to have one of those pictures displayed to you. Perhaps you may look upon it with a sense of pleasure and satisfaction, or even with genial smiles; perhaps you may feel at home in Master Martin's house, and linger gladly amongst his vats and barrels. At all events, may that come to pass which the writer from the depths of his heart most cordially desires.

HOW MASTER MARTIN WAS ELECTED ONE OF THE CHIEFS OF HIS GUILD, AND DULY RETURNED THANKS FOR THAT HONOUR.

On the first of May of the year one thousand five hundred and eighty, the

Honourable Guild of Coopers in the free Imperial town of Nürnberg held its solemn annual meeting, according to use and wont. A short time previously one of its "Vorsteher," or presidents, had been carried to his grave; so that it was necessary to appoint his successor. The choice fell upon Master Martin, and, in truth, no one could equal him in strong and elegant building of vats; nor did any one understand as he did the keeping of wine in cellar; for which reason he had the grandest lords and gentry for his patrons, and lived in the utmost comfort; nay, in absolute wealth, so that the worthy town councillor, Jacobus Paumgartner (who was president of the Guild), said, "You have done right well, my worthy friends, to pitch upon Master Martin for this appointment, which could not be in better hands. Master Martin is highly esteemed by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance, for his great ability, and his profound experience in the art of storing and caring for the noble wine. His ceaseless, honest industry, his life of piety, in spite of the wealth which he has amassed, are an example to you all."

"So I offer you a thousand congratulations on your election, my dear Master Martin."

Thus saying, Paumgartner rose from his chair, and stepped forward a pace or two with extended arms, expecting that Master Martin would advance towards him in reciprocation. Upon which Master Martin pressed his arms on the elbows of his chair, and raised himself as slowly and heavily as his well-nourished "corporation" admitted of his doing; after which, with equal deliberateness, he walked into Paumgartner's hearty embrace, which he scarcely returned.

"Well, Master Martin," said Paumgartner, a little astonished, "is there anything not quite to your liking in having been elected Syndic?"

Master Martin, as was his habit, threw his head well back, fingered his paunch with both hands, and looked around the assemblage with his eyes opened very wide, and his nether lip protruded; then, turning to Paumgartner, he said: "My dear and worthy sir! how should it be otherwise than to my liking that I receive what is my just due? Who despises the reward of his hard work? Who sends from his door a bad debtor who comes at last to pay the money he has owed so long? My good friends"--here he turned to the Masters--"it has struck you at last, has it, that I ought to be elected Syndic of our Honourable Guild? What, think you, are the qualifications you expect in your Syndic? Ought he to be the best hand at his work?--Go and look at my two-fudder vat, hooped without firing, my great masterpiece there, and then come and tell me if e'er a one of you can boast of a piece of work its equal in strength and beauty. Should your Syndic be a man of money and property?--Call at my house, and I will open my chests and my coffers, and you shall gladden your eyes with the sight of the glittering gold and silver. Should he be honoured and esteemed by high and low, great and small?--Ask our honourable gentlemen of the Council; ask Princes und Lords all round our good town of Nürnberg; ask the Right Rev. Bishop of Bamberg; ask them all what they think of Master Martin--and I don't think you will hear much to his disadvantage."

With which Master Martin patted his fat corporation with much complacent contentment, twinkled his half-closed eyes, and, as all were silent, and only a half-suppressed throat-clearing, of a somewhat dubious character, was audible here and there, he continued as follows:

"However, I perceive--in fact I am well aware--that I ought now to return thanks, to the best of my ability, that it has pleased the Lord at last to enlighten your minds to make this election. Certainly, when I am paid for my work, or when my debtor returns me the sum he borrowed, I always write at the bottom of the receipt, 'With thanks. Tobias Martin, cooper in this town;' so I return you all my hearty thanks that you have paid off an old debt by electing me your Syndic. For the rest, I promise that I will perform the duties of my office with all truth and faithfulness; that I shall ever be ready to stand by the Guild, or any of its members, in word and deed, in time of need, to the utmost of my power. It will be my heart's earnest desire to maintain our Honourable Company in all the honour and dignity which it possesses at present; and, dear friends and Masters, I invite

you, one and all, to dinner on Sunday next, when, over a good glass of Hochheimer, Johannisberger, or whatever other good wine out of my cellar you may prefer, we may consider and discuss what further may be expedient for our common advantage. Once more, consider yourselves all cordially invited."

The faces of the Honourable Society, which had darkened considerably at Martin's arrogant words, now brightened again, and the gloomy silence was succeeded by lively conversation, in which much was said concerning the eminent merits of Master Martin, and of his celebrated cellar. Every one promised to appear on the Sunday, and gave his hand to the newly-elected Syndic, who shook them all cordially,--and he even pressed one or two of the Masters just the least little bit against his waistcoat, as if he half thought of embracing them.

The meeting dispersed in the best of humour, and the highest spirits.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT, IN MASTER MARTIN'S HOUSE.

It so chanced that Master Jacobus Paumgartner, on his way to his own dwelling, had to pass the door of Master Martin's house; and when they, together, had reached the said door, and Paumgartner was about to proceed on his way, Master Martin, taking off his little cap and bowing as low as he could, said to the Councillor: "Ah! if you would not think it beneath you, my dear and honoured sir, to step into this poor house of mine for a brief hour; if you would but be so very kind as to grant me the opportunity of profiting by, and delighting in, your wise conversation."

"I am sure, Master Martin," said the Councillor with a smile, "I shall only be too happy to accept your invitation to come in; though how you can call your house a poor one I cannot imagine. I know well that the wealthiest of our citizens do not surpass you in the costliness of your furniture and appointments. It is only the other day that you have finished those additions to your house which have made it one of the finest specimens of street architecture in all this famous town, of which it is one of the ornaments; of the interior arrangements I say nothing, for I am aware that of them no nobleman in the land need be ashamed."

Old Paumgartner was right; for when the brightly-waxed and polished door, all over rich brass-work, was opened, the spacious entrance-hall, with its beautifully-inlaid floor, fine pictures on the walls, rich carpets, and elegant cabinets and chairs, was seen to be like some fine drawing-room; so that everyone willingly obeyed the instructions which, according to an old-world custom, were inscribed on a tablet hung up close to the door, in verse, as follows:

"Those who, in entering, these steps ascend
Should see that their shoon shall not sully the floor;
Or then let them elsewhere their footsteps wend,
That so there shall be no distress on their score
A person of judgment doth know--without this--
What, in such matter, his duty is."

It was warm weather, and the air in the rooms, now that the evening twilight was falling, was heavy and steamy; for which reason Master Martin took his guest into the cool, spacious "best kitchen;" such at that time was named the apartment which, in the houses of wealthy merchants, was indeed furnished like a kitchen, but, at the same time, adorned not for use, but solely for display--with all manner of costly implements of household necessity. As soon as they came in, Master Martin cried loudly, "Rosa! Rosa!" The door presently opened, and Rosa, Master Martin's only daughter, entered.

Gracious reader! I must here ask you to call to remembrance, as vividly as you can, the masterpieces of our grand Albrecht Dürer. Let those beautiful virgin

forms which he has portrayed, instinct with grace and suavity, sweetness, gentleness, pious meekness, rise before you. Think of the noble, tender shapes; the pure, rounded foreheads white as snow; the rose-tint suffusing the cheeks; the delicate lips, red as cherries; the eyes, looking far away, in dreamy longing, half shadowed by the dark lashes, as moonlight is by thick leafage. Think on the silky hair, carefully gathered and knotted. Think on all the heavenly beauty of those virgin forms, and you will see the lovely Rosa. He who relates this tale cannot hope otherwise to portray her. Let me, however, remind you of another grand painter into whose soul a ray from those ancient days has penetrated: I mean our German Master, Cornelius. Just as he has made Margaret (in his illustrations to Goethe's mighty 'Faust') appear, as she says--

"I'm not a lady; nor am I fair,"

such was Rosa, when she felt constrained, bashfully and modestly, to evade the ardent advances of some admirer.

She now bent low before Paumgartner, in child-like deference, took his hand, and pressed it to her lips. The old gentleman's pale cheeks glowed. As the radiance of the evening sky fading away into darkness, brightens up suddenly for a last moment, gilding the dark foliage ere it sinks into night, so did the fire of youth long-perished flash up in his eyes. "Ah, Master Martin!" he cried, "you are a wealthy, prosperous man, but by far the most precious gift that Heaven has bestowed on you is your charming Rosa. The sight of her makes the hearts of us old fellows beat, as we sit at the Council Board: and if *we* can't turn our eyes away from her, who can blame the young gallants if they stand staring like stone images when they meet her in the street; or see only *her* in church, and not the parson? What marvel that, when there is a *fête* in the common meadow, they drive the other girls to despair, by all running after *your* daughter, following *her* exclusively with their sighs, love-looks, honeyed speeches? Master Martin, you are well aware you may pick and choose among the best patrician blood in the country-side for your son-in-law, whenever you have a mind."

Master Martin's face crumpled up into sombre folds. He told his daughter to go and bring some fine old wine; and when she, blushing over and over as to her cheeks, and with eyes fixed on the ground, had hurried away for it, he said to old Paumgartner:--

"Ay, honourable sir! it is no doubt the truth that my daughter is gifted with exceptional beauty, and that Heaven has made me rich in that respect as well as in others; but how could you speak of it in the girl's presence?--and as to an aristocratic son-in-law, that's all moonshine."

"Nay, nay, Master Martin," answered Paumgartner; "out of the abundance of the heart, the tongue speaketh,' you know. *My* old sluggish blood begins to dance in my veins when I look at Rosa; and there can't be much harm in my saying what she must know well enough to be true."

Rosa brought the wine, and two magnificent goblets. Martin drew the great table, richly carved, to the centre of the room; but just as the old fellows had taken their places, and Martin was filling the goblets, a tramping of horses was heard in front of the house. Some cavalier seemed to be drawing bridle; his voice was heard ringing loud in the hall. Rosa hastened to the door, and came back to say that the old Lord Heinrich, of Spangenberg, was there and wished to speak with Master Martin.

"Well!" said Martin, "this is really a wondrous lucky evening, since my good friend--my oldest patron and customer--has come to pay me a call. New orders, no doubt; something fresh to lay down in the cellar." With which he made off as glibly as he could, to greet the new visitor.

HOW MASTER MARTIN EXTOLLED HIS CALLING ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

The wine of Hochheimer glittered like pearls in the beautiful, cut goblets, and opened the hearts, and loosened the tongues of the three old fellows; and old Spangenberg, advanced in years, but still glowing with life and vigour, served up many a quaint tale and adventure of his younger days; so that Master Martin's paunch waggled heartily, and he had, times without end, to wipe tears of irrepressible laughter from his eyes, Paumgartner, too, forgot his senatorial gravity more than usual, and gave himself thoroughly up to the enjoyment of the noble liquor and the entertaining talk; then Rosa came in with a pretty basket, whence she brought out table-linen, dazzling as snow. She tripped here and there with housewifely eagerness; laid the table, and covered it with all sorts of well-flavoured dishes, appetizing of odour, and begged the gentlemen, with sweetest smiles, not to disdain what had been got ready in haste. The laughter and the flow of conversation ceased. Paumgartner and Spangenberg could neither of them move his eyes away from the beautiful girl, and even Master Martin watched her housewifely activities with a smile of satisfaction, as he leant back in his chair with folded hands. When Rosa would have left them, old Spangenberg jumped up as briskly as a youth, took her by both shoulders, and cried over and over again, with tears in his eyes, "Oh thou good, precious angel!--thou sweet, kind, charming creature!" Then he kissed her three times on the forehead, and went back to his chair in deep reflection. Paumgartner drank a toast to her health.

"Ay!" began Spangenberg, when she had left the room; "ay, Master Martin! Heaven has, in that daughter of yours, bestowed on you a jewel which you cannot prize too highly. She will bring you to great honour one day. Who--be he of whatsoever condition he may--would be otherwise than only too happy to be your son-in-law?"

"You see," said Paumgartner; "you see, Master Martin, the noble Herr von Spangenberg thinks exactly as I do. Already I see my darling Rosa a nobleman's bride, with the rich pearls in her lovely fair hair!"

"Dear, dear! good gentlemen!" cried Master Martin, looking quite out of temper, "why should you persist in talking about a matter which has not even begun to enter my thoughts? My daughter Rosa is only just eighteen; she is too young to be thinking of a husband; and how matters may come to pass hereafter, I leave wholly in God's hands. But thus much is certain that neither a noble nor any other man shall have my daughter's hand, save and except that cooper who proves himself, to my satisfaction, to be the most utterly perfect master of his craft--always supposing that my daughter loves him; for I am not going to constrain my darling daughter to anything whatever in the world, least of all to a marriage that does not please her."

Spangenberg and Paumgartner looked each other in the face, much astonished at this remarkable statement of the Master's. Presently, after clearing his throat a good deal, Spangenberg began:

"Then your daughter is not to marry out of her own class, is she?"

"God forbid that she should," answered Martin.

"But," continued Spangenberg, "suppose some doughty young Master belonging to some other craft--say, a goldsmith, or perhaps a talented young painter--were to come wooing your daughter, and pleased her very specially, much more than any of her other wooers, how were it then?"

Master Martin answered, drawing himself up, and throwing back his head:

"'Show me,' I should say, 'show me, my good young sir, the two-fudder cask that you have built as your masterpiece.' And if he couldn't do that I should open the door politely, and beg him, as civilly as I could, to try his luck elsewhere."

Spangenberg resumed:

"Suppose the young fellow said, 'I cannot show you a small-scale piece of work such as you speak of; but come with me to the market-place, and look at that stately building, reaching its pinnacles proudly up to the skies. That is my masterpiece.'"

"Ah, my good sir!" Martin interrupted impatiently; "what is the good of your taking all this trouble to alter my determination. My son-in-law shall belong to my own craft, and to no other; for I look upon my craft as being the most glorious that exists on earth. Do you suppose that all that is necessary to make a cask hold together is to fit the hoops on to the staves? Ah! ha! The glory and the beauty of our craft is that it presupposes a knowledge of the preservation and the nursing of that most precious of heaven's gifts--the noble wine, that so it may ripen, and penetrate us with its strength and sweetness, a glowing spirit of life. Then there is the build of the cask itself. If the build is to be successful, we have to measure and calculate all the curves, and the other dimensions, with rule and compass with the utmost accuracy. Geometers and arithmeticians we must be, that we may compute the proportions and the capacities of our casks. Ah, good sir, I can tell you my very heart laughs within my body when I see a fair, well-proportioned cask laid on to the end-stool, the staves all beautifully finished off with the riving knife and the broad-axe, and the men set to with the mallets, and 'clipp, clapp' ring; the strokes of the driver. Ha! ha! that is merry music. There stands then the work, perfect; and well may I look round me with a dash of pride when I take my marking-iron and mark it with my own trade-mark on the head of the cask--my own mark, known and respected by all genuine vineyard-masters in the land. You spoke of architects, dear sir. Very good; a grand, stately house is a fine work beyond doubt. But if I were an architect, and passed by one of my works, and saw some dirty-minded creature, some good-for-nothing, despicable wretch who had happened to become the owner of that house, looking down at me from one of the balconies, I should feel a shame at the bottom of my heart; I should long to dash that work of mine to pieces from sheer annoyance and disgust. Nothing of that sort can ever happen to me, for in my works dwells ever the very purest thing on earth--the noble wine. God's blessing on my craft!"

"Your encomium," said Spangenberg, "was admirable, and heartily felt on your part. It is to your honour that you hold your craft in high esteem. But please be patient with me if I do not leave you in peace even now. Suppose one of the nobility did actually come and ask you for your daughter. Sometimes, when a matter really comes very close to one, much in it begins to assume a different appearance to what one thought."

"Ah," cried Martin a little warmly, "what could I say, except with a polite bow, 'Honoured sir, if you were but a clever cooper; but, being as you are----'"

"Listen further," said Spangenberg. "If some fine morning a handsome noble were to come on a splendid charger, with a brilliant following all in grand clothes, and rein up at your door and ask for Rosa for his helpmate?"

"Hey! hey!" cried Master Martin more impetuously than before; "I should run as fast as I could and bolt and bar the door. Then I should cry and shout, 'Ride on your road, your lordship. Roses such as mine do not bloom for you. I dare say my cellar and my cash-box please you well, and you think you may have the girl into the bargain. Ride on your road.'"

Old Spangenberg rose up, his face red as fire. He leaned both hands on the table and looked down before him. "Well," he began, after a short silence, "this is my last question, Master Martin. If the young noble at your door were my own son, if I myself were at your door with him, would you bar the door? Would you think we had come only for the sake of your cellar and your cash-box?"

"Most certainly not," answered Master Martin. "My honoured and dear sir, I should open the door politely to you; everything in my house should be at your

and your son's command. But as regards Rosa, I should say, 'Had it pleased Heaven that your noble son had been a clever cooper, no one on earth would have been more welcome to me as a son-in-law than himself. As it is, however----' But why should you plague me with all those extraordinary questions, honoured sir? Our delightful conversation has come to an end, and our glasses are standing full. Let us leave the questions of the son-in-law and Rosa's marriage on one side. I drink your son's good health. People say he is a fine handsome gentleman."

Master Martin took up his goblet, and Paumgartner followed his example, saying "A truce to captious conversation; here's to your son's health."

Spangenberg touched glasses with them, and then said, with a forced laugh, "You saw, of course, that I was only speaking in jest. My son, who has only to ask and have amongst the best and noblest in the land, were a raving lunatic to come here begging for your daughter."

"Ah, my dear sir," answered Martin, "even were it jest I could answer it in no other manner, without loss of my proper self-respect. For you must confess, yourselves, that you are aware that I am justified in holding myself to be the best cooper in all the country-side; that all that can be known as to wine, I know it; that I hold faithfully by the wine-laws framed in the days of our departed Emperor Maximilian; that, as a pious man, I hate and despise all godlessness; that I never burn beyond an ounce of sulphur in a two-fudder cask, which is needful for the preservation thereof. All this, dear and honoured sirs, you can sufficiently trace the savour of, in my wine here."

Spangenberg, resuming his seat, strove to assume a happier expression of countenance again, and Paumgartner led the conversation to other topics. But as the strings of an instrument, when once they have gone out of tune, stretch and warp more and more, and the master cannot evoke from it the well sounding chords which he could produce before, nothing that those old fellows tried to say would harmonise any longer. Spangenberg called his servants and went away depressed and out of temper from Martin's house, which he had come to in such a jovial mood.

THE OLD GRANDMOTHER'S PROPHECY.

Master Martin was somewhat concerned at his old friend and patron's having gone away annoyed. He said to Paumgartner, who had finished his last goblet and was leaving too:

"I really cannot make out what the old gentleman was driving at with all those odd questions; and why should he be so vexed when he went away?"

"Dear Master Martin," answered Paumgartner, "you are a fine, grand, noble, upright fellow, and you are right to set a value on what, by the help of God, you have brought to such a prosperous issue and carried on so well, and what has been a source of wealth and fortune to you at the same time. Still, this should not lead you to ostentation and pride, which are contrary to all Christian feeling. In the first place, it was hardly right in you to set yourself above all the other masters at the meeting to-day as you did. Very likely you do know more of your craft than all the rest of them put together; but to go and cast this straight in their teeth could only give rise to anger and annoyance. And then your conduct of this evening; you surely could not have been so blind as not to see that what Spangenberg was driving at was to find out how far your headstrong pride would really carry you. It could not but have hurt the worthy gentleman sorely to hear you attribute any young noble's wooing of your daughter to mere greed for your money. And it would have all been well enough if you had got back into the right road when he began to talk about his own son. If you had said, 'Ah, my good and honoured sir, if you were to come with your son to ask for my daughter (an honour on which, certainly, I could never have reckoned), I should waver in the

firmness of my determination.' If you had said that, what would have been the consequence, but that old Spangenberg, quite forgetting his previous wrongs, would have smiled, and got back into the fine temper he was in before."

"Scold me well," said Master Martin; "I deserve it, I know. But when the old gentleman spoke such non sense, I really could not bring myself to give him any other answer."

"Then," Paumgartner continued, "this silly notion of yours that you won't give your daughter to anybody but a cooper. Was ever such nonsense heard of? You say your daughter's destiny shall be left in God's hands, and yet you go and wrest it out of God's hands yourself, by deciding that you will choose your son-in-law out of one limited circle. This may be the very destruction of both her and you. Leave off such unchristian, childish folly, Master Martin. Commit the matter to the Almighty. He will place the right decision in your daughter's pious heart."

"Ah, my dear sir," said Master Martin quite dejectedly, "I see now, for the first time, how wrong I was not to make a clean breast of the whole business at once. You, of course, suppose that it is merely my high opinion of the cooper's craft which makes me resolve never to give Rosa to anybody but a master cooper. But that is by no means the case; there is another reason. I can't let you go away until I have told you all this. You shall not pass a single night, even, with a bad opinion of me in your mind. Sit down again; I beg it as a favour. See, here is still another bottle of my oldest wine; Spangenberg was too much offended to taste it. Sit, and stay but a few minutes longer."

Paumgartner was surprised at Master Martin's friendly insistence, which was not in his usual nature. It seemed as if something lay heavy on his mind which he felt eager to be clear of. When Paumgartner had resumed his seat, and taken some of the wine, Master Martin commenced as follows:

"You are aware, dear sir, that my beloved wife died soon after Rosa's birth from the effects of a difficult confinement. My own grandmother was still alive at a great age (if one can call it being 'alive,' to be stone deaf, quite blind, scarcely able to speak, paralysed in every limb, and completely bedridden). My Rosa had been baptized, and the nurse was sitting with her in the room where the old grandmother lay. I was so sorrowful, and (when I looked at the child) so wonderfully happy, and yet so sad--I was so deeply touched that I found it impossible to do any work, and I was standing, sunk in my thoughts, beside my grandmother's bed, envying her, and thinking how well for her it was that she had done with earthly pain. And as I was so looking into her pale face, all at once she began to smile in the strangest way; her wrinkled features seemed to smooth out, her pale cheeks took on a colour; she sat up in her bed and stretched her powerless arms as she had not been able to do for a long time, and, as if suddenly inspired by some miraculous power, she called out distinctly, in a soft, sweet voice, 'Rosa! darling Rosa!' The nurse gave her the child. She took it and dandled it in her arms. But now, my dear sir, picture my amazement, nay, my terror, when the old lady began, in a strong, clear voice, a song, in the lofty, joyful 'manner' of Herr Hans Berchler,⁵ host at the sign of the Spirit, in Strasbourg, to the following effect:--

"Little maiden, with cheeks of roses,
Rosa, hear The decree.
Never yield thee to dread or doubting,
Set God fast in thy heart.
Let not vain longings deride thee.
He prepares thee a brightsome dwelling,
Streams, of sweet savour, flowing therein,
Beauteous angels, singing full sweetly.
Pious of soul,
List to the truest of wooing,
Loveliest promise of love.

A House, resplendent and gleaming,
He whom thy heart goeth forth to
Shall to thy dwelling bring.
Needless to ask of thy father.
This is thy destined lord.
For this House, into thy dwelling
Bringeth good fortune and bliss.
Keep thine eyes open, then, maiden;
Watchful thine ears for the true word to come.
God's truest blessing be on thee,
Walking thy flowery way."

"And when the old grandmother had sung this song, she put the child gently and carefully down on the bedcover, and laying her withered, trembling hands upon its forehead, whispered words which were wholly unintelligible, though the inspired and sublime expression of her face showed that she was praying. Then she sunk back with her head on the pillow, and as the nurse lifted the child she gave a deep sigh--she was gone."

"A wonderful story," said Paumgartner. "Still I don't see how this prophetic song of the old grandmother has any connection with your obstinate determination to give Rosa to nobody but a master cooper."

"What can be clearer," said Master Martin, "than that the old lady, specially enlightened by the Lord during the last moments of her life, declared in prophecy how matters are to go with Rosa, if she is to be happy and fortunate? The wooer who is to bring wealth, luck and happiness into her dwelling with a beautiful House; who can that be but a clever cooper, who shall finish his masterpiece, the beautiful House of his building, in my workshop? In what other house do streams of sweet savour flow up and down but in a wine-cask? And when the wine is working it rustles, and hums, and plashes; and that is the singing of the angels as they float on the tiny ripples. Ay, ay! no other bridegroom did the old grandmother mean but the master cooper. To that I pin my faith."

"Good Master Martin," said Paumgartner, "you interpret the old lady's words after your own manner; but I cannot altogether agree with your interpretation, and I still maintain that you ought to leave the whole matter in the hands of God, and in your daughter's heart: for the true meaning and the proper deciding of it most certainly lie hidden there."

"And I, as far as I am concerned," said Master Martin, "stick to my own opinion, that my son-in-law shall be none but a clever cooper. This I hold to, for once and for all."

Paumgartner was beginning almost to lose his temper over Martin's obstinacy. But he controlled himself, and rose from his chair, saying:

"It is getting late, Master Martin; I think we have had as much wine and as much conversation as are good for us."

And, as they were making for the door, there appeared a young woman with five boys, of whom the eldest might have been scarcely eight, and the youngest scarcely half a year old. The woman was weeping and sobbing. Rosa hastened to meet them, crying, "Ah! Heavens! Valentine must be dead. Here are his wife and children." "What? Valentine dead?" cried Master Martin, much shocked, "Oh, what a misfortune! What a misfortune! My dear sir, Valentine was the best of all my workmen; a hardworking, good, honest fellow. A short time ago he hurt himself dangerously with an adze, during the building of a big cask. His wound got worse and worse; he fell into a violent fever, and now he has had to die in the prime of his years." Master Martin went up to the disconsolate woman, who was bathed in tears, lamenting that she must perish in misery and distress.

"What think you of *me*?" asked Master Martin. "Your husband came by his

death in my service, and do you suppose I am going to abandon you in your need? God forbid! You all belong to my house henceforth. To-morrow, or when you choose, we will bury your husband, poor fellow, and then you and your boys go to my farm before the Lady-gate, where my great workshop is, and be there with my men. You can look after the housekeeping; I will bring up those fine young boys of yours as though they were my own. More than that, your old father shall come and live here too. He was a grand journeyman cooper while he had strength in his arms for the work. If he can't wield the mallet now-a-days, or the notching-tool, or the hooping-iron, or take his stroke at the grooving-bench, why he can manage to turn out hoops with the rounding-knife. Whether or not, into my house he comes with the rest of you."

Had not Master Martin held the woman up, she would have fallen at his feet overwhelmed with emotion. The elder boys hung upon his doublet, and the two youngest, whom Rosa had taken in her arms, held out their little hands to him, as if they understood what he said.

Quoth old Paumgartner, smiling, with tears in his eyes, "One can't be vexed with you, Master Martin," and he betook himself to his dwelling.

HOW THE TWO YOUNG JOURNEYMEN, FRIEDRICH AND REINHOLD, MADE EACH OTHER'S ACQUAINTANCE.

The evening was falling as a young journeyman, very handsome and distinguished-looking, Friedrich by name, was lying on a little grassy hillock, shaded by leafy trees. The sun had set, and rosy flames were shooting up from the deep abyss of the western sky. The famous town of Nürnberg could be distinctly seen in the distance, broadening out in the valley, its proud towers stretching up into the evening red, which darted bright rays, streaming on to their summits. The young mechanic had his arm propped upon his bundle, or travelling knapsack, and was gazing down into the valley with longing eyes. He plucked a flower or two from the grass, and cast them into the air towards the sunset sky; then once more he gazed mournfully before him, and the hot tears came to his eyes. At length he lifted his head, stretched out his arms, as if he were embracing some beloved form, and sang the following song, in a rich, tuneful voice:

"Again, again I see thee, my own beloved home,
My faithful heart has never lost
The faintest trace of thee.
Rise on my sight, oh roseate sheen;
Fain would I see nought else but roses.
Love's own blossoms, glow on my heart,
Gladden my bosom, cheer my soul.
Ah, swelling heart, and must thou break?
Beat firm through pain and sweetest joy.
And thou, thou golden evening sky,
Be thou to me a faithful herald;
Bear down to her my sighs and tears
And tell her, should I die, my heart
Dissolved in love unchanging."

When Friedrich had finished this song, he took some wax from his bundle, warmed it in his breast, and began to model a beautiful rose, with its hundreds of delicate petals, in the most skilful and artistic manner. As he worked at it, he kept singing detached phrases of his song; and, thus absorbed, he did not notice a handsome lad who had been standing behind him for a considerable time, eagerly watching him as he worked.

"My friend," said this young fellow, "that is an exquisite piece of work you are doing."

Friedrich looked round, startled. But when he saw the stranger's kindly dark eyes, he felt as if he had known him long. So he answered, with a smile, "Ah, my dear sir, how can you care to look at this trifle, which serves to pass a little of my time on my journey?"

The stranger answered, "If you call that flower, so accurately studied and copied from nature, and so tenderly executed, a 'trifle,' a plaything, you must be a remarkably finished and accomplished artist in that line. You delight me in a double sense. First, your song, which you sung so charmingly (in the tender 'Letter-Mode' of Martin Haescher), went quite to my heart; and now I have to admire your masterly skill in modelling. Whither are you bound to-day?"

"The goal of my journey," answered Friedrich, "lies there before our eyes. I am bound for my home there, the renowned town of Nürnberg. As the sun is far beneath the horizon, I shall pass the night down in the village there; but I shall push on as early as I can in the morning, and be in Nürnberg by noon."

"Ah, how well that falls in," cried the lad; "I am bound for Nürnberg too. I shall pass the night along with you in the village, and we can go on together in the morning. So let us talk together a little."

The lad, whose name was Reinhold, threw himself down on the grass beside Friedrich, and went on as follows:

"If I do not mistake, you are a splendid metal-worker. I see that by your style of moulding. You work in gold and silver, do you not?"

Friedrich looked sadly down, and began, quite dejectedly:

"Ah, my dear sir, you take me for something much higher and better than I really am. I must tell you candidly that I learnt the craft of a cooper, and I wish to go and work with a well-known master of that craft in Nürnberg. You will despise me that I do not model and cast glorious images, figures, groups, and only shape hoops for casks and barrels."

"This is delightful," cried Reinhold, laughing aloud. "The idea of *my* despising you for being a cooper, when I am nothing else myself!"

Friedrich looked at him fixedly; he did not know what to think. Reinhold's dress was like anything rather than that of a journeyman cooper on his travels. The doublet of fine black cloth trimmed with velvet, the delicate lace cravat, short sword, barret cap, with long drooping feather, seemed more appropriate to a well-to-do merchant; and yet there was a certain wonderful something in the face and whole bearing of the lad which excluded the idea of a merchant. Reinhold saw Friedrich's doubts; he opened his knapsack, and brought out his cooper's leather apron and case of tools, crying, "Look *there*, friend; have you any doubt now as to my being your comrade? I dare say my clothes may strike you a little; but I come from Strassburg, where the coopers dress like gentry. Certainly, like yourself, I once had ideas of something different; but now I think the cooper's craft the finest in the world, and I have based many of my fairest life-hopes on it. Is not this *your* case, too, comrade? But it almost seems to me as if some dark cloud-shadow had come over the happiness of your life, preventing you from looking around you with any gladness. Your song was all love-longing and sorrow; but there were tones in it which seemed to come shining out of my own breast, and I feel as though I knew everything which is imprisoned within you. That is all the more reason why you should tell me all about it. As we are going to be intimate friends and companions in Nürnberg, confide in me." Reinhold put an arm about Friedrich, and looked him kindly in the eyes.

"The more I look at you, you charming fellow," Friedrich said, "the more I am drawn to you. I distinctly hear a wondrous voice within me echoing a monition of my soul, which tells me you are my true friend. So I *must* tell you everything. Not that a poor fellow such as I has anything really important to confide to you, but

merely because the breast of a true friend has room for a man's sorrows; and, from the first moment of our acquaintance, I felt that you are the truest friend I possess. I am a cooper now, and I may say I know my craft well. But all my devotion was given to another--perhaps a better--art. From my childhood my desire was to be a silversmith, a great Master in the art of modelling and working in silver, such as Peter Fischer, or the Italian, Benvenuto Cellini. I worked at this with fervent zeal, under Master Johannes Holzschuer, the famous silversmith in my native town, who, although he did not himself cast images of the kind I refer to, had it in his power to give me instruction in that direction and province. Into Herr Holzschuer's house came, not seldom, Herr Tobias Martin, the master cooper, with his daughter, the beautiful charming Rosa. I fell in love with her, without quite being aware of it myself. I left home, and went to Augsburg, to learn image-casting properly, and it was not till then that the love-flames blazed up in my heart. I saw and heard only Rosa. I loathed every effort, every endeavour that did not lead to *her*; so I started off upon the only path which *did* lead to her. Master Martin will give his daughter to no man save the cooper who, in his house, shall make the most perfect masterpiece which a cooper can produce, and whom at the same time his daughter shall look upon favourably into the bargain. I cast my own art on one side, I learned the cooper's craft, and I am going to Nürnberg to work in Master Martin's workshop. That is my object and intention. But now that my home lies before me, and Rosa's image glows vividly before my eyes, I could swoon for hesitation, anxiety, dread. I see *now* the folly of my undertaking clearly. Can I tell whether Rosa loves me, or ever will love me?"

Reinhold had listened with even closer attention. He now rested his head on his arm, and, placing his hand over his eyes, asked, in a hollow, gloomy voice:

"Has Rosa ever given you any sign that she cares for you?"

"Ah," said Friedrich, "when I left Nürnberg, Rosa was more a child than a girl. She certainly did not dislike me. She used to smile charmingly on me when I never wearied of gathering flowers and making wreaths in Herr Holzschuer's garden. But----"

"Well, there is some hope in that case," Reinhold cried out suddenly, so violently, and in such an unpleasant, yelling tone, that Friedrich felt almost frightened. Reinhold started to his feet, the sword at his side rattled, and as he stood drawn up to his full height, the evening shadows fell on his pale face, and distorted his gentle features in such an ill-favoured sort that Friedrich cried, in real anxiety:

"What has come to you so suddenly?"

As he spoke he stepped backward, touching Reinhold's bundle with his foot. A sound of strings rang forth of it, and Reinhold cried, angrily:

"Don't smash my lute, you villain!"

He took the instrument from his bundle and struck its strings stormily, as if he would tear them in pieces. But soon his touch upon them grew soft and tuneful.

"Let us go on down to the village, brother! I have here a fine remedy against the Evil Spirits which stand in our way, and are in opposition principally to *me*."

"Why should Evil Spirits stand in our way, dear brother?" asked Friedrich. "But oh! your playing is beautiful, Please to go on with it."

The gold stars had come forth in the dark azure of the heavens; the night-wind was breathing in soft whispers over the perfumed meadows; the streams were murmuring louder; the dark trees of the forest were rustling all round in the distance. Reinhold and Friedrich went down into the valley, playing and singing; and clear and bright, as on shining pinions, their songs of Love and Longing floated on the breeze.

When they reached their night-quarters, Reinhold threw his lute and his knapsack down, and pressed Friedrich stormily to his heart. Friedrich felt burning tears upon his cheek; they came from Reinhold's eyes.

HOW THE TWO YOUNG JOURNEYMEN, REINHOLD AND FRIEDRICH, WERE RECEIVED INTO MASTER MARTIN'S HOUSE.

When Friedrich awoke the next morning, he missed his new friend, who had thrown himself down by his side on the straw bed; and as he saw neither the lute nor the bundle, he thought Reinhold, for reasons to him unknown, had left him and taken another road. When he went out, however, he saw Reinhold with his lute under his arm, and his knapsack, but dressed quite differently to what he had been the day before. He had taken the feather from his cap, was not wearing his sword, and had on a homely citizen's doublet, of sober hue, instead of the velvet slashed one he had previously.

"*Now, brother,*" he cried, with a kindly smile, "I am sure you see that I really am your comrade and fellow-journeyman. However, I must say you slept wonderfully well for a man in love. Look how high the sun is. Let's be off at once."

Friedrich was silent and thoughtful; he scarcely answered Reinhold, or paid any attention to his jests, for he darted about hither and thither in the highest spirits, shouting aloud, and throwing his cap into the air; but even he became quieter as they approached the town, quieter and quieter.

"I cannot go any further, I am so anxious, so uncertain, so filled with delicious unrest," said Friedrich, throwing himself down as one exhausted, when they had all but arrived at the gates of Nürnberg. Reinhold sat down beside him, and after a time said:--

"Last night I must have seemed to you to be a very strange creature, good brother, but when you told me of your love, and were so disconsolate, all manner of absurd nonsense came into my head, making me feel confused. I think I should have gone crazy at last, had not your singing and my lute driven the evil spirits away. This morning, when the first rays of the sun awoke me, all my sense of enjoyment in life had come back to me. I went out, and as I strolled up and down amongst the trees, all manner of glorious thoughts came into my mind; the way in which I had met you--how my whole heart had so turned to you. I remembered a pretty tale of a matter which happened some time ago in Italy when I chanced to be there. I should like to tell it to you, as it shows very vividly what true friendship can accomplish. It so happened that a certain noble prince, a zealous friend and protector of the Arts, offered a valuable prize for a picture, the subject of which, very interesting, and not over-difficult to treat, was duly announced. Two young painters, who were united in bonds of the closest friendship, determined to compete for this prize. They were in the habit of working together; they told each other their respective ideas on the subject, showed each other their sketches for it, and talked much together as to the difficulties to be overcome. The elder of the two, who had more experience than the other in drawing and grouping, had soon grasped the idea of his picture, had sketched it, and was helping the younger with all his power; for the latter was so discouraged at the very threshold of his sketch for the picture, that he would have given up all idea of going on had not the elder unceasingly encouraged him, and given him advice and suggestions. Now when they began to paint their pictures, the younger, who was quite a master of colour, was able to give the elder many suggestions, which he skilfully adopted and availed himself of; thus, the elder had never coloured a picture so well, and the younger had never drawn one so well. When the pictures were finished, the masters embraced each other, each of them inwardly delighted with the work of the other, and each convinced that the well-earned prize belonged of right to the other. The younger, however, was the gainer of the prize; upon which he cried

out, thoroughly ashamed: 'Why should I have it? What is my merit compared to my friend's? I could not have accomplished anything worthy of praise but for his help.' But the elder said: 'And did you not help me with valuable counsel and advice? No doubt my picture is by no means bad; but you have got the prize, as was proper. To strive towards the same goal, bravely and openly, that is real friendship. Then the laurel which the victor gains honours the vanquished too. I like you all the more for your having laboured so doughtily, and brought me, too, honour and renown by your victory.' Now, Friedrich, that painter was right, was he not? Would it not rather truly and intimately unite than separate true friends to strive for the same prize, honestly, openly, genuinely, to the utmost of their power? Can petty envy or hatred find place in noble minds?"

"Never!" answered Friedrich; "assuredly never! We are now loving brethren; very likely we shall both ere long set to work to turn out the great Nürnberg 'masterpiece'--the two-fudder cask, without firing--each on his own account. But heaven forbid that I should be able to trace in myself the faintest tinge of envy, if yours, dear brother Reinhold, should be a better one than mine."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Reinhold. "What does your 'masterpiece' signify? You will soon make *that*, I have no doubt, to the admiration of all competent coopers; and let me tell you that, as far as concerns the measurements, the proportions, curves, etc., you have found in me your man; moreover, you can trust me as to the choice of the timber, staves of red oak, felled in the winter, free from worm-holes, red or white stripes, or blaze-marks--that is what we will seek out. You can trust my eye; I will give you the best possible advice about everything, and my own 'masterpiece' will be none the worse for that."

"But, heaven help us," cried Friedrich, "why should we talk about 'masterpieces,' and which of us is going to succeed there? Is that what we are going to contend for? The real 'masterpiece' is winning Rosa; how are we to set about that? My head reels at it."

"Well, brother," cried Reinhold, still laughing; "really we were not saying anything about Rosa at that moment; you are a dreamer. Come along, let us get to the town, at all events."

Friedrich rose, and walked along, perplexed in mind. As they were washing and brushing themselves in the inn, Reinhold said:

"For my part, I don't know in the least what master I am going to work with. I don't know a creature in the place, so I was thinking that perhaps you would take me with you to Master Martin's, dear brother; perhaps he would give me work."

"You take a weight from my heart," answered Friedrich; "for if you are with me I shall find it easier to overcome my anxiety and my uneasiness."

So they set out together stoutly for the house of the renowned cooper, Master Martin.

It happened to be the very Sunday on which Master Martin was giving his great official dinner in honour of his appointment, and it was exactly dinner-time. Thus, when Reinhold and Friedrich crossed Master Martin's threshold, they became aware of a ringing of wine-glasses, and the confused buzz of a merry dinner-company.

"Ah!" said Friedrich, despondingly; "I fear we have come at an unfortunate time."

"I think just the contrary," said Reinhold; "for Master Martin will be in a fine temper, after all that good cheer, and disposed to grant our requests."

And presently Master Martin--to whom they had caused their coming to be announced--came out to them, in festal attire, and with no small amount of rubicundity of nose and cheeks. As soon as he saw Friedrich, he cried out, "Aha,

Friedrich, good lad, thou art home again! That is well; and thou hast betaken thyself to the noble cooper-craft, too! No doubt Herr Holzschuer makes terrible faces when thy name is mentioned, and says a really great artist is spoilt in thee, and that thou couldst very likely have cast all sorts of little niminy-piminy figures, like those in St. Sebald's--that, and trellis-work, such as there is in Fugger's house in Augsburg. Stupid stuff and nonsense; thou hast done the proper thing in turning to what is right; many thousand welcomes to thee." With which Master Martin took him by the shoulders and embraced him, according to his wont when highly pleased. Friedrich completely revived at Master Martin's kind reception of him. All his bashfulness abandoned him: he not only laid his own desires before Master Martin, fully and unhesitatingly, but begged him to take Reinhold into his service too.

"Well," said Master Martin, "you could not possibly have come at a better time; there is heaps of work, and I'm greatly in need of men. You are both heartily welcome. Take off your bundles and come in; dinner is nearly done, but there is room at the table, and Rosa will take every care of you." And Master Martin went in with the two journeymen.

The worthy and honourable masters were all seated there, Herr Paumgartner in the place of honour. Their faces were all aglow; dessert was just served, and a noble wine was pearling in the great drinking-glasses. Matters had arrived at a point when each of the masters was talking, very loud, about something different from all the others, yet they all thought they quite followed and understood; and now one, and now another, laughed loud, without quite knowing why or wherefore. But when Master Martin, with Friedrich and Reinhold in either hand, announced that those two fine young journeymen, with good certificates, the sort of fellows after his own heart, had come offering to work for him, all grew silent, and everybody looked at the handsome lads with a pleasant satisfaction. Reinhold glanced round him with his clear eyes, almost proudly; but Friedrich cast his down, and toyed with his barret-cap. Master Martin gave the two lads places at the bottom of the table. But they were the most glorious places of all, for presently Rosa came and sat down beside them, carefully helping and serving them with exquisite dishes and delicious wines. All this made a delightful picture to behold. The beautiful Rosa, the handsome lads, the bearded masters, one could not but think of some shining morning cloudlet rising up alone on a dark background of sky; or, perhaps, of pretty spring flowers, raising their heads from melancholy, colourless grass. Friedrich could hardly breathe for rapture and delight; only by stealth did he now and then glance at her who was filling all his soul. He stared down at his plate; how was it possible for him to swallow a morsel? Reinhold, on the other hand, never moved his eyes (from which sparkling lightnings flashed) from the girl. He began to talk of his far travels in such a marvellous style, that she had never heard anything like it before. All that he spoke of seemed to rise before her eyes in thousands of ever-changing images; she was all eye, all ear. She did not know where she was, or what was happening to her when Reinhold, in the fire of his discourse, grasped her hand and pressed it to his heart. "Friedrich," he cried, "why are you sitting mum and sad? Have you lost your tongue? Come, let's clink our glasses to the health of this young lady, who is taking such care of us here." Friedrich took, with trembling hand, the tall goblet which Reinhold had filled to the brim, and which, as Reinhold did not draw breath, he had to empty to the last drop. "Here's to our brave master!" Reinhold cried again, filling the glasses; and once more Friedrich had to empty his bumper. Then the fire-spirit of the wine permeated him, and set his halting blood a-moving, till it coursed, seething and dancing, through all his veins. "What a blissful feeling," he whispered, as the glowing scarlet mantled in his cheeks; "I cannot express how delightful; never did I feel so happy in all my life before."

Rosa--to whom those words might, perhaps, convey another sense smiled on him with marvellous sweetness, and he, befreesed from all his bashfulness, said: "Dear Rosa, I suppose you don't remember me at all, do you?"

"Now, Friedrich," answered Rosa, with downcast eyes; "how could it be

possible that I should forget you so soon? At old Herr Holzschuer's I was only a child, certainly, but you did not think it beneath you to play with me; and you always talked of such charming things. And that beautiful little basket of silver wire which you gave me one Christmas, I still have, and shall always prize it as a precious keepsake." Tears stood in the lad's eyes, in the intoxication of his happiness. He tried to speak; but only the words, "Ah, Rosa! Dear Rosa!" came out of his heart like a deep sigh. Rosa went on to say: "I have always wished most heartily that I might see you again, but that you should take to the cooper's craft, I never could have imagined. Ah! when I think of the beautiful things you used to make at Herr Holzschuer's, it is really a shame that you do not keep to your own art."

"Ah, Rosa," said Friedrich, "it was all for your sake that I was faithless to my own beloved art." Scarcely were the words spoken than he would fain have sunk into the ground with shame and alarm. The most unintentional of avowals had come from his lips. Rosa, as if she saw it all, turned her face away from him. He strove in vain for words. However, Herr Paumgartner rapped on the table loudly with a knife, and announced to the company that Herr Vollrad, a worthy master-singer, would favour them with a song. So Herr Vollrad stood up, cleared his throat, and sung such a beautiful song in Hans Vogelsang's "golden tone," that all hearts throbbed for joy, and even Friedrich recovered from his serious embarrassment. After Herr Vollrad had sung other beautiful songs, in various other "tones" or "manners,"--such as the "sweet" tone, the "crooked horn" manner, the "flowery paradise" manner, the "fresh orange" manner, etc.,--he said that, should there be any at the table who knew anything of the gracious craft of the master-singers, he should now be so good as to sing a song. At this Reinhold rose, and said that, if he might be permitted to accompany himself on the lute, after the Italian manner, he too would be happy to sing a song, keeping, however, in it wholly to the German "modes." No one saying anything to the contrary, he got out his lute, and after preluding a little in the loveliest way, went on with the following song:--

"Where is the little fount,
Where springs the flavourous wine?
Deep in the ground.
There found,
All men may see with joy its golden glory shine.
Who found it, thought it out,
With doughty might and thews,
With craft and careful skill?
Who but the cooper!
None but he can build
The precious fount and source."

(With a little more to the same effect.) This song pleased everyone beyond measure, but none so much as Master Martin, whose eyes beamed with joy and delight. Without attending to Herr Vollrad--who spake more than was necessary concerning that "manner" of "Herr Müller's" which the journeyman had "hit off by no means badly"--Master Martin rose, and, lifting his glass on high, cried: "Come here--thou--proper cooper and fine master-singer--come here! with me--with thy master--shalt thou empty this glass!"

Reinhold had to do as he was told. As he came back to his seat he whispered to the thoughtful Friedrich, "*You* must sing now, what you snug last night."

"You are mad," Friedrich cried, in anger. But Reinhold spoke out to the company, in a loud voice, saying:--

"Honourable gentlemen and masters, my dear brother Friedrich here knows much more beautiful songs and has a far finer voice than I. But the dust of the journey has got into his throat, so that he will sing to you in all 'manners' on another occasion."

Then they all begun praising and applauding Friedrich as if he had actually sung, and some of the masters even thought his voice was finer than Reinhold's. Herr Vollrad (after another glass) thought, and said, that Friedrich caught the beautiful German "modes" even better than Reinhold, who had just a little too much of the Italian school about him. But Master Martin threw his head back, smote his breast with his fist till it resounded again, and cried--

"Those are *my* men--mine, I say! Master Tobias Martin, the Cooper of Nürnberg's men."

And all the masters nodded their heads, and said, as they savoured the last drops out of their tall drinking-glasses--

"Aye, aye, it is so! All right! Master Martin's, the Cooper of Nürnberg's fine, clever men."

At last they all went home to bed; and Master Martin gave each of his new journeymen a nice bright chamber in his house.

HOW A THIRD JOURNEYMAN CAME TO MASTER MARTIN'S AND WHAT HAPPENED THEREUPON.

After Friedrich and Reinhold had worked with Master Martin for a week or two, he observed that, as regarded measurements, rule and compass work, calculations, and correctness of eye, Reinhold was probably without a rival. But it was otherwise as concerned work at the bench with the adze or the mallet. At those Reinhold soon wearied, and the work would not progress, let him exert himself as he would. Friedrich, on the other hand, hammered and planed away sturdily, and did not get very tired of it. What they both had in common, however, was a refinement of manner, to which there joined themselves, chiefly at Reinhold's instigation, much innocent merriment and witty fun. Moreover (especially when Rosa was by) they did not spare their throats, but sang many a beautiful song, often together, when their voices went delightfully. And when Friedrich, turning his eyes to Rosa, would tend towards falling into a melancholy and sentimental strain, Reinhold would immediately strike in with a comic ditty of his own devising, which began--

"The vat is not the zither--the zither not the vat,"

so that old Martin had often to drop the tool which he had in his hand raised in act to strike, and hold his sides for inward laughter. On the whole both the journeymen, but especially Reinhold, stood high in Master Martin's favour; and one might almost fancy that Rosa too sometimes found a pretext for lingering oftener and longer in the workshop than perhaps she otherwise would have done.

One day Master Martin went thoughtfully to his workshop outside the town gate, where work was carried on in the summer-time. Friedrich and Reinhold were just beginning a small cask. Master Martin placed himself before them with folded arms, and said:--

"I really cannot tell you, you two dear lads, how thoroughly I am satisfied with you. But I find myself in a considerable predicament. People write to me from the Rhine country that as regards crop this present year is going to be more blessed than any that has gone before it. A certain wise man has said that this comet which has appeared in the sky so fertilises the earth with its wonderful rays, that it will give forth all the heat which genders the noble metals out of its deepest depths, which will so stream and exhale up into the thirsting vines, that they will yield crops upon crops brimful of the liquid fire which has heated them. It seems there has not been such a lucky 'constellation' for well on to three hundred years. Very good; hence will spring great abundance of work. And, moreover, the Bishop of Bamberg has written to order a large vat. We shall not be able to finish it, so

that I shall have to be looking out for another journeyman hand--a good one. All the same, I don't want to bring the first comer out of the street amongst us. And yet what's to be done? I see no choice. If you happen to know of a good hand anywhere whom you would have no objection to work with, say the word, and I'll send and get him though it should cost me no small sum."

Scarce had Master Martin said this, when a young man of tall, powerful figure cried in at the door, in a loud voice, "I say, is this Master Martin's?"

"Yea," said Master Martin, stepping up to the young man, "verily it is; but there's no occasion to shout in that murdering sort of style. That is not the way to come at people."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the young man. "I see you are Master Martin yourself. You answer exactly to the description of him given to me--the fat corporation, the imposing double chin, the flashing eyes, and the red nose. My best respects to you, Master Martin."

"Well, sir," said Master Martin, greatly irritated, "and what may your business with Master Martin be?"

"I am a journeyman cooper," the young man answered, "and all I want is to know if you can give me a job of work here."

Master Martin took a step or two backward in sheer amazement at the notion that, just when he had made up his mind to look out for another hand, one should appear and offer himself; and he scanned the young man closely from head to foot. The latter met his gaze with which flashed. Now, as Master Martin observed the broad chest, athletic build, and powerful hands of the young man, he thought to himself, "This is just the stout, strong-built sort of fellow that I want." And he asked him for his certificates.

"I have not got them with me," the young man said, "but I will soon get them. In the meantime, I give you my word that I will do your work faithfully and honourably. That must suffice for the time." And therewith, without waiting for Master Martin's leave, he strode into the workshop, threw down his barret and his bundle, tied on his apron, and said, "Now then, Master Martin, tell me what to set about."

Master Martin, puzzled by this cool manner of setting about matters, had to take thought with himself for a moment. "Well," he said, "my lad, to show us that you are a trained cooper, set to with the notcher upon that cask there at the end stool."

The stranger journeyman accomplished the task told off to him with remarkable force, skill, and rapidity. And then, loudly laughing, he cried, "Now, master, have you any doubt that I am a trained cooper? But," he continued, as he strolled up and down the shop examining the tools, timber, &c., "you seem to have a good deal of queer stuff about here. Now here's a funny little bit of a mallet. I suppose your children amuse themselves with that. And the broad-axe yonder, that's for your apprentice boys, I presume; isn't it?" With that he whirled the great heavy mallet--which Reinhold could not wield, and which Friedrich could only use with difficulty--up to the roof-tree, did the like with the ponderous broad-axe which Master Martin worked with, and then rolled great casks about as if they had been bowls; and, seizing a thick unshaped stave, he cried, "Master, this seems good sort of oak-heart. I reckon it will fly like glass!" and banged it against the grindstone, so that it broke right across into two pieces with a loud report.

"My good sir," Master Martin cried, "all I beg of you is, don't smash up that two-fudder cask there, or bring the whole workshop down about our ears. You might make a mallet of one of the rafters; and, by way of a broad-axe to your liking, I'll send to the Town Hall for Roland's sword, three ells long."

"That would do for me nicely," said the young man, with sparkling eyes. But presently he cast them down, and spoke in a gentler tone:

"All I was thinking, dear Master Martin, was that your work needed men of thews and sinews. But perhaps I was a little hasty in swaggering as to my strength. Take me into your employ all the same. I will do what work you give me in first-rate style, you will see."

Master Martin looked him in the face, and had to own to himself that he had probably never seen nobler or more thoroughly honest features. Indeed he felt somehow that the young man's face stirred up a dim remembrance of someone whom he had known and esteemed for a very long time. But this would not become clear, although, for this cause, he at once agreed to employ the young man, merely stipulating that he should produce proper certificates to prove that he belonged to the craft.

Reinhold and Friedrich meanwhile had finished setting up the cask at which they were working, and were putting on the first hoops. At such times they were in the habit of singing, and they now begun a pretty song, in the "goldfinch manner" of Adam Puschmann. At this Conrad (such was the new-comer's name) shouted out from the planing bench where Master Martin had set him to work, "Ugh! what a cheeping and chirping. Sounds as though the mice were squeaking about the shop. If you're going to sing, sing something that will cheer a fellow up and put some heart into him to go on with his work. I sometimes sing a thing of that sort myself." With which he commenced a rough, wild hunting song, full of "Hulloh!" and "Hussah!" And he imitated the cry of the hounds and the shouts of the people in such a thundering, all-penetrating voice, that the workshop shook and resounded. Master Martin stopped both his ears with his hands, and the boys of Frau Martha (Valentine's widow), who were playing in the workshop, hid themselves in terror amongst the timber. Just then Rosa came in astonished, nay terrified, at the prodigious shouting, for "singing" it could not be called. Conrad was silent the moment he saw Rosa. He rose and went up to her in the most courteous manner, saying, in a soft voice, and with gleaming fire in his bright brown eyes: "Beautiful lady, how this old working cabin beamed with roseate splendour as soon as you entered it. Ah! had I but seen you a little sooner I should not have offended your ears with my rough hunting song." He turned to Master Martin and the workmen, and cried, "Hold that abominable noise, every one of you! Whenever this beautiful lady deigns to show herself here, hammers and mallets must stop. We will hear only her sweet voice, and listen with bowed heads to such commands as she may deign to issue to us--her humblest servants."

Reinhold and Friedrich gazed at each other in amazement; but Master Martin shouted with laughter, and said, "Well, Conrad, I must say you are the very drollest rascal that ever put on an apron. You come here, and seem to be going to set to work to smash the whole place to atoms, like some great lumbering giant. Next you bellow till we're all obliged to hold our ears; and, by way of a worthy *finale*, you treat my little daughter here as if she were a lady of quality, and you her page, in love with her."

"I know your lovely daughter quite well, Master Martin," answered Conrad unconcernedly; "and I tell you she is the most glorious lady that walks the earth, and would to heaven that she would permit her most devoted servitor to be her Paladin!"

Master Martin held his sides. He nearly suffocated himself before he made way for his laughter by dint of wheezing and coughing. He then managed to get out a "Good! very good! my dear young sir. Take my little girl Rosa for a lady of quality, if you will, but just get back to your work at the bench there."

Conrad stood rooted to the spot with eyes fixed on the ground; rubbed his forehead, and said softly, "So I must." He did as he was ordered. Rosa sat down on a small barrel, as she usually did when she came to the workshop. Reinhold and Friedrich brought this barrel forward for her as they were wont to do; and

then they sang together (as Master Martin bade them) the pretty song in which Conrad had interrupted them. The latter went on with his task, silent and thoughtful. When the song was ended Master Martin said, "Heaven has endowed you two dear lads with a precious gift. You have no idea how much I honour the glorious Art of Song. In fact I once wanted to be a Master-singer myself. But it wouldn't do. I could make nothing of it, try as hard as I might. With all my endeavours I earned nothing but derision and jesting, when I tried my hand at the master-singing. I always made wrong 'annexations' or too many syllables, In fact there was always something askew with it. Well, well! you will make a better job of it. What the master couldn't manage, his men will. Next Sunday there will be a master-singing at the usual time, after noonday service, at Saint Catherine's Church; and there you two, Reinhold and Friedrich, may gain praise and honour by means of your beautiful art. For before the head-singing, a free-singing will be holden, open to strangers, at which you may try your skill. Now, Herr Conrad" (Master Martin called over to the planing bench), "mightn't you mount the singing stool too, and treat them to that beautiful hunting song of yours?"

"Don't jest, good master," answered Conrad, without looking up; "there's a place and time for everything: while you are edifying yourself at the Master-singing, I shall go in search of my own pleasure, to the Common Meadow."

Things turned out as Master Martin had expected. Reinhold mounted the singing stool and sang songs, which could not be classified as being any special "tones" or "manners," but which delighted all the Master-singers, albeit they were of opinion that, though the singer committed no actual errors, yet a certain "outlandish," or foreign style, which they could not quite define themselves, somewhat detracted from their merit. Soon after, Friedrich seated himself on the singing stool, took off his barret, and, after looking before him for a second or two, cast a glance at the assembly (which darted through Rosa's heart like a glowing arrow, so that she could not help sighing deeply), then began such a glorious song, in the tender "tone" of Heinrich Frauenlob, that all the masters declared unanimously that none of them could surpass this young journeyman.

When evening came, and the singing was over, Master Martin, by way of thoroughly completing the enjoyment of the day, betook himself with Rosa to the Common Meadow. Reinhold and Friedrich were allowed to go with them. Rosa walked between the two. Friedrich, in a state of great glorification by reason of the praise of the Master-singers, ventured, in the intoxication of his blissfulness, on many a daring word, which Rosa, drooping her eyes modestly, did not seem to wish to hear. She turned the rather to Reinhold, who, after his wont, chattered and made many a lively jest and sally, not hesitating to sling his arm round one of hers. When they came where the young men were engaged in divers athletic sports (some of them of knightly sort), they heard the people crying, over and over again, "He has won again!--nobody can stand before him! There! he wins again!--that strong one!" When Master Martin had pressed his way through the crowd, he found that all this shouting and acclamation were to the address of none other than his own journeyman, Conrad, who had excelled everybody at running, boxing, and throwing the javelin. Just as Master Martin came on the scene, Conrad was challenging all-comers to a bout of fencing with blunted rapiers, and several young patrician "bloods," skilled at this exercise, accepted; but he very soon conquered them all, with little difficulty, so that there was no end to the laudation of his strength and skill.

The sun had set; the evening sky was glowing red, and the twilight rapidly falling. Master Martin, Rosa, and the two journeymen had seated themselves beside a plashing fountain. Reinhold told many delightful things concerning far-away Italy; but Friedrich gazed, silent and happy, into Rosa's beautiful eyes. Then Conrad approached, with slow and hesitating steps, as if he had not quite made up his mind whether to join the others or not. So Master Martin called out: "Come along, come along, Conrad! You have held your own bravely; just as I like my journeymen to do. Don't be bashful, my lad; you have my full permission." Conrad flashed a penetrating glance at the master, who was nodding to him

condescendingly, and said, in a hollow tone: "So far, I have not asked your permission whether I might join you or not. On the whole, it was not to *you* that I was thinking whether I should come, or otherwise. I have laid all my opponents prostrate in the dust in knightly play, and what I wanted to do was to ask this beautiful lady if she would not mind giving me, as my guerdon, those flowers which she wears in her breast." With which Conrad knelt on one knee before Rosa, looked her honestly in the face with his clear brown eyes, and petitioned, "Give me the flowers, if you will be so kind, fair Rosa; you can hardly refuse me." Rosa at once took the flowers from her breast, and gave them to him, saying, with a smile, "I am sure such a doughty knight deserves a prize of honour from a woman; so take my flowers, although they are beginning to wither a little." Conrad kissed them, and placed them in his barret cap; but Master Martin rose up crying, "Stupid stuff and nonsense! Let's get away home; it'll soon be dark." Martin walked first; Conrad, in a courtier-like fashion, gave Rosa his arm, and Reinhold and Friedrich brought up the rear, not in the best of temper. The people who met them stopped and looked after them, saying:

"Ey! look there!--that is Master Martin, the rich cooper, with his pretty daughter and his fine journeymen; happy folks, these, I can tell you!"

HOW FRAU MARTHA CONVERSED WITH ROSA ABOUT THE THREE JOURNEYMEN. CONRAD'S QUARREL WITH MASTER MARTIN.

Young girls are wont to live over again all the enjoyments of a festal day, in detail, on the subsequent morning, and this secondary feast seems then almost more delicious to them than the original itself. Thus did the fair Rosa sit pondering on the subsequent morning alone in her chamber, with her hands folded in her lap, and her head hung down in reverie, letting spindle and needle-work rest. Probably she was mentally listening again to Reinhold and Friedrich's singing, and again watching the athletic Conrad vanquishing his adversaries, and receiving from her the victor's prize. Now and then she would hum a line or two of some song; then she would say, "My flowers, do you want?" and then a deeper crimson mantled in her cheeks; flashes darted through her half-closed eyelids, faint sighs stole forth from her innermost breast.

Frau Martha came in, and Rosa was delighted to have the opportunity of giving her a circumstantial account of all that had happened in Saint Catherine's Church, and afterwards in the Common Meadow. When she had finished, Martha said, smiling, "Well, Rosa dear, you will soon have to make up your mind which of those three brave wooers you are going to choose."

"What are you talking about, Frau Martha?" Rosa cried; "I haven't got any wooers."

"Come, come," answered Martha, "don't pretend that you don't know what's going on. Anybody who has got eyes, and is not as blind as a mole, sees well enough that all the three, Reinhold, Friedrich, and Conrad, are over head and ears in love with you."

"What an idea!" cried Rosa, hiding her eyes with her hand.

"Come, come," said Martha, sitting down beside her and putting an arm about her; "you bonny bashful child, take your hand away; look me straight in the face, and then deny, if you can, that you have known for many a day that all the three of them are devoted to you, heart and soul! You see that you *can't* deny it. It would be a miracle if a woman's eye should not see a thing of that sort in an instant. When you come into the workshop, all their eyes turn away from their work, to you, and everything goes on in a different way, three times as swimmingly. Reinhold and Friedrich begin singing their prettiest songs; even that

wild fellow Conrad turns quiet and kindly. They all try to get beside you; and fire flashes out of the face of whichever of them has a kind glance or a friendly word from you. Aha! little daughter! you are a very fortunate girl to have three such charming fellows paying attention to you. Whether you will ever choose either of them--and, if so, which--of course I cannot tell, for you are good and nice to them all; though I--but silence as to that! If you were to come to me, and say, 'Frau Martha, give me your advice,' I should freely answer, 'Doesn't your own heart speak out quite clearly and distinctly? Then *he* is the one. Of course, they're all pretty much alike, to *me*. I like Reinhold, and I like Friedrich too; and Conrad as well, for the matter of that; and still I have some objections to every one of them. Aye! the fact is, dear Rosa, when I look at those three young fellows at their work, I always think of my dear husband. And I must say, as far as the work which he did went, everything which he did was done in a different style to theirs. There was a swing and a *go* about it: you saw that his heart was in it; that he wasn't thinking of anything else. But *they* always seem to unto be doing it for the doing's sake, as if they all had something else at the bottom of their minds all the time; as if the work was a sort of task which they had taken up of their own accords, and were sticking to as well as they could, against the grain. I get on best with Friedrich. He is a nice, straight-forward fellow. He seems more like *us*, somehow. One understands whatever he says. And what I like about him is, that he loves you in such a silent sort of way, with all the bashfulness of a good child; that he hardly dares to look at you, and blushes whenever you say a word to him."

A tear came to Rosa's eye. She rose, turned to the window, and said: "Yes, I am very fond of Friedrich too; but you mustn't think too little of Reinhold, either."

"How should I?" said Martha; "he's the nicest-looking of them all, by far and away. When he looks one through and through, with his eyes like lightning, one can hardly bear it. Still, there is a something about him so strange and wonderful, that I feel a little inclined to draw back from him in a sort of awe. I think the master must feel, when he is at work in the workshop, as I should if somebody brought a lot of pots and pans all sparkling with gold and jewels into my kitchen, and I had to set to work with them as if they were so many ordinary pots and pans. I shouldn't dare to touch them. He talks, and tells tales, and it all sounds like beautiful music, and carries one away. But when I think seriously about what he has been saying after he has done, I haven't understood a word of it, really. And then, when he will sometimes joke and jest just like one of ourselves, and I think he is only one of us after all, all of a sudden he will look up at one so proudly, and seem such a gentleman, that one feels frightened. It is not that he ever swaggers, as plenty of the young gentlefolks do; it's something quite different. In one word, it strikes me--God forgive me for saying it!--that he must have dealing with higher powers; as if he really belonged to another world altogether, Conrad is a rough, overbearing sort of fellow, but he has something cursedly aristocratic about him, too, which doesn't go a bit well with the cooper's apron; and he goes on as if it were his place to give orders, which everybody else had to obey. In the little time that he has been here, you see he has got so far that even Master Martin himself has to obey him, when he roars at him with that thundering voice of his. But then, at the same time, Conrad is so good-humoured, and so thoroughly straight-forward and honourable, that one can't be vexed with him. In fact I must say that, in spite of his wildness, *I* like him better than Reinhold, almost; for though he *does* often speak roughly, yet one always understands what he is saying. I would wager he has once been a soldier, however he may pretend to disguise himself now. That's why he knows so well about weapons, and the knightly exercises, which become him so well. Now tell me, truly and sincerely, Rosa dear, which of them do you like the best?"

"Don't be so crafty with me, Frau Martha," Rosa replied. "One thing is certain--that I don't feel at all as you do about Friedrich. It is quite true that he is of quite a different sort to the others. When he talks, it seems as if some beautiful garden opened upon one, full of lovely flowers, blossoms, and fruit, the like of which are not to be found on earth; but it delights me to look into this garden. And many things strike me quite differently since Reinhold has been here. Many things

which were dim and formless in my mind have grown so distinct and clear, that I can see them and understand them perfectly."

Frau Martha got up, and, as she departed, she threatened Rosa with uplifted finger, saying, "Well, Rosa! I suppose Reinhold is to be the one: I never should have dreamt he would have been."

"I beg and pray you, Martha dear, neither dream, nor anticipate anything. Leave it all to the future. What the future brings will be the will of Heaven, and to that we must all submit with resignation."

Meanwhile things were very stirring in Master Martin's workshop. To enable him to execute all his commissions he had taken on fresh hands and a few apprentices, and there was such a banging and hammering going on that it was audible far and wide. Reinhold had made out all the measurements for the Bishop of Bamberg's great vat, and set it up so cleverly that Master Martin's heart laughed in his body, and he cried out, over and over again, "*that I do* call a piece of work! that's going to be a cask such as I never turned out before--always excepting my *own* masterpiece." The three journeymen, hooping the cask, were hammering till the whole place rang. Old Valentine was shaving away busily with the hollowing-cramp. Frau Martha, with her two youngest children in her lap, was sitting just behind Conrad, while the others were playing and chasing each other about with the hoops. It was such a merry, boisterous affair altogether, that nobody noticed the incoming of old Master Johannes Holzschuer. However, Master Martin went up to him, and asked him courteously what might be his will.

"Well," said Master Holzschuer, "I wanted to see my dear Friedrich again, who is working away so hard there. But, besides that, Master Martin, I want a fine cask for my cellar, and I was going to ask you to turn me one out. See! *there* is just the sort of cask I want--that one your men have in hand there, let me have that one. You have but to tell me the price."

Reinhold, who, being a little tired, was resting, said on his way on to the scaffold again, "Ah, dear Herr Holzschuer, you will have to forego your fancy for this cask; we are making it for the Bishop of Bamberg."

Master Martin, folding his arms behind his back, advancing his left foot, and lifting his head proudly, blinked at the cask with his eyes, and said somewhat boastfully, "My dear master, you might know by the choiceness of the timber, and the superiority of the workmanship, that a masterpiece such as this is a thing for a Prince-Bishop's cellar alone. My journeyman Reinhold has said well. But when we have got the vintage off our hands, I will turn you out a tidy little cask, such as will be suitable for your cellar."

Old Holzschuer, annoyed with Master Martin's conceit, thought, for his part, that his money was just as good as the Bishop of Bamberg's, and that he would probably get as good value for it elsewhere; and he said so. Master Martin, overwhelmed with anger, contained himself with difficulty. He scarcely dared to offend old Holzschuer, friend of the Council as he was, highly esteemed by all the town. But just at that moment, Conrad was making such a tremendous hammering with his mallet on the cask that the whole place was ringing and resounding; and Master Martin's boiling wrath ran over, so that he spluttered out, with a shout, "Conrad--dunderhead that you are--don't whack away in that blind, furious style, man! You'll ruin that cask on our hands altogether."

"Ho! ho! you funny little master," Conrad cried, looking round with an angry face, "why shouldn't I?" and set to work again, hammering at the cask with such violence that the largest of the hoops burst with a "clirr," knocking Reinhold off the narrow board of the scaffold, whilst, from the hollow sound which followed, it was evident that one of the staves must have sprung as well. Overcome with rage and fury, Master Martin seized the staff which Valentine was shaving at, and, with a loud roar of, "Cursed hound!" dealt Conrad a heavy blow with it across the back.

When Conrad felt the blow, he turned quickly round, and stood for a moment as if unconscious, and then his eyes flamed with wild anger; he gnashed his teeth, howled out, "Struck!" got down, with one spring, from the scaffold, seized the broad-axe which was on the ground, and aimed with it a tremendous stroke at the master, which would have split his skull, had not Friedrich drawn him aside, so that it missed his head; but it fell on his arm, whence the blood at once streamed out. Martin, stout and unwieldy, lost his balance and stumbled over the bench, at which an apprentice was working, and on to the ground. All the rest now threw themselves around Conrad, who was raging, and wielding the bloody broad-axe in the air, yelling, in a terrible voice.

"To Hell with him!--to Hell with him!"

Exerting all his gigantic strength, he sent them flying from him in all directions, and was raising his weapon for a second stroke, which would certainly have given Master Martin his quietus as he lay coughing and groaning on the ground, but Rosa, pale as death, appeared at the door; and the moment Conrad saw her, he paused like a stone image, with the uplifted weapon in his hand. Then he threw it away far from him, struck his hands together in front of his breast, cried--in a voice which went to every one's heart--"Gracious God of Heaven! what have I done?" and darted out of the building. Nobody thought of following him.

Master Martin was now set on his legs again, by dint of some effort, and it was found that the blade of the broad-axe had struck the fleshy part of his arm without doing very much mischief. Old Master Holzschuer, whom Martin had dragged over also in his fall, was got out from amongst the timber; and Frau Martha's children, who were frightened and crying, were pacified. Master Martin was much confounded; but on the whole thought that if that devil of a wicked fellow had only not damaged the beautiful *cask*, he himself was not much the worse. Carrying chairs were brought for the old gentlemen, for Herr Holzschuer was more or less the worse for his tumble, too, and expressed a very mean opinion of a calling which was carried on where there were so many lethal weapons at hand, advising Friedrich to return to the beautiful metals, and the modelling, and that the sooner the better.

When the world was wrapt in twilight, Friedrich, and with him Reinhold, who had been hard hit by the hoop, and felt sore in every bone of his body, crept, very unhappy, back to town. At the back of a hedge they heard a low sobbing and sighing. They stopped: and presently a tall figure rose from the earth, which they at once recognised to be Conrad; and they started back, alarmed. "Ah! don't fear me, you dear fellows!" Conrad cried. "You think I am a diabolical, murdering dog; but I really am nothing of the kind. Only I couldn't help myself. I was *obliged* to dash the life out of that fat old master--shiver all the bones in his body--settle the hash of him; oh! come along back with me now, and let me do it properly! Ah! no!--no, no! The whole thing is over! you won't see me any more. Give my deepest homage to the beautiful Rosa, whom I love so dearly, so dearly. Tell her I will wear her flowers on my heart as long as I live, and that they shall be upon me when I--but perhaps she may hear of me again yet. Good-bye! good-bye! dear old friends and comrades!" With which he ran off across the fields without a stop.

"There's something very strange about that young fellow," Reinhold said. "We can't judge what he does by every-day standards. Perhaps the future may unravel this mystery which so weighs on us now."

REINHOLD LEAVES MASTER MARTIN'S HOUSE.

Master Martin's workshop was now as melancholy a place as it had once been merry. Reinhold, unable to work, remained in his room. Master Martin, with his arm in a sling, railed and raved unceasingly on the subject of his late evil, unintelligible journeyman. Rosa and Frau Martha with her children avoided the scene of the mad attempt, so that Friedrich's hammer on the wood sounded

mournful and hollow, as he went on, finishing the job by himself.

Soon his heart was filled with the deepest sorrow. For he fancied he now saw very clearly that what he had long dreaded was the truth. He was *sure* that Rosa loved Reinhold. It was not only that all her real friendliness, besides many a sweet word, had all along been given to him; but it was proof sufficient that, now that Reinhold was unable to come to the workshop, she never thought of leaving the house, either, doubtless, to nurse and take care of her lover. On Sunday, when everybody went out to make holiday, and Master Martin--now nearly well--asked him to go with Rosa and him to the meadow, he declined, and went off alone to the village on the height, overpowered with grief and love-anxiety. There, where he had first met Reinhold, he laid himself down on the flowery turf, and, as he thought how the beautiful Star of Hope, which had shone before him on all his journey home, had now--at the goal--vanished suddenly into the deepest night--how all his undertaking was now like the vain effort of a dreamer who stretches his longing arms to embrace empty images of air--the tears came to his eyes and rolled down his cheeks on to the grass, and the flowers, which hung their little heads as if in sorrow for his bitter fortune. He scarce knew how it came that the sighs which heaved his distracted breast took the form of words and music. But he sang the following song:--

"My star of hope! ah! whither hast thou fled?
Alas! for me, slid down beneath the marge,
To rise, in splendour, upon happier hearts.
Thou trembling night-wind! smite upon this breast,
And waken there the bliss which bringeth death,
That so my heart, surcharged with tears of blood,
May break, in longing ne'er to be assuaged.
Dark trees! oh, tell me what mysterious words
Ye whisper thus, in loving confidence.
And ye, gold hems of heaven's wide-spread robe,
Why shine ye down on me benignantly?
Show me my grave! there is my hope's fair haven!
There, and there only shall I rest in peace."

It sometimes happens that the deepest sorrow, if it can but find tears and words, dissolves into a mild, painfulness of melancholy, so that perhaps even a gentle shimmer of hope begins then to beam faintly through the heart. And thus it was that Friedrich felt wondrously consoled and strengthened after he had sung this song. The evening wind, and the dark trees which he had invoked, rustled and whispered as if with voices of comfort. Golden streaks appeared in the dark sky like sweet dreams of coming glory, and happiness still afar off. He rose, and walked down to the village. There he felt as if Reinhold was walking by his side as he had been when he first met him. All that Reinhold had said came back upon his mind. When he remembered Reinhold's story of the two painters who had tried for the prize, scales seemed to fall from his eyes. It was quite clear that Reinhold must, ere then, have seen, and loved, the fair Rosa. Nothing but this love had taken him to Master Martin's house in Nürnberg, and, by the painter's contest, he had meant nothing but his own and Friedrich's rivalry as regarded Rosa. Friedrich listened once more to what Reinhold had then said; that "to strive towards the same goal, bravely and openly, was true friendship, and must truly, in the depths of their hearts, rather unite than separate real friends; for nobleness or littleness never can find place in hearts which are true."

"Yes, friend of my heart!" Friedrich cried aloud, "to thee will I turn without reserve. Thou thyself shalt tell me if all hope is over for me."

It was broad day when Friedrich knocked at Reinhold's door. As all was silent within, he opened it--it was not fastened, as it generally was--and entered. When he did so, he stood transfixed like a statue; for there stood, on an easel before him, a full-length portrait of Rosa, in all the pride of her beauty, lighted up by the rays of the rising sun. The mahl-stick on the table, where it had been thrown

down--the colours still wet--showed that the portrait had just been worked upon.

"Rosa! Rosa! oh, Father of Heaven!" Friedrich cried. Reinhold tapped him on the shoulder, and asked him, with a smile, what he thought of the picture. Friedrich pressed him to his heart saying:

"Ah, glorious fellow! mighty artist!--it is all clear to me now. You have gained the prize for which I--wretch that I am! was bold enough to try. What am I, compared to you; what is *my* art, to *yours*? Alas! I had great ideas in my mind, too! Don't laugh me altogether to scorn, dear Reinhold. I thought what a glorious thing it would be to make a mould model of Rosa's beautiful form in the finest silver. But that, of course, would be mere child's play. But as for *you*!--how she smiles on one, in all the pride of her loveliness!--Ah, Reinhold! happiest of men! what you said long ago has now come true. We have striven for the prize. You have won it. You could not *but* win. But I am still yours, with all my soul! I must get away; I could not bear to stay here. I should die if I saw Rosa again. Forgive me this, my dear, dear, glorious friend! This very day--this very moment--I must away into the wide world, whithersoever my love-sorrow--my inconsolable misery--may drive me." With which he would have left the room; but Reinhold held him fast, saying gently:

"You shall not go, because things may possibly turn out far otherwise than you suppose. It is time, now, that I should tell you what I have kept silence about hitherto. That I am not a cooper at all, but a painter, you probably now have gathered; and I hope the portrait has proved to you that I am not one of the worst. When I was very young, I went to Italy, the land of art; and there it chanced that some great masters took an interest in me, and fanned the sparks which smouldered within me into living fire. Thus I soon rose to some eminence, and my pictures became celebrated all over Italy. The Grand Duke of Florence took me to his Court. At that time I did not care to know anything of the German School of Art, and, without having seen any German pictures, I talked largely of the woodenness, the bad drawing, and the hardness of your Dürer and your Cranache. However, one day, a dealer brought a small Madonna of old Albrecht's into the Duke's gallery, which went to my heart in a wonderful manner; so that I completely turned away from the luxury of the Italian school, and at that hour determined to see for myself, in my native Germany, those masterpieces on which my thoughts were now bent. I came to Nürnberg here; and when I saw Rosa, it seemed to me as though that Madonna which beamed so brightly in my heart were walking the earth. In my case, just as in yours, dear Friedrich, all my being flamed up in a blaze of affection. I saw and thought of nothing but Rosa. Even art was only precious in my sight because I could go on drawing and painting Rosa hundreds of times, over and over again. In the unceremonious Italian fashion, I thought I should have no difficulty in approaching her, but all my efforts in this direction were vain. There was no way of getting introduced, in honour, to Master Martin's house. At last I thought of going and straight-forwardly announcing myself as one of her wooers, when I heard of Master Martin's determination to give her to nobody but a real, doughty, Master-Cooper. On this, I came to the, rather Quixotic, resolve that I would go and learn coopering at Strassburg, and then betake myself to Master Martin's workshop. The rest I left to Heaven's will. How I carried out my resolution, you know; but you have still to learn that, a few days ago, Master Martin told me I should make a first-rate cooper, and should be very acceptable to him as a son-in-law; for he saw well enough that I was trying to gain Rosa's favour, and that she liked me."

"How could it be otherwise?" Friedrich cried. "Yes, yes; she will be yours. How could I, most wretched of creatures, ever hope for such bliss!"

"My brother!" said Reinhold, "you forget that Rosa has by no means yet confirmed what wily Master Martin fancies he has seen. It is true she has always been very charming and kindly with me; but that is not exactly how a loving heart displays itself. Promise me, my brother, to keep yourself quiet for three days more, and work in the shop as usual. I might go back again there now, too; but

since I have been busy at this picture, that miserable handicraft sickens me inexpressibly. I *cannot* take a hammer in my hand again, come what will! On the third day I will tell you distinctly how matters stand between me and Rosa. If I should really be the fortunate man to whom she has given her heart, you may depart; and you will learn that time heals the very deepest wounds."

Friedrich promised to abide his destiny.

On the third day (Friedrich had carefully shunned the sight of Rosa) his heart trembled with fear and anxious expectation. He crept about the workshop like one in a dream, and his awkwardness was such as to give Master Martin occasion to scold angrily, in a way unusual with him. Taking things all round, something seemed to have come to the master which had taken away all satisfaction from him. He talked much of wicked artfulness and ingratitude, without further explaining what he was driving at. When evening came at length, and Friedrich was going back to town, near the city-gate he saw a man on horseback meeting him, whom he at once knew to be Reinhold. As soon as this latter caught sight of him he cried out: "Ha, ha! here you are!--just as I wished!" He got off his horse, threw the reins on his arm, and took his friend by the hand: "Let us stroll along together for a while," he said; "I can tell you now how my love-affair has turned out."

Friedrich noticed that Reinhold was dressed as he had been when they first met, and that the horse had a valise on him. Reinhold was looking rather pale and troubled. "Good-luck to you, brother-heart!" he cried, somewhat wildly. "You can go on hammering lustily away at your casks, for I am clearing out of your way. I have just said good-bye to the lovely Rosa, and worthy old Martin."

"What!" cried Friedrich, who felt a kind of electric shock go through him. "You are going away! when Master Martin wants you for a son-in-law, and when Rosa loves you?"

"Dear brother," answered Reinhold, "that is what your jealousy has led you to imagine. It has turned out that Rosa would have married me, from mere filial obedience, but that there is not a single spark of affection for me in that ice-cold heart of hers. Ha, ha! I should have been a celebrated cooper! Shaven hoops on week-days with my apprentices, and taken my worthy housekeeper-wife on Sundays to St. Catherine's or St. Sebald's to service, and then to the meadow in the evening, one year after another, all my life long."

"Well, you needn't jest over the simple, innocent life of the good townspeople," cried Friedrich, interrupting Reinhold in his laughter. "It's not Rosa's fault if she does not really love you. You are so angry--so wild!"

"You are right," said Reinhold; "it is only my stupid way of behaving like a spoilt child when I feel annoyed. You will understand that I told Rosa of my love for her, and of her father's good-will. The tears streamed from her eyes; her hand trembled in mine; she turned away her face, and said, 'Of course I must do as my father wishes.' That was enough. This strange vexation of mine cannot but have enabled you to read my inmost heart. You see that my efforts to gain Rosa were the result of a deception, which my mistaken feeling had prepared for itself. As soon as I had finished her portrait, my heart was at rest; and I often felt, in an inexplicable manner, as though Rosa had really been the picture, and the picture the real Rosa. The mean, wretched, mechanical handicraft grew detestable to me; the common style of life, and the whole business of having to get myself made a Master-Cooper, and marry, depressed me so that I felt as if I were going to be immured in a prison and chained to a block. How could that heavenly child whom I have worn in my heart--*as* I have worn her in my heart--ever become my wife? Ah, no! she must for ever be resplendent in the master-works which my soul shall engender; in eternal youth, delightsomeness, and beauty. Oh, how I long to be working at them! How could I ever sever myself from my heavenly calling! Soon shall I bathe once more in thy fervid vapours, glorious land! home of all the arts!"

The friends had reached the point where the road which Reinhold meant to follow turned sharp off to the left. "Here we part!" he cried. He pressed Friedrich warmly to his heart, sprang into the saddle, and galloped away.

Friedrich gazed after him, in silence, and then crept home, filled with the strangest thoughts.

HOW FRIEDRICH WAS DRIVEN OUT FROM MASTER MARTIN'S WORKSHOP.

The next day Master Martin was labouring away at the Bishop of Bamberg's cask, in moody silence; and Friedrich too, who was now only feeling fully what he had lost in Reinhold, was not capable of a word, far less of a song. At last Martin threw down his hammer, folded his arms, and said in a low voice:

"So Reinhold has gone too! He was a great, celebrated painter, and merely making a fool of me with his coopering. If I had but had the slightest inkling of that when he came to my house with you, and seemed so handy and clever, shouldn't I just have shown him the door! Such an open, honest-looking face! and yet all deceit and falsehood! Well! he is gone; but *you* are going to stick to me and the craft with truth and honour. When you get to be a doughty Master-Cooper--and if Rosa takes a fancy to you--well! you know what I mean, and can try if you can gain her liking." With which he took up his hammer, and went busily on with his work. Friedrich could not quite explain to himself why it was that Master Martin's words pained his heart--why some strange, anxious dread arose in him, darkening every shimmer of hope. Rosa came to the workshop, for the first time for long, but she was deeply thoughtful, and (as Friedrich remarked to his sorrow) her eyes were red from weeping. "She has been crying about *him*; she loves him;" a voice in his heart said; and he did not dare to raise his glance to her whom he loved so unutterably.

The cask was finished; and then, and only then, Master Martin, as he contemplated that highly successful piece of work, grew cheerful and light-hearted once more. "Ay, my lad," he said, slapping Friedrich on the shoulder, "it is a settled matter that, if you can turn out a right good master-piece, and win Rosa's good will, my son-in-law you shall be. After that you can join the Coopers' Guild, and gain much renown."

At this time Master Martin's commissions so accumulated that he had to hire two new journeymen, capital workmen, but rough fellows, who had picked up many evil habits during their long years of travel, as journey-men away from home. In place of the old merry talk, the jokes, and the pretty singing which used to go on in the workshop, nothing was to be heard there now but obscene ditties. Rosa avoided the place, so that Friedrich only saw her at long intervals, and when he then looked at her with melancholy longing, and sighed out, "Ah! dearest Rosa! if I could but talk with you again! if you would only be kindly with me as you used to be when Reinhold was here!" she would cast her eyes bashfully down, and murmur, "Have you anything to say to me, dear Friedrich?" But he would stand transfixed and speechless. The lucky moment would pass, as quick as lightning which flashes in the evening sky, and has vanished ere one has noticed it almost.

Master Martin was now all insistence that Friedrich should set to work on his "Master-piece." He had himself chosen, in his workshop, the finest, cleanest, most flawless timber, which had been stored there for over five years, and had not a vein or a streak in it; and nobody was to give Friedrich the slightest hand in the job except old Valentine. More and more intensely disgusted with the whole thing as Friedrich now was, on account of those brutes of journeymen, the thought that all his future life hung upon this piece of work almost stifled him. The strange sense of dread and anxiety which had developed itself in him when Master Martin had lauded his faithful devotion to the craft, took shape, now, more and more

clearly. He felt convinced that he would come to the most utter and shameful failure in an occupation completely repugnant to his whole nature, filled as it was with the love of his own art. Reinhold, and Rosa's portrait he could not drive out of his mind; at the same time, his own branch of Art shone upon him in the brightest splendour. Often, when the terrible sense of the full wretchedness of the trade he was engaged in was like to overpower him as he was working at it, he would pretend to be unwell, and hurry off to the church of St. Sebald, where he would gaze for hours at Peter Fischer's marvellous monument, and then cry out, like one enchanted, "Oh, Father of Heaven!--to conceive, to execute such a work as that--could there be anything on earth more glorious!" and then when he had to go back to his staves and hoops, and remember that by means of them, only, Rosa was to be won, the very devil's glowing talons seemed to touch his heart, and he felt as if he must perish in the terrible misery of it all. Reinhold often appeared to him in dreams, bringing to him lovely designs, in which Rosa was worked in, and displayed now as a flower, now as a beautifully winged angel. But there was always a something wanting. Reinhold had forgotten to put a *heart* in Rosa's image; and that he added himself. *Then* all the flowers and leaves of the design seemed to begin moving and singing, and breathing out the most delicious odours; and the noble metals reflected Rosa's form as in a gleaming mirror, seeming to stretch her longing arms to her lover--but the image would vanish in dim vapour, and the beautiful Rosa, herself, seemed to be clasping him to her loving heart, all blissful desire. His feelings towards the miserable cooperating work grew more and more terribly unendurable, and he went for aid and consolation (as well as for advice) to his old master, Johannes Holzschuer. This master allowed Friedrich to set about a little piece of work, for which an idea had occurred to him, and for the carrying out of which, and providing himself with the necessary gold and silver, he had saved up the wages which Master Martin gave him, for many a day.

Thus it came about that Friedrich, who was so very pale that there was but too much reason to believe (as he gave out) that he was suffering from strongly-marked consumptive symptoms, scarcely ever went to Master Martin's workshop, and that months elapsed without his having made the very slightest progress with his master-piece, the great two-fudder cask. Master Martin pressed him to work at least at much as his strength would permit him, and Friedrich was at length compelled to go once more to the hateful cutting-block, and take the broad-axe in hand again. As he was working, Master Martin came up and looked at the staves he had been finishing. He grew red in the face, and cried out--

"Why, Friedrich! what do you call this? A nice job and a half! Are those staves turned out by a journeyman trying to pass as master, or by an apprentice-boy who has only been a day or two in the shop! Bethink yourself, man; what demon has entered itself into you? My beautiful oak timber! The great masterpiece indeed! Clumsy, careless, goose!"

Overcome by all the hellish torments which were burning in his heart, Friedrich could contain himself no longer. He sent the broad-axe flying with all his force, and cried, "Master, it's all over! If it costs me my life--if I perish in misery unnamed, I cannot go on labouring at this wretched handicraft another minute. I am drawn to my own glorious Art with a power which I cannot withstand. Alas! I love your Rosa unutterably--as no other on earth can love her. It is for her sake alone that I have gone through with this abominable work in this place. I know I have lost her now. I shall soon die of grief for her. But I cannot help it. I must go back to my own glorious Art, to my own dear master, Johannes Holzschuer, whom I deserted so basely."

Master Martin's eyes shone like flaming tapers. Scarce able to articulate for anger, he stammered out--

"What! you too! lies and cheaterly! impose on *me*--talk of a 'miserable handicraft!' Out of my sight, you shameless scoundrel--get out from here!" with which he took Friedrich by the shoulders and chucked him out of the workshop.

The derisive laughter of the other journeymen and the apprentices followed him. But old Valentine folded his hands, looked thoughtfully at the ground, and said, "I always saw that good fellow had something very different in his head from casks."

Frau Martha cried a great deal, and her children lamented over Friedrich, who used to play with them, and bring them many a nice piece of sweet-stuff.

CONCLUSION.

Notwithstanding Master Martin's anger with Reinhold and Friedrich, he could not but admit that, with them, all happiness and joy had fled from the workshop. His new journeymen caused him nothing but vexation and annoyance every day. He had to give himself trouble over every trifling detail of the work, and had difficulty in getting the very smallest matter done as he wished it. Wholly worn out with the worries of the day, he would often sigh, "Ah, Reinhold! ah, Friedrich! how I wish you had not deceived me so shamefully! Oh that you had only gone on being doughty coopers, and not turned out to be something else!" This went so far, that he often thought of giving up business altogether.

He was sitting one evening in a gloomy frame of mind of this description, when Herr Jacobus Paumgartner, and with him Master Johannes Holzschuer, came in unexpectedly. He felt sure their visit related to Friedrich, and in fact Paumgartner soon led the conversation to the subject of him, and Master Holzschuer began to extol him in every possible way, stating his opinion that with Friedrich's talents and diligence he would not only become a first-class goldsmith, but actually tread in Peter Fischer's footsteps as a modeller of eminence. Then Herr Paumgartner set to work to vehemently inveigh against the undeserved treatment that the poor fellow had received from Master Martin, and they both of them urged the latter that, if Friedrich should turn out a goldsmith and modeller, he should give him Rosa to wife, provided she should be really fond of him. Master Martin allowed them both to finish what they had to say; then he took off his cap and answered with a smile, "Worthy sirs, you speak strongly in favour of the lad, who has--all the same--deceived me in a shameful manner. I forgive him that, however, but you must not expect me to alter my firm decision, on his account. It is not the slightest use asking me to give him my Rosa--completely out of the question."

Just then, Rosa came in, pale as death, with eyes red from crying, and, in silence, placed glasses and wine on the table.

"Very well!" said Holzschuer; "then I suppose I shall be obliged to let Friedrich have his way, and leave this place altogether. He has just finished a beautiful piece of workmanship at my atelier, which--if you will allow him, Master Martin--he wishes to offer to Rosa as a I; Bake. I have got it with me; look at it."

He produced a small silver goblet, beautifully and artistically ornamented all over, and handed it to Master Martin, who was a great admirer and "amateur" of such things. He took it, and looked at it on all sides with great admiration; in fact it would have been difficult to meet with a more beautiful piece of silver-work than this little vessel, where lovely vine-branches, with tendrils, interwoven with roses, were twining in all directions, whilst from among the grapes and the roses, beautiful angels were peeping, and others, embracing, graven inside it, on its gilt sides and bottom; so that when wine was poured into it, those angels seemed to hover up and down, in charming play.

"A very pretty thing indeed!" Master Martin said. "Beautiful work about it! I shall be glad to take it, if Friedrich will allow me to give him twice its worth in good gold pieces."

So saying, Master Martin filled the cup with wine, and set it to his lips.

Here the door opened gently, and Friedrich, with the deadly pain of parting for ever from her he loved best on earth in his white face, came in at it. As soon as Rosa saw him, she gave a bitter cry of "Oh, my own dearest Friedrich!" and threw herself half-fainting on his breast.

Master Martin set the cup down, and when he saw Rosa in Friedrich's arms, he opened wide eyes, as if he were seeing ghosts. Then he took up the cup again without a word, and looked down into it. "Rosa," he cried in a loud voice, rising from his chair, "do you really love Friedrich?"

"Ah!" said Rosa in a whisper, "I cannot hide it any longer--I love him as my life! My heart was broken when you sent him away."

"Take your wife to your heart then, Friedrich, Yes, yes, I say it--*your wife*," Master Martin cried out.

Paumgartner and Holzschuer looked at each other, lost in amazement; but Master Martin, holding the cup in his hands, went on, and said, "Oh Father of Heaven! has not everything turned out exactly as the old lady prophesied it should? 'A House resplendent and gleaming he shall to thy dwelling bring; streams of sweet savour flowing therein; beauteous angels sing full sweetly; he whom thy heart goeth forth to needless to ask of thy father, this is thy Bridegroom beloved!' Oh fool that I have been! this is the bright little House! here are the angels, the bridegroom! Aha! gentlemen, my friends and patrons--my son-in-law is found!"

Whosoever has at any time been under the spell of an evil dream, and thought he was lying in the deep, black darkness of the grave, and then has suddenly awakened in the bright spring-time, all perfume, sunshine and song, and she who is dearest to him on earth has come and put her arms about him, while he looked up into the heaven of her beautiful face--that person will understand how Friedrich felt--will comprehend the exuberance of his blissfulness. Unable to utter a word, he held Rosa fast in his arms as if he would never let her go, till she gently extricated herself from his embrace, and led him to her father. He then found words, and cried:

"Oh, dear master, is this really true, then? Do you give me Rosa for my wife, and may I go back to my own art?"

"Yes, yes, believe it!" answered Master Martin. "What else is there that I can do? You have fulfilled my mother's prophecy, and your masterpiece will never be finished."

Friedrich smiled, transfigured with happiness, and said: "No, dear master, you will allow me to finish my masterpiece, and then I will go back to my smelting-furnace. For I should enjoy finishing my cask, as my last piece of cooping-work."

"So let it be then, my dear, good son," cried Master Martin, with eyes sparkling with joy. "Finish your masterpiece, and then, for the wedding!"

Friedrich kept his word. He duly finished his two-fudder cask, and all the masters averred that it would be hard to meet with a prettier piece of work; at which Master Martin was highly delighted, and thought that, all things considered, heaven could scarcely have awarded him a better son-in-law.

The wedding-day had come at last. Friedrich's cask-masterpiece, full of noble wine, and garlanded with flowers, stood on the house-floor. The Masters of the craft, headed by Herr Paumgartner, duly arrived, with their wives, followed by the Master-Goldsmiths. The procession was just setting out from St. Sebald's church, where the wedding was to be, when a blast of trumpets sounded in the streets, and horses were neighing and stamping in front of Master Martin's house. He hastened to the balcony window, and there he saw Herr von Spangenberg drawing up, in front of the house, in festal array. A few yards behind him rode a young cavalier, a grand-looking young gentleman, on a spirited charger, with a

sword at his side, and tall plumes waving in his barret-cap, which sparkled with jewels. At the cavalier's side Master Martin saw a most beautiful lady, also splendidly attired, and riding a palfrey as white as new-fallen snow. Pages and servants in fine liveries formed a circle about them. The trumpets ceased to sound, and old Baron von Spangenberg cried out, "Ha, ha! Master Martin. I am not come here on account of your cellar or your gold-ingots, but because it is Rosa's wedding-day. Will you let me come in, dear Master Martin?"

Master Martin, remembering what he had said that night so long ago, was somewhat put out, but hastened down to welcome the party. The old Baron dismounted, and came in, with courteous greetings. Pages hurried up, offering their arms to help the young lady to dismount; her cavalier gave her his hand, and followed the old Baron. But as soon as Master Martin looked upon the young cavalier, he started back three paces, clapped his hands and cried, "Good heavens! 'tis Conrad!"

The cavalier smiled, and said, "Yes, yes, Master Martin, I am your journeyman Conrad. You must pardon me for having given you that nasty wound. By rights, dear master, I ought to have sent you to kingdom come; you must see that yourself--however, things have all turned out differently."

Master Martin, in some confusion, answered that he "thought it was just as well that he had *not* been sent to 'kingdom come,' and that he hadn't much minded the little bit of cut with the broad-axe."

As Master Martin now entered with his new guests the chamber where the bridal-pair were, with the others, everybody acclaimed delight at the beauty of the lady, for she was so exactly like the bride that she might have been her twin-sister. The cavalier went up to the bride courteously, saying, "Beautiful Rosa, I hope you will permit Conrad to be present at your wedding. You are no longer vexed with the wild thoughtless fellow who so nearly cost you a great sorrow?"

As the bride, the bridegroom, and Master Martin looked from one to another in utter perplexity, the old Baron cried out, "Well, well! suppose I must help you out of your dream. This is my son, Conrad, and there is his beautiful wife, whose name is Rosa, the same as the bride's. Remember, Master Martin, our conversation, when I asked you if you would refuse to give me your Rosa even to my son. It had a special purpose. The boy was over head and ears in love with your Rosa. He got me persuaded to throw all consideration to the winds, and agree to act as his mediator--his go-between. But when I told him how you had shown me the door, he went and sneaked into your service in the most foolish way, as a cooper, to gain Rosa's heart, with the view, as I suppose, of carrying her off from you. Well! you cured him with that swinging blow you gave him on the back, and thanks to you for that, inasmuch as he has found a noble lady, who may perhaps be really the Rosa he had in his heart from the beginning."

Meanwhile the lady had saluted the bride with the gentlest courtesy, and placed round her neck a rich pearl-necklace, as a wedding-gift.

"Look, dear Rosa," she said, taking some withered flowers from amongst the fresh ones she wore on her breast, "those are the flowers which you once gave to my Conrad as a prize of victory. He kept them faithfully till he saw me. But then he was false to you, and let me have them. Don't be angry."

Rosa, blushing deeply, and casting her eyes modestly down, answered, "Ah! my lady, how can you speak *so*? He never could have cared for *me*, certainly. *You* were his love alone; and because I happen to be called Rosa, too, and am--as these gentlemen say--a little like you, he made love to me, thinking all the time of you."

The procession was about to start for the second time, when a young gentleman came in, dressed in the Italian fashion, all in slashed black velvet, with a fine gold chain and a collar of rich lace.

"Oh, my Reinhold," cried Friedrich, and fell upon his neck; and the bride and Master Martin, too, rejoiced, and cried out, "Here is our beloved Reinhold come!"

"Did I not say, my dearest friend," said Reinhold, cordially returning the embraces, "that everything would turn out gloriously for you after all? Let me celebrate your wedding day with you. I have come a long distance to do so. And as an everlasting memorial, hang up in your house the picture which I painted for you, and which I have brought with me." He called without, and two servants came in carrying a large painting, in a magnificent gold frame, representing Master Martin in his workshop, with his journeymen, Reinhold, Friedrich, and Conrad, at work on the great cask, with Rosa just come in at the door. Everybody was amazed at the truthfulness and the splendid colouring of this work of art.

"Ah," said Friedrich, "*that* is *your* cooper's masterpiece. Mine is downstairs. But I shall turn out another."

"I know," said Reinhold, "and you are a fortunate man; stick to your own art; very probably it is better suited to domesticity and the like, than mine."

At the wedding dinner Friedrich sat between the two Rosas, with Master Martin opposite to him, between Reinhold and Conrad. Paumgartner filled Friedrich's goblet to the brim with noble wine, and drank to the health of Master Martin and his grand journeymen. The goblet went round, and first Baron von Spangenburg, and after him all the worthy masters drained it to the same toast.

When Sylvester had finished his reading, the friends were unanimous in their opinion that the tale was worthy of the Serapion Club, and they particularly admired the pleasingness of the general tone which characterised it.

"I suppose," said Lothair, "that I am fated always to be the one to pick a hole or two. But I can't help it. To my mind, Master Martin smacks too much of his origin; I mean, of the picture which suggested him. Sylvester, inspired by our great Kolbe's painting, has shown us a splendid collection of other pictures; and, though the colouring of them is delightful, still, they are nothing but pictures; they never could become situations, in living movement, as the narrative of the drama demands that they should do. Conrad, with *his* Rosa, and Reinhold as well, come in at the end merely that Friedrich's wedding feast may be pleasant and proper, as it ought to be. On the whole--as far as Conrad is concerned--if I did not know your simpleness of heart, Sylvester--if you had not, all through your tale, striven with good success to be always true and straight-forward, well! I should have been inclined to say that--in your Conrad--you had wished to be ironical over those wondrous characters who, in many of our modern novels, play leading parts--a sort of hash-up of loutishness, '*galanterie*,' barbarism, and sentimentality who call themselves 'chivalrous,' but of whom, I fancy, there never was a prototype, any more than of those 'blusterers' whom Veit Weber and his followers used to portray, knocking everybody into minced meat, right and left, on every occasion."

Vincent said: "You have brought in the 'Berseker fury' certainly, with admirable effect. But it is unpardonable in you to have allowed a nobleman's back to be blued and blacked by the hoop of a cask, without the blue and blacked aristocrat having broken the head of the dealer of the blow. He might have begged his pardon politely afterwards, or applied an Arcanum which would have mended his head in a moment; after which he would have been aware of a distinct increase in his wisdom. The only gentleman whom you can quote as a prototype is the valiant knight Don Quixote, who got many a sound licking, notwithstanding his magnanimity, braggery, and chivalry."

"Blame as much as you please," said Sylvester, laughing. "I leave myself entirely in your hands; but let me say that where I find consolation is in the verdicts of those charming ladies to whom I read my 'Master Martin,' and who expressed thorough delight with the whole affair, and overwhelmed me with

praise."

"Praise of that sort, from beautiful lips," said Ottmar, "certainly is wholly irresistible, and capable of leading many a romancer into wondrous follies, and scriptorial capers of every kind; but, if I am not mistaken, Lothair promised to finish this evening of ours with one of the productions of his fantastic dreamery."

"Yes," answered Lothair. "Recollect that I undertook to write a second story for my sister's children, and to be less wild, and more peaceable and 'childlike,' than I was in 'Nutcracker and the King of Mice.' The story is here, and you shall hear it."

Lothair then read:--

THE STRANGER CHILD.

BARON VON BRAKEL OF BRAKELHEIM.

There was once a noble gentleman named The Baron Thaddeus von Brakel, who lived in the little village of Brakelheim, which he had inherited from his deceased father, the old Baron von Brakel, and which, consequently, was his property. The four rustics, who were the other inhabitants of the village, called him "your Lordship," although, like themselves, he went about with his hair badly combed, and it was only on Sundays when he went to the neighbouring country town to church, with his lady and his two children (whose names were Felix and Christlieb)--that he substituted for the coarse cloth jacket, which he wore at other times, a fine green coat and a scarlet waistcoat with gold braid, which became him well. The same rustic neighbours, when any one chanced to ask, "How shall I find my way to the Baron von Brakel's?" were wont to reply: "Go straight on through the village, and up the hill where those birches are; his Lordship's castle is there." Now everybody knows that a castle is a great and lofty building, with a number of windows and doors, to say nothing of towers and glittering weathercocks; but nothing of this sort could be discovered on the hill where the birches were, all that was to be seen there being a commonplace little ordinary house, with a few small windows, which you could hardly see anything of, till you were close upon it. Now it is often the case that, at the portal of a grand castle, one suddenly halts, and--being breathed upon by the icy air which streams out of it, and glared at by the lifeless eyes of the strange sculptured figures which are fixed, like fearful warders, on the walls--loses all desires to go in, preferring to turn away. But this was by no means the case, as regarded Baron von Brakel's abode. For, first of all, the beautiful graceful birches, when one came to them, would bend their leafy branches like arms stretched out, to greet him, their rustling leaves whispering a "Welcome, welcome among us!" And when one reached the house, it seemed as if charming voices were calling, in dulcet tones, out of the bright, windows, and everywhere from among the thick dark leafage of the vine which covered the walls up to the roof: "Come, come, and rest, thou dear weary wanderer; here all is comfort and hospitality." This was also confirmed by the swallows, twittering merrily in and out of their nests; and the stately old stork looked down, gravely and wisely, from the chimney, and said: "I have passed my summers in this place now for many and many a year, and I know no better lodging in all the world; if it weren't for my inborn love of travel, which I can't control--if it weren't so very cold here in the winter, and wood so dear--I should never stir from the spot." Thus charming and delightful, although not a castle, was Baron von Brakel's house.

VISITORS OF DISTINCTION.

Madame von Brakel got up very early one morning, and baked a cake, into which she put a great many more almonds and raisins than even into her Easter

cake, for which reason it had a much more delicious odour than that one itself had. While this was in progress, the Baron von Brakel thoroughly dusted and brushed his green coat and his red waistcoat, and Felix and Christlieb were dressed in the very best clothes they possessed. The Baron said to them: "You mustn't run about in the wood to-day, as you generally do, but sit still in the room, that you may look neat and nice when your distinguished uncle comes!"

The sun had emerged, bright and smiling, from the clouds, and was darting golden beams in at the window; out in the wood the morning breeze blew fresh, and the finch, the siskin, and the nightingale were all pouring out their hearts in joy, and warbling the loveliest songs in chorus. Christlieb was sitting silent, deep in thought, at the table, now and then smoothing and arranging the bow of her pink sash, now and then industriously striving to go on with her knitting, which, somehow, would by no means answer that morning. Felix, into whose hands papa had put a fine picture-book, looked away over the tops of the pages towards the beautiful Birchwood, where, every other morning but this, he might jump about for an hour or two to his heart's content. "Oh! isn't it jolly out there!" sighed he to himself; and when, in addition, the big yard-dog, Sultan by name, came barking and bounding before the window, dashing away a short distance in the direction of the wood, coming back again, and barking and growling afresh, as if he were saying to Felix, "Aren't you coming to the wood to-day? What on earth are you doing in that stuffy room?" Felix couldn't contain himself for impatience. "Oh, darling mamma, do just let me go out, only for a little!" he cried; but Madame von Brakel answered, "No, no, stay in the room, like a good boy. I know very well how it will be; if you go, Christlieb must go too, and then away you'll both scamper, helter skelter, through brush and briar, up into the trees. And then, back you'll come, all hot and smirched, and your uncle will say, 'What ugly country children are these? I am sure no Brakels, be they big or little, can ever be like that.'"

Felix clapped the book to in a rage, and said, as the tears of disappointment came into his eyes, "If our grand uncle talks of ugly country children, I'm sure he never can have seen Peter Vollrad or Annie Hentschel, or any of the children in the village here, for I know there couldn't be prettier children anywhere than they are." "I'm sure of that," said Christlieb, as if suddenly waking from a dream; "and isn't Maggy Schulz a beautiful child too, although she hasn't anything like as pretty ribbons as mine." "Do not talk such stupid nonsense," said their papa, "you don't understand what your uncle means, in so saying."

All further representations to the effect that just this day, of all others, it was so very glorious in the wood were of no avail, Felix and Christlieb had to stay in the room, and this was all the more painful because the company cake, which was on the table, gave out the most delicious odours, and yet might not be cut into until their uncle's arrival. "Oh! if he would but come! if he would but only come!" both the children cried, and almost wept with impatience. At last a vigorous trampling of horses became audible, and a carriage appeared, which was so brilliant and so richly covered with golden ornamentation, that the children were unspeakably amazed, for they had never beheld the like of it before. A tall and very thin man glided by help of the arm of the footman, who opened the carriage door, into the arms of Baron von Brakel, to whose cheek he twice gently laid his own, and whispered mincingly, "*Bon jour*, my dear cousin; now, no ceremony, I implore!" Meanwhile the footman had also aided a short stout lady, with very red cheeks, and two children, a boy and a girl, to glide down to earth from the carriage (which he performed with much dexterity), so that each of them came to their feet on the ground.

When they were all thus safely deposited, Felix and Christlieb came forward (as they had been duly prepared by mamma and papa to do), seized each a hand of the tall thin man, and said, kissing the same, "We are very glad you are come, dear noble uncle;" then they did the same with the hands of the stout lady, and said, "We are very glad you are come, dear noble aunt;" then they went up to the children, but stood before them quite dumfounded, for they had never seen children of the sort before. The boy had on long pantaloons, a little jacket of

scarlet cloth covered all over with golden knots and embroidery, and a little bright sabre at his side; while on his head was a curious red cap with a white feather, from under which he peeped shyly and bashfully with his yellow face, and his bleared, heavy eyes. The girl had on a white dress--very much like Christlieb's, but with a frightful quantity of ribbons and tags--and her hair was most curiously frizzed up into knots, and twisted upon the top of her head, where there was, besides, a little shining coronet.

Christlieb plucked up courage, and was going to take the little girl's hand; but she snatched it away in a hurry, and put on such an angry tearful face, that Christlieb was quite frightened, and let her alone. Felix wanted to have a closer look at the boy's pretty sabre, and put out his hand to it, but the youngster began to cry, "My sabre, my sabre, he's going to take my sabre!" and ran to the thin man, behind whom he hid himself. Felix grew red in the face, and said, much annoyed: "I don't want to take your sabre--young stupid!"

The last two words were murmured between his teeth, but Baron von Brakel seemed to have heard all, and was much put out about it, for he fingered his waistcoat nervously, and said, "Oh, Felix!" The stout lady said, "Adelgunda! Herrmann! the children are doing you no harm; do not be so silly." The thin gentleman saying, "They will soon make acquaintance," took Madam von Brakel by the hand, and conducted her to the house. Baron von Brakel followed him with the stout lady, to whose skirts Adelgunda and Herrmann clung. Christlieb and Felix came after them.

"The cake will be cut now," Felix whispered to his sister. "Oh, yes! oh, yes! yes!" answered she delighted. "And then we'll be off into the wood," continued Felix. "And not bother more about these stupid stranger things," added Christlieb. Felix cut a caper; and then they went into the room. Adelgunda and Herrmann might not have any of the cake, because their papa and mamma said it was not good for them; so each of them had a little biscuit, which the footman had to produce from a bag which he had brought. Felix and Christlieb munched bravely at the substantial piece of cake which their dear mamma had given to each, and enjoyed themselves.

THE FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE VISIT OF THE DISTINGUISHED RELATIVES.

The thin gentleman, whose name was Cyprianus von Brakel, was first cousin to the Baron Thaddeus von Brakel, but a personage of far greater distinction. For, besides bearing the title of count, he wore upon every one of his coats--aye, even on his dressing-gown--a great silver star. Thus it had happened that when, about a year before, he had paid a flying visit one afternoon to his cousin, Baron Thaddeus--but alone that time, without the stout lady (who was his wife) and without the children Felix had said to him, "Please tell me, uncle, have you been made *king* now?" For Felix had seen a picture of a king in his picture-book with just such a star on his breast, and naturally thought his uncle was one, since he wore this mark of royalty. His uncle had laughed much at the question on that occasion, and replied, "No, dear child, I am not the king, but I am the king's most faithful servant and minister, who rules over a great many people. If you belonged to the line of the Counts of Brakel, perhaps you might one day wear a star like this one of mine. As it is, you are only a simple 'von'--a baron, and cannot expect to come to very much."

Felix did not understand his uncle in the slightest, and his father thought it did not much matter whether he did or not. The uncle told his fat lady how Felix had thought he was the king; on which she ejaculated, "Sweet, delightful, *touching* innocence!"

And now Felix and Christlieb had to come forward from the window, where

they had been eating their cake with much kicking and laughter. Their mother wiped the cake-crumbs and raisin-remnants from their lips, and they were handed over to their gracious uncle and aunt, who kissed them, with loud ejaculations of, "Oh, sweet and darling nature! oh rural simplicity!" and placed big cornets of paper in their hands. Tears came to the eyes of Baron Thaddeus von Brakel, and to those of his wife, over this condescension of their grand kinsfolk. Meanwhile Felix had opened his paper-cornet, and found in it bonbons, at which he set to work to munch vigorously, in which Christlieb followed his example.

"My boy! my boy!" cried his gracious uncle, "that is not the way to do it; you will destroy your teeth! You must suck them gently till the sugar dissolves in your mouth." But Felix laughed, and said, "Gracious uncle! do you think I am a baby, and haven't got teeth to bite them with?" With which he put a bonbon in his mouth and gave it such a bite that everything rattled and rang. "Delicious naivety!" the fat lady cried. The uncle agreed; but drops of perspiration stood on Baron Thaddeus von Brakel's forehead. He was ashamed of Felix's lack of polish; and the mother whispered to the boy hurriedly, "Don't make such a clattering with those teeth of yours, ill-bred boy!" This put poor Felix into a state of utter consternation, for he didn't know he was doing anything wrong. He took the half-eaten bonbon out of his mouth, put it into the paper parcel again, and handed the whole thing back to his uncle, saying, "Take your sugar away with you again!--that's all I care about, if I mayn't eat it." Christlieb, accustomed to follow Felix's example in all things, did the same with *her* paper-cornet. This was too much for poor Baron Thaddeus, who cried out, "Ah! my honoured and gracious cousin! do not be annoyed with the silliness of those simple children. Really, in the country, and in our straitened circumstances, alas! who could bring up children in the style in which you have brought up yours?" Count Cyprianus smiled a gracious smile as he glanced at Herrmann and Adelgunda. They had long since finished eating their biscuit, and were now sitting as mum as mice upon their chairs, without the slightest motion of either their faces or their limbs. The fat lady smiled too, and lisped out, "Really, dear cousin, the education of our children lies nearer our hearts than anything in the world." She made a sign to Count Cyprianus, who immediately turned to Herrmann and Adelgunda, and asked them all sorts of questions, which they answered with the utmost readiness. The questions were about towns, rivers, and mountains, many thousands of miles off, and having the oddest names; also they could tell what every sort of animal was like, which was to be found in the remotest quarters of the globe. Then they spoke of plants, trees, and shrubs, just as if they had seen them themselves, and eaten of the fruits. Herrmann gave a minute description of all that had happened at a great battle three hundred years ago, or more, and was able to cite the names of all the Generals who had taken part in it. At length Adelgunda even spoke of the stars, and stated that there were all sorts of beasts, and curious figures, in the sky. This made Felix quite frightened and uneasy; he got close to his mother, and whispered, "Ah, mamma! dearest mamma! what is all that nonsense that they're blabbering about?" "Hold your tongue, stupid boy!" his mother replied. "Those are the Sciences."

Felix held his peace.

"Astonishing!" cried Baron Thaddeus. "Quite unparalleled! at their time of life!" And Fran von Brakel sighed out, "Oh, Jemini! what little angels! What in the world is to become of *our* little ones, out in the country here!"

Baron Thaddeus now joining in his wife's lamentations, Count Cyprianus comforted their hearts, by promising to send them, shortly, a man of much erudition, and specially skilled in the education of children.

Meanwhile the beautiful carriage had driven up to the door, and the "jaeger" came in with two great bandboxes, which Herrmann and Adelgunda took and handed to Felix and Christlieb. Herrmann, making a polite bow, said, "Are you fond of playthings, *mon cher*?--here I have brought you some of the finest kind." Felix hung his head. He felt melancholy; he did not know why. He held the

bandbox in his hands, without expressing any thanks, and said in a murmur, "I'm not '*mon cher*,' and I'm not 'you'; I'm 'thou.'" And Christlieb was nearer crying than laughing, although the box which Adelgunda had handed her was giving forth the most delightful odours, as of delicious things to eat. The dog Sultan, Felix's faithful friend and darling, was dancing and barking, according to his wont; but Herrmann was so frightened at him that he hid himself in a corner and began to cry. "He's not touching *thee*," Felix cried. "He's only a dog. What art thou howling and screaming about? You know all about the most terrible wild beasts in the world, don't you?--and even if he were going to set upon you, haven't you your sword on?"

But Felix's words were of no avail. Herrmann went on howling till the servant had to take him in his arms and bear him off to the carriage. Adelgunda, suddenly infected by her brother's terror--or heaven knows from what other cause!--also began to scream and howl, which so affected poor Christlieb that *she* began to cry too. Amid this yelling and screaming of the children, Count Cyprianus von Brakel took his departure from Brakelheim; and so terminated the visit of those distinguished relations.

THE NEW PLAYTHINGS.

When the carriage containing Count Cyprianus von Brakel and his family had rolled down the hill, Herr Thaddeus quickly threw off his green coat and his red waistcoat; and when he had, as quickly, put on his loose jacket, and passed his big comb two or three times through his hair, he drew a long breath, stretched himself, and cried, "God be thanked!" The children, too, got out of their Sunday clothes, and felt happy and light. "To the wood! to the wood!" cried Felix, executing some of his highest jumps.

"But don't you want to see what Herrmann and Adelgunda have brought you before you set off?" said their mother. And Christlieb, who had been contemplating the boxes with longing eyes even while her clothes were being changed, thought that *that would* be a good thing to do first, and that it would be plenty of time to go to the wood afterwards. Felix was very hard to convince of this. He said, "What that can be of any consequence can that stupid pump-breeked creature have brought us?--and his ribbony sister into the bargain? About the 'sciences,' as you call them, he clatters away as finely as you please. He talks about bears and lions, and tells you how to take elephants, and then he's afraid of my dear dog Sultan; has a sword on, and goes and crawls under the table!--a nice sort of sportsman *he* is!"

"Ah, dear, good Felix! just let us see, for a minute or two, what's inside the boxes." Thus prayed Christlieb; and as Felix always did anything he could to please her, he at once gave up the idea of being off to the wood immediately, and patiently sat down with her at the table on which the boxes were. The mother opened them; and then!--oh! my very dear readers! you have all been so happy when, at the time of the yearly fair, or at all events at Christmas, your parents and your friends flooded you with presents of every delightful kind. Remember how you danced for joy when pretty soldiers, and little fellows with barrel-organs, beautifully-dressed dolls, delightful picture-books, and all the rest, lay and stood before you. Such great delight as was then yours, Felix and Christlieb now experienced. For a really splendid assortment of the loveliest toys came out of those boxes, and all sorts of charming things to eat as well; so that the children clapped their hands again and again, crying, "Oh, how nice that is!" One paper parcel of bonbons, however, Felix laid aside with contempt; and when Christlieb begged him not to throw the glassy sugar out of the window, as he was going to do, he gave up that idea, and only chucked some of the bonbons to Sultan, who had come in wagging his tail. Sultan snuffed at them, and then turned his back on them disdainfully.

"Do you see, Christlieb," Felix cried, "Sultan won't have anything to do with the wretched stuff."

But, on the whole, none of the toys caused Felix such satisfaction as a certain little sportsman, who, when a little string which stuck out beneath his jacket was pulled, put his gun to his shoulder and fired at a target which was stuck up three spans in front of him. Next to him in his affections stood a little fellow, who made bows and salaams, and tinkled on a little harp when you turned a handle. But what pleased him more than all those things was a gun made of wood, and a hunting hanger, of wood also, and silvered over; also a beautiful hussar's busby and a sabretasche. Christlieb was equally delighted with a finely dressed doll and a set of charming furniture. The children forgot all about the woods, and enjoyed themselves over their playthings till quite late in the evening. They then went to their beds.

WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE NEW PLAYTHINGS IN THE WOOD.

Next day the children began where they had left off the night before; that is to say, they got out the boxes, took forth the toys, and amused themselves with them in many ways. Just as had been the case the day before, the sun shone brightly and kindly in at the windows; the birches, greeted by the sighing morning breeze, whispered and rustled; the birds rejoiced in loveliest songs of joy. Felix's heart was full of his sportsman, his harper, his gun, and sabretasche.

"I'll tell you what it is," he cried; "it's much nicer outside! Come, Christlieb, let's be off to the woods!"

Christlieb had just undressed her big doll, and was going to put its clothes on again, a matter of the greatest moment and interest to her, for which reason she would rather not have gone out just then, and said, in a tone of entreaty, "Hadn't we better stay here and play a little longer, Felix dear?"

"I'll tell you what well do, Christlieb; we'll take the best of our toys out to the woods with us. I'll put on my hanger, and sling the gun over my shoulder; and then, you see, I shall be a regular sportsman. The little hunter and the harper can come with me, and you can take your big doll and the best of your other things with you. Come along, let's be off."

Christlieb hastened to dress her doll as quickly as possible, and then they both made off to the wood with their playthings. There they established themselves in a nice, grassy place; and after they had played for a while, and Felix was making his harper tinkle his little tune, Christlieb said, "Do you know, Felix, that harper of yours doesn't play at all nicely. Just listen how wretched it sounds out here in the wood, that eternal 'ting-ting, plang-plang.' The birds peep down from the trees as though they were disgusted with that stupid musician who insists on accompanying them." Felix turned the handle more and more strenuously, and at length cried, "I think you're right, Christlieb. What the little fellow plays sounds quite horrible. I'm quite ashamed to see those thrushes there looking down at me with such wise eyes. He must make a better job of it." With which Felix screwed away at the handle with such force that crack! crack! the whole box on which the harp-man stood flew into a thousand splinters, and his arms fell down broken.

"Oh, oh!" Felix cried. "Ah! poor little harper!" sighed Christlieb. Felix looked at the broken toy for a minute or two, and then said, "Well, he was a stupid, senseless chap, after all. He played terribly poor music, and made faces, and bowed and scraped like our cousin Pump-breeks;" and he shied the harp-player as far as he could into the thicket. "What I like is my sportsman here," he went on to say. "He makes a bull's-eye every time he fires over and over again." And he kept on making him score a long succession of bull's-eyes accordingly.

When this had gone on for some time, however, Felix said, "It's stupid, all the same, that he should always make bull's-eyes; so very unsportsmanlike, you know--papa says so. A real sportsman has got to shoot deer, hares, and so forth, running. I can't have this chap going on aiming at a target; mustn't be any more of it; one gets weary of it; won't do." And Felix broke off the target which was fixed up in front of the shooting-man. "Now then," he cried, "fire away into the open."

But it was in vain that he pulled at the thread; the little man's arms hung limp and motionless; the gun rose no more to his shoulder--his shooting was at an end.

"Ha! ha!" Felix cried; "you could shoot at your target indoors; but out in the woods here, where the sportsman's home is, you can't, eh? I suppose you're afraid of dogs, too; and if one were to come you would take to your heels, gun and all, as cousin Pump-breeks did with his sword, wouldn't you? ugh! you stupid, useless dunderhead;" with which Felix shied him into the bushes after the harp-man.

"Come, let's run about a bit," he said to Christlieb. "Ah, yes, let us," said she; "this lovely doll of mine shall run with us too; that will be fun."

So Felix and Christlieb took each an arm of the doll, and off they set in full career, through the bushes, down the brae, and on and on till they came to a small lake, engarlanded with water-plants, which was on their father's property, and where he sometimes shot wild-duck. Here they came to a stand, and Felix said, "Suppose we wait here a little. I have a gun now, you know, and perhaps I may hit a duck among the rushes, like father."

At that moment Christlieb screamed out, "Oh! just look at my doll; what's the matter with her?"

Indeed, that poor thing was in a miserable condition enough. Neither Felix nor Christlieb had been paying any attention to her during their run, and so the bushes had torn all the clothes off her back, both her handsome legs were broken, and of the pretty waxen face there was scarcely a trace remaining, so marred and hideous did it appear.

"Oh, my poor, beautiful doll!" wept Christlieb.

"There, you see!" cried Felix; "those are the sort of trashy things those two stupid creatures brought and gave us. That doll of yours is nothing more or less than a stupid, idiotic slut. Can't so much as come for a little run with us but she must get her clothes all torn off her back, and herself spoilt and destroyed. Give me hold of her!"

Christlieb sorrowfully complied, and could scarcely restrain a cry of "Oh, oh!" as he chucked the doll, without more ado, into the pond.

"Never mind, dear!" Felix said, consoling his sister. "Never mind about the wretched thing. If I can only shoot a duck, you shall have all the beautiful wing feathers."

A rustle was heard amongst the rushes, and Felix instantly took aim with his wooden gun. But he moved it away from his shoulder speedily, saying--"Am I not a tremendous idiot myself?" Looking reflectively before him for a few minutes, he continued softly--

"How can a fellow shoot without powder and shot? And have I either the one or the other? And then, could I put powder into a wooden gun? What's the use, after all, of the stupid, wooden thing? And the hunting-knife! wooden, too. Can neither cut nor stab. Of course my cousin's sword was wooden as well! That was why he couldn't draw it when he was afraid of Sultan. I see what it all comes too. Cousin Pump-breeks was making a fool of me with his playthings, which only make-believe to be things, and are nothing but useless trumpery." With which Felix shied the gun, the hunting knife, and finally the sabretasche into the pond. But

Christlieb was terribly distressed about her doll, and Felix himself couldn't help being annoyed at the way things had turned out. And in this mood of mind they crept back to the house; and when their mother asked them what had become of their playthings, Felix truthfully related how they had been deceived in the harper, the gun, the sabretasche, and the doll.

"Ah! you foolish children!" cried Frau von Brakel, half angry; "you don't know how to deal with nice toys of the kind."

But Baron Thaddeus, who had listened to Felix's tale with evident satisfaction, said, "Let the children alone; at the bottom, I am very glad they are fairly rid of those playthings. They didn't understand them, and were only bothered and vexed by them."

Neither Frau von Brakel nor the children understood what the Baron meant in so saying.

THE STRANGER CHILD.

Soon after those events, Felix and Christlieb had run off to the wood very early one morning. Their mother had impressed upon them that they were to be home very soon again, because it was necessary that they should stay in the house and read and write a great deal more than they used to do, that they might not lose countenance before the tutor, who was expected very soon. Wherefore Felix said, "We must jump and run about as much as we can for the little while that we are allowed to stay out here, that's all." So they immediately began to play at hare and hounds.

But that game, and also every other that they tried to play at, very soon only wearied them, and failed to amuse them after a second or two. They could not understand why it was that, on that particular day, thousands of vexatious annoyances should keep continually happening to them. The wind carried Felix's cap away into the bushes; he stumbled and fell down on his nose as he was running his best. Christlieb found herself hanging by her clothes in a thorn-tree, or banged her foot against a sharp stone, so that she had to shrink with pain. They soon gave it all up, and slunk along dejectedly through the wood.

"Let's go home," said Felix; "there's nothing else for it."

But instead of doing so, he threw himself down under a shady tree; Christlieb followed his example; and there the children lay, depressed and wretched, gazing at the ground.

"Ah!" said Christlieb; "if we only had our nice playthings."

"Bosh!" growled Felix; "what the better should we be? We should only smash them up and destroy them again. I'll tell you what it is, Christlieb. Mother is not far wrong, I suspect. The playthings were all right enough. But we didn't know how to play with them. And that's because we don't know anything about the 'sciences,' as they call them."

"You're quite right, Felix, dear," Christlieb said; "if we knew the 'sciences' all by heart, as those dressed-up cousins of ours do, we should still have your harp-man and your sportsman; and my poor doll would not be at the bottom of the duck-pond. Poor things that we are! Ah! we know nothing about the 'sciences!'"

And therewith Christlieb began to sob and cry bitterly, and Felix joined her in so doing. And they both howled and lamented till the wood re-echoed again, crying, "Poor unfortunate children that we are! we know nothing of the 'sciences.'"

But suddenly they ceased, and asked one another in amazement--

"Do you see, Christlieb?" "Do you hear, Felix?"

From out the deepest shades of the dark thicket which lay before the children, a wonderful luminousness began to shine, playing like moonlight over the leaves, which trembled in ecstasy. And through the whispering trees there came a sweet musical tone, like that which we hear when the wind awakens the chords slumbering within a harp. The children felt a sense of awe come over them. All their vexation had passed away from them; but tears of a sweet, unknown pain rose to their eyes.

As the radiance streamed brighter through the bushes, and the marvellous music-tones grew louder and louder, the children's hearts beat high: they gazed eagerly at the brightness, and then they saw, smiling at them from the thicket, the face of the most beautiful child imaginable, with the sun beaming on it in all its splendour.

"Oh, come to us!--come to us, darling child!" cried Christlieb and Felix, as they stretched their arms with indescribable longing towards the beautiful creature. "I am coming!--I am coming!" a sweet voice cried from the bushes; and then, as if borne on the wings of the morning breeze, the Stranger Child seemed to come hovering over to Christlieb and Felix.

HOW THE STRANGER CHILD PLAYED WITH FELIX AND CHRISTLIEB.

"I thought I heard you, out of the distance, crying and lamenting," said the Stranger Child, "and then I was very sorry for you. What is the matter, you dear children?--what is it you want?"

"Ah," Felix said, "we didn't quite know what it was that we *did* want! But now, as far as I can make out, what we wanted was just you yourself." "That is it!" Christlieb chimed in; "now that you are with us, we are happy again. Why were you so long in coming?"

In fact, both children felt as though they had known and played with the Stranger Child for a long time already, and that their unhappiness had been only because this beloved playmate was not with them.

"You see," Felix said, in continuation, "we really haven't got any playthings left; for I, like a stupid fool, went and destroyed a number of the very finest, which my cousin Pump-breeks gave me, and I shied them away. Never mind; we shall play somehow for all that."

"How can you talk so, Felix," said the Stranger Child, laughing aloud. "Certainly the stuff you threw away wasn't of much value; but you, and Christlieb too, are in the very middle of a quantity of the most exquisite play-things that were ever seen."

"Where--where are they?" Felix and Christlieb cried.

"Look round you," said the Stranger Child; and Felix and Christlieb then saw how, out of the thick grass and the wool-like moss, all sorts of glorious flowers were peeping, with bright eyes gleaming, and between them many-coloured stones and crystalline shells sparkled and shone, while little golden insects danced up and down, humming little gentle songs.

"Now we will build a palace," said the Stranger Child. "Help me to get the stones together." And the Stranger stooped down and began choosing stones of pretty colours. Felix and Christlieb helped, and the Stranger Child knew so well how to set the stones up on one another that soon there arose tall columns, shining in the sun like polished metal, while an aerial golden roof vaulted itself

over them at the top. Then the Stranger Child kissed the flowers which were peeping from the ground; when, with sweet whisperings, they shot up higher, and, embracing each other lovingly, formed sweet-scented arcades and covered walks, in which the children danced about, full of delight and gladness. The Stranger Child clapped hands; and then the golden roof of the palace, which was formed of insects' golden wings vaulted together, went asunder with a hum, and the pillars melted away into a plashing silver stream, on whose banks the varied flowers took up their stations, and peered inquiringly into its ripples, or, moving their heads from side to side, listened to its baby pattering. Then the Stranger Child plucked blades of grass, and gathered little twigs from trees, strewing them down before Felix and Christlieb. But those blades of grass presently turned into the prettiest little dolls ever seen; and the twigs became delicious little huntsmen. The dolls danced round Christlieb; let her take them up in her lap, and whispered, in delicate little voices, "Be kind to us!--love us, dearest Christlieb!" The hunters shouted, "Halloa! halloa! the hunt's up!" and blew their horns, and bustled about. Then hares came darting out of the bushes, with dogs after them, and the hunters banging about. This was delightful.

Then all disappeared again. Christlieb and Felix cried, "What has become of the dolls? where are the hunters?" The Stranger Child said, "Oh, they are all at your disposal; they are close by you at any moment when you want them. But hadn't you rather come on through the wood a little now?" "Oh, yes! yes!" cried Felix and Christlieb. The Stranger Child took hold of their hands, crying, "Come; come!"

And with that they went off. But it could not be called "running," really, for the children floated along, lightly and easily, through amongst the trees, whilst all the bird's went fluttering along beside them, singing and warbling in the blithest fashion. All of a sudden up they soared, far into the sky. "Good morning, children! Good morning, Fritz, my crony!" cried the stork in the by-going.

"Don't hurt me! don't hurt me!" screamed the hawk. "I'm not going to touch your pigeons." And he swept away as hard as his long wings would carry him, alarmed at the children. Felix shouted with delight, but Christlieb was frightened. "Oh, my breath's going!" she cried; "I shall tumble!" And just at that moment the Stranger Child let them all three down to the ground again, and said: "Now I shall sing you the Forest-Song, as a good-bye for to-day. I shall come again to-morrow." Then the Child took out a little horn, of which the golden windings looked almost as if made of wreaths of flowers, and began to sound it so beautifully that the whole wood echoed wondrously with the lovely music of it, whilst the nightingales (which had come up fluttering as if in answer to the horn's summons, and were sitting on the branches, as close as they could to the children) sang their sweetest songs. But all at once the music grew fainter and fainter, till nothing of it remained but a soft whisper, which seemed to come from the thicket into which the Stranger Child had disappeared. "To-morrow!--to-morrow I come again!" the children could just hear, as if from an immense distance. They could not give themselves any explanation of their feelings, for never, never had they known such happiness and enjoyment before in their lives.

"And, oh, I wish it were to-morrow now!" they both cried, as they hastened home as hard as they could, to tell their parents all that had happened to them.

WHAT BARON VON BRAKEL AND HIS LADY SAID, AND WHAT HAPPENED FURTHER.

"I could almost fancy the children had dreamt all this," the Baron said to his wife, when Felix and Christlieb, full of the Stranger Child, could not cease from talking of all that had happened--the delightsomeness of their new friend, the exquisite music, the wonderful events generally--"but then," said the Baron, "when I remember that they could not both have dreamt just the same things at the same time, really, when all's said and done, I cannot get to the bottom of it

all."

"Don't trouble your head about it, dear," said Frau von Brakel. "My idea is that this Stranger Child was nobody but the schoolmaster's boy, Gottlieb, from the village. It must have been he that ran over, and put all this nonsense in the children's heads. We must take care that he is not allowed to do it any more."

The Baron, was by no means of his wife's opinion; and, with the view of getting better at the rights and wrongs of the affair, the children were brought in and made to describe minutely what the child was like; how it was dressed, and so forth. With respect to its appearance, both Felix and Christlieb agreed that its face was fair as the lilies; that it had cheeks like roses, cherry lips, bright blue eyes, locks of golden hair, and that it was more beautiful altogether than words could tell. As regarded its dress, all they knew was that it certainly had not a blue-striped jacket and trousers, or a black leather cap, such as the schoolmaster's Gottlieb wore. On the other hand, all they said of its dress sounded utterly fabulous and absurd. For Christlieb said its dress was wondrous beautiful, shining and gleaming, as if made of the petals of roses; whilst Felix maintained that it was sparkling golden green, like spring-leaves in the sunshine. Felix further said that the child could not possibly have any connection with such a person as a school master, because it was too deeply acquainted with sportsmanship and woodcraft, and must consequently belong to some very home and head-quarters of forest lore, and was going to be the grandest sportsman ever heard of. "Oh, Felix!" Christlieb broke in, "how can you say that dear little girl could ever be a sportsman? She may, perhaps, know a good deal about that too, but I'm sure she knows a great deal more about house-management; or how should she have dressed those dolls for me so beautifully, and made such delightful dishes?" Thus Felix thought the Stranger Child was a boy, and Christlieb, a girl; and those contradictory opinions could not be reconciled.

Fran von Brakel thought it was a pity to go into nonsense of this kind with children; but the Baron thought differently, and said: "I should only have to follow the children into the woods, to find out what wondrous sort of creature this is that comes to play with them; but I can't help feeling that if I did I should spoil what is for them a great pleasure; and for that reason I don't want to do it."

Next day, when Felix and Christlieb went off to the wood at the usual time, they found the Stranger Child waiting for them; and, if their play had been glorious on the former day, this day the Stranger Child did the most miraculous things imaginable, so that Felix and Christlieb shouted for rapture over and over again. It was delicious and most enjoyable that, during their play, the Stranger Child talked so prettily and comprehendingly with the trees, the bushes, the flowers, and the brook which ran through the wood, and they all answered so understandably that Felix and Christlieb knew everything that they said.

The Stranger Child said to the alder-thicket, "What is it that you black-looking folks are muttering and whispering to each other again?" and the branches took to shaking more forcibly, and they laughed and whispered "Ha, ha, ha! we are delighting ourselves over the charming things that friend Morning-breeze was saying to us when he came rustling over from the blue hills, in advance of the sunbeams. He brought us thousands of greetings and kisses from the Golden Queen; and plenty of wing-waftings, full of the sweetest perfume."

"Oh, silence!" the flowers broke in, interrupting the talk of the branches. "Hold your tongues on the score of that flatterer, who is so vain about the perfumes which his false caresses rob us of. Never mind the thickets, children; let them lisp and whisper; look at us--listen to us. We love you so, and we dress ourselves out, day by day, in the loveliest colours merely to give you pleasure."

"And do we not love *you*, you beautiful flowers?" said the Stranger Child. But Christlieb knelt down on the ground, and stretched out her arms, as if she would take all the beautiful flowers to her heart, crying, "Ah, I love you all, every one of you!" Felix cried, "I love you all, too, flowers, in your bright dresses. Still I dote

upon green, and the woods, and the trees. The woods have to take care of you, and shelter you, bonny little things that you are."

Then came a sighing out of the tall, dark fir-trees; and they said, "That is very true, you clever boy; and you are not to be afraid of us, when our cousin, the storm, comes rushing at us, and we have to hold a rather strenuous bit of argument with that rough customer."

"All right," said Felix. "Groan, and sigh, and snarl as much as you like, you green giants that you are; *then* is when the real woodsman's heart begins to rejoice."

"You are quite right there," the forest brook plashed and rustled. "But what is the good of always hunting--always rushing in storm and turmoil? Come, and sit down nicely among the moss, and listen to me. I come from far-away places, out of a deep, dark, rocky cleft. I have delightful tales to tell you; and always something new, wave after wave, for ever and ever. And I will show you the loveliest pictures, if you will but look properly into this clear mirror of mine. Vaporous blue of the sky--golden clouds--bushes, flowers and trees, and your very selves, you beautiful children, I draw lovingly into the depths of my bosom."

"Felix and Christlieb," said the Stranger Child, looking round with wondrous blissfulness, "only listen how they all love us. But the redness of the evening is rising behind the hills, and the nightingale is calling me home."

"Oh, but let us just fly a little, as we did yesterday," Felix prayed.

"Yes," said Christlieb, "but not quite so high. It makes my head so giddy."

Then the Stranger Child took them by the hands again, and they went soaring up into the golden purple of the evening sky, while the birds crowded and sang round them. That was a shouting and a jubilating! In the shining clouds Felix saw, as if in wavering flame, beautiful castles all of rubies and other precious stones. "Look! look! Christlieb!" he cried, full of rapture, "look at all those splendid palaces! Let us fly along as fast as we can, and we shall get to them." Christlieb saw the castles too, and forgot her fear, as she was not looking down, this time, but up before her.

"Those are my beloved air-castles," the Stranger Child said. "But I don't think we shall get any further to-day."

Felix and Christlieb seemed to be in a dream, and could not make out at all how they came to find themselves, presently, with their father and mother.

CONCERNING THE STRANGER CHILD'S HOME.

In the most beautiful part of the wood beside the brook, between whispering bushes, the Stranger Child had set up a most glorious tent, made of tall, slender lilies, glowing roses, and tulips of every hue; and beneath this tent Felix and Christlieb were sitting with the Stranger Child, listening to the forest-brook as it went on whispering the strangest things imaginable.

"I'll tell you, darling boy," Felix said, "I can't properly understand all that he, there, is saying; but I somehow feel that *you* could tell me, clearly and distinctly, what it is that he goes on murmuring. But most of all I should like you to tell me where it is that you come from, and where it is that you go away to, so fast, so fast, that we never can make out how you do it."

"Do you know, sweetest girl," said Christlieb, "our mother thinks you are the schoolmaster's boy, Gottlieb."

"Hold your tongue, stupid thing!" Felix cried. "Mother has never seen this

darling boy, or she wouldn't have talked about the schoolmaster's Gottlieb. But come now, tell me where it is that you live, dear boy; for we want to go and see you at your home in the winter time, when it storms and snows, and nobody can trace a track in the woods."

"Yes, yes!" said Christlieb. "Tell us, like a darling, where your home is; and all about your father and mother, and more than all, what your own name is."

The Stranger Child looked very thoughtfully at the sky, almost sorrowfully, and gave a deep sigh. Then, after some moments of silence, the Stranger Child said, "Ah, my dears, why must you ask about my home? Is it not enough for you that I come every day and play with you? I might tell you that my home lies behind those distant hills, which are like dim, jagged clouds. But though you were to travel day after day, for ever and ever, till you were standing on those hills, you would always see other, and other ranges of hills, further and further away, and my home would still be beyond them; and even if you reached them, you would still see others further away, and would have to go to them, and you would never come to where my home is."

"Ah me!" sighed Christlieb. "Then you must live hundreds and hundreds of miles away from us. It is only on a sort of visit that you are here?"

"Christlieb, darling," the Stranger Child said; "whenever you long for me with all your heart, I am with you immediately, bringing you all those plays and wonders from my home with me; and is not that quite as good as if we were in my home together, playing there?"

"Not at all," Felix said; "for I believe that your home is some most glorious place, full of all sorts of delightful things which you bring--some of them--here with you. I don't care how hard you may say the road is to your home, I mean to set out upon it this minute. To work one's way through forests--by difficult tracks--to climb mountains, and wade rivers, and break through all sorts of thickets, and clamber over rugged rocks--all that is a woodsman's proper business, and I'm going to do it."

"And so you shall!" said the Stranger Child, smiling pleasantly; "for when you put it all so clearly before you, and make up your mind to it, it is as good as done. The land where I live is, in truth, so beautiful and glorious that I can give you no description of it. It is my mother who reigns over that country--all glory and loveliness--as queen."

"Ah, you are a prince!" "Ah, then, you are a princess!" the two children cried together, amazed, and almost terrified.

"I am, certainly," the Stranger Child replied.

"Then you live in a beautiful palace?" Felix cried.

"Yes," said the Stranger Child. "My mother's palace is far more beautiful than those glittering castles which you saw in the evening clouds; for the gleaming pillars of her palace are all of the purest crystal, and they soar, slender and tall, into the blue of heaven; and upon them there rests a great, wide canopy; beneath that canopy sail the shining clouds, hither and thither, on golden wings, and the red of the evening and the morning rises and falls, and the sparkling stars dance in singing circles. Dearest playmates, you have heard of the fairies, who can bring about the most glorious wonders, as mortal men cannot; now, my mother is one of the most powerful fairies of all. All that lives and moves on earth she holds embraced to her heart in the purest and truest love; although, to her inward pain, many human beings will not allow themselves to come to any knowledge of her. But my mother loves children most of all; and thence it is that the festivals which she holds in her kingdom for children are the most splendid and glorious of all. It is then that beautiful spirits belonging to my mother's kingdom, and to her royal palace, fly deftly through the sky, weaving and combining a shining rainbow, from

one end of her palace to another, gleaming in the most brilliant dyes. Under those rainbows they build my mother's diamond throne, all of nothing but diamonds--diamonds which are, in appearance and in perfume, like lilies, roses, and carnations; and when my mother takes her place on her throne, the spirits play on their golden harps and their crystal cymbals, and to those instruments the court singers of her court sing with voices so marvellous, that one could die of rapture to hear them. Now, those singers are beautiful birds, bigger even than eagles, with feathers all purple-red, such as you have never seen the like of. And as soon as their music begins, everything in the palace, the woods, and the gardens moves and sings; and all around there are thousands of beautiful children in charming dresses, shouting and delighting. They chase each other amongst the bushes, and throw flowers at each other in play; they climb trees, where the winds swing them and rock them; they gather gold-glittering fruit, which tastes as nothing on earth does; and they play with tame deer and other charming creatures which come bounding up to them from among the trees; then they run up and down the rainbows, or they ride on the golden pheasants, which fly up among the gleaming clouds with them on their backs."

"How delightful that must be!" Christlieb and Felix cried with rapture. "Oh, take us with you to your home! We want to stay there always!"

But the Stranger Child said, "I cannot take you with me to my home; it is too far away. You would have to be able to fly as far and as strongly as I can myself."

Felix and Christlieb were very sorry, and cast their eyes sadly down to the ground.

THE WICKED MINISTER AT THE FAIRY QUEEN'S COURT.

"And then," the Stranger Child continued, "you might not be as happy as you expect at my mother's court. Indeed, it might be a misfortune for you to go there. There are many children who cannot bear the singing of those purple-red birds, glorious as it is: it breaks their hearts, and they are obliged to die immediately. Others, who are too pert and adventurous in running up and down the rainbows, slip, and fall; and there are many who are so stupid and awkward, that they hurt the gold pheasants when they are riding on them. Then those birds, though they are good-tempered and kind-hearted, take this amiss, and they tear those children's breasts open with their sharp beaks, so that they fall down from the clouds bleeding. My mother is very very sorry when children come to misfortune in those ways, although it is all their own fault when they do. She would be only too happy if all the children in the world could enjoy the pleasures of her court and kingdom. But, although there are plenty who can fly strongly enough and far enough, they are often either too forward, or too timid, and cause her only sorrow and pain; and that is why she allows me to fly away from my home, and take to nice children all sorts of delightful playthings, as I have done to you."

"Ah," cried Christlieb, "I am sure I could never do anything to hurt those beautiful birds! But to run up and down a rainbow, that I am certain I never could. I shouldn't like that."

"Now that would be just what I should delight in," Felix said; "and that is the very reason why I want to go and see your mother, the queen. Couldn't you bring one of those rainbows here with you?"

"No," the Stranger Child said, "I could not do that. And I must tell you that I have only been able to come to you by stealing away from home. Once on a time, I was quite safe every where, just as if I were at home, and my mother's beautiful kingdom seemed to extend all over the world; but now that a bitter enemy of hers, whom she has banished from her kingdom, is going raging about everywhere, I cannot be safe from being watched, pursued, and molested."

"Well," Felix cried, jumping up, and shieing the thorn-stick which he was cutting into the air, "I should like to come across the fellow who would do anything to harm you! He would have to do with me in the first place; and then I should send for father, and he would have him taken up and put in the tower."

"Ah," the Stranger Child said, "powerless as my bitter enemy is to harm me when I am at home, he is terribly dangerous when I am not there, and neither sticks nor prisons can protect me from him!"

"What sort of a nasty creature is it, then," Christlieb inquired, "that can do you so much harm?"

"I have told you that my mother is a mighty queen," the Stranger Child said; "and you know that queens, like kings, have courts and ministers belonging to them."

"Yes, yes," said Felix. "My own uncle, the count, is one of those ministers, and wears a star on his breast. Do your mother's ministers wear stars like him?"

"No," the Stranger Child said; "not exactly that; for most of them are shining stars themselves, and others of them do not wear any coats on which they could stick things of the sort. I must tell you that my mother's ministers are all powerful spirits, either hovering in the sky, or dwelling in the waters, doing, and carrying out everywhere what my mother orders them to do. Once, a long while ago, there came amongst us a stranger, who called himself Pepasilio, who said he was very learned, and could do more, and accomplish greater things, than all the others of us. My mother took him in amongst the ranks of her other ministers; but his natural spite and wickedness very soon developed themselves and came to light, Not only did he strive to undo all that the other ministers did, but he set himself specially to spoil all the happy enjoyments of children. He had pretended to the queen that he, of all others, was the very spirit who could make children glad, and happy, and clever; but instead of that, he hung himself with a weight of lead on to the tails of the pheasants, so that they could not fly aloft any more; and when the children climbed up the rose-trees, he would drag them down by the legs, so that they knocked their noses on the ground and made them bleed; and any that were jumping and dancing he dashed down to the ground, to go crawling wretchedly about there with downcast heads. Those who were singing he crammed all sorts of nasty stuff into the mouths of, so that they had to stop; for singing he could not abide. As for the poor tame beasts, he always wanted to eat them, instead of playing with them, for he said that was what they were meant for. The worst was, that with the help of his followers, he had a way of smearing all the beautiful, sparkling precious stones of the palace, the many-tinted glowing flowers, the roses and lilies, and even the shining rainbows, with a horrible black juice, so that all the glory and the beauty of them was gone, and everything became sorrowful and dead. And when he had accomplished this, he would out with a loud ringing laugh, and say that everything was now just as he wished it to be. But when, at last, he declared that he did not consider my mother to be queen at all, and that the rule really belonged to him alone,--and when he went hovering up in the shape of an enormous fly, with flashing eyes, and a great trunk, or snout, sticking out, all about my mother's throne, buzzing and humming in an abominable manner,--then she, and all the rest of her court, saw that this malignant minister, who had come amongst us under the fine name of Pepasilio, was none other than Pepser, the morose and gloomy King of the Gnomes. But he had foolishly overestimated his power, as well as the bravery of his followers. The ministers of the Air department surrounded the queen, and fanned perfumed breezes towards her, whilst the ministers of the Fire department rushed up and down in billows of flame, and the singers (whose bills had been cleaned out) chanted the most full-voiced choruses, so that the queen neither saw nor heard the ugly Pepser, neither could she be aware of his evil-smelling breath. Moreover, at that moment, the pheasant prince seized him with his glittering beak, and gripped him so strenuously that he screamed with agony and rage; and then the pheasant prince let him down to the earth from a height of three thousand ells, so that he could

not stir hand or foot till his aunt, and crouching, the great blue toad, took him on her back, and so carried him home. Five hundred fine sprightly children armed themselves with fly-flappers, with which they banged Pepser's horrible followers to death, when they were still swarming about intending to destroy all the beautiful flowers. Now, as soon as Pepser was gone, all the black juice which he had covered everything over with, flowed away of itself, and everything was restored, and was soon beaming and shining, and blooming as gloriously as ever. You may imagine that this horrid Pepser has no more power in my mother's kingdom. But he knows that I often venture out, and he follows me everywhere, in shapes of every kind, so that, wretched child that I am, I often do not know where to hide myself in my flight; and that is why I often get away from you so quickly that you cannot see what becomes of me. Therefore things must go on just as they are; and I can assure you that if I were to try to take you with me to my home, Pepser would be sure to lie in wait for us, and kill us."

Christlieb wept bitterly over the danger to which the Stranger Child must always be exposed. But Felix said, "If that horrible Pepser is nothing but a great fly, I'll soon be at him with father's big fly-flapper; and if once I give him a good crack on the nose with it, Auntie Toad will have a job to get him home, I can tell her."

HOW THE TUTOR ARRIVED, AND HOW THE CHILDREN WERE AFRAID OF HIM.

Felix and Christlieb ran home as fast as they could, crying, as they went, "Ah! the Stranger Child is a beautiful prince!"--"Ah! the Stranger Child is a beautiful princess!" They wanted, in their delight, to tell this to their parents; but they stood at the door like marble statues when they found the baron meeting them there with a stranger at his side, an extraordinary-looking personage, who muttered to himself, half intelligibly, "Ah, a nice pair of gawkies those are, it seems to me!"

The baron took him by the hand, saying, "This gentleman is the tutor whom your gracious uncle has sent. So say, 'How-do-you do, sir?' to him properly."

But the children looked askance at the man, and could move neither hand nor foot. This was because they had never seen such an extraordinary-looking creature. He was scarcely more than half a head taller than Felix; but he was stumpy and thick-set, and his little weasened legs formed an astonishing contrast with his body, which was stout and powerful. His shapeless head was almost to be called four-square, and his face was almost too ugly altogether. For not only was his nose much too long and sharp-pointed to suit with his fat, brownish cheeks, and his wide mouth, but his little prominent eyes glittered so alarmingly that one hardly liked to look at him. Moreover, he had a black periwig crammed on to his four-cornered head; he was clad in black from top to toe, and his name was "Tutor Ink."

Now, as the children stood staring like stone images, their mother got angry, and cried, "Good gracious, children, what are you thinking of? This gentleman will take you for a pair of raw country gabies! Come, come; give him your hands!"

The children, taking heart of grace, did as their mother bade them. But as soon as the tutor took hold of their hands, they jumped back with a loud cry of "Oh! oh! It hurts!" The tutor laughed aloud, and showed a needle which he had hidden in his hand, to prick the children with. Christlieb was weeping; but Felix growled, in an aside, "Just you try that again, little Big-belly!"

"Why did you do that, dear Mr. Tutor Ink?" the baron asked, rather annoyed.

The tutor answered, "Well, it is my way; I can't alter it!" With which he stuck his hands in his sides, and went on laughing, till at length his laughter sounded as

ugly as the noise of a broken rattle.

"You seem to be a person fond of your little jokes, Master Tutor Ink!" the baron said. But he, and his wife, and most particularly the children, were beginning to feel very eery and uncomfortable. "Well, well," said Tutor Ink, "what sort of a state are these little crabs here in? Pretty well grounded in the sciences? We'll see directly." With which he began to ask questions of Felix and Christlieb, of the sort that their uncle and aunt had asked of their cousins. But, as they both declared that, as yet, they did not know any of the sciences, by heart, Tutor Ink beat his hands over his head till everything rang again, and cried, like a man possessed, "A pretty story indeed! No sciences! Then we've got our work cut out for us. However, we shall soon make a job of it."

Felix and Christlieb could both write fairly well, and, from many old books which their father put in their hands, and which they were fond of reading, they had learned a good many pretty stories, and could repeat them. But Tutor Ink despised all this, and said it was stupid nonsense.

Alas! there was no more running about in the woods to be so much as thought of. Instead of that, the children had to sit within the four walls of the house all day long, and babble, after Tutor Ink, things which they did not in the least understand. It was really a heart-breaking business. With what longing eyes they looked at the woods! Often it was as if they heard, amidst the happy songs of the birds, and the rustling of the trees, the Stranger Child's voice calling to them and saying, "Felix! Christlieb! are you not coming any more to play with me? Oh, come! I have made you a palace, all of flowers; we will sit there, and I will give you all sorts of beautiful stones, and then we'll soar into the air, and build ourselves cloud-castles. Come! oh come!"

At this, the children were drawn to the woods with all their thoughts, and neither saw nor heard their tutor any longer. But he would get very angry, thump on the table with both his fists, and hum, and growl, and snarl, "Pim--sim--pr--srr knurr kirr--what's all this? Wait a little! "Felix, however, did not endure this very long; he jumped up, and cried, "Don't bother me with your stupid nonsense, Mr. Ink; I must be off to the woods! Go and get hold of Cousin Pumpbreeks; that's the sort of stuff for *him*. Come along, Christlieb! The Stranger Child is waiting for us;" with which they started off. But Tutor Ink sprang after them with remarkable agility, and seized hold of them just outside the door. Felix fought like a man, and Tutor Ink was on the point of getting the worst of it, as the faithful Sultan came to Felix's help. Sultan--generally a good, kindly-behaved dog took a strong dislike to Tutor Ink the moment he set eyes on him. Whenever the tutor came near him, he growled, and swept about him so forcibly with his tail that he nearly knocked the tutor down, managing deftly to hit him great thumps on his little weazened legs. So Sultan came dashing up, when Felix was holding the tutor by the shoulders, and hung on to his coat-tails. Master Ink raised a doleful yell, which brought up the baron to the rescue. The tutor let go his hold of Felix, and Sultan let go his hold on the tutor's coat-tails.

"He said we weren't to go to the woods any more," cried Christlieb, weeping and lamenting. And although the baron gave Felix a good scolding, he was very sorry that the children might not go wandering, as they used, amongst the trees and bushes, and told the tutor that he wished him to go with them into the woods for a certain time every day.

The tutor did not like the idea at all. He said, "Ah, Herr Baron, if you had but a sensible piece of garden, with nicely-clipped box, and railed-in enclosures, one might go and take the children for a little walk there of forenoons! But what in all the world is the good of going into a wild forest?"

The children did not like it either, saying, "What business has Tutor Ink in our darling wood?"

HOW TUTOR INK TOOK THE CHILDREN FOR A WALK IN THE WOODS, AND WHAT HAPPENED ON THE OCCASION.

"Well, Master Ink, isn't it delightful in our wood here?" Felix said, as they were making their way through the rustling thickets. Tutor Ink made a face, and answered, "Stupid nonsense! There's no road. All that one does is to tear one's stockings. And one can't say or hear a word of sense, for the abominable screaming noise the birds are making."

"Ha, ha! master," said Felix, "I see you don't know anything about singing! And I daresay you don't hear when the morning wind is talking with the bushes, and the old forest brook is telling all those delightful tales." "And you don't even love the flowers," Christlieb chimed in; "do you, master?"

At this the tutor's face became of even a deeper cherry-brown than it was usually; and he beat with his hands about him, crying, "What stupid, ridiculous nonsense you are talking! Who has put such trash in your heads? Who ever heard that woods and streams had got the length of engaging in rational conversation? Neither is there anything in the chirping of birds. I like flowers well enough when they are nicely arranged in a room in glasses. They smell then; and one doesn't require a scent-bottle. But there are no proper flowers in woods."

"But don't you see those dear little lilies of the valley, peeping up at you with such bright, loving eyes?" Christlieb said.

"What? what?" the tutor screamed. "Flowers--eyes? Ha, ha! Nice 'eyes' indeed! The useless things haven't even got what you would call a smell!" With which Master Ink bent down and plucked up a handful of them, roots and all, and chucked them away into the thickets. To the children it seemed, almost, as if they heard a cry of pain pass through the wood. Christlieb could not help bitter tears, and Felix gnashed his teeth in anger. Just then, a little siskin went fluttering close past the tutor's nose, alighted on a branch, and began a joyous song. "That is a mockingbird, I think!" said the tutor; and, taking up a stone, he threw it at the poor bird, which it struck, and silenced into death; it fell from the green branch to the ground.

Felix could restrain himself no longer. "You horrible Tutor Ink," he cried, "what had the bird done to you that you should strike it dead? Ah, where are you, you beautiful Stranger Child? Oh come! only come! Let us fly far, far away. I cannot stay beside this horrible creature any longer. I want to go to your home with you." Christlieb chimed in, sobbing and weeping bitterly, crying, "Oh, thou darling child, come to us, come to us! Rescue us, rescue us! Tutor Ink is killing us, as he is killing the flowers and the birds."

"What do you mean by the Stranger Child?" Tutor Ink asked. But at that instant there came a louder whispering and rustling amongst the bushes, mingled with melancholy, heart-breaking tones, as if of muffled bells tolling in the far distance. In a shining cloud, which came sailing over above them, they saw the beautiful face of the Stranger Child, and presently it came wholly into view, wringing its little hands, whilst tears, like glittering pearls streamed down its rosy cheeks. "Ah, darling playmates," cried the Stranger Child, in tones of sorrow, "I cannot come to you any more. You will never see me again. Farewell, farewell! The gnome Pepser has you in his power. Oh, you poor children, good-bye, good-bye!" and the Stranger Child soared up far into the sky. But, at the children's backs, there began a horrid, fearsome sort of buzzing and humming, and snarling and growling; and lo! Tutor Ink had taken the shape of an enormous frightful-looking fly. And the horrible part of the thing was, that he had a man's face at the same time, and even some of his clothes on still. He began to fly upwards, slowly and with difficulty, evidently with the intention of following the Stranger Child. Felix and Christlieb, overpowered with terror, ran away out of the wood as quickly as they could, and did not so much as dare to look up to the sky till they had got some distance off. When they did so, they could just perceive a shining speck in

the sky, glittering amongst the clouds like a star, and apparently coming nearer, and downwards. "That's the Stranger Child," Christlieb cried. The star grew bigger and bigger, and as it did, they could hear a braying of trumpets; and presently they saw that the star was a splendid bird, with wondrous shining plumage, coming soaring down to the wood, flapping its mighty wings, and singing loud and clear. "Ha!" cried Felix, "this is the pheasant prince. He will bite Master Tutor Ink to death. The Stranger Child is saved and so are we! Come, Christlieb; let us get home as fast as we can, and tell father all about it."

HOW THE BARON TURNED TUTOR INK OUT OF DOORS.

The baron and his spouse were both sitting before the door of their simple dwelling, looking at the evening-red, which was beginning to flame up from behind the blue mountains in golden streamers. They had their supper laid out on a little table: it consisted of a noble jug of splendid milk, and a plate of bread-and-butter.

"I don't know," the baron began, "where Tutor Ink can be staying out so long with the children. At first there was no getting him to go out at all to the wood, and now there's no getting him back from it. He's really a very extraordinary fellow, this Tutor Ink, taking him all in all. I sometimes almost wish he had never entered our doors. To begin with, his pricking the children with that needle was a thing that I cannot say I liked; and I don't think his knowledge of the sciences amounts to very much, either. He plappers out a lot of stuff that nobody run make head or tail of, and can tell you what kind of spatterdashes the Grand Mogul puts on; but when he goes outside, he can't tell a lime-tree from a chestnut; and his behaviour has always struck me as being most remarkable."

"I feel just as you do, dearest husband," said Frau von Brakel; "and, glad as I was that your great cousin should interest himself about the children, I feel quite sure, now, that he might have done it in other and better ways than by saddling us with this Tutor Ink. As regards his knowledge of the sciences, I don't pretend to give an opinion; but I know that the little black creature, with his little weeny legs, is more and more disagreeable to me every day. He has such a nasty way of gobbling things. He can't see a drop of beer at the bottom of a glass, or the fag-end of a jug of milk, but he must gulp them down his throat; and if he finds the sugar-box open, he's at it in a moment, snuffing at the sugar, and dipping his fingers in it, till one has to clap to the lid in his face; and then away he darts, humming and buzzing in a way that's most disgusting and abominable."

The baron was going to carry this conversation further, when Felix and Christlieb came running home through amongst the birches.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" Felix kept shouting, "the pheasant prince has bitten Master Tutor Ink to death!"

"Oh, mamma dear," cried Christlieb, "Master Tutor Ink is not a Tutor Ink at all! What he really is, is Pepser, king of the Gnomes; a great, monstrous fly, but a fly with a wig on, and shoes and stockings!"

The parents gazed at the children in utter amazement, as they went on excitedly telling them all about the Stranger Child, whose mother was a great fairy queen; and of the Gnome King Pepser, and his combat with the pheasant prince.

"Who on earth has been cramming all this nonsense into your heads?" the baron asked over and over again. "Have you been dreaming? or what in the name of goodness has happened to you?" However, the children declared, and stuck to it, that everything had happened just as they told it, and that the horrible Pepser, who had given himself out as being Master Ink, the tutor, must be lying killed in the wood.

Frau von Brakel struck her hands over her head and cried, in much sorrow, "Oh, children, children, I don't know what on earth is to become of you, when fearful things of this sort come into your heads, and you won't let yourselves be persuaded to the contrary!"

But the baron grew very grave and thoughtful. "Felix," he said, "you are really a very sensible boy now; and I must admit that Tutor Ink has always, from the very first, struck me as being a very strange, mysterious creature. Indeed, it often seemed to me that there was something very queer about him, which I could by no means get to the bottom of; he is not like the common run of tutors at all. Your mother and I are by no means satisfied with him, particularly your mother. He has such a terribly liquorish tooth of his own, there's no keeping him away from sweet things! And then he hums and buzzes in such a distressing way! Altogether, I can assure you he wouldn't have been here much longer. No! But now, my dear boy, just bethink yourself calmly; even if there were, really, any such nasty things as gnomes existing in the world, could (I ask you now to think it over calmly and rationally), *could*, I say, a tutor really be a fly?"

Felix looked his father steadily in the face with his clear blue eyes, as he repeated this question. "Well," said Felix, "I never thought very much about that; in fact, I should not have believed it myself, if the Stranger Child had not said so, and if I had not seen, with my own eyes, that he is a horrible, nasty fly, and only pretends to be Tutor Ink. And then," continued Felix, while the baron shook his head in silence, like one who does not know quite what to say, or think, "see what mother says about his fondness for sweet things. Isn't that just like a fly? Flies are always grabbing at sweet things. And then, his hummings and buzzings!"

"Silence!" cried the baron. "Whatever Tutor Ink may really be, one thing is certain; that the pheasant prince has not bitten him to death, for here he comes out of the wood!"

At this the children uttered loud screams, and fled into the house.

For, in truth, Tutor Ink was approaching out of the wood, up the path among the birches. But he was all wild-looking and bewildered, with sparkling eyes, and his wig all touzled. He was buzzing and humming, and making great springs, high off the ground, first to one side, then to another, banging his head against the birches till you heard them resound. When he got to the house, he dashed at the milk-jug and popped his face into it, so that the milk ran over the sides; and he gulped it down, making a horrible noise of swallowing.

"For the love of heaven, Master Ink," cried Fran von Brakel, "what are you about?"

"Are you out of your senses?" said the baron. "Is the foul fiend after you?"

But, regardless of those interrogations, Master Ink, taking his mouth from the milk-jug, threw himself down bodily on the dish of bread-and-butter; fluttered over it with his coat-tails, and, somehow, made such play over it with his weazened legs, that he smoothed it down all over. Then, with a louder buzzing, he made for the house-door; but he couldn't manage to get into the house, but staggered hither and thither as if he was drunk, banging against the windows till they rattled and rang.

"I'll tell you what it is, my good sir!" cried the baron. "This is pretty behaviour! Look out, or you'll come to grief before you know where you are!" And he tried to seize Master Ink by the coat-tails; but Master Ink always managed to elude him, deftly. Here Felix came running out, with his father's big fly-flapper in his hand; and he gave it to the baron, crying, "Here you are, father; knock the horrible Pepser to death!"

The baron took the fly-flapper, and then they all set to work at Master Ink. Felix, Christlieb, and their mother took table-napkins, and made sweeps with

them in the air, driving the tutor backwards and forwards, here and there; whilst the baron kept letting drive at him with the fly-flapper, which did not hit him, unfortunately, because he took good care never to stay a moment in the same place. And wilder and wilder grew the chase. "Summ-summ----simm-simm----trr-trr," went the tutor, storming hither and thither; "huss-huss," went the table-napkins, pursuing the foe; "klip-klap" fell the baron's strokes with the flapper, thick as hail. At last the baron managed to hit the tutor's coat-tails; he fell down with a groan. But just as the baron was going to get a second stroke at him, he bounced up into the air, with renewed and redoubled strength, stormed, humming and buzzing, away through the birches, and was seen no more.

"A good job," said the baron, "that we're well rid of horrible Tutor Ink: never shall he cross my threshold again."

"No; that he shall not!" said Frau von Brakel. "Tutors with such objectionable manners can do nothing but mischief, when just the contrary ought to be the case. Brags about his 'sciences,' and then goes flop into the milk-jug. A nice sort of a tutor, upon my word!"

But the children laughed and shouted, crying, "Hip-hip, hurrah! It's all right now! Father has hit Tutor Ink a good one on the nose, and we've got rid of him for good and all."

THAT WHICH CAME TO PASS IN THE WOOD, AFTER TUTOR INK WAS GOT RID OF.

Felix and Christlieb breathed freely again now. A great weight was taken off their hearts. Above all things, there was the delicious thought that, now that the horrid Pepser was gone, the Stranger Child would be sure to come back, and play with them as of yore. They hurried into the wood, full of sweet hope and happy expectancy. But everything there was silent and desolate. Not a merry note of finch or siskin was to be heard; and in place of the gladsome rustling of the bushes and the joyous voice of the brook, sighs of sorrow seemed to be passing through the air, and the sun cast only faint and feeble glimpses through the clouded sky. Presently great dark clouds began to pile themselves up; thunder muttered in the distance; a storm-wind howled, and the tall fir-trees creaked and groaned. Christlieb clung to Felix, in alarm. But he said, "What's come to you? What are you afraid of? There's going to be a thunderstorm. We must get home as fast as we can; that's all!"

So they set off to do so; but somehow--they didn't know why--instead of getting out of the wood, they seemed to keep getting farther and farther into it. The darkness deepened: great rain-drops fell, faster and faster, thicker and thicker, and flashes of lightning darted hither and thither, hissing as they passed. The children came to a stand by the edge of an impassable thicket. "Let's duck down here for a little, Christlieb," said Felix; "the storm won't last long." Christlieb was crying from fear, but she did as Felix asked her. Scarcely had they sat down among the thick bushes, however, when nasty, snarling voices began to speak, behind them, saying:

"Stupid things! Senseless creatures! You despised us; didn't know how to treat us--what to do with us. So now you can do your best without any playthings, senseless creatures that you are!" Felix looked round, and felt very eery and uncomfortable when he saw the sportsman and the harper rise up out of the thicket into which he had thrown them, staring at him with dead eyes and struggling and fighting about them with their hands. Moreover, the harper twanged on his strings so that they gave out a horrible, nasty, eery clinking and rattling; and the sportsman went so far as to take a deliberate aim at Felix with his gun; and both of them croaked out, "Wait a little, you boy and you girl. We are obedient pupils of Master Tutor Ink: he'll be here directly, and then we'll pay you

out nicely for despising us." Terrified--regardless of the rain, which was now streaming in torrents, and of the rattling peals of thunder, and the gale which was roaring through the firs--the children ran away from thence, and came to the brink of the pond which bordered the wood. But as soon as they got there, lo and behold! Christlieb's big doll, which Felix had thrown into the water, rose out of the sedges, and squeaked out, in a horrible voice, "Wait a little, you boy and you girl! Stupid things! Senseless creatures! You despised me; didn't know what to do with me--how to treat me. So now you can get on without playthings the best way you can. I am an obedient pupil of Master Tutor Ink's: he'll be here directly, and then you'll be nicely paid out for despising me." And then the nasty thing sent great splashes of water flying at Felix and Christlieb, though they were wet through already with the rain.

Felix could not endure this terrible process of haunting. Poor Christlieb was half dead, so they ran off again, as hard as they could; but soon, in the heart of the wood, they sank down, exhausted with weariness and terror. Then they heard a humming and a buzzing behind them. "Oh, heavens!" cried Felix; "here comes Tutor Ink, now!" At that moment his consciousness left him, and so did Christlieb's too.

When they came back to their senses, they found themselves lying on a bed of soft moss. The storm was over, the sun was shining bright and kindly, and the raindrops were hanging on the glittering bushes and trees like sparkling jewels. The children were much surprised to find that their clothes were quite dry, and that they felt no trace of either cold or wet. "Ah!" cried Felix, stretching his arms to the sky; "the Stranger Child must have protected us." And then they both called out so loud that the wood re-echoed: "Ah, thou darling child, do but come to us again! We do so long for you; we cannot live without you!" And it seemed, too, as though a bright beam of light came darting through the trees, making the flowers lift up their heads as it touched them. But though the children called upon their playfellow yet more movingly, nothing made itself seen. They crept home in silence and sadness. But their parents were very glad to see them, having been exceedingly anxious about them during the storm. The baron said, "It is a good thing that you are home again; for I confess I was afraid that Tutor Ink was still hanging about somewhere in the wood, and on your track."

Felix related all that had happened in the wood. "That is all stupid nonsense," their mother said. "If you are to go dreaming all that sort of stuff in the wood, you shan't be allowed to go there any more. You'll have to stop at home." And indeed--although, when they begged that they might be allowed to go back there, their mother yielded--it so came about that they didn't care very much about doing it. Alas! the Stranger Child was never there; and whenever they got far into the wood, or reached the bank of the pond, they were jeered at by the harper, the sportsman, and the doll, who cried to them, "Stupid things! Senseless creatures! You must do without playthings. You didn't know how to treat us clever, cultivated people--stupid things, senseless creatures that you are!"

This being unendurable, the children preferred staying at home.

CONCLUSION.

"I don't know," said the baron to his lady one day, "what it is that has been the matter with me for the last few days. I feel so queer and so odd, that I could almost fancy Tutor Ink has put some spell upon me. Ever since the moment when I hit him that crack with the fly-flapper, all my limbs have felt like bits of lead."

And the baron did really grow weaker and paler, day by day. He gave up walking about his grounds; he no longer went bustling about the house, cheerily ordering matters as he used to do; he sat, hour after hour, in deep meditation, and would get Felix and Christlieb to repeat to him, over and over again, all about the Stranger Child; and when they spoke eagerly of all the marvels connected

with the Stranger Child, and of the beautiful brilliant kingdom which was its home, he would give a melancholy smile, and the tears would come to his eyes.

But Felix and Christlieb could not reconcile themselves to the circumstance that the Stranger Child went on keeping aloof from them, leaving them exposed to the nasty behaviour of those troublesome puppets in the thicket and the duck pond, on account of which they did not like now to frequent the wood at all.

But one morning, when it was fine and beautiful, the baron said, "Come along, children; we'll go to the wood together, you and I. Master Ink's nasty pupils shan't do you any harm." So he took them by the hands, and they all three went together to the wood, which that day was fuller than ever of bright sunshine, perfume, and song. When they had laid themselves down amongst the tender grass, and the sweet-scented flowers, the baron began as follows:--

"You dear children, I have for some time had a great longing to tell you a thing, and I cannot delay doing so any longer. It is, that--once on a time--I knew the beautiful Stranger Child that used to show you such lovely things in the wood, just as well as you did yourselves. When I was about your age, that child used to come to me too, and play with me in the most wonderful way. How it was that it came to leave me, I cannot quite remember; and I don't understand how I had so completely forgotten all about it till you spoke to me about what had happened to you, and then I didn't believe you, though I often had a sort of dim consciousness that what you told me was the truth. But within the last few days, I have been remembering and thinking about the delightful days of my own boyhood, in a way that I have not been able to do for many a long year. And then that beautiful magic-child came back to my memory, bright and glorious, as you saw it yourselves; and the same longing which filled your breasts came to mine too. But it is breaking my heart! I feel, and I know quite well, that this is the last time that I shall ever sit beneath these bonnie trees and bushes. I am going to leave you very soon, and when I am dead and gone, you must cling fast to that beautiful child."

Felix and Christlieb were beside themselves with grief and sorrow. They wept and lamented, crying, "No, no, father; you are not going to die! You have many a long year to be with us still, and to play with the Stranger Child along with us."

But the next day, the baron lay sick in his bed. A tall, meagre man came and felt his pulse, and said, "You'll soon be better!" But he was not soon better. On the third day, the Baron von Brakel was no more. Ah, how Frau von Brakel mourned! How the children wrung their hands and cried, "Oh, father! our dear, dear father!"

Soon, when four peasants of Brakelheim had borne their master to his grave, there came to the house some horrible fellows, almost like Tutor Ink in appearance, and they told Frau von Brakel that they must take possession of all the piece of land, and the house, and everything in it, because the deceased baron owed all that, and more besides, to his cousin, who could wait no longer for his money. So that Frau von Brakel was a beggar, and had to go away from the pretty little village of Brakelheim, where she had spent so many happy years, and go to live with a relation not very far away. She and the children had to pack up whatever little bits of clothes and effects they had left, and with many tears take their leave, and set forth upon their way. As they crossed the bridge, and heard the loud voice of the forest stream, Frau von Brakel fell down in a swoon, and Felix and Christlieb sank on their knees beside her, and cried, with many sobs and tears, "Oh, unfortunate creatures that we are! Will no one take any pity on us?"

At that moment the distant rushing of the forest stream seemed to turn into beautiful music. The thickets gave forth mysterious sighs, and presently all the forest streamed with wonderful, sparkling fires. And lo! the Stranger Child appeared, coming forth out of the sweet-smelling leafage, surrounded by such a brilliant light and radiance, that Felix and Christlieb had to shut their eyes at the

brightness of it. Then they felt themselves gently touched, and the Stranger Child's beautiful voice said, "Oh, do not mourn so, dear playmates of mine! Do I not love you as much as ever? Can I ever leave you? No, no! Although you do not see me with your bodily eyes, I am always with you and about you, helping you with all my power to be always happy and fortunate. Only keep me in your hearts, as you have done hitherto, and neither the wicked Pepses, nor any other adversary, will have power to harm you. Only go on loving me truly and faithfully."

"Oh, that we shall--that we shall!" the children cried. "We love you with all our souls!"

When they were able to open their eyes again, the Stranger Child had vanished; but all their pain was gone from them, and they felt that a heavenly joy and gladness had arisen within their hearts. Frau von Brakel recovered slowly from her swoon, and said, "Children, I saw you in a dream. You seemed to be standing in a blaze of gleaming gold, and the sight has strengthened and refreshed me in a wonderful way."

Delight beamed in the children's eyes, and shone in their cheeks. They related how the Stranger Child had come to them and comforted them. And their mother said, "I do not know how it is that I feel compelled to believe in this story of yours to-day, nor how my believing in it seems to have taken away all my sorrow and anxiety. Let us go on our way with confidence."

They were kindly received and welcomed by their relatives, and all that the Stranger Child promised came to pass. Whatever Felix and Christlieb undertook was sure to prosper, and they and their mother became quite happy. And, as their lives went on, they still, in dreams, played with the Stranger Child, which, never ceased to bring to them the loveliest wonders from its fairy home.

"No doubt," said Ottmar, when Lothair had finished, "your 'Stranger Child' is more purely a story for children than your 'Nutcracker.' Still, pardon me for saying so, you haven't been able to refrain from introducing a certain number of your confounded flourishes, such as no child could see to the bottom of."

"I," said Sylvester, "have long been acquainted with the little Devilkin that sits on Lothair's shoulder like a tame squirrel. He can't shut his ears to the strange things which the creature whispers to him."

"At all events," said Cyprian, "he ought to call those stories, 'Tales for Children, great and small,' instead of 'Tales for Children.'"

"Or," added Vincent, "'Tales for Children, and those who are not children.' In this way the entire world would be able to take them up and form their own opinion of them."

They all laughed, and Lothair, in comic anger, declared that in his next he would give full rein to his inspiration, regardless of consequences.

Midnight having struck, the friends said good-night, and separated in the happiest of moods.

[Footnote ¹](#) The time of Napoleon's Prussian operations is here meant. Hoffmann passed through this in early life.--TRANS.

[Footnote ²](#) This untranslatable expression means, "Sentence of death is pronounced."--TRANSLATOR.

[Footnote ³](#)

When I have passed away,
How this unchanging soul
Loves Thee for aye!
Though my poor ashes rest
Deep in the silent grave,
Ev'n in the urn of Death
Thee I adore!"

[Footnote ⁴](#) I have omitted the words in question, as not now possessing much interest.--TRANS.

[Footnote ⁵](#) A celebrated master singer; as were also others, subsequently mentioned as composers of "tones" or "manners" of song.--TRANS.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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