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BLACK FOREST

VILLAGE STORIES

BY

BERTHOLD AUERBACH

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES GOEPP

AUTHOR'S EDITION

Illustrated with Facsimiles of the original German Woodcuts.

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BLACK FOREST

VILLAGE STORIES.

THE GAWK

I see you now, my fine fellow, as large as life, with your yellow hair cropped very short, except in the neck, where a long tail remains as if you had cut yourself after the pattern of a plough-horse. You are staring straight at me with your broad visage, your great blue goggle eyes, and your mouth which is never shut. Do you remember the morning we met in the hollow where the new houses stand now, when you cut me a willow-twig to make a whistle of? We little thought then that I should come to pipe the world a song about you when we should be thousands of miles apart. I remember your costume perfectly, which is not very surprising, as there is nothing to keep in mind but a shirt, red suspenders, and a pair of linen pantaloons dyed black to guard against all contingencies. On Sunday you were more stylish: then you wore a fur cap with a gold tassel, a blue roundabout with broad buttons, a scarlet waistcoat, yellow shorts, white stockings, and buckled shoes, like any other villager; and, besides, you very frequently had a fresh pink behind your ear. But you were never at ease in all this glory; and I like you rather better in your plainer garb, myself.

But now, friend gawk, go about your business; there's a good fellow. It makes me nervous to tell your story to your face. You need not be alarmed: I shall say nothing ill of you, though I do speak in the third person.

The gawk not only had a real name, but a whole pedigree of them; in the village he ought to have been called Bart's Bast's[1] boy, and he had been christened Aloys. To please him, we shall stick to this last designation. He will be glad of it, because, except his mother Maria and a few of us children, hardly any one used it; all had the impudence to say "Gawk." On this account he always preferred our society, even after he was seventeen years old. In out-of-the-way places he would play leap-frog with us, or let us chase him over the fields; and when the gawk--I should say, when Aloys--was with us, we were secure against the attacks of the children at the lime-pit; for the rising generation of the village was torn by incessant feuds between two hostile parties.

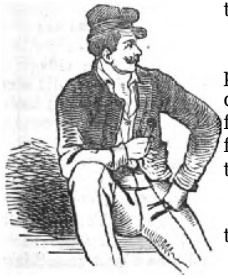
Yet the boys of Aloys' own age were already beginning to feel their social position. They congregated every evening, like the grown men, and marched through the village whistling and singing, or stood at the tavern-door of the Eagle, by the great wood-yard, and passed jokes with the girls who went by. But the surest test of a big boy was the tobacco-pipe. There they would stand with their speckled bone-pipe bowls, of Ulm manufacture, tipped with silver, and hung with little silver chains. They generally had them in their mouths unlit; but occasionally one or the other would beg a live coal from the baker's maid, and then they smoked with the most joyful faces they knew how to put on, while their stomachs moaned within them.

Aloys had begun the practice too, but only in secret. One evening he mustered up courage to mingle with his fellows, with the point of his pipe peeping forth from his breast-pocket. One of the boys pulled the pipe out of his pocket with a yell; Aloys tried to seize it, but it passed from hand to hand with shouts of laughter, and the more impatiently he demanded it the less it was forthcoming, until it disappeared altogether, and every one professed to know nothing of what had become of it. Aloys began to whimper, which made them laugh still more; so at last he snatched the cap of the first robber from his head, and ran with it into the house of Jacob the blacksmith. Then the capless one brought the pipe, which had been hidden in the wood-yard.

Jacob Bomiller the blacksmith's house was what is called Aloys' "go-out." He was always there when not at home, and never at home after his work was done. Aunt Applon, (Apollonia,) Jacob's wife, was his cousin; and; besides his own mother and us children, she and her eldest daughter Mary Ann always called him by his right name. In the morning he would get up early, and, after having fed and watered his two cows and his heifer, he always went to Jacob's house and knocked at the door until Mary Ann opened it. With a simple "Good-morning," he passed through the stable into the barn. The cattle knew his step, and always welcomed him with a complacent growl and a turn of the head: he never stopped to return the compliment, but went into the barn and filled the cribs of the two oxen and the two cows. He was on particularly good terms with the roan cow. He had raised her from a calf; and, when he stood by her and watched her at her morning meal, she often licked his hands, to the improvement of his toilet. Then he would open the door of the stable and restore its neatness and good order, often chatting cosily to the dumb beasts as he made them turn to the right or left. Not a dunghill in the village was so broad and smooth and with such clean edges as the one which Aloys built before the house of Jacob the blacksmith; for a fine dunghill is the greatest ornament to a villager's door-front in the Black Forest. The next thing he did was to wash and curry the oxen and cows until you might have seen your face in their sleek hides. This done, he ran to the pump before the house and filled the trough with water: the cattle, unchained, ran out to drink; while he spread fresh straw in their stalls. Thus, by the time that Mary Ann came to the stable to milk the cows, she found every thing neat and clean. Often, when a cow was "skittish," and kicked, Aloys stood by her and laid his hand on her back while Mary Ann milked; but generally he found something else to do. And when Mary Ann said, "Aloys, you are a good boy," he never looked up at her, but plied the stable-broom so vehemently that it threatened to sweep the boulder-stones out of the floor. In the barn he cut the feed needed for the day; and, after all the work required in the lower story of the building--which, in the Black Forest, as is well known, contains what in America is consigned to the barn and outhouses--was finished, he mounted up-stairs into the kitchen, carried water, split the kindling-wood, and at last found his way into the room. Mary Ann brought the soup-bowl, set it on the table, folded her hands, and, everybody having done the same, spoke a prayer. All now seated themselves with a "God's blessing." The bowl was the only dish upon the table, into which every one dipped his spoon, Aloys often stealing a mouthful from the place where Mary Ann's spoon usually entered. The deep silence of a solemn rite prevailed at the table: very rarely was a word spoken. After the meal and another prayer, Aloys trudged home.

Thus things went on till Aloys reached his nineteenth year, when, on New-Year's day, Mary Ann made him a present of a shirt, the hemp of which she had broken herself, and had spun, bleached, and sewed it. He was overjoyed, and only regretted that it would not do to walk the street in shirt-sleeves: though it was bitter cold, he would not have cared for that in the least; but people would have laughed at him, and Aloys was daily getting more and more sensitive to people's laughter.

The main cause of this was the old squire's[2] new hand who had come into the village last harvest. He was a tall, handsome fellow, with a bold, dare-devil face appropriately set off with a reddish mustache. George (for such was his name) was a cavalry soldier, and almost always wore the cap belonging to his uniform. When he walked up the village of a Sunday, straight as an arrow, turning out his toes and rattling his spurs, every thing about him said, as plainly as words could speak, "I know all the girls are in love with me;" and when he rode his horses down to Jacob's pump to water them, poor Aloys' heart was ready to burst as he saw Mary Ann look out of the window. He wished that there were no such



things as milk and butter in the world, so that he too might be a horse-farmer.

Inexperienced as Aloys was, he knew all about the three classes or "standings" into which the peasants of the Black Forest are divided. The cow-farmers are the lowest in the scale: their draught-cattle, in addition to their labor, must yield them milk and calves. Then come the ox-farmers, whose beasts, after having served their time, may be fattened and killed. The horse-farmers are still more fortunate: their beasts of draught yield neither milk nor meat, and yet eat the best food and bring the highest prices.

Whether Aloys took the trouble to compare this arrangement with the four castes of Egypt, or the three estates of feudalism, is doubtful.

On this New-Year's day, George derived a great advantage from his horses. After morning service, he took the squire's daughter and her playmate Mary Ann sleighing to Impfingen; and, though the heart of poor Aloys trembled within him, he could not refuse George's request to help him hitch the horses and try them in the sleigh. He drove about the village, quite forgetting the poor figure he cut beside the showy soldier. When the girls were seated, Aloys led the horses a little way, running beside them until they were fairly started, and then let them go. George drove down the street, cracking his whip; the horses jingled their bells; half the commune looked out of their windows; and poor Aloys stared after them long after they were out of sight; and then went sadly home, cursing the snow which brought the water to his eyes. The village seemed to have died out when Mary Ann was not to be in it for a whole day.

All this winter Aloys was often much cast down. At his mother's house the girls frequently assembled to hold their spinning-frolics,--a custom much resembling our quiltings. They always prefer to hold these gatherings at the house of a comrade recently married or of a good-natured widow; elder married men are rather in the way. So the girls often came to Mother Maria, and the boys dropped in later, without waiting to be invited. Hitherto Aloys had never troubled himself about them so long as they left him undisturbed: he had sat in a corner doing nothing. But now he often said to himself, "Aloys, this is too bad: you are nineteen years old now, and must begin to put yourself forward." And then again he would say, "I wish the devil would carry that George away piecemeal!" George was the object of his ill-humor, for he had soon obtained a perfect control over the minds of all the boys, and made them dance to his whistle. He could whistle and sing and warble and tell stories like a wizard. He taught the boys and girls all sorts of new songs. The first time he sang the verse,--

"Do thy cheeks with gladness tingle
Where the snows and scarlet mingle?"--

Aloys suddenly rose: he seemed taller than usual; he clenched his fists and gnashed his teeth with secret joy. He seemed to draw Mary Ann toward him with his looks, and to see her for the first time as she truly was; for, just as the song ran, so she looked.

The girls sat around in a ring, each having her distaff with the gilt top before her, to which the hemp was fastened with a colored ribbon; they moistened the thread with their lips, and twirled the spindle, which tumbled merrily on the floor. Aloys was always glad to put "a little moistening," in the shape of some pears or apples, on the table, and never failed to put the plate near Mary Ann, so that she might help herself freely.

Early in the winter Aloys took his first courageous step in right of his adolescence. Mary Ann had received a fine new distaff set with pewter. The first time she brought it into the spinning-room and sat down to her work, Aloys came forward, took hold of it, and repeated the old rhyme:--

"Good lassie, give me leave,
Let me shake your luck out of this sleeve;
Great goodhap and little goodhap
Into my lassie's lap.
Lassie, why are you so rude?
Your distaff is only of wood;
If it had silver or gold on't,
I'd have made a better rhyme on't."

His voice trembled a little, but he got through without stammering. Mary Ann first cast her eyes down with shame and fear lest he should "balk;" but now she looked at him with beaming eyes. According to custom, she dropped the spindle and the whirl,[3] which Aloys picked up, and exacted for the spindle the promise of a dumpling, and for the whirl that of a doughnut. But the best came last. Aloys released the distaff and received as ransom a hearty kiss. He smacked so loud that it sounded all over the room, and the other boys envied him sorely. He sat down quietly in a corner, rubbed his hands, and was contented with himself and with the world. And so he might have remained to the end of time, if that marplot of a George had not interfered again.

Mary Ann was the first voice in the church-choir. One evening George asked her to sing the song of the "Dark-Brown Maid." She began without much hesitation, and George fell in with the second voice so finely and sonorously that all the others who had joined in also lapsed into silence one by one, and contented themselves with listening to the two who sang so well. Mary Ann, finding herself unsupported by her companions, found her voice trembling a little, and nudged her companions to go on singing; but, as they would not, she took courage, and sang with much spirit, while George seemed to uphold her as with strong arms. They sang:--

"Oh, to-morrow I must leave you,
My belovéd dark-brown maid:
Out at the upper gate we travel,
My belovéd dark-brown maid.
"When I march in foreign countries,
Think of me, my dearest one;
With the sparkling glass before you,
Often think how I adore you;
Drink a health to him that's gone.
"Now I load my brace of pistols,
And I fire and blaze away,
For my dark-brown lassie's pleasure;
For she chose me for her treasure,
And she sent the rest away.
"In the blue sky two stars are shining:
Brighter than the moon they glow;
This looks on the dark-brown maiden,
And that looks where I must go.
"I've bought a ribbon for my sabre,
And a nosegay for my hat,
And a kerchief in my keeping,
To restrain my eyes from weeping:
From my love I must depart.
"Now I spur my horse's mettle,
Now I rein him in and wait:
So good-bye, dear dark-brown maiden;

When each of the girls had filled four or five spindles, the table was pushed into a corner, to clear a space of three or four paces in length and breadth, on which they took turns in dancing, those who sat singing the music. When George brought out Mary Ann, he sang his own song, dancing to it like a spindle: indeed, he did not need much more space than a spindle, for he used to say that no one was a good waltzer who could not turn around quickly and safely on a plate. When he stopped at last,--with a whirl which made the skirts of Mary Ann's wadded dress rise high above her feet,--she suddenly left him alone, as if afraid of him, and ran into a corner, where Aloys sat moodily watching the sport. Taking his hand, she said,--

"Come, Aloys, you must dance."

"Let me alone: you know I can't dance. You only want to make game of me."

"You g----" said Mary Ann: she would have said, "you gawk," but suddenly checked herself on seeing that he was more ready to cry than to laugh. So she said, gently, "No, indeed, I don't want to make game of you. Come; if you can't dance you must learn it: there is none I like to dance with better than you."

They tried to waltz; but Aloys threw his feet about as if he had wooden shoes on them, so that the others could not sing for laughing.

"I will teach you when nobody is by, Aloys," said Mary Ann, soothingly.

The girls now lighted their lanterns and went home. Aloys insisted on going with them: he would not for all the world have let Mary Ann go home without him when George was of the company.

In the still, snowy night, the raillery and laughter of the party were heard from end to end of the village. Mary Ann alone was silent, and evidently kept out of George's way.

When the boys had left all the girls at their homes, George said to Aloys, "Gawk, you ought to have stayed with Mary Ann to-night."

"You're a rascal," said Aloys, quickly, and ran away. The others laughed. George went home alone, warbling so loud and clear that he must have gladdened the hearts of all who were not sick or asleep.

Next morning, as Mary Ann was milking the cows, Aloys said to her, "Do you see, I should just like to poison that George; and if you are a good girl you must wish him dead ten times over."

Mary Ann agreed with him, but tried to convince him that he should endeavor to become just as smart and ready as George was. A bright idea suddenly struck Aloys. He laughed aloud, threw aside the stiff old broom and took a more limber one, saying, "Yes: look sharp and you'll see something." After much reluctance, he yielded to Mary Ann's solicitations to be "good friends" with George: he could not refuse her any thing.

It was for this reason alone that Aloys had helped George to get the sleigh out, and that the snow made his eyes run over as he watched the party till they disappeared.

In the twilight Aloys drove his cows to water at Jacob's well. A knot of boys had collected there, including George and his old friend, a Jew, commonly called "Long Hartz's Jake." Mary Ann was looking out of the window. Aloys was imitating George's walk: he carried himself as straight as if he had swallowed a ramrod, and kept his arms hanging down his sides, as if they had been made of wood.

"Gawk," said Jake, "what will you allow me if I get Mary Ann to marry you?"

"A good smack on your chops," said Aloys, and drove his cows away. Mary Ann closed the sash, while the boys set up a shout of laughter, in which George's voice was heard above all the others.

Aloys wiped the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve, so great was the exertion which the expression of his displeasure had cost him. He sat for hours on the feed-box of his stable, maturing the plans he had been meditating.

Aloys had entered his twentieth year, and it was time for him to pass the inspection of the recruiting-officers. On the day on which he, with the others of his age, was to present himself at Horb, the county town, he came to Mary Ann's house in his Sunday gear, to ask if she wished him to get any thing for her in town. As he went away, Mary Ann followed him into the hall, and, turning aside a little, she drew a bit of blue paper from her breast, which, on being unwrapped, was found to contain a creutzer.[4] "Take it," said she: "there are three crosses on it. When the shooting stars come at night, there's always a silver bowl on the ground, and out of those bowls they make this kind of creutzers: if you have one of them in your pocket you are sure to be in luck. Take it, and you will draw a high number."[5]

Aloys took the creutzer; but in crossing the bridge which leads over the Necker he put his hand in his pocket, shut his eyes, and threw the creutzer into the river. "I won't draw a high number: I want to be a soldier and cut George out," he muttered, between his teeth. His hand was clenched, and he drew himself up like a king.

At the Angel Hotel the squire waited for the recruits of his parish; and when they had all assembled he went with them to the office. The squire was equally stupid and pretentious. He had been a corporal formerly, and plumed himself on his "commission:" he loved to treat all farmers, old and young, as recruits. On the way he said to Aloys, "Gawk, you will be sure to draw the highest number; and even if you should draw No. 1 you need not be afraid, for they never can want you for a soldier."

"Who knows?" said Aloys, saucily. "I may live to be a corporal yet, as well as any one: I can read and write as well as another, and the old corporals haven't swallowed all the wisdom in the world, either."

The squire looked daggers at him.

When Aloys walked up to the wheel, his manner was bold almost to provocation. Several papers met his fingers as he thrust his hand in. He closed his eyes, as if determined not to see what he should draw, and brought out a ticket. He handed it to the clerk, trembling with fear of its being a high number. But, when "Number 17" was called, he shouted so lustily that they had to call him to order.

The boys now bought themselves artificial flowers tied with red ribbons, and, after another hearty drink, betook themselves homeward. Aloys sang and shouted louder than all the others.

At the stile at the upper end of the village the mothers and many of the sweethearts of the boys were waiting: Mary Ann was among them also. Aloys, a little fuddled,--rather by the noise than by the wine,--walked, not quite steadily, arm-in-arm with the others. This familiarity had not occurred before; but on the present occasion they were all brothers. When Aloys' mother saw No. 17 on his cap, she cried, again and again, "O Lord a' mercy! Lord a' mercy!" Mary Ann took Aloys aside, and asked, "What has become of my creutzer?" "I have lost it," said Aloys; and the falsehood smote him, half unconscious as he was.

The boys now walked down the village, singing, and the mothers and sweethearts of those who had probably been "drawn" followed them, weeping, and wiping their eyes with their aprons.

The "visitation," which was to decide every thing, was still six weeks off. His mother took a large lump of butter and a basket full of eggs, and went to the doctor's. The butter was found to spread very well, notwithstanding the cold weather, and elicited the assurance that Aloys would not be made a recruit of; "for," said the conscientious physician, "Aloys is incapable of military service, at any rate: he cannot see well at a distance, and that is what makes him so awkward sometimes."

Aloys gave himself no trouble about all these matters: he was quite altered, and swaggered and whistled whenever he went out.

On the day of the visitation, the boys went to town a little more soberly and quietly than when the lots were drawn.

When Aloys was called into the visitation-room and ordered to undress, he said, saucily, "Spy me out all you can: you will find nothing wrong about me. I have no blemish: I can be a soldier." His measure being taken and found to be full, he was entered on the list without delay: the doctor forgot the short-sightedness, the butter, and the eggs, in his astonishment at the boldness of Aloys.

But, when the irrevocable step was fairly taken, Aloys experienced such a sense of alarm that he could have cried. Still, when his mother met him on the stone steps of the office, weeping bitterly, his pride returned; and he said, "Mother, this is not right: you must not cry. I shall be back in a year, and Xavier can keep things in order very well while I am gone."

On being assured of their enlistment as soldiers, the boys began to drink, sing, and royster more than ever, to make up for the time they supposed themselves to have lost before.

When Aloys came home, Mary Ann, with tears in her eyes, gave him a bunch of rosemary with red ribbons in it, and sewed it to his cap. Aloys took out his pipe, smoked all the way up the village, and made a night of it with his comrades.

One hard day more was to be passed,--the day when the recruits had to set out for Stuttgart. Aloys went to Jacob's house early, and found Mary Ann in the stable, where she now had to do all the hard work without his assistance. Aloys said, "Mary Ann, shake hands." She did so; and then he added "Promise me you won't get married till I come back."

"No, indeed, I won't," said she; and then he replied, "There, that's all: but stop! give me a kiss for good-bye." She kissed him; and the cows and oxen looked on in astonishment, as if they knew what was going on.

Aloys patted each of the cows and oxen on the back, and took leave of them: they mumbled something indistinctly between their teeth.

George had hitched his horses to the wagon, to give the recruits a lift of a few miles. They passed through the village, singing; the baker's son, Conrad, who blew the clarionet, sat on the wagon with them and accompanied; the horses walked. On all sides the recruits were stopped by their friends, who came to shake hands or to share a parting cup. Mary Ann was looking out of her window, and nodded, smiling.

When they were fairly out of the village, Aloys suddenly stopped singing. He looked around him with moistened eyes. Here, on the heath called the "High Scrub," Mary Ann had bleached the linen of the shirt he wore: every thread of it now seemed to scorch him. He bade a sad farewell to every tree and every field. Over near the old heath-turf was his best field: he had turned the soil so often that he knew every clod in it. In the adjoining patch he had reaped barley with Mary Ann that very summer. Farther down, in the Hen's Scratch, was his clover-piece, which he had sown and was now denied the pleasure of watching while it grew. Thus he looked around him. As they passed the stile he was mute. In crossing the bridge he looked down into the stream: would he have dropped the marked creutzer into it now?

In the town the singing and shouting was resumed; but not till the Bildechingen Hill was passed did Aloys breathe freely. His beloved Nordstetten lay before him, apparently so near that his voice could have been heard there. He saw the yellow house of George the blacksmith, and knew that Mary Ann lived in the next house but one. He swung his cap and began to sing again.

At Herrenberg George left the recruits to pursue their way on foot. At parting he inquired of Aloys whether he had any message for Mary Ann.

Aloys reddened. George was the very last person he should have chosen for a messenger; and yet a kind message would have escaped his lips if he had not checked himself. Involuntarily he blurted out, "You needn't talk to her at all: she can't bear the sight of you, anyhow."

George laughed and drove away.

An important adventure befell the recruits on the road. At the entrance of the Boeblingen Forest, which is five miles long, they impressed a wood-cutter with his team, and compelled him to carry them. Aloys was the ringleader: he had heard George talk so much of soldiers' pranks that he could not let an occasion slip of playing one. But when they had passed through the wood he was also the first to open his leathern pouch and reimburse the involuntary stage-proprietor.

At the Tuebingen gate of Stuttgart a corporal stood waiting to receive them. Several soldiers from Nordstetten had come out to meet their comrades; and Aloys clenched his teeth as every one of them greeted him with, "Gawk, how are you?" There was an end of all shouting and singing now: like dumb sheep the recruits were led into the barracks. Aloys first expressed a wish to go into the cavalry, as he desired to emulate George; but, on being told that in that case he would have to go home again, as the cavalry-training would not begin till fall, he changed his mind. "I won't go home again until I am a different sort of a fellow," he said to himself; "and then, if any one undertakes to call me gawk, I'll gawk him."

So he was enrolled in the fifth infantry regiment, and soon astonished all by his intelligence and rapid progress. One misfortune befel him here also; he received a gypsy for his bedfellow. This gypsy had a peculiar aversion to soap and water. Aloys was ordered by the drill-sergeant to take him to the pump every morning and wash him thoroughly. This was sport at first; but it soon became very irksome: he would rather have washed the tails of six oxen than the face of the one gypsy.

Another member of the company was a broken-down painter. He scented the spending-money with which Aloys' mother had fitted him out, and soon undertook to paint him in full uniform, with musket and side-arms, and with the flag behind him. This made up the whole resemblance: the face was a face, and nothing more. Under it stood, however, in fine Roman characters, "Aloys Schorer, Soldier in the Fifth Regiment of Infantry."

Aloys had the picture framed under glass and sent it to his mother. In the accompanying letter he wrote,--

"DEAR MOTHER:--Please hang up the picture in the front room, and let Mary Ann see it: hang it over the table, but not too near the dovecote; and, if Mary Ann would like to have the picture, make her a present of it. And my comrade who painted it says you ought to send me a little lump of butter and a few yards of hemp-linen for my corporal's wife: we always call her Corporolla. My comrade also teaches me to dance; and to-morrow I am going to dance at Haeslach. You

needn't pout, Mary Ann: I am only going to try. And I want Mary Ann to write to me. Has Jacob all his oxen yet? and hasn't the roan cow calved by this time? Soldiering isn't much of a business, after all: you get catawampously tired, and there's no work done when it's over."

The butter came, and was more effective this time: the gypsy was saddled upon somebody else. With the butter came a letter written by the schoolmaster, in which he said,--

"Our Matthew has sent fifty florins from America. He also writes that if you had not turned soldier you might have come to him and he would make you a present of thirty acres of land. Keep yourself straight, and let nobody lead you astray; for man is easily tempted. Mary Ann seems to be out of sorts with you,--I don't know why: when she saw your picture she said it didn't look like you at all."

Aloys smiled when he read this, and said to himself, "All right. I am very different from what I was: didn't I say it, Mary Ann,--eh?"

Months passed, until Aloys knew that next Sunday was harvest-home at Nordstetten. Through the corporal's intervention, he obtained a furlough for four days, and permission to go in full uniform, with his shako on his head and his sword at his side. Oh, with what joy did he put his "fixings" into his shako and take leave of his corporal!

With all his eagerness, he could not refrain from exchanging a word with the sentry at the gate of the barracks and with the one at the Tuebingen gate. He must needs inform them that he was going home, and that they must rejoice with him; and his heart melted with pity for his poor comrades, who were compelled to walk to and fro in a little yard for two mortal hours, during which time he was cutting down, step by step, the distance that lay between him and his home.

He never stopped till he got to Boeblingen. Here he ordered a pint of wine at the "Waldburg;" but he could not sit quiet in his chair, and walked away without emptying the glass.

At Nufringen he met Long Hartz's Jake,--the same who had teased him so. They shook hands, and Aloys heard much news of home, but not a word of Mary Ann; and he could not make up his mind to inquire after her.

At Bohndorf he forced himself to rest: it was high time to do so; for his heart was beating furiously. Stretched upon a bench, he reflected how they all would open their eyes on his arrival: then he stood before the looking-glass, fixed the shako over his left ear, twisted the curl at the right side of his forehead, and encouraged himself by a nod of approbation.

It was dusk when he found himself on the heights of Bildechingen and once more beheld his native village. He shouted no longer, but stood calm and firm, laid his hand upon his shako, and greeted his home with a military salute.

He walked slower and slower, wishing to arrive at night, so as to astonish them all in the morning. His house was one of the first in the village: there was a light in the room; and he tapped at the window, saying,--

"Isn't Aloys here?"

"Lord a'-mercy!" cried his mother: "a gens-d'armes!"

"No: it's me, mother," said Aloys, taking off his shako as he entered, and clasping her hand.

After the first words of welcome were spoken, his mother expressed her regret that there was no supper left for him; nevertheless, she went into the kitchen and fried him some eggs. Aloys stood by her near the hearth, and told his story. He asked about Mary Ann, and why his picture was still hanging in the room. His mother answered, "Don't think any thing more of Mary Ann, I beg and beg of you: she is good for nothing,--she is indeed!"

"Don't talk anymore about it, mother," said Aloys; "I know what I know." His face, tinted by the ruddy glow of the hearth-fire, had a strange decision and ferocity. His mother was silent until they had returned to the room, and then she saw with rapture what a fine fellow her son had become. Every mouthful he swallowed seemed a titbit to her own palate. Lifting up the shako, she complacently bewailed its enormous weight.

Aloys rose early in the morning, brushed up his shako, burnished the plating of his sword, and the buckler and buttons, more than if he had been ordered on guard before the staff. At the first sound of the church-bell he was completely dressed, and at the second bell he walked into the village.

Two little boys were talking as they passed him.

"Why, that's the gawk, a'n't it?" said one.

"No, it a'n't," said the other.

"Yes, it is," rejoined the first.

Aloys looked at them grimly, and they ran away with their hymn-books. Amid the friendly greetings of the villagers he approached the church. He passed Mary Ann's house; but no one looked out: he looked behind him again and again as he walked up the hill. The third bell rang, and he entered the church; Mary Ann was not there: he stood at the door; but she was not among the late-comers. The singing began, but Mary Ann's voice was not heard: he would have known it among a thousand. What was the universal admiration to him now? *she* did not see him, for whom he had travelled the long road, and for whom he now stood firm and straight as a statue. He heard little of the sermon; but, when the minister pronounced the bans of Mary Ann Bomiller, of Nordstetten, and George Melzer, of Wiesenstetten, poor Aloys no longer stood like a statue. His knees knocked under him, and his teeth chattered. He was the first who left the church. He ran home like a crazy man, threw his sword and his shako on the floor, hid himself in the hay-loft, and wept. More than once he thought of hanging himself, but he could not rise for dejection: all his limbs were palsied. Then he would remember his poor mother, and sob and cry aloud.

At last his mother came and found him in the hay-loft, cried with him, and tried to comfort him. "It was high time they were married," was the burden of her tale of Mary Ann. He wept long and loud; but at last he followed his mother like a lamb into the room. Seeing his picture, he tore it from the wall and dashed it to pieces on the floor. For hours he sat behind the table and covered his face with his hands. Then suddenly he rose, whistled a merry tune, and asked for his dinner. He could not eat, however, but dressed himself, and went into the village. From the Adler he heard the sound of music and dancing. In passing Jacob's house, he cast down his eyes, as if he had reason to be ashamed; but when it was behind him he looked as proud as ever. Having reported himself and left his passport in the squire's hands, he went to the ball-room. He looked everywhere for Mary Ann, though he dreaded nothing more than to meet her. George was there, however. He came up to Aloys and stretched out his hand, saying, "Comrade, how are you?" Aloys looked at him as if he would have poisoned him with his eyes, then turned on his heel without a word of answer. It occurred to him that he ought to have said, "Comrade! the devil is your comrade, not I;" but it was too late now.

All the boys and girls now made him drink out of their glasses; but the wine tasted of wormwood. He sat down at a table and called for a "bottle of the best," and drank glass after glass, although it gave him no pleasure. Mechtilde, the daughter of his cousin Matthew of the Hill, stood near him, and he asked her to drink with him. She complied very readily, and remained at his side. Nobody was attentive to her: she had no sweetheart, and had not danced a round that day, as every one was constantly dancing with his or her sweetheart, or changing partners with some other.

"Mechtilde, wouldn't you like to dance?" said Aloys.

"Yes: come, let's try."

She took Aloys by the hand. He rose, put on his gloves, looked around the floor as if he had lost something, and then danced to the amazement of all the company. From politeness he took Mechtilde to a seat after the dance: by this he imposed a burden on himself, for she did not budge from his side all the evening. He cared but little for her conversation, and only pushed the glass toward her occasionally by way of invitation. His eyes were fixed fiercely on George, who sat not far from him. When some one asked the latter where Mary Ann was, he said, laughing, "She is poorly." Aloys bit his pipe till the mouthpiece broke off, and then spat it out with a "Pah!" which made George look at him furiously, thinking the exclamation addressed to him. Seeing that Aloys was quiet, he shrugged his shoulders in derision and began singing bad songs, which all had pretty much the same burden:--

"A bright boy will run through
  Many a shoe;
  An old fool will tear
  Never a pair."

At midnight Aloys took his sword from the wall to go. George and his party now began to sing the "teaser," keeping time with their fists on the table:--

"Hey, Bob, 'ye goin' home?
  'Ye gettin' scared? 'Ye gettin' sick?
  Got no money, and can't get tick?
  Hey, Bob, 'ye goin' home?"

Aloys turned back with some of his friends and called for two bottles more. They now sang songs of their own, while George and his gang were singing at the other table. George got up and cried, "Gawk, shut up!" Then Aloys seized a full bottle and hurled it at his head, sprang over the table, and caught him by the throat. The tables fell down, the glasses chinked on the floor, the music stopped. For a while all was still, as if the two were to throttle each other in silence: then suddenly the room was filled with shouting, whistling, scolding, and quarrelling. The bystanders interfered; but, according to custom, each party only restrained the adversary of the party he sided with, so as to give the latter a chance of drubbing his opponent undisturbed. Mechtilde held George by the head until his hair came out by handfuls. The legs of chairs were now broken off, and all hands whacked each other to their hearts' content. Aloys and George remained as if fastened together by their teeth. At length Aloys gained his feet, and threw George down with such violence that he seemed to have broken his neck, and then kneeled down on him, and would have throttled him had not the watchman entered and put an end to the row. The musicians were sent home and the two chief combatants taken to the lock-up.

With his face black and blue, pale and haggard, Aloys left the village next day. His furlough had another day to run; but what should he do at home? He was glad enough to go soldiering again; and nothing would have pleased him better than a war. The squire had endorsed the story of the fracas on his passport, and a severe punishment awaited him on his return. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but walked away almost without knowing it, and hoping never to return. At Horb, on seeing the signpost to Freudenstadt, which is on the way to Strasbourg, he stopped a long time and thought of deserting to France. Unexpectedly he found himself addressed by Mechtilde, who asked, "Why, Aloys, are you going back to Stuttgart already?"

"Yes," he answered, and went on his way. Mechtilde had come like an angel from heaven. With a friendly good-bye, they parted.

As he walked, he found himself ever and anon humming the song he had heard George sing so long ago, and which now, indeed, suited poor Mary Ann's case:--

"In a day, in a day,
  Pride and beauty fade away.
Do thy checks with gladness tingle
Where the snows and roses mingle?
  Oh, the roses all decay!"

At Stuttgart he never said a word to the sentry at the Tuebingen gate nor to the one at the barrack-gate. Like a criminal, he hardly raised his eyes. For eight days he did penance in a dark cell,--the "third degree" of punishment. At times he became so impatient that he could have dashed his head against the wall; and then again he would lie for days and nights half asleep.

When released from prison, he was attached for six weeks to the class of culprits who are never permitted to leave the barracks, but are bound to answer the call at every moment. He now cursed his resolution to become a soldier, which bound him for six years to the land of his birth. He would have gone away, far as could be.

One morning his mother Maria came with a letter from Matthew, in America. He had sent four hundred florins for Aloys to buy a field with, or, if he wished to join him, to buy himself clear of the army.

Aloys and Matthew of the Hill, with his wife and eight children,--Mechtilde among them,--left for America that same autumn.

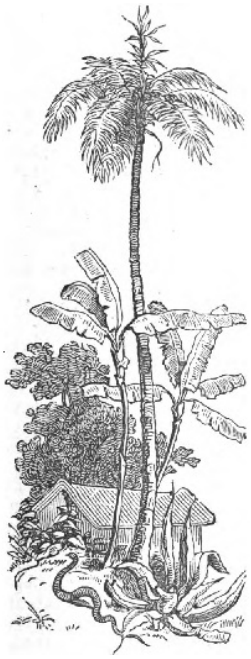
While at sea he often hummed the curious but well-known old song, which he had never understood before:--

"Here, here, here, and here,
  The ship is on her way;

There, there, there, and there,
  The skipper goes to stay;
When the winds do rave and roar
As though the ship could swim no more,
My thoughts begin to ponder
    And wander."

In his last letter from Ohio Aloys writes to his mother:--

"... My heart seems to ache at the thought that I must enjoy all these good things alone. I often wish all Nordstetten was here,--old Zahn, blind Conrad, Shacker of the stone quarry, Soges, Bat of the sour well, and Maurice of the hungry spring: they ought to be here, all of them, to eat their fill until they couldn't budge from their seats. What good does it do me while I am alone here? And then you might all see the gawk with his four horses in the stable and his ten colts in the field. If Mary Ann has any trouble, let me know about it, and I will send her something; but don't let her know from whom it comes. Oh, how I pity her! Matthew of the Hill lives two miles away. His Mechtilde is a good worker; but she is no Mary Ann, after all. I do hope she is doing well. Has she any children? On the way across there was a learned man with us on the ship,--Dr. Staeberle, of Ulm: he had a globe with him, and he showed me that when it is day in America it is night in Nordstetten, and so on. I never thought much about it till now. But when I am in the field and think, 'What are they doing now in Nordstetten?' I remember all at once that you are all fast asleep, and Shackerle's John, the watchman, is singing out, 'Two o'clock, and a cloudy morning.' On Sunday I can't bear to think that it is Saturday night in Nordstetten. All ought to have one day at once. Last Sunday was harvest-home in Nordstetten: I should never forget that, if I were to live a hundred years. I should like to be in Nordstetten for one hour, just to let the squire see what a free citizen of America looks like."



THE PIPE OF WAR.

It is a singular story, and yet intimately connected with the great events of modern history, or, what is almost the same thing, with the history of Napoleon. Those were memorable times. Every farmer could see the whole array of history manœuvre and pass in review beneath his dormer-window: kings and emperors behaved like play-actors, and, sometimes assumed a different dress and a different character in every scene. And all this gorgeous spectacle was at the farmer's service, costing him nothing but his house and home, and occasionally, perhaps, his life. My neighbor Hansgeorge was not quite so unlucky,--as the story will show.

It was in the year 1796. We who live in these piping times of peace have no idea of the state of things which then existed: mankind seemed to have lost their fixed habitations and to be driving each other here and there at random. The Black Forest saw the Austrians, with their white coats, in one month, and in the next the French, with their laughing faces; then the Russians came, with their long beards; and mixed and mingled with them all were the Bavarians, Wurtembergers, and Hessians, in every possible uniform. The Black Forest was the open gate of Germany for the French to enter; it is only ten years since that Rastatt was placed as a bolt before it.

The marches and counter-marches, retreats and advances, cannonades and drum-calls, were enough at times to turn the head of a bear in winter; and many a head did indeed refuse to remain upon its shoulders. In a field not far from Baisingen is a hillock as high as a house, which, they say, contains nothing but dead soldiers,--French and Germans mixed.

But my neighbor Hansgeorge escaped being a soldier, although a fine sturdy fellow, well fit to stand before the king, and the people too, and just entering his nineteenth year. It happened in this wise. Wendel, the mason, married a wife from Empfingen, and on the day before the wedding the bride was packed on a wagon with all her household goods, her blue chest, her distaff, and her bran-new cradle. Thus she was conveyed to the village, while the groom's friends rode on horseback behind, cracking off their pistols from time to time to show how glad they were. Hansgeorge was among them, and always shot more than all the others. When the cavalcade had reached the brick-yard, where the pond is at your right hand and the kiln at your left, Hansgeorge fired again; but, almost before the pistol went off, Hansgeorge was heard to shriek with pain. The pistol dropped from his hand, and he would have fallen from his horse but for Fidele, his friend, who caught him in his arms. He had shot off the forefinger of his right hand, just at the middle joint. Every one came up, eager to lend assistance; and even Kitty of the brick-kiln came up, and almost fainted on seeing Hansgeorge's finger just hanging by the skin. Hansgeorge clenched his teeth and looked steadily at Kitty. He was carried into the brickmaker's house. Old Jake, the farrier, who knew how to stop the blood, was sent for in all haste; while another ran to town for Dr. Erath, the favorite surgeon.

When Old Jake came into the room, all were suddenly silent, and stepped back, so as to form a sort of avenue, through which he walked toward the wounded man, who was lying on the bench behind the table. Kitty alone came forward, and said, "Jake, for God's sake, help Hansgeorge!" The latter opened his eyes and turned his head toward the speaker, and when Jake stood before him, mumbling as he touched his hand, the blood ceased running.

This time, however, it was not Jake's witchcraft which produced the result, but another kind of magic. Hansgeorge no sooner heard Kitty's words than he felt all the blood rush to his heart, and of course the hemorrhage ceased.

Dr. Erath came and amputated the finger. Hansgeorge bore the cruel pain like a hero. As he lay in a fever for hours after, he seemed to see an angel hovering over him and fanning him. He did not know that Kitty was driving the flies away, often bringing her hand very near his face: such neighborhood of a loving hand, even though there be no actual touch, has marvellous effects, and may well have fashioned the dream in his wandering brain. Then again he saw a veiled figure: he could never recall exactly how she looked; but--so curious are our dreams--it had a finger in its mouth, and smoked tobacco with it, as if it were a pipe: the blue whiffs rose up from rings of fire.

Kitty observed that the closed lips of Hansgeorge moved in his sleep. When he awoke, the first thing he called for was his pipe. He had the finest pipe in the village; and we must regard it more closely, as it is destined to play an important part in this history. The head was of Ulm manufacture, marbleized so that you might fancy the strangest figures by looking at it. The lid was of silver, shaped like a helmet, and so bright that you could see your face in it, and that twice over,--once upside-down and once right side up. At the lower edge also, as well as at the stock, the head was tipped with silver. A double silver chain served as the cord, and secured the short stem as well as the long, crooked, many-jointed mouthpiece. Was not that a splendid pipe?

"And who shall dare
To chide him for loving his pipe so fair,"

even as an ancient hero loved his shield?

What vexed Hansgeorge most in the loss of his finger was, that he could not fill his pipe without difficulty. Kitty laughed, and scolded him for his bad taste; but she filled his pipe nevertheless, took a coal from the fire to light it, and even drew a puff or two herself. She shook herself, and made a face, as if she was dreadfully disgusted. Hansgeorge had never liked a pipe better than that which Kitty started for him.

Although it was the middle of summer, Hansgeorge could not be taken home with his wound, and was compelled to stay at the brickmaker's house. With this the patient was very well content; for, although his parents came to nurse him, he knew very well that times would come when he would be alone with Kitty.

The next day was Wendel's wedding; and when the church-bell rang and the inevitable wedding-march was played in the village, Hansgeorge whistled an accompaniment in his bed. After church the band paraded through the village where the prettiest girls were, or where their sweethearts lived. The boys and girls joined the procession, which swelled as it went on: they came to the brickmaker's house also. Fidele, as George's particular friend, came in with his sweetheart to take Kitty off to the dance; but she thanked them, pleaded household duties, and remained at home. Hansgeorge rejoiced greatly at this, and when they ware alone he said,--

"Kitty, never mind: there'll be another wedding soon, and then you and I will dance our best."

"A wedding?" said Kitty, sadly: "who is going to be married?"

"Come here, please," said Hansgeorge, smiling. Kitty approached, and he continued:--"I may as well confess it: I shot my finger off on purpose, because I don't want to be a soldier."

Kitty started back, screaming, and covered her face with her apron.

"What makes you scream?" said Hansgeorge. "A'n't you glad of it? You ought to be, for you are the cause."

"Jesus! Maria! Joseph! No, no! surely I am innocent! Oh, Hansgeorge, what a sinful thing you have done! Why, you might have killed yourself! You are a wild, bad man! I never could live with you; I am afraid of you."

She would have fled; but Hansgeorge held her with his left hand. She tried to tear herself away, turned her back, and gnawed the end of her apron: Hansgeorge would have given the world for a look, but all his entreaties were in vain. He let her go, and waited a while to see whether she would turn round; but, as she did not, he said, with a faltering voice,--

"Will you be so kind as to fetch my father? I want to go home."

"No; you know you can't go home: you might get the lockjaw: Dr. Erath said you might," returned Kitty,--still without looking at him.

"If you won't fetch anybody, I'll go alone," said Hansgeorge.

Kitty turned and looked on him with tearful eyes, eloquent with entreaty and tender solicitude. George took her offered hand, and gazed long and earnestly into the face of his beloved. It was by no means a face of regular beauty: it was round, full, and plump; the whole head formed almost a perfect sphere; the forehead was high and strongly protruding, the eyes lay deep in their sockets, and the little pug nose, which had a mocking and bantering expression, and the swelling cheeks, all proclaimed health and strength, but not delicacy or refinement. George regarded her in her burning blushes as if she had been the queen of beauty.

They remained silent for a long time. At last Kitty said, "Shall I fill your pipe for you?"

"Yes," said George, and let go her hand.

This proposal of Kitty's was the best offer of reconciliation. Both felt it as such, and never exchanged another word on the subject of their dispute.

In the evening many boys and girls, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, came to take Kitty to the dance; but she refused to go. Hansgeorge smiled. When he asked Kitty to go as a favor to him, she skipped joyfully away, and soon came back in her holiday gown. Another difficulty arose, however. With all their good nature, none of the comers cared to give up their dance and stay with Hansgeorge; and Kitty had just announced her intention, when, fortunately, old Jake came in. For a good stoup of wine,--which they promised to send him from the inn,--he agreed to sit up all night, if necessary.

Hansgeorge had got Dr. Erath to preserve his finger in alcohol, and intended to make Kitty a present of it; but, with all

her strength of nerve, the girl dreaded it like a spectre, and could hardly be induced to touch the phial. As soon as Hansgeorge was able to leave the house, they went into the garden and buried the finger. Hansgeorge stood by, lost in thought, while Kitty shovelled the earth upon it. The wrong he had done his country by making himself unfit to serve it never occurred to him; but he remembered that a part of the life which was given him lay there never to rise again. It seemed as if, while full of life, he were attending his own funeral; and the firm resolve grew in him to atone for the waste committed of a part of himself by the more conscientiously husbanding what yet remained. A thought of death flitted across his mind, and he looked up with mingled sadness and pleasure to find himself yet spared and the girl of his heart beside him. Such reflections glimmered somewhat dimly in his soul, and he said, "Kitty, you are quite right: I committed a great sin. I hope it will be forgiven me." She embraced and kissed him, and he seemed to have a foretaste of the absolution yet to come.

One would expect to find in a man a peculiar fondness for the spot where a part of his bodily self is buried. As our native country is doubly dear to us because the bodies of those we love are resting there,--as the whole earth is revealed in all its holiness when we call to mind that it is the sepulchre of ages past, that

> "all who tread
> The earth are but a handful to the tribes
> That slumber in its bosom,"--

so must a man who has already surrendered a part of his dust to become dust again be attracted by the sacred claims of earth, and often turn to the resting-place of his unfettered portion.

Thoughts like these, though vaguely conceived, cannot be supposed to have taken clear form and shape in such a mind as that of our friend Hansgeorge. He went to the brickmaker's house every day; but it was in obedience to the attraction, not of something dead, but of a living being. But, joyfully as he went, he sometimes came away quite sad and downhearted; for Kitty seemed intent upon teasing and worrying him. The first thing she required, and never ceased requiring, was that he should give up smoking. She never allowed him to kiss her when he had smoked, and before she would sit near him he was always obliged to hide his darling pipe. In the brickmaker's room he could not smoke on any account; and, much as he liked to be there, he always took his way home again before long. Kitty was not mistaken in often rallying him about this.

Hansgeorge was greatly vexed at Kitty's pertinacity, and always came back to his favorite enjoyment with redoubled zest. It appeared to him unmanly to submit to a woman's dictation: woman ought to yield, he thought; and then it must be confessed that it was quite out of his power to renounce his habit. He tried it once in haying-time for two days; but he seemed to be fasting all the time: something was missing constantly. He soon drew forth his pipe again; and, while he held it complacently between his teeth and struck his flint, he muttered to himself, "Kitty and all the women in the world may go to the devil before I'll stop smoking." Here he struck his finger with the steel, and, shaking the smarting hand, "This is a judgment," thought he; "for it isn't exactly true, after all."

At last autumn came on, and George was pronounced unfit for military service. Some other farmers' boys had imitated his trick by pulling out their front teeth, so as to make themselves unable to bite open the cartridges; but the military commission regarded this as intentional self-mutilation, while that of George, from its serious character, was pronounced a misfortune. The toothless ones were taken into the carting and hauling service, and so compelled to go to the wars, after all. With defective teeth they had to munch the hard rations of the soldiers' mess; and at last they were made to bite the dust,--which, indeed, they could have done as well without any teeth at all.

In the beginning of October, the French general Moreau made good his famous retreat across the Black Forest. A part of his army passed through Nordstetten: it was spoken of for several days before. There was fear and trembling in all the village, and none knew which way to turn. A hole was dug in every cellar, and every thing valuable concealed. The girls took off their strings of garnets with the silver medallions, and drew their silver rings from their fingers, to bury them. All went unadorned, as if in mourning. The cattle were driven into a secluded ravine near Eglesthal. The boys and girls looked at each other sadly when the approaching foe was mentioned: many a young fellow sought the handle of his knife, which peeped out of his side-pocket.

The Jews were more unfortunate than any others. Rob a farmer of every thing you can carry away, and you must still leave him his field and his plough; but all the possessions of the Jews are movables,--money and goods: they, therefore, trembled doubly and trebly. The Jewish Rabbi--a shrewd and adroit man--hit upon a lucky expedient. He placed a large barrel of red wine, well inspirited with brandy, before his house, and a table with bottles and glasses beside it, for the unbidden guests to regale themselves. The device succeeded to perfection,--the more so as the French were rather in a hurry.

In fact, the storm passed over, doing much less damage than was expected. The villagers collected in large groups to view the passing troops. The cavalry came first, then a long column of infantry.

Hansgeorge had gone to the brick-yard with his comrades Xavier and Fidele: he wished to be near Kitty in case of emergency. The three stood in the garden before the house, leaning upon the fence, Hansgeorge calmly smoking his pipe. Kitty looked out of the window and said, "George, if you'll stop smoking you may come into the house with your friends."

"Wo are quite comfortable here, thank you," replied Hansgeorge, sending up three or four whiffs in quick succession.

On came the cavalry. They rode in entire disorder, each apparently occupied with himself alone; and nothing showed that they belonged together save the common interest manifested in any deviltry undertaken by any one of them. Several impudently kissed their hands to Kitty,--at which Hansgeorge grasped his jack-knife and Kitty quickly closed the sash. The infantry were followed by the forage-wagons and the pitiable cavalcade of the wounded and dying. This was a wretched sight. One of them stretched forth a hand which had but four fingers. This curdled Hansgeorge's blood in his veins: it seemed to him as if he himself were lying there. The poor sufferer had nothing but a kerchief round his head, and seemed to shiver with cold. Hansgeorge jumped over the fence, pulled off his fur cap, and set it on the poor man's head; then he gave him his leathern purse with all the money in it. The poor fellow made some signs with his mouth, as if he wished to smoke, and looked beseechingly at Hansgeorge's pipe; but the latter shook his head. Kitty brought some bread and some linen, and laid them on the cart. The maimed warriors looked with pleasure on the blooming lass, and some made her a military salute and garbled some broken German. No one asked whether they were friends or foes: the unfortunate and helpless have a claim on every one.

Another troop of cavalry brought up the rear. Kitty stood at the window again, while Hansgeorge and his comrades had returned to their post at the garden-gate. Suddenly Fidele exclaimed, "Look out: the marauders are coming."

Two ragged fellows in half-uniform, without saddle or stirrup, came galloping up. While yet a few yards off, they stopped and whispered something to each other, at which one of them was heard to laugh. They then rode up slowly, the one coming very near the fence. Quick as a flash he tore the pipe out of Hansgeorge's mouth, and galloped off at the top of his horse's speed. Putting the still-burning pipe into his mouth, he puffed away merrily in derision. Hansgeorge held

his chin with both his hands: every tooth seemed to have been torn out of his jaw. Kitty laughed heartily, crying, "Go get your pipe, Hansgeorge: I'll let you smoke now."

"I'll get it," said Hansgeorge, breaking a board of the fence in his fury. "Come, Fidele, Xavier; let's get our horses out and after them: I won't let the rascals have my pipe, if I must die for it."

His two comrades went away and took the horses out of the stable. Kitty came running over, however, and called Hansgeorge into the house. He came reluctantly, for he was angry with her for laughing at him; but she took his hand, trembling, and said, "For God's sake, Hansgeorge, let the pipe alone. I'll do any thing to please you if you'll only mind me now. How can you let them kill you for such a good-for-nothing pipe? Do stay here, I beg of you."

"I won't stay here! I don't care if they do send a bullet through my head! What should I stay here for? You never do any thing but tease me."

"No, no!" cried Kitty, falling upon his neck: "you must stay here! I won't let you go."

Hansgeorge felt a strange thrill pass through him; but he asked, saucily, "Will you be my wife, then?"

"Yes, yes, I will, Hansgeorge! I will!"

They embraced each other with transport, and Hansgeorge exclaimed, "I'll never put a pipe into my mouth again as long as I live: if I do, I hope I may be----"

"No, no; don't swear, but keep your word: that's much better. But now you will stay here, won't you, Hansgeorge? Let the pipe and the Frenchman go to the devil together."

Xavier and Fidele now came riding up, armed with pitchforks, and cried, "Hurry up, Hansgeorge! hurry up!"

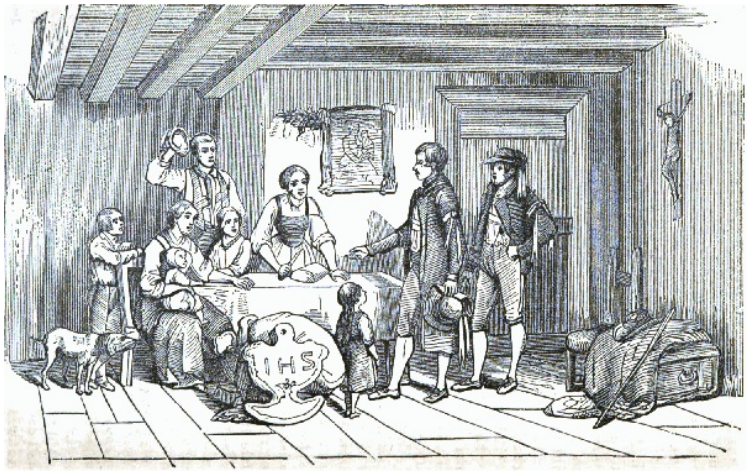
"I am not going with you," said Hansgeorge.

"What will you give us if we bring your pipe back?" asked Fidele.

"You may keep it."

They rode off post-haste down the Empfingen road, Hansgeorge and Kitty looking after them. At the little hill by the clay-pit they had nearly caught up to the marauders; but when the latter found themselves pursued they turned, brandished their swords, and one of them drew a pistol. Fidele and Xavier, seeing this, turned round also, and returned faster than they had come.

From that day Hansgeorge never touched a pipe. Four weeks later his and Kitty's banns were read in the church.



One day Hansgeorge went to the brickmaker's: he had come unperceived, having taken the back way. He heard Kitty say to some one inside. "So you are sure it is the same?"

"Of course it is," said the person addressed, whose voice he recognised as belonging to Little Red Meyer, a Jewish peddler. "Why, they were always seen together: for my part, I don't see how he ever made up his mind to marry anybody else."

"Well," said Kitty, laughingly, "I only want to make him stare a little on our wedding-day. So you won't disappoint me, will you?"

"I'll do it as sure as I want to make a hundred thousand florins."

"But Hansgeorge mustn't hear a word about it."

"Mum's the word," said Little Red Meyer, and took his leave.

Hansgeorge came in rather sheepishly, being ashamed to confess that he had been listening. But when they sat closely side by side, he said, "Kitty, don't let them put any nonsense into your head: it's no such thing. They once used to say that I was courting the maid at the Eagle, who is now in Rothweil: don't you believe a bit of it. I wasn't confirmed then: it was nothing but child's-play."

Kitty pretended to lay great stress on this matter, and put Hansgeorge to a world of trouble to clear himself. In the evening he did his best to pump the whole secret out of Little Red Meyer; but all in vain: his word was "mum."

Hansgeorge had many things to go through with yet, and, in a manner, to run the gauntlet of the whole village. On the Sunday before the wedding, he, as well as his "playmate" Fidele, adorned their hats and left arms with red ribbons, and went, thus accoutred, from house to house, the groom that was to be repeating the following speech at every call:--"I want you to come to the wedding on Tuesday, at the Eagle. If we can do the same for you, we will. Be sure to come. Don't forget. Be sure to come." Thereupon the housewife invariably opened the table-drawer and brought out a loaf of bread and a knife, saying, "There! have some bread." Then the intended groom was expected to cut a piece from the loaf and take it with him. The loss of his forefinger made Hansgeorge rather awkward at this operation; and many would hurt his feelings unintentionally by saying, "Why, Hansgeorge, you can't cut the bread. You oughtn't to get married: you are unfit for service."

Hansgeorge rejoiced greatly when this ordeal was over.

The wedding was celebrated with singing and rejoicing, although there was no shooting, as it had been strictly forbidden since Hansgeorge's misfortune.

The dinner was uncommonly merry. Immediately after it, Kitty slipped out into the kitchen, and came back with the memorable pipe in her mouth: no one, at least, could say that it was not the same. Kitty puffed away a little with a wry face, and then handed it to Hansgeorge, saying, "There, take it: you have kept your word like a man, and now you may smoke as much as you please. I don't mind it a bit."

Hansgeorge blushed up to the eyes, but shook his head. "What I have said is said, and not a mouse shall bite a crumb off: I'll never smoke again in all my life. But, Kitty, I may kiss you after you've done smoking, mayn't I?"

He strained her to his heart, and then confessed, laughing, that he had overheard a part of Kitty's talk with Little Red Meyer, and had supposed they were speaking of the maid at the Eagle. The joke was much relished by all the company.

The pipe was hung up in state over the wedding-bed of the young couple; and Hansgeorge often points to it in proof of the maxim that love and resolution will enable a man to overcome any weakness or foible.

Many years are covered by a few short words. Hansgeorge and Kitty are venerable grandparents, enjoying a ripe old age in the midst of their descendants. The pipe is an heirloom in which their five sons have a common property: not one of them has ever learned to smoke.

MANOR-HOUSE FARMER'S VEFELA.

1.

Not many will divine the orthography of this name in the Almanac; yet it is by no means uncommon, and the fate of the poor child who bore it reminds one strongly of the German story of her afflicted patroness, the holy St. Genevieve.

The grandest house in all the village, which has such a broad front toward the street that all the wandering journeymen stop there to ask for a little "assistance," once belonged to Vefela's father: the houses standing on each side of it were his barns. The father is dead, the mother is dead, and the children are dead. The grand house is now a linen-factory. The barns have been altered into houses, and Vefela has disappeared without a trace.

One thing alone remains, and will probably remain for all time to come. Throughout the village the grand house still goes by the name of the Manor-Farmer's House; for old Zahn, Vefela's father, was called the Manor-House Farmer. He was not a native of the village, but had moved there from Baisingen, which is five miles away. Baisingen is one of those fertile villages called "straw shires," and the Baisingers were nicknamed "straw-boots," from their custom of strewing the streets of the village with straw. The German peasantry are not difficult to please in point of cleanliness; and such a device suits their tastes for two reasons: it saves street-sweeping and helps to make manure for the numerous fields of such rich folk as the Baisingers. The Manor-House Farmer lived in the village thirty years; but he never had a dispute without hearing himself reviled as the Baisingen straw-boots, and his wife as the Baisingen cripple. Mrs. Zahn had a fine figure and a good carriage; but her left leg was a little short and made her limp in walking. This defect was a chief cause of her unusual wealth. Her father, whose name was Staufer, once said publicly at the inn that the short leg shouldn't hurt his daughter, because he would put a peck of crown-thalers under it as her wedding-portion, and see if that wouldn't make it straight.

He kept his word; for when his daughter married Zahn he filled a peck-measure with as many dollars as would go into it, stroked it as if it had been wheat, and said, "There! what's in it is yours." To keep up the joke, his daughter was told to set her foot upon it, and the peck of silver flourished on the wedding-table as one of the dishes.

With this money Zahn bought the manorial estate of the counts of Schleitheim, and built the fine house from which he took his nickname. Of nine children born to him, five lived,--three sons and two daughters. The youngest child was Vefela. She was so pretty and of such delicate frame that they used to call her, half in scorn and half in earnest, "the lady." Partly from pity and partly from malice, every one said in speaking of her that she was "marked," for she had inherited the short leg of her mother. This expression has an evil meaning: it is applied to humpbacks, to one-eyed and lame persons, as if to insinuate that God had marked them as dangerous and evil-disposed. Being too frequently treated with scorn and suspicion, these unfortunates are often bitter, crabbed, and deceitful: the prejudice against them provokes the very consequences afterward alleged in proof of its truth.

It was not that Vefela did harm to any one: she was kind and gentle to all. But the hatred felt by all the village against the manor-house farmer was transferred to his children.

For eighteen years the manor-house farmer carried on a lawsuit with the village commune. He claimed the seignorial rights of the estate. He had fifty votes in the election of the squire; and he drew the smoking-tithe, the chicken-tithe, the road-tithe, and a hundred other perquisites, which the farmers never paid without the greatest chagrin, grumbling, and quarrelling. Such is human nature! A count or a baron would have received all these taxes without much difficulty; but the farmer had to swallow a curse with every grain which was yielded by his fellows. For want of a better revenge, they mowed down the manor-house farmer's rye-fields at night while the corn was yet green. But this only made matters worse, for the manor-house farmer recovered his damages from the commune; and he employed a gamekeeper of his own, half of whose salary the villagers were bound to pay. So there was no end to petty disagreements.

A new lawyer having settled in the little town of Sulz, a lawsuit began between the manor-house farmer and the commune, in which paper enough was used up to cover acres of ground. Like a great portion of the Black Forest, the village then belonged to Austria. The "Landoogt" sat at Rottemburg, the court of appeals at Friburg in the Breisgau: an

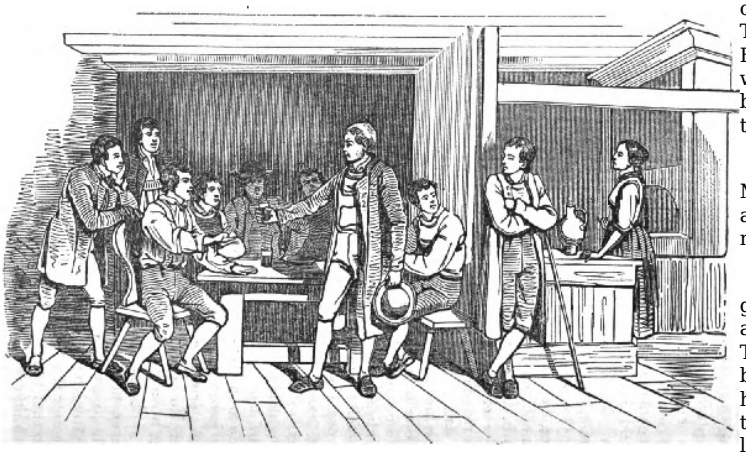
important case could be carried still further. In the complicated state of the higher tribunals, it was easy to keep a suit in a proper state of confusion to the day of judgment.

The quarrel between the manor-house farmer and the villagers grew in time into a standing feud between Baisingen and Nordstetten. When they met at markets or in towns, the Baisingers called the Nordstetters their subjects or copyholders, because a Baisingen man ruled over them. The Nordstetters, who went by the nickname of Peaky-mouths, never failed to retort. One sally provoked another: the badinage remained friendly for a time, but grew more and more bitter, and, before any one expected it, there was a declared state of war, and cudgellings were heard of on all sides. The first occurred at the Ergenzingen fair; and after that the two parties rarely met without a skirmish. They would travel for hours to a dance or a wedding, drink and dance quietly together for a while, and finally break into the real object of their visit,--the general shindy.

The manor-house farmer lived in the village as if it were a wilderness. None bade him the time of day; nobody came to see him. When he entered the inn, there was a general silence. It always seemed as if they had just been talking about him. He would lay his well-filled tobacco-pouch upon the table beside him; but the company would sooner have swallowed pebbles than asked the manor-house farmer for a pipeful of tobacco. At first he took great pains to disarm the general ill-will by kindness and courtesy, for he was a good man by nature, though a little rigid; but when he saw that his efforts were fruitless he began to despise them all, gave himself no more trouble about them, and only confirmed his determination to gain his point. He withdrew from all companionship of his own accord, hired men from Ahldorf to do his field-work, and even went to church at Horb every Sunday. He looked stately enough when on this errand. His broad shoulders and well-knit frame made him seem shorter than he really was; his three-cornered hat was set a little jauntily on the left side of his head, with the broad brim in front. The shadow thus flung on his face gave it an appearance of fierceness and austerity. The closely-ranged silver buttons on his collarless blue coat, and the round silver knobs on his red vest, jingled, as he walked, like a chime of little bells.

His wife and children--particularly the two daughters, Agatha and Vefela--suffered most under this state of things. They often sat together bewailing their lot and weeping, while their father was discussing his stoup of wine with his lawyer in town and did not return till late in the evening. They had become so much disliked that the very beggars were afraid to ask alms of them, for fear of offending their other patrons. In double secrecy, as well from their father as from their neighbors, they practised charity. Like thieves in the night, they would smuggle potatoes and flour into the garden, where the poor awaited them.

At last this was too much for Mrs. Zahn to bear: so she went to her father and told him all her troubles. Old Staufer was a quiet, careful man, who liked to be safe in whatever he did. First of all, therefore, he sent his peddler-in-ordinary and general adviser in the practical duties of his magisterial office, who was of course a Jew, and bore the name of Marem, to Nordstetten, directing him to inquire privately who were the actual ringleaders in carrying on the lawsuit, and to see whether the matter could not be settled. Marem did so, but with an eye to his private interests. He procured an acquaintance to spread the report that the manor-house farmer had succeeded in having an imperial commission appointed to come to Nordstetten and remain there until the matter was finally adjudicated, at the expense of the losing party. Then he went himself to the leading spirits, and told them that for a certain compensation he would bring about a compromise, though it would be no easy matter. Thus he secured a perquisite from both parties. But what is the use of all this fine manœuvring, when you have men to deal with who act like bears and spoil the most exact calculations with their savage ferocity?



Old Staufer now came to Nordstetten, and Marem with him. They went to the inn, accompanied by the manor-house farmer, "to meet the spokesmen of the village.

"Good-morning, squire," said the assembled guests to the three men as they entered, acting as if no one but old Staufer himself had come. The latter started at this, but called for two bottles of wine, filled his glass, and drank the health of the company, jingling his glass against the glasses of the others. But Ludwig the locksmith replied, "Thank you, but we can't drink. No offence, squire, but we never drink till after the bargain is made. What the rich gentlemen-farmers of Baisingen do is more than we can say."

The squire took his glass from his lips and sighed deeply. He then went to business with much calmness; dwelt upon the folly of throwing away one's dearly-bought earnings to "those blood-suckers," the lawyers, reminded the company that every lawsuit eat out of one's dish and skimmed the marrow-fat from one's soup, and concluded by saying that a little allowance here and a little allowance there would bring about a peace.

Each party now proposed a composition; but the two propositions were far apart. Marem did all he could to bring them nearer to each other. He took aside first the one and then the other, to whisper something into their ears. At length he took upon himself, in the teeth of objections made on both sides, to fix a sum. He pulled them all by the sleeves and coat-tails, and even tried to force their hands into each other.

After much wrangling, the manor-house farmer said, "Sooner than take such a beggar's bit as that, I'll make you a present of the whole, you starvelings!"

"Why, who spoke to you," said Ludwig the locksmith, "you straw-boots?"

"You'll never walk on straw as long as you live," replied the manor-house farmer. "I'll find such beds for you that you won't have straw enough under your heads to sleep on. And if I should be ruined, and my wife and child too, and not have a span of ground left, I'll not let you off another farthing. I'll have my rights, if I must go to the emperor himself. Mark my words." He gnashed his teeth as he rose, and all hope of a compromise was gone. At last he even quarrelled with his father-in-law, and went out, banging the door after him.

When he came home, his wife and daughters wept as if somebody had died, so that all the passers-by stopped to learn what was the matter. But all their entreaties could not turn the manor-house farmer from his purpose. Old Staufer returned home without coming to see his daughter: he sent Marem to say good-bye to her.

The old state of things went on. The manor-house farmer and his wife had frequent differences, which Vefela had to settle. The father had a sort of reverence for "the child," for such was the name by which she went all over the house. There was such angelic mildness in her face, and her voice had such a magic charm, that if she only took his hand, looked up into his face with her blue eyes, and said, "Dear daddy," he became meek and gentle at once: the strong man followed the guidance of his child as if it were a higher being; he never spoke a harsh word in her presence, and did every thing to please her, except only to make peace with his enemies.

Yet on this very subject the obstinacy of the manor-house farmer was but the cloak for a great struggle which was going on in his mind. He would fain have extended the hand of reconciliation, but was ashamed to confess what he called his weakness; and, as matters had gone so far, he thought his honor was at stake in keeping up the war. The thought of his honor recalled his pride; and he thought himself superior to the other farmers. This notion was fostered by the fawning law-clerks of the town and by mine host of the Crown Inn there, who always talked to him of his excellent mind and of his barony. He did not believe what they said; but still he liked to hear it. Finding, in time, that the townsfolk were really no wiser than himself, and convinced, like all European peasants, that the city is inhabited by beings of a far different order from those who plod in the fields, he could not but come to the conclusion that the peasantry were far beneath him. Not that he really enjoyed the society of this sort of people, who never objected to his standing treat for a stoup of wine; "but," thought he, "a man must have some company, and it's better than farmers' gossip, after all." At last, without avowing it even to himself, he enjoyed the stimulus to his vanity which their conversation afforded.

Such is life. The manor-house farmer quarrelled with himself, with his wife, with his fellow-men, with everybody and every thing, because he would not humble himself to surrender a jot or tittle of these old feudal rights, or rather wrongs, when he had enough and to spare without them: the confusion of his heart and of his mind increased from day to day, and he undermined his happiness and that of his family when they might all have enjoyed so much good fortune.

After a time, a few old farmers, who had no warm stoves at home, or whose scolding wives made their dwellings too hot to hold them, would drop in to see the manor-house farmer of a winter evening; but he received them sullenly, vexed that these only came and not the more important and influential. Their visits soon ceased.

The mother and daughters often spent a week with her father at Baisingen, but the manor-house farmer did not go with them. He never saw his father-in-law again until he lay upon his bier.

The life in the village became more and more disagreeable. It is a sad thing to go into the fields and not receive a friendly greeting from all you meet. The manor-house farmer, to make the time pass away, was forced to talk to his dog, Sultan,--a poor entertainment for a man at any time.

The hard times brought upon Europe by Napoleon did not leave a single farm-house of the Black Forest unvisited. Strasbourg was not far away, and those who had good hearing maintained that they had heard the shots fired off there in honor of the French victories. This was said to be a sign of great trouble in the land,--just as if any sign were needed to show that things would be turned upside-down.

The preparations for the Russian campaign were going on briskly. The manor-house farmer's oldest sons, Philip and Caspar, were forced to go: their father would rather have gone himself, for he was tired of every thing. He saw the departure of his sons with the stony silence of one whose faculties for wishes or for hopes were gone.

Philip and Caspar were probably buried in the Russian snows: at all events, they have never been heard of. General Huegel used to tell a story of a soldier whom he had seen on the retreat from Moscow leaving the ranks and shedding copious tears over his many distresses. The general rode up to him and asked, kindly, "Where are you from?"

"I'm the manor-house farmer's boy from the Black Forest over there," answered the soldier, pointing sideways, as if his father's house were within gunshot around the corner. The general was so much amused by the soldier's answer that the tears ran down his cheeks also and turned to icicles in his mustache.

This is all that was ever known of the life and death of the manor-house farmer's two sons.

Meantime, pleasure and pain were mingled at home. When a misfortune lasts long, people manage to live in it as if it were a house, and make themselves comfortable. While in health, man cannot cultivate sorrow beyond a given length of time, the fountain of life always lifts the gladness of life like the sunbeams upon its waters. Harvest-homes and weddings were once more held at home, while far away in the distant steppe hundreds of sons, brothers, and sweethearts were laid on the cold bed of death.

Agatha, the oldest daughter, was engaged to be married to the innkeeper of Entingen: the manor-house farmer, at war with the whole village, had to see his children travel out of his sight and easy reach. At the wedding-day, Vefela, the bride's-maid, looked beautiful. She was dressed just like the bride, with a crown or tiara of glittering silver-foil around her head, and her hair, which hung down her back in two long wefts, tied in red silk ribbons a handbreadth wide. This is a decoration which none but virgins are permitted to wear: those who cannot claim the title are compelled to wear white linen ribbons or tape. Around her neck was the chain of garnets worn by every peasant-girl, the dark color of which displayed the brilliant fairness of her tints to great advantage. The collar of white lace was partially covered by a nosegay which was set in the bosom of her scarlet bodice with its silver chains and clasps. The wide blue skirt reached down to the knees and was half covered with, a white apron; at the shoulders, and at the ends of her short linen sleeves, red ribbons fluttered gayly. The high-heeled, wooden-soled shoes made her limping gait more unsteady still. And yet, as she walked to the church beside her sister to the sound of music and the firing of pistols, she looked so charming that all wished she had been the bride instead of the bride's-maid.

Who knows where were the manor-house farmer's sons while he sat with his guests at the wedding-table? No one thought of them. Once only Vefela sank into a deep brown study and gazed fixedly into vacancy. She seemed to see nothing of what was going on around her: her look seemed to pierce the walls and to wander searching into space. She was thinking of her brothers that were gone.

Not two months later, Melchior, the third son of the manor-house farmer, was married also. At Agatha's wedding he had made the acquaintance of the only daughter of the innkeeper of the Angel, in Ergenzingen, and engaged himself to her. Although Melchior was still very young and scarcely a year older than Vefela, the wedding was hurried as much as possible, lest he might also be forced to go to the wars. Melchior left the village, and Vefela was left at home alone. The mother's health failed. A silent grief was gnawing at her life. She always wished to induce her husband to sell all he had and live with one of his married children; but his answers were so harsh that she was forced to drop the subject. These were sad times for Vefela, for she was always called upon to mediate and make peace. Her mother's ill-health increased her fretfulness; and she often said that if her father were still living she would leave her husband. These two people had lived to see the second generation which issued from their union, and yet they could not come to understand each other: the older they grew the more did their heart-burnings and bickerings increase. Vefela always brought matters around, and wore an air of gayety and happiness; but in private she often wept bitterly over her sad lot and that of her parents,

and made many vows never to marry. She knew no one to whom she would have devoted herself; and then she saw how much she was needed in the house to prevent the smouldering flames from bursting through the ashes. It is written that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. Such is the case particularly with evil marriages. The heart that is without love to its father and its mother is exposed to many dangers.

The death of Vefela's mother suddenly made her father feel how dearly, after all, he had loved her in his inmost heart. He grieved to think that he had not been more indulgent, and that he had often taken her ailments for pretexts and affectation. Every unkind word he had uttered stung him to the soul: he would gladly have given his life to recall it. Such are we. Instead of bearing with and sustaining each other in life, most men grieve when it is too late, when death has made the irreparable separation. Why not love while yet we live? Every hour not spent in kindness is so much robbed from the life of those around us, which can never be restored.

On Sunday the manor-house farmer no longer went to church in the town, but to the village church, for his wife lay buried beneath the shadow of its steeple: he always took the roundabout way of the churchyard. The weekly visit to his wife's grave seemed like an effort to atone for his shortcomings toward her in life.

The house was all quiet now. Not a loud word was spoken, and Vefela ruled there like a spirit of peace. Peace was there, but not joy: some one seemed to be always missed or anxiously expected. Still, the effect of Vefela's management on the manor-house farmer was such that he gradually regained his spirits: he did nothing without consulting "the child." Indeed, he left almost every thing to her disposal: when any thing was asked of him, he usually answered, "Ask Vefela."

Thus they lived for years. Vefela was over five-and-twenty. Many suitors asked for her hand; but she always said that she did not wish to marry; and her father always assented. "Vefela," he would say, "you are too refined for a farmer, and when I have gained my lawsuit we will move into town, and I will give you a peck of dollars for your portion, and you can choose a gentleman." Vefela would laugh; but secretly she agreed with her father, at least in so far that she made up her mind that if she ever did marry it should not be a farmer. She had suffered so much from the ill-governed passions and implacable hatred of the peasantry that she had contracted a great hatred against them. She thought that in town, where people are more refined and have better manners, they must also be better and truer. She had steeled herself to bear her troubles only by looking upon the people about her as coarse, and herself as something higher; and, after pondering on the matter for so many years, she had come not only to think herself better, but even to fancy that she occupied a higher position. This was her great misfortune.

2.

It is a great mistake to suppose that in the country people, may live alone and undisturbed. Such a thing is only possible in a large city, where men take no interest in each others' affairs, where one man may meet the other daily for years, and never think of inquiring who he is or what he does; where you pass a human being without a greeting or even a look, just as if he were a stone. In the country, where everybody knows everybody, each one is compelled to account to all the others' for what he does: no one can rest content with the approbation of his own judgment. In the Black Forest the passing word of recognition varies with the direction of your steps. If you are going down hill, the passer-by inquires, "'You going down there?" If you are ascending, "'You going up there?" If he finds you loading a wagon, he says, "Don't load too heavy," or, "Don't work too hard." If you are sitting before your door or on a stile, it is, "'You resting a little?" If two are talking, the third man who passes by says, "Good counsel, neighbors?" and so on.

There is a charm in this communion of work and rest, word and thought; but the custom has its drawbacks. Any one having good or bad reasons of his own for disposing of his time in a manner different from what is customary has to contend against the gossip and the jibes and mockery of all. An old bachelor or an old maid are in particular the butts of this sort of street-raillery, whether it be from poverty or any other motive that they cling to their single condition.

The more Vefela approached the sombre years of old-maidenhood, the more was the "manor-house lady" persecuted by this sort of fun. One Sunday, as she walked through the village, a crowd of young men were standing before the town-hall, and "Tralla," the butt of the village,--a poor simpleton who was half dumb,--stood near them. When they saw Vefela, one of them cried, "Tralla, there comes your sweetheart." Tralla grinned from ear to ear. They urged him on to take his sweetheart by the arm. Poor Vefela heard them, and almost sank to the ground with shame and vexation. Already had Tralla hobbled up and taken her arm, with his brutal features distorted with fun. Vefela raised her eyes to the young fellows with a look so full of entreaty and reproach that one of them was actually induced to take her part. What he said was not heard, being drowned in the uproarious laughter of the others. Here Vefela found a rescuer whom nobody had expected. Her father's dog Nero, who had followed her, suddenly sprang on Tralla's back, seized him by the collar, and dragged him down. Vefela took him away from his victim in all haste, and hurried on her way. From that time Nero was a power in the village. The whole affair mortified Vefela greatly, and confirmed her in her dislike to farmers and farmers' ways.

Vefela spent some weeks with her brother Melchior, in Ergenzingen. Here too she was often sad; for Melchior had hard-hearted, stingy wife, who hardly gave him enough to eat.

The squire of Ergenzingen, a widower with three children, frequently came to Melchior's house; and one day he asked Vefela to marry him. Vefela was disposed to consent; for, though not attached to the squire, she was weary of her lonesome life, and hoped to derive pleasure from being a kind mother to the children. But the manor-house farmer came and told his daughter that the squire was a hard man, who had been unkind to his first wife, and, besides, that Vefela could only be happy with a man of great refinement. The squire was rejected. But his proposal had been heard of in Ergenzingen; and the boys, with whom he was unpopular on account of his strictness, came one night and strewed bran all along the path between his house and Melchior's. The squire forthwith began to hate the manor-house farmer and Vefela: she returned with her father to the solitude of his roof.

Vefela would have done better to have followed her own counsel and married the squire; but her doom was sealed, and she could not escape it.

The life of the manor-house farmer seemed likely to end sooner than his lawsuit. The strong man was sinking under petty ailments: the trouble and chagrin so long suppressed had gnawed his core. For hours and hours he would sit speechless in his arm-chair, only murmuring occasionally an indistinguishable word to his dog Nero, whose head was on his master's knee, while his faithful eyes looked up into his face. Vefela could not be with him always, and he now felt doubly the dreariness of his lot. He would have given any thing for the privilege of receiving a guest in his warm, cosy room, only to have given or received a pinch of snuff. He went to the window and looked out; he coughed when anybody passed; but no one spoke to him, no one came. He closed the sash and returned grumbling to his seat.

It was two days before New-Year. Vefela had gone to the well with the maid for water. She purposely did this coarse kind of work because the villagers had said that she was ashamed of it. Just as her bucket was full, the girl said, "Look at that man there with the double eyes: I guess he is the new surgeon."

A man in citizens' dress, with spectacles on his nose, was coming down the village. Just as he was passing the two girls, Vefela took the pail on her head; but, by an unlucky step, she slipped upon the ice and fell, pouring the water over her. When she recovered herself the strange gentleman was standing by her: he took her hand and helped her up, and then asked her, kindly, whether she had not hurt herself, for she had had a bad fall. There was something so winning in

the tone of his voice that Vefela experienced a strange sensation: she thanked him quite warmly, and assured him that she was not hurt. She walked on, the gentleman beside her.

"Why, you are limping," said he again. "Does your foot pain you?"

"No," answered Vefela; "I have a short foot;" and, though she was chilled through, the blood shot into her face. She covered her face with her apron, pretending to wipe it, though it was wet through and through. The stranger now remarked that her limp was scarcely to be perceived. Vefela smiled, half incredulous, half flattered. It was a strange thing to Vefela to find the gentleman walking by her side through the village, all the way to her father's house; and even there he entered with her, with a word of apology, to which he gave no time to reply. Nero, however, sprang upon the stranger, and would have dragged him down had not the manor-house farmer and Vefela interfered. The stranger now gave sundry directions to guard against Vefela's taking cold. She must go to bed, drink tea, and so on.

Edward Brenner (for such was his name) sat down and chatted cosily with the manor-house farmer. Not an hour passed before he was master of his whole history. The latter took a strong liking to Dr. Brenner, but spoke so much of the spectacles, and asked so often whether he had need of them all the time, that Brenner soon perceived that this instrument of learning was not agreeable to him. He took them off, and the manor-house farmer nodded pleasantly, observing that he could talk with a man much better when his head was not in a lantern. He now gave him a full account of his bodily grievances also. Brenner looked wise, said that the doctors had all mistaken his disease, and prescribed an infallible remedy.

From this time forth he visited the manor-house farmer daily. All were glad to see him except Nero, who proved so intractable that he had to be chained whenever Brenner came. One day the latter threw him a piece of bread as he was leaving the house; but the dog never touched it, but sprang furiously at the giver.

Vefela was not equally inaccessible to the fine speeches and flatteries of Brenner. She often scolded the maid for saying that Brenner had but one coat, for he wore the same in the week and on Sunday. Such was the way with the gentlefolks, she said; and everybody knew it who wasn't too stupid. She often lingered near when Brenner talked with her father, and rejoiced to find the latter almost invariably pleased with the views advanced by the surgeon. His health happened to improve a little after taking Brenner's prescription: this gave the latter an excuse for saying again and again that he was in fact a better doctor than the licensed physician, but that the law prevented him from practising. He scolded about those who thought the only way to be wise was to cram your head with books. "Practice makes perfect," he said. "A farmer who knows the world often understands more about government matters than all the ministers and governors; and so it is in medicine." This mixture of sense and nonsense was very pleasing to the manor-house farmer's ears: it jumped exactly with what his own experience had made him wish to be true. The lawsuit also came in for a share of the kind solicitude of Brenner. He confirmed the notion of the manor-house farmer to meet in kind the tactics of his adversaries, and resort to bribery. Brenner suggested the shrewd expedient of stealing a march on the other party by giving gold instead of silver. Those were the "good old times" when a lawsuit could not come to an end without "cribbings" and officials had no hesitation in receiving illegal pay.

One evening, as Brenner left the house, Vefela accompanied him to the door, and they remained standing there a while together. Brenner took Vefela's hand and said, "'Pon honor, Vefela, you are a sweet girl, and not like the peasant-girls at all: you are too refined for a peasant-girl. 'Pon honor: and you have as much sense as any of them in the city."

Vefela said he was making fun of her; but in her heart she believed him. He kissed Vefela's hand and took his leave, taking off his hat politely to Vefela. She remained standing under the door a long time with thoughtful eyes and a pleased smile upon her lips: Brenner's polite and yet kind-hearted manner had pleased her greatly. She went upstairs singing, and let the soup-bowl fall out of her hands,--at which she laughed aloud. Every thing was so delightful that evening that she could not frown, no matter what happened. Late at night she went into the cellar and brought the men a bottle of cider: they must have a little enjoyment on a working-day for once.

The intimacy between Brenner and Vefela increased from day to day.

An event which had been so long expected that it almost took them by surprise brought rejoicing into the manor-house. The news came that the lawsuit was gained. The opponents had been at Rottenburg, where the magistrate had told them very plainly, though with a little circumlocution, that "the manor-house farmer's duns had come in ahead of their grays." Though confined to the house, the manor-house farmer put on his Sunday clothes and poured a whole pot of fresh milk into Nero's breakfast. He sent to Melchior and Agatha to come and rejoice with him: nobody cared to let him know that Agatha was on her death-bed. Brenner, also, was sent for; and he alone accepted the invitation. The manor-house farmer sat up till late at night, drinking, laughing, and talking, and sometimes lapsing into sudden seriousness. He sighed to think that his "old woman" could not share his good luck, and drank a full glass to her memory. At last, as he was beginning to nod in his chair, they carried him to bed.

It was very late when Brenner started to go. Vefela lighted him to the door: they were both greatly excited, and exchanged fervent kisses. On his entreaties and solicitations, Vefela at last said, aloud, "Good-night." Brenner did the same, took the key, unlocked the door, closed it with a bang, and locked it. But he had not left the house.

No one had any suspicions except Nero, who was tied in the yard, and who barked all night as if a thief had got into the house.

Life and death were both busy in that house that night. The next morning the manor-house farmer lay dead in his bed: the palsy had struck him.

None could understand why it was that Vefela raved like a maniac by the bedside of her father. Usually so calm and moderate, she could not be made to hear reason now.

The estate was again purchased by a baron, and the farmers bore their feudal burdens without a murmur.

3.

Vefela moved to Ergenzingen, to live with her brother Melchior. Nobody accompanied her from the village except Nero. Agatha died soon after her father, and people whispered that Vefela would marry her brother-in-law; but that was out of the question. Brenner came to Ergenzingen several times every week. He must have raised money in some way or other, for he was always showily dressed, and had a peculiar confidence, almost amounting to arrogance, in his behavior to Vefela as well as to others. He gave them all to understand that he must be addressed as "Doctor." Vefela did not quite understand it all, but she did not complain, as she had made him acquainted with her situation.

Melchior had a man employed whose name was Wendel,--a stalwart, hard-working fellow, who shared all Nero's friendships and enmities. He loved the dog because the dog hated Brenner, and loved him doubly for his devotion to Vefela. In Germany, polite people address each other as "they;" equals on intimate terms are the "thee" and "thou;" and superiors sometimes undertake to address inferiors as "he" or "she." Brenner had once addressed Wendel as "he;" and

this gave the latter, what he had long desired, a pretext for hating the "beard-scraper" like poison. In spite of this, however, he never objected to hunting him up in town, even late at night, whenever Vefela took the trouble to say, "Wendel, won't you, please?" Then he trudged along, and Nero ran with him, and they brought the doctor a letter from Vefela. Sometimes, when he had ploughed all day and was more tired than his horses, it cost Vefela but a word to make him hook up again and take Brenner to town through storm and darkness.

One Saturday night Vefela said to Wendel in the yard, "To-morrow you must be so kind as to drive to Horb early in the morning and bring Brenner here."

"Is it true," asked Wendel, "that you are going to be betrothed to him?"

"Yes."

"Take my advice and don't do it. There are honest farmers in the world enough."

Vefela replied, "You can't forgive Brenner for having said 'he' to you." She had intended to say more, but checked herself, not wishing to offend the poor fellow. To herself she said, "It is shocking how stupid and obstinate these farmers are," and congratulated herself on having got over all that. Notwithstanding his demurrer, Wendel was on the road long before daybreak.

Vefela and Brenner were now publicly betrothed, and people gossiped a good deal about it, some even hinting that Brenner had given the manor-house farmer a drink of which he died, as he had refused his consent to the match. So over-cunning is foul-mouthed suspicion.

The first change to which Vefela was now forced to submit was a very sad one. Brenner sent a seamstress from the town to fit dresses for her. Vefela felt like a recruit who is no longer his own master, and is forced to wear any clothes brought to him, because the lot has picked him out; but she submitted without a word. Next Sunday, when she had to put on the new dresses, she stood weeping beside the seamstress, and took a sad farewell of every piece. The skirt was particularly hard to part with: her mother had given it to her when she was confirmed, and had told her to go in it to the altar when she married. It is a great defect in a city lady's dress that it cannot be put on or off without the assistance of a servant. Vefela shuddered as the seamstress fumbled about her. Her hair was braided and put up in a comb; and, when all was done, Vefela could not help laughing as she looked at herself in the window and made herself a reverential bow.

Brenner was delighted when she bashfully entered the room: he said she looked ten times as pretty as before. But when Vefela said that the city dresses amounted to nothing after all,--that one peasant's dress was worth more, and cost more too, than six such city flags,--Brenner looked cross, and said that that was "silly village-prattle." Vefela bit her lips, and her eyes were full of tears: she went out and wept.

She very seldom left the house, for she was ashamed to be "marked" so. She thought everybody must be looking at her. Only one other girl in the village wore city dresses. She had been brought up by old Ursula, and no one knew exactly where she came from.

Vefela had hard times in Melchior's house, for his wife was a very dragon, and always gave birth to still-born children,--so that people said they were poisoned in her womb. Melchior and Vefela often sat in the barn, pretending to amuse themselves by peeling turnips, but in fact eating them with much appetite. Vefela did her best to encourage her brother to yield and keep the peace. She knew what it was to live in a house divided against itself, and thought a quiet life cheaply bought at almost any sacrifice. Melchior was a good fellow, and agreed to every thing.

Vefela urged Brenner with increasing earnestness to hasten their marriage. Then he suddenly came out with a new project. He would go to America. He knew as much of doctoring as the official physician, but the laws would not allow him to practise here; so he would go to a free country. Vefela wrung her hands, fell on her knees, and besought him to give up the plan: they had money enough to live comfortably without doctoring. But Brenner was not to be moved, and scolded Vefela for a "stupid peasant-girl that didn't know there were people living 'tother side the big hill." Poor Vefela gave way at this: she lay with her face on the ground, and the dreadful thought swept through her mind that she was despised and would be wretched for life. Brenner must have guessed at her thoughts: he came, raised her up gently, kissed her, and spoke so well and so politely that Vefela forgave and forgot every thing and agreed to go to America with him at once. Where would she not have gone if he had led the way?

Brenner made all the preparations. Vefela's fortune was turned into money and exchanged for gold, to be of better use for travelling. Vefela kept it in the same press with her wardrobe.

The banns were to be spoken at the church; but Brenner's papers never arrived from Hohenlohe, his birthplace. At last he came one day when Vefela was busy at the wash-tub, and said, "Vefela, I'll tell you what: I'll go home and get my papers myself. A friend of mine is waiting at the door in the carriage; and so I shall have a ride for nothing as far as Tuebingen. While I'm about it, I'll get our passport countersigned by the ambassador, and then we can be off in the fall."

"The sooner the better," said Vefela.

"By-the-by," said Brenner, again, "I'm out of change: couldn't you let me have a little?"

"Here is the key," said Vefela: "help yourself. You know where it is,--at your left hand as you open the press, by the new linen which is tied with blue tape."

Brenner went up-stairs and returned after some time. Vefela dried her hand with her apron and gave it to him: his hand trembled. She wished to go with him a little way, but he begged her to stay, and ran quickly down the stairs. Vefela was hurt that he would not let her go with him to the door, supposing that he was ashamed of having his friend see her. What was all this to end in? Bitter tears fell into the wash-tub at the thought of it. Still, she went up into her attic and looked out of the window to follow the carriage with her eyes. What was her astonishment when she saw that the carriage, instead of taking the road to Tuebingen, started toward Herrenberg! It was on her lips to call to the travellers that they were on the wrong road; but she bethought herself that she must have misunderstood Brenner, or that he might have made a slip of the tongue.

A week, a fortnight, passed by, and nothing was seen or heard of Brenner. Vefela was often sad to think that her whole life was to be given to a man who did not esteem her: she was not proud, yet she could not help thinking how much every one in the village, even the squire himself, would have felt honored by her hand. But again the mere recollection of Brenner would make her happy as a queen, and she would beg his forgiveness in thought for all the unkind ideas she had had of him. She saw no fault in him now: when those we love are away we never see their faults, but only their virtues. Had Brenner but had a single virtue!

When Melchior wondered why Brenner remained so long away, she would answer in such a manner as to make him suppose she knew the reason and was not disturbed about it.

One day, when in low spirits, Vefela went into her room. For a long time she looked out of the window in the direction from which Brenner was to come. To dispel her sadness by a look at her wedding-dress, she opened the press. Oh pity! what did she behold! Every thing rifled and strewed about as if the Pandours had been there. Involuntarily her hand sought the money: it was gone! She shrieked aloud, and the whole truth flashed upon her. The wrong road--the trembling

hand--the fear of her going with him--the long absence! She flew to the window to fling herself out. A hand seized her and held her back. Melchior had heard her cry and hastened to her. Vefela fell upon her knees, wrung her hands, and told him the dreadful truth. Melchior raved and swore. He would find him out. He would bring him before every court in the empire. Then Vefela sank upon her face and told him her shame: her brother sank down by her side and wept with her. Long they remained closely pressed against each other, sobbing aloud, without speaking a word, and almost afraid to look each other in the face.

Whoever is acquainted with human nature, and with the German peasantry in particular, will fully appreciate the goodness exercised by Melchior in never reproaching his sister with her fall. On the contrary, he did his best to restore her love of life. Most people make themselves paid for their sympathy with misfortune by immediately giving full vent to their friendly mortification and their wise admonitions. This treatment may do for children and for people who know not what they have done or what has befallen them; but for those who feel the arrow rankling in their flesh it is sheer cruelty to harry them still further, instead of drawing it out with care and tenderness.

They held counsel together what was to be done, and agreed that the main thing was to keep quiet and adjust the whole affair secretly. With a resolution quite unlike him, Melchior made his wife give him money, and started in his little wagon in pursuit of Brenner. Vefela wished to go too, and seemed desperate at the thought of having nothing to do but stay at home and weep; but Melchior kindly persuaded her not to undertake the journey.

Days and weeks passed in silent wretchedness. Those who had known Vefela before would have been frightened at the change in her. But she saw nobody, and lived a life of hopelessness which was hardly life. She ate and drank, slept and waked, but seemed to know nothing of what she was doing, and looked straight before her, like a mad woman. She could not even weep any more. Her soul seemed to be buried alive in her body. She saw and heard the world around her, but she could not find and could not understand herself.

When Melchior returned without having seen a trace of the runaway, Vefela heard his story with heart-rending calmness. She seemed incapable of surprise. For days she hardly spoke a word. Only when she heard that Brenner was pursued with warrants giving an exact description of his appearance did she break out into loud wailings. A million tongues seemed to proclaim her sorrows and her shame throughout the land. And yet--so inexhaustible is love--she wept almost more for Brenner than for herself.

Yet her misery had not yet reached its climax. When Melchior's wife discovered her condition she became more wicked than ever. Vefela bore all this with patience; the double life within her seemed to give her strange new powers of mind and body, which bore her safely through her troubles. But when she heard her sister-in-law reproach Melchior and curse the day in which she had entered a family that had such a stain upon it, then the heart of the poor unfortunate bled deeply. She, the angel of peace, to be the disgrace of such a dragon! This was too much to bear.

It was the sad fate of poor Vefela that a phalanx of bad or weak men and women, clad in the dismal garb of gloomy passions, lined the path on which her journey through life had been cast. This prevented her from recognising those bright exceptions who do not press forward hastily, because their unostentatious dignity holds them back, and because they have a right to suppose that they will be detected without it.

As Vefela sat weeping on the kitchen-hearth one day, Wendel came in and said, "'Mustn't cry: don't you mind how I told you there were plenty of good farmers' boys in the world, though they don't know how to make bows and shambles?"

Vefela looked up with tearful eyes, astonished at the speech. But she said nothing, and after a while Wendel went on:--

"Yes, look at me: what I say is as true as if the parson said it in the pulpit." He took Vefela's hand and said, "To make it short, I know all about it: but you are better than a hundred others for all that; and, if you will say the word, we shall be man and wife in a fortnight; and your child shall be my child."

Vefela quickly drew away her hand and covered her eyes. Then, rising, she said, with a burning blush, "Do you know that I am as poor as a beggar? You didn't know that, did you?"

Wendel stood still a while, anger and pity contending for the mastery within him. He was ashamed of Vefela's words for her sake and for his own. At last he said, "Yes, I know it all. If you were rich yet, I would never have opened my mouth. My mother has a little lot, and I have saved a little money: we can both work and live honestly."

Vefela looked up to heaven with folded hands, and then said, "Forgive me, Wendel: I didn't mean to speak so wickedly. I am not so bad; but the whole world seems so wicked to me. Forgive me, Wendel."

"Well, do you say the word?" he inquired.

Vefela shook her head, and Wendel, stamping the ground, asked, "Why not?"

"I can't talk much," said Vefela, breathing hard; "but, forgive me, I can't. God will reward your good heart for this: but now please don't let us speak another word about it."

Wendel went out and gave Melchior warning against next Martinmas.

At last the worst came. The squire of the village had heard of her condition, and now gave full scope to the spite he had so long harbored. He sent the constable to tell her that she must leave the village, as otherwise her child, if born there, would have a right to claim a settlement and come upon the parish.

Vefela would not allow any resistance to be made to this act of cruelty. In a stormy autumn night she got into the little wagon, and Wendel drove her to Seedorf. On the road Wendel tried to comfort her as well as he could. He said he could never forgive himself for not having pitched Brenner down the Bildechingen steep, as he once intended, and mashed him to a jelly. Vefela seemed almost glad to find no chance to live at Seedorf. Wendel begged and implored her to go with him to his mother in Bohndorf. But she was deaf to all his prayers, sent him back next morning, and went on her way on foot to Tuebingen, as she said. Nero had gone with them too, and would not be separated from Vefela. Wendel had to tie him with a rope under the little wagon.

The wind drove the rain about, and the soil was so slippery that Vefela lost her footing at every step as she took the way to Rottenburg. She wore a city dress, and had a light-red kerchief on her neck. Under her arm was a little bundle. An old song, long forgotten, suddenly returned to her thoughts,--the song of the earl's daughter who was betrayed. Without opening her lips, she often repeated to herself,--

"O, weep ye for your land so wide,
Or weep ye for your fallen pride?
Or your bright cheeks that are so wan,
Or for your honor that is gone?
    Gone, gone!
Your honor that is gone."

She was hardly a hundred yards out of Seedorf before something rushed up to her. At first she started; but soon her

eyes brightened, for it was Nero. He had a piece of rope around his neck, and seemed so happy!

The storm was so severe that it seemed as if two stones were being struck together close by your ears, and as if intangible, rustling curtains were weaving themselves around and around as if to smother you. As she went slowly on her way, of a sudden the thought fell on her like a thunderbolt that Brenner was now upon the sea. Only once had she seen a picture of the storm in the gospel, but now she saw the terrible reality: she was in the midst of it herself. The dark, hilly billows tossed the ship, and there stood Brenner stretching out his arms and wailing. There! There! Vefela raised her arms, her lips parted, but the scream died in her mouth: she saw Brenner buried in the waves. Her arms sank to her side, she bowed her head, folded her hands, and prayed long for the soul of the lost one. Thus she stood for a long time, fully knowing that Brenner had died that instant. With a deep sigh she looked up again, took the bundle, which had fallen from her hand, and went on.

On the hill where the road turns and Rottenburg is displayed to the eye, stands a chapel. Vefela entered, and prayed long and fervently. On leaving the chapel again, the long plain before her had the appearance of a lake: the Neckar had overflown its banks. Vefela went outside of the town toward Hirschau. Here she met an old acquaintance,--Marem, her grandfather's Jew adviser. He had a bag strapped across his shoulder, and was leading a cow toward Hirschau. Who would have supposed that Marem's sympathy for Vefela drew tears from his eyes? Yet so it was. Take a village Jew and a peasant of the same degree of intelligence, and you will find the former more cunning, more on the alert for his profit, and apparently more cold; but in all purely human misfortune you will see a warmth and a delicacy of feeling which lift him far above his ordinary existence. His peculiar lot has deadened his social feelings, but has concentrated his heart all the more upon that which is purely human.

Marem tried his utmost to dissuade Vefela from pursuing her aimless journey. He offered to take her to his own house, and even to raise money for her. Vefela refused every thing. At Hirschau they both went into a tavern: Marem had a good soup boiled for Vefela; but after the first spoonful she got up again to continue her journey. Marem wished to keep the dog back; but the faithful beast refused to stay behind, and Vefela departed with a "God reward you."

An hour later, Marem, having sold his cow, went to Tuebingen also. Not far from Hirschau, Nero came running up to him with a red kerchief in his mouth. Marem grew pale with fear. Nero ran forward, and he followed: they came to a spot where the water had overrun the road; the dog sprang in, and swam on and on, on and on, until he was lost to sight.

* * * * *

The grandest house in all the village once belonged to Vefela's father. The father is dead, the mother is dead, and Vefela has disappeared without a trace.

NIP-CHEEKED TONEY.

On the ridge where the road forks, and leads to Muehringen on one side and to Ahldorf on the other, in what is called the "Cherry-copse," three lasses were sitting one Sunday afternoon under a blossoming cherry-tree. All around was quiet: not a plough creaked nor a wagon rattled. As far as the eye could see, Sunday rested everywhere. From the opposite hill, where the church of an old monastery is yet standing, a bell tolled its farewell to the worshippers who were returning to their homes. In the valley the yellow rape-seed blossomed among the green rye-fields; and on the right, where the Jewish graveyard crowns a gentle eminence, the four weeping willows which mark its corners drooped motionless over the graves of the grandmother, mother, and five children who were all burned in one house together. Farther down, amid the blooming trees, was a wooden crucifix, painted white and red. Every thing else breathed still life. The "beech-wood," the only remnant of leaf-forest in the whole neighborhood, was dressed in its brightest green, and the gladed pine-grove swept along the road in unruffled calmness. Not a breath stirred. High up in the air the sky-lark trilled his gladness, and the quail sang deep in the furrows. The fields seemed to wear their green robes only for their own delight; for nowhere was man visible to indicate, with his shovel or his hoe, that he claimed the allegiance of the earth. Here and there a farmer came along the footpath; sometimes two or three were seen viewing the progress of their crops. Dressed in their Sunday gear, they seemed to regard with satisfaction the holiday attire of nature.

The three girls sat motionless, with their hands in their aprons, singing. Babbett sang the first voice, and Toney (Antonia) and Brigetta accompanied. The long-drawn sounds floated solemnly and a little sadly over the mead: as often as

they sang, a thistlefinch, perched on a twig of the cherry-tree, piped with redoubled vigor; and as often as they paused at the end of a strain, or chatted in a low voice, the finch was suddenly silent. They sang:--

"Sweet sweetheart, I beg and I beg of you,
Just stay a year longer with me;
And all that you lack, and all that you spend,
My guilders shall keep you free.
"And though your guilders should keep me free,
Yet I cannot do your will;
Far, far o'er the hills and away I must go,
Sweet sweetheart, then think of me still.
"Far over the hills and away when I came,
Sweet sweetheart, she open'd the door;
She laugh'd not, she spoke not, she welcomed me not:
It seem'd that she knew me no more.
"There's never an apple so white and so red
But the kernels are black at its core;
There's never a maid in all Wurtemberg
But plays false when you watch her no more."

Pop! went the report of a fowling-piece. The girls started: the finch flew away from the cherry-tree. Looking round, they saw the gamekeeper of Muehringen run into a field of rape-seed, with his dog before him. He picked up a heron, pulled out one of its feathers and fixed it in his hat, thrust the bird into his pouch, and hung his gun upon his shoulder again: he was a fine-looking fellow as he strode through the green field.

Tony said, "He might have let the bird alone on Sunday."

"Yes," said Babbett; "the gamekeepers are no good Christians anyhow: they can do nothing but get poor folks into the workhouse for trespassing, and kill poor innocent beasts and birds. That green devil's imp there sent poor Blase's Kitty to prison for four weeks just the other day. I wouldn't marry a gamekeeper if he were to promise me I don't know what."

"Old Ursula once told me," said Bridget, the youngest of the three, "that a gamekeeper is bound to kill a living thing every day of his life."

"That he can do easy enough," laughed Babbett, catching a gnat which had settled on her arm.

By this time the gamekeeper came quite near them. As if by a previous arrangement, they all began to sing again: they wished to pretend that they did not see the gamekeeper, but in their constraint they could not raise their voices, and only hummed the last verse of the song:--

"If she plays me false I will play her fair:
Three feathers upon my hat I wear;
And, as she will not have me stay,
I'll travel forth upon my way."

"Girls, how are you?" said the gamekeeper, standing still: "why don't you sing louder?"

The girls began to giggle, and held their aprons to their mouths. Babbett found her tongue first, and said, "Thank you, mister, we are only singing for ourselves, and so we hear it if we sing ever so low: we don't sing for other people."

"Whisht!" said the gamekeeper: "the little tongue cuts like a sickle."

"Sickle or straight, it's as broad as it's long; whoever don't like it may talk to suit himself if he can," replied Babbett. Tony jogged her, saying, half aloud, "You're as rough as a hedgehog, you Babbett."

"Oh, I can stand a joke as well as the next one," said the gamekeeper, making the best of a bad job.

For all that, the girls were a good deal embarrassed, and did just the worst thing to put an end to it: they rose and took each others' arms to go home.

"May I go with you, ladies?" said the gamekeeper again.

"It's a high road and a wide road," said Babbett.

The gamekeeper thought of getting away, but reflected that it would look ridiculous to let these girls bluff him off. He felt that he ought to pay Babbett in her own coin, but he could not: Tony, by whose side he walked, had "smitten" him so hard that he forgot all the jokes he ever knew, although he was not a bashful man by any means. So he left the saucy girl in the enjoyment of her fun and walked on in silence.

Just to mend matters a little, Tony asked, "Where are you going on Sunday?"

"To Horb," said the gamekeeper; "and if the ladies would go with me I wouldn't mind standing treat for a pint or two of the best."

"We're going home," said Tony, blushing up to the eyes.

"We'd rather drink Adam's ale," said Babbett: "we get that for nothing too."

At the first house of the village, Babbett again said, pointing to a footpath, "Mr. Gamekeeper, there's a short cut for you goes round behind the village: that's the nearest way to Horb."

The gamekeeper's patience was running out, and he had a wicked jibe on his lips; but, checking, himself, he only said, "I like to look an honest village and honest people in the face." He could not refrain from turning his back on Babbett as he spoke.

The gamekeeper grew uncivil because he could not crack a joke,--a thing that happens frequently.

As they were entering the village, the gamekeeper asked Tony what her name was. Before she could answer, Babbett interposed, "Like her father's."

And when the gamekeeper retorted upon Babbett, "Why, you are mighty sharp to-day: how old are you?" he received the common answer, "As old as my little finger."

Tony said, half aloud, "My name's Tony. What makes you ask?"

"Because I want to know."

'When they had reached the top of the hill, at "Sour-Water Bat's" house, the three girls stood still and laid their heads together. Suddenly, like frightened pigeons, they ran in different directions, and left the gamekeeper all alone on the road. He whistled to his dog, who had started in pursuit, put his left arm in his gun-strap, and went on his way.

At the stone-quarry the girls met again and stood still.

"You are too rough, you are," said Tony to Babbett.

"Yes, you are so," Bridget chimed in.

"He didn't hurt you," continued Tony, "and you went at him like a bull-dog."

"I didn't hurt him either," answered Babbett; "I only fooled him. Why didn't the jackanapes answer me? And, another thing, I don't like the green-coat, anyhow. What does he mean by running through the whole village with us and making people think we want something of him? And what will Sepper[6] and Caspar think of it? I'm not such a good-natured little puss as you are; I don't take things from counts or barons, nor barons' gamekeepers either."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Sepper and Caspar, who had looked for their sweethearts at the cherry-bush in vain. Babbett now told the whole story so glibly that no one else could get a word in edgewise. As a good many smart things occurred to her while she was speaking, she put them into her own mouth, without being unnecessarily precise. People have a way of embellishing the recital of their own doings and sayings in this manner: it requires so much less readiness and courage to invent these things when the person at whom they are levelled is gone than when he is by.

Sepper expressed his hearty approval of Babbett's proceedings, and said, "These gentry-folk must be stumped short the minute you begin with them."

The gamekeeper certainly did not belong to the "gentry-folk;" but it was convenient to class him so, for the purpose of scolding the more freely about him.

Sepper gave an arm to Tony, his sweetheart, while Bridget hung herself upon the other. Caspar and Barbara walked beside them; and so they passed out through the hollow to take a walk.

Sepper and Tony were a splendid pair, both tall and slender, and both doubly handsome when seen together: among a thousand you would have picked them out and said, "These two belong together." Sepper wore a style of dress half-way between that of a peasant and a soldier: the short flapping jacket set off in fine contrast the display of well-rounded limbs cased in the close-fitting military breeches. He looked like an officer in undress, so fine was the blending of ease and precision in all his movements.

At the top of the hill they saw the gamekeeper in conversation with the woodranger of Nordstetten. Sepper even observed that he was pointing toward them, and cleared his throat as if to prepare a sharp answer for the "gentleman," who was still two hundred yards away. Then he put his arms around Tony's neck and gave her a hearty smack, as a sort of broad hint for him who ran to read. This done, he walked on, whistling a lively tune, with something of a swagger.

His manner would have been still more emphatic if he had heard what the gamekeeper was saying to the woodranger, which was, "See! there she comes now. It is a girl as white as wax,--for all the world like the mother of God in the church: I never saw any thing like it in all my life."

"Yes, I thought you meant her," replied the woodranger "It's the Poodlehead's daughter: they call him Poodlehead because he has white curly hair like a lamb, just as the girl has, too. In the village they call her the maiden-blush, because she has such pretty red cheeks. The old parson knew what's good, and wanted her for a cook; but it was no go. Poodlehead wiped his chops for him with a 'No, thank ye.' Tony will get her ten acres some day in this commune, and they say there's more besides."

The gamekeeper shook hands and took his leave before the party had quite reached him.

Sitting on an unploughed strip of land, between two fields,--such as take the place of fences in that hedgeless country,--our friends spent the afternoon in singing and kissing. Bridget had the worst of the game, for her sweetheart was with the soldiers at Heilbronn: who knows what he was about while his girl sat aside from the others with blushing face, playing with a flower and thinking of him? At dusk she was wanted to "fix up" the others: her own collar was in perfect trim, while the collars and the hair of her friends were all "mussed and fussed," as she said, scolding good-naturedly.

All the girls and boys now met on the highroad, and the sexes walked separately. In the west, or, as they say there, "across the Rhine," the sun went down blood-red and gave promise of a pleasant day. The boys walked into the village in files which spread nearly across the street, singing or whistling tunes set in four parts. About thirty yards behind, the girls walked arm in arm. They sang incessantly. Scarcely was one song at an end before one girl or the other struck up a new one, and the others fell in without consultation or debate.

Tony was on the left flank, and on her right arm hung Blatschle's Mary Ann, called the Flambeau Mary Ann,--a poor unfortunate girl the whole left side of whose face, from the forehead to the chin, was blue, just as if there were clotted blood beneath the skin. At the great fire which happened eighteen years before, and where seven men lost their lives, Mary Ann's mother had hurried up, and on seeing the flames had passed her hand over her face in great fear and fright. When her child was born, one-half of its face was blue. Tony always had a certain horror of Mary Ann; but she did not like to hurt her feelings by going away. So she went on, trembling inwardly, but singing the louder to regain the mastery over herself.

Near the manor-house farmer's house the gamekeeper came up with the party on his return from Horb. On seeing Tony he blushed up to the eyes, and lifted his gun off his shoulder a little, sinking it again immediately, and, turning toward Tony, he said, "Good-evening, girls."

A few returned the salutation, and he said, in a low voice, to Tony, "May I walk with you now?"

"No, no! that will never do," said Tony, no louder than he had spoken: "go and walk with the boys, just to oblige me."

The gamekeeper was delighted, and, with a polite bow, he walked on.

At the Eagle there was, a general halt. The curfew sounded, and the boys, with their heads uncovered, mumbled a paternoster: the girls did the same; and then all crossed themselves.

But as soon as this was done the jokes and laughter were resumed. The gamekeeper said, "Good-night, all," and went on his way. The girls teased Tony about him, and said he had whispered to her. Sepper, who heard this, suddenly grew stark and stiff: the pipe which he was lifting to his mouth remained in the convulsive grasp of his one hand, while his other fist clenched, and his eyes, which stared upon Tony, shot forth fierce and angry thoughts. Then again he swung proudly on his knees, and only once cast his head backward in something of disdain.

When all separated, Sepper went with Tony to her father's house. He was silent a while, and then said,--

"What are you carrying on with the gamekeeper?"

"Nothing."

"What were you saying to him?"

"Just what people are apt to talk."

"But I don't want you ever to speak a word to him."

"And I'm not going to ask you for permission to speak to anybody."

"You're a proud, deceitful thing."

"If you think so I can't help it."

They walked on in silence. At Tony's door she said "goodnight;" but Sepper allowed her to go in without an answer. He stood before the door all the evening, whistling and singing: he thought that Tony must certainly come to him; but she did not come, and he went away in high dudgeon.

That whole week Sepper never spoke a word to Tony, and even went out of his way to avoid meeting her.

On Saturday afternoon he was out in the "Warm Dell" with his team to get clover for Sunday. On his way home he saw Babbett coming up the "Cowslip Dell" with a heavy bundle of clover on her head. He stopped, and made her put her clover and herself on his wagon. Here Babbett told him her mind about his foolish jealousy so very plainly that he went to the well near the town-hall and waited until Tony came to fetch water. He hastened to lift the bucket for her and adjust it on her head, and then walked by her side, saying, "How have you been all the week? I have such lots of work."

"You give yourself lots of trouble, which you might let alone. You are a wild, wilful fellow. Do you see now that you were in the wrong?"

"You must never speak to that gamekeeper again."

"I'll speak to him whenever I please," said Tony: "I am not a child. I understand my own business."

"But you needn't speak to him if you don't choose to."

"No, I needn't; but I am not going to be led about by a halter that way."

Peace was restored, and no disturbance occurred for a long time, for the gamekeeper did not show himself at Nordstetten again.

Tony often sat in the cherry-copse of a Sunday afternoon, with her playmates, and sometimes with Sepper, laughing and singing. The wild cherries--the only ones which ripen in the climate of the Black Forest--had long disappeared; the rape-seed was brought home; the rye and barley were cut, and the peaceful life of our friends had passed through but little change: Sepper's and Tony's love for each other had, if any thing, increased in intensity. That fall Sepper had to go through the last course of drill with the military, and then he would get his discharge, and then--the wedding.

Since that Sunday in the spring Tony had never cast eyes on the gamekeeper. But when she and Sepper were cutting oats in the Molda[7] the gamekeeper came by and said, "Does't cut well?" Tony started, and plied her sickle busily without answering. Sepper said, "Thank you," knelt upon a sheaf and twisted down the tie with all his might,--as if he were wringing the gamekeeper's neck. The gamekeeper passed on.

It happened that Babbett's and Caspar's wedding came off just three days before that on which Sepper was obliged to go to the military. So he made up his mind to enjoy himself once for all, and kept his word. In almost every house where Caspar and his friend left the invitations, somebody said, "Well, Sepper, your turn will come next." And he smiled affirmatively.

At the wedding Sepper was as happy as a horse in clover. He enjoyed the foretaste of his coming bliss. When the dance began he climbed up to the musicians and bespoke them for his wedding, with two additional trumpeters: he belonged to the Guard, and therefore thought himself entitled to more trumpets than others.

But in the evening a new apparition crossed his path and changed the color of his thoughts. The gamekeeper came to the dance, and the first one he asked to dance with him was Tony.

"Engaged," answered Sepper for Tony.

"The lassie can speak for herself, I guess," replied the gamekeeper.

"You and I will dance the next hop-waltz together," said Tony, taking Sepper's hand. But she turned around toward the gamekeeper once more before the hop-waltz began. The next waltz Tony danced with the gamekeeper, while Sepper sat down at the table and made up his mind not to stir another foot that evening, and to forbid Tony to dance any more. But Babbett came and asked him to dance. This was the bride's privilege, and Sepper could not refuse. Of course the dance was a cover for a round lecture. "I don't know what to make of you at all," said she: "that gamekeeper seems to have driven every bit of sense out of your head. It'll be your fault and nobody else's if Tony should ever come to like him. She wouldn't have had a thought of him this many a day; but, if you go on teasing her about him this way, what can she do but think of him? And with always thinking about him, and wondering whether he likes her or not, she might get to like him at last, after all, for he does dance a little better than you, that's a fact: you couldn't reverse waltz the way he does, could you?"

Sepper laughed; but in his heart he could not deny that the shrewd little rogue was right, and when he sat at the table with his sweetheart he clinked his glass against the gamekeeper's and beckoned to Tony to do the same. The gamekeeper drank, bowed politely to Tony, and nodded slightly to Sepper. The latter had made up his mind, however, not to be sulky

again, and prided himself a little on the good tact of his behavior to the gamekeeper, and then sat, happy as a king, with his arm round Tony's waist. He was called away to the master-joke of the wedding.

According to ancient custom, all the young men had conspired to steal the bride. They formed a ring around her, and Caspar had to bargain for her release amid a plentiful volley of small jokes and lively sallies. Six bottles of wine were at last accepted as a ransom, and the reunited pair marched off arm in arm. The musicians came down from their platform to the yard under their windows, and played the customary march; and many a hurrah followed from the crowd.

Tony stood at the window, in a dreamy mood, long after Babbett was gone and the others had returned to the dance.

It was very late at night, or, rather, early in the morning, when Sepper saw Tony home; yet it was long before they parted. Tony pressed her cheek against his with wild emotion, and held him with all the force of her arms. He too was greatly excited; yet he could not refrain from talking about the gamekeeper. "Let the gamekeeper alone," said Tony: "there's nothing in the world but you."

Sepper lifted her high up in the air; then he embraced her again, and, pressing his lip to her cheek, he whispered, "Do you see? I should just like to bite you."

"Bite," said Tony.

Well done! Sepper had bitten in good earnest. The blood flowed freely and ran down her cheeks into her neck and breast. Her hand rushed to her cheek, and there she felt the open scars of the teeth. She thrust Sepper away with such force that he fell on his back, and shrieked and cried aloud, so that the whole house was alarmed. Sepper got up and tried to comfort her; but with loud wailing she pushed him away again. Hearing a noise in the house, he slipped away quietly. He thought the matter was not so bad, after all, and that if he was out of the way she would hit upon some excuse to quiet them.

Her father and mother came up with lights, and were frightened almost to death at the sight of their child dripping in blood. Old Ursula, who knew so many remedies, was sent for immediately. She had no sooner cast eyes on the wound than she declared, "This may end in a cancer, or else the person who did it must clean the wound with his tongue." But Tony protested vehemently that she would rather die than ever let Sepper touch her again.

Various remedies were applied, and Tony groaned as if she were at the point of death.

The story spread through the village like wildfire; and it was even said that Sepper had taken a piece of flesh out of Tony's cheek. Everybody came to comfort her and to find out all about it. Sepper came too; but Tony screamed like a maniac, and declared he must leave the house at once and never come back. All his prayers and tears availed nothing: Tony seemed to be really beside herself, and Sepper had to go. He went to Babbett and begged her to say a good word for him. Babbett was busy arranging the wedding-gifts: kitchen-furniture, and all sorts of utensils, lay scattered about. She scolded Sepper roundly, but left her work at once and hastened to Tony. The latter fell upon her playmate's neck and cried, "I am spoiled for all the days of my life!" After a great deal of coaxing, she consented to rise from her bed; but, when she stood before the looking-glass and saw the horrible devastation, she exclaimed, "Jesus! Maria! Joseph! why, I am just like Flambeau Mary Ann! Oh God! I'm sure I must have sinned against her: I am punished hard enough!"

On no condition would she hear of seeing Sepper again; so the poor fellow had to trudge off to Stuttgard in a day or two, with a little white linen knapsack on his back, and a heavy, heavy load on his heart.

It was two weeks before Tony left the house, and then she kept her face well tied up. She walked out with a hoe on her shoulder to dig potatoes; and, strange to say, almost the first person she met was the gamekeeper.

"How are you, pretty Tony?" he asked, almost tenderly.

She could have sunk into the earth with shame, it seemed so strange for him to call her by name, and say "pretty" besides; and she felt more keenly than ever how much she was disfigured. As she sighed and said nothing, the gamekeeper went on:--"I have heard of what has happened: won't you let me see it?"

She bashfully pushed the kerchief aside, and the gamekeeper involuntarily raised his hands to his own face and said, "It is horrid, it is inhuman, to act so to a sweet, good girl like you! There's a fair specimen of your farmers' brutality. Don't be offended: I certainly didn't mean you by it: but these people are often worse than wild beasts. But don't be grieved about it."

Of all this Tony only heard the sympathy of the gamekeeper, and said, "I'm dreadfully spoiled and mangled, a'n't I?"

"I shouldn't mind it," said the gamekeeper: "if you had but one cheek you would please me better than all the girls between Nordstetten and Paris."

"It isn't right to tease one so," said Tony, smiling sadly.

"I am not teasing you," said the gamekeeper; and, taking her hand, he continued, "Oh, if you would say the word, how glad I should be to marry you!"

"That is talking sinfully," said Tony.

"I don't see any sin in our getting married," returned the gamekeeper.

"If you want to be good friends with me, don't say another word about it," said Tony, taking her way across the field.

The gamekeeper was content, for the present, to be "good friends," and made the most of it; for he came to Nordstetten almost regularly twice or three times a week. He managed to start some business-negotiations with the Poodlehead, Tony's father, about cordwood; and this always gave him an opportunity of talking with Tony. He said nothing more about marrying, but anybody but a fool could see that he alluded to it all the time. He had much trouble with Babbett, whose influence upon Tony was of the greatest consequence. At first he tried good humor and fun, but Babbett never would understand his jokes: she did nothing but talk about Sepper as long as the gamekeeper was within hearing.

A lucky occurrence gave the latter a great advantage. Tony had a rich cousin in Muehringen, who was to be married shortly: the dance was to last three days; and Tony was invited. The gamekeeper's sister soon made friends with her, and the two girls rambled over the fields together and kept near each other at the dance. Tony now appeared for the first time with an uncovered face; and it might almost be said that the bite had improved her looks. Some wild and superstitious people purposely mangle what is perfectly beautiful, so that the "evil look" may have no power over it, and by way of appeasing the devil, who can suffer nothing perfect to exist. Whether the "beauty-spots" cultivated by the damsels of our day were originally derived from this superstition I cannot tell. At all events, the bite on Tony's cheek was just enough to give the spirit of envy a little "but" to hang on the end of an acknowledgment of her comeliness.

The gamekeeper always kept near Tony while the dance was going on; and in the evening he treated her to something that no peasant-girl of all Nordstetten had ever enjoyed. The old baron, a stout and well-fed personage, though very parsimonious, and unmerciful in hunting down every poor farmer who took an armful of dry sticks out of the wood, was

very ambitious for the prosperity of a little private theatre which he maintained at the manor-house, and to which he used to invite the grand folks of the neighborhood. The gamekeeper was permitted to bring Tony to see the theatricals.

She trembled till her teeth chattered as she walked up the hill on which the manor-house, or rather castle, stands, with its drawbridge, moat, and parapet, in the style of the Middle Ages. Without a breath, and on tip-toe, she came into the hall, where the ladies and gentlemen were already assembled. A place was assigned her not far back of the orchestra. The lord-lieutenant's lady levelled her eyeglass at her for a long time; Tony cast down her eyes, almost afraid to breathe. The scar on her cheek tingled as if the eyes of the lady had opened the wound afresh. The rise of the curtain came to her relief, and now she listened with breathless attention. She shed tears over the fate of the poor boy who died in prison, because he was accused of stealing, just to save the credit of his master, to whom he owed a debt of gratitude; and if she had been the master's daughter she certainly would not have put off her disclosure until it came too late. When the curtain fell, a deep sigh escaped her.

On the way home the gamekeeper put his arm around Tony's waist, and she clung closely to him. She was quite overcome with mingled emotions. It seemed as if all she felt, and the feigned events she had seen, were of the gamekeeper's doing, and as if she owed it all to him; and, again, she wished to go back to the old man and his sweet daughter, who were now so happy together. The gamekeeper, too, was happy, for he obtained Tony's promise to walk with him after church on Sunday afternoon.

Thus the gamekeeper's manœuvres were far more successful than those in which poor Sepper was engaged on horseback on the plains of Ludwigsburg; and, before the latter got his honorable discharge from the military, Tony had given him another discharge which he never desired. When he came home, his first visit was to the house of Tony's father. She was spinning in the room, but gave him no look of recognition, only directing a fixed, cold stare at him from time to time. He took his discharge out of his pocket, brushed every mote of dust from the table, and spread the document before their eyes. Tony would not walk to the table to look at it. He wrapped it up in a piece of paper and went, carrying it carefully in his hand, to Babbett's. Here he heard the whole story, and also that the two playmates had quarrelled about the gamekeeper, and were not on speaking terms. He mashed the discharge into a ball with both hands and went away.

At dark Sepper was sitting under the cherry-tree where we first made Tony's acquaintance. It was leafless. The wind whistled over the stubble, and the pine-wood sighed and murmured like a mighty current. The night-bell sounded from the convent, and a belated raven croaked as he flew toward the wood. Sepper saw and heard nothing. His elbows rested on his knees, and his hands covered his eyes. Thus he remained a long time. The bark of a dog and the sound of footsteps approaching aroused him, and he sprang to his feet. The gamekeeper was coming out of the village. Sepper saw the flash of his gun-barrel: he also saw a white apron, and concluded, rightly, that Tony was accompanying the gamekeeper. They stood still a while, and Tony returned toward the village.

When the gamekeeper was near him, Sepper said, in a tone of defiance, "Good-evening."

"How are you?" returned the gamekeeper.

"I've got a crow to pick with you," said the former again.

"Oh, Sepper," said the gamekeeper, "since when have you got back?"

"Too soon for you, you----: we won't be long about it. There! we'll draw straws for which of us must give up Tony, and if I lose I must have the gun."

"I won't draw any straws."

"Then I'll draw your soul out of your body, you rascally green-coat!" roared Sepper, seizing the rifle with one hand and the gamekeeper's throat with the other.

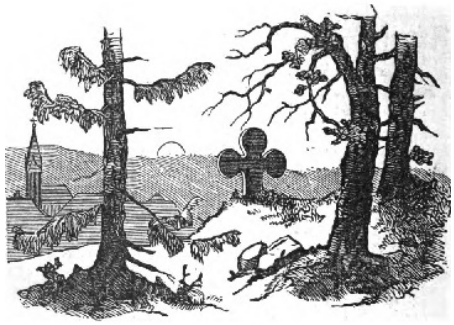
"Seize him, Bruin," cried the gamekeeper, with a smothered voice. A kick from Sepper disabled the hound, but released the gamekeeper a little. They now wrestled furiously for the gun, and held each other by the throat, when suddenly the charge went off, and the gamekeeper fell backward into the ditch. He groaned but slightly, and Sepper bent over him to hear whether he was still breathing. Tony came running up the road: she had heard the report, and was filled with forebodings of evil.

"There, there!" cried Sepper; "there lies your gamekeeper: now marry him!"

Tony stood like a statue, without speech or motion. At last she said, "Sepper, Sepper, you have made yourself and me unhappy."

"What am I to you? I ask nothing more of anybody," cried Sepper, and fled toward the highlands. He was never heard of again.

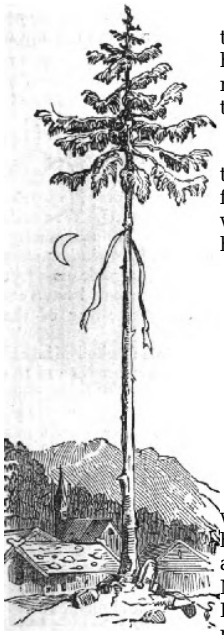
On the way to Muehringen, in the cherry-copse, is a stone cross, to mark the spot where the gamekeeper of Muehringen was slain.



Tony lived through many years of solitary grief.

GOOD GOVERNMENT.

1.



On May morning a magnificent tree was found before the house of Michael the wagoner. It was a tall fir; the branches had been cut off, and only the crown was left. It towered far over all the houses, and, if the church were not on a hill, it would have looked down on the steeple. There was not another May-pole in all the village; and all the girls envied Eva, the wagoner's oldest daughter, the distinction of having this one set for her.

The children came up the village, a green hut moving along in their midst. A conical roof of twisted withes, covered with leaves, was put on a boy's head, and in this curious disguise he went from house to house, stopping at every door. Two boys walked beside him, carrying a basket filled with eggs and chaff, followed by a crowd with green boughs in their hands. They sang at every house,--

"Bim, bam, bum!
The May-man he has come;
Give us all the eggs you've got.
Or the marten will come to your cot;
Give us all the eggs we will,
Or we'll strew our chaff on your sill.
Bim, bam, bum," &c.

Where they received no eggs they fulfilled their threat, and cast a handful of chaff on the sill, with cheers and laughter. This happened but very rarely, however, though they left not a single house unvisited except the manor-house farmer's. But the "May-man" failed on this occasion to attract the general interest, for all the world had flocked to Michael the wagoner's house to see the May-pole. It could not have been brought there without the aid of at least six men and two horses. How it could have been done so "unbeknown" was the wonder of all, for setting May-poles was rigorously forbidden and punished with three months' confinement in the Ludwigsburg penitentiary. The fear of this punishment had deterred all the boys from putting this monster nosegay before their sweethearts' windows,--all but Wendel's Mat, who went to see Eva. Who had helped him was not to be discovered: some supposed that they were boys from Dettensee, which is only a mile off and belongs to the dominions of his high mightiness the Duke of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

Many of the farmers, on their way to the field with their ploughs and harrows, stopped to look at the May-pole. Others, with hoes on their shoulders, did the same. Wendel's Mat was there also, and he chuckled in his sleeve continually, tipping the wink to Eva, who sat gayly at the window with her eyes shut. Those closed eyes were very significant. At every arch repetition of the question, "Who could have set the May-pole!" she answered with a roguish shrug of the shoulders.

Just as the May-man and his followers had reached Michael the wagoner's house and began their song, the beadle and the ranger made their appearance, and a solemn "Hush your noise, you----!" from the former, stopped the proceedings. Amid the sudden silence the officer of the law walked up to Mat, took him by the arm, and said, "Come along to the squire."

Mat shook off the broad hand of the functionary, and asked, "What for?"

"You'll hear in good time. Come along, now, or you'll be sorry for it."

Mat looked about him as if he did not exactly know what to do, or as if he was waiting for assistance from some quarter. The May-cabin marched straight up to the beadle and struck his face. The boy probably took it for granted that, as May-man, his person was sacred and secure; but the beadle knew no sacred personage except himself, and pulled the boy's hut to pieces at a blow. Christian, Mat's younger brother, sprang out of it; and there was an end of the Maying.

Meantime Eva had come out of the house and took Mat by the arm, as if to save him. But he shook her off almost as roughly as he had done the beadle; while the latter said to Eva, "You may as well wait till I come for you."

"Come on," said Mat, casting a look of much meaning on Eva; but she, poor thing, saw nothing now, for the tears were in her eyes. Holding her apron to her face, she went back quickly to the house.

The farmers went to their work, and Mat followed the officers to the squire's, the children bringing up the rear. When nearly out of hearing, some of the boldest cried, "Soges! Soges!" This was the beadle's nickname, and always made him furious. He had administered his office while the Black Forest yet formed a part of the possessions of the house of Austria. His devotion to his august master was such that he thought it necessary even to affect the dialect of Vienna; and, instead of pronouncing the German for "I say it," "I sag's" or "I han's g'sa't,"--as a plain Black Forester would have done,--he said, "I sog'es." Soges thereby became his title.

The mysterious brown door of the squire's house removed Mat, Soges, and the ranger from the sight of the multitude. The squire welcomed the prisoner with a round rating for the crime of which he stood accused. Mat remained calm, only beating with one foot the time of a tune he sang in imagination. At last he said, "'You 'most done, squire? All that's nothing to me, for I haven't set any May-pole: go on talking, though, for I've plenty of time to listen."

The squire waxed very wroth, and would have assaulted Mat bodily had not Soges whispered some more sagacious counsels in his ear. He sank his clenched fist, and ordered Soges to take the criminal to the lock-up for twenty-four hours for a flagrant denial.

"I belong to the village; I am to be found at any time, and I'm not likely to run away about such a trumpery as this: you can't lock me up," said Mat, rightly.

"Can't?" cried the squire, reddening with anger: "we'll see if we can't, you----"

"Save your blackguarding," said Mat: "I'm going; but it's an outrage to treat the son of a citizen this way. If my cousin Buchmaier was at home it couldn't be done."

On the way to the lock-up they met Eva; but Mat did not even make an attempt to speak to her. Eva could not understand how this happened. She followed Mat with her eyes until he was no longer in sight, and then, bent with shame and trouble, she entered the squire's dwelling. His wife was Eva's godmother, and Eva would not go until Mat had been released. But her intercession was of no use this time: the president-judge of the district was shortly expected on his tour of visitation, and the squire wished to conciliate him by a specimen of unrelenting severity.

In conjunction with his faithful prime minister Soges, a report was prepared and Mat transported to Horb early next morning. It was well that Eva's house lay at the other end of the village, so that she could not see the wretched plight to which a night's imprisonment had reduced the fine, active fellow who generally appeared so neatly clad. In his anger he tore a bough from every hedge he passed, gnawed it between his teeth, and threw it away again. In the fir-wood he broke a twig and kept it in his mouth. He never spoke a word: the fir-sprig seemed to be the symbol of his silence in regard to the May-pole,--a charm with which he intended to tie his tongue. Arrived at the court-house door, he hastily took it out of his mouth and unconsciously thrust it in his pocket.

No one who has not been in the hands of a German court of justice can form any idea of the misery attending such a perfect loss of the power of self-control: it is as if one's mind had been forcibly deprived of its body. Pushed from hand to hand, the feet move with apparent freedom of will, and yet do only another's bidding. Mat felt all this keenly; for he had never been in trouble like this. He felt as if he was a great criminal, and had killed somebody at the very least: his knees seemed to sink under him as he was taken up the long flights of steps which lead to the top of the hill. He was locked up in the old tower which stands so uncomfortably on the hill, like a great stone finger pointing upward as if to say, "Beware!"

Every minute appeared to last an age. As long as he could remember, he had never been left alone for an hour without work: what could he do now? For a while he peered through the doubly-barred and grated window in the wall, which was six feet thick, but saw only a patch of sky. Lying on the bench, he played with the fir-sprig which he found in his pocket,--the only keepsake he had of the green world without. Sticking it into a crack of the floor, he amused himself with supposing it to be the great May-pole before Eva's window,--which he seemed not to have seen for a hundred years. Sighing, he started up, looked around wildly, whistled, and began to count the needles of the fir-sprig. In the midst of this occupation he stopped and regarded it more closely: he had never before seen the beauty of one of Nature's fabrics. At the stem the needles were dark-green and hard; but they grew gradually lighter and softer, and at the ends they were like the plumage of an unfledged bird. At the tip, the germ, with its neatly-folded scales, gave promise of a fir-nut. A smell sweeter than that of lavender or of rosemary oozed out of its pores. Mat passed it gently over his face and closed eyes, until he fell asleep. He dreamed of being spellbound to a swaying fir-tree, without being able to stir: he heard Eva's voice begging the spirit who held him in chains for leave to come up to him and set him free. He awoke, and really heard Eva's voice and that of his brother Christian. They had brought him his dinner, and begged the jailer to let them speak to Mat in his presence; but in vain.

It was late in the day when Mat was brought up for a hearing. The president-judge received him roughly, and scolded him in high German, just as the squire had done in the dialect of the country. Wherever judicial transactions are withheld from the public eye, as they have been in Germany for three or four centuries, any man accused of an offence will always be at the mercy of the officiating functionary. Though it will not do to torture or to beat him, there are means of ill treatment which the law cannot reach.

The judge walked up and down the room with rattling spurs, and twirled a bit of paper nervously between his fingers, as he put his questions.

"Where did you steal the tree?"

"I don't know any thing about it, your honor."

"You lie, you beggarly rascal!" cried the judge, stepping up to Mat and seizing him by the lapel of his coat.

Mat started backward, and clenched his fist involuntarily.

"I'm not a rascal," said he, at last, "and you must write what you have said in the minutes: I'd like to see what sort of a rascal I am. My cousin Buchmaier will come home after a while."

The judge turned away, biting his lips. If Mat's case had been a better one, the judge might have had reason to rue his words; but he wisely abstained from inserting what he had said in the minutes. He rang the bell, and sent for Soges.

"What proof have you that it was this fellow that put up the May-pole?"

"Every child in the village, the tiles on the roofs, know that Mat goes to see Eva: no offence, your honor, but I should think it would be the quickest way to send for Eva, and then he won't deny it: he can't qualify that it isn't so."

Mat opened his eyes wide, and his lips quivered; but he said nothing. The judge hesitated a long time, for he perfectly understood the impropriety of such a mode of proof; but the desire to set an example prevailed.

The hearing ended by drawing up the minutes, and requiring Mat, as well as Soges and the customary two "assessors," or, as they are vulgarly called, "by-sleepers," to sign them. Mat had not the courage to repeat his demand about the abusive words of the judge, but suffered himself to be led back quietly to prison.

When it grew dusk, Eva might have been seen sitting on the stile at the end of the village and looking over toward the tower, thinking that Mat must surely come before long. She sat behind a hedge, to avoid being seen and questioned by the passers-by. There she saw Soges coming up the hillside. As she walked toward the road, Soges beckoned to her; and, hoping to hear news from Mat, she ran to him in all haste.

"Not too fast, Eva," cried Soges; "I only wished to tell you that you must come to court to-morrow: you've saved me a walk."

Eva turned ashy pale, and looked almost beside herself; then she ran down the hill, and did not stop till she had come to the Neckar. She looked around in amazement, for it had seemed to her that she was to be locked up at once with no hope of escape but by running away. She went home, weeping silently.

Eva hardly closed her eyes all night for thinking of the chambers hung in black, and the skull and bones with which her imagination garnished the thought of courts and judges. If her playmate Agatha, the tailor's daughter, had not come to sleep with her, she would have died of fear. At the first dawn of morning she went to the press and took out her Sunday gear. Agatha had to dress her, for she trembled so much that she could not tie a string. She looked at herself sadly in her broken glass. It seemed as if she were forced to go to a funeral in holiday garb.

Michael the wagoner accompanied his daughter, for it would not do to let the child go alone. In the court-house he took off his hat, stroked his short hair, and drew his face into an expression of smiling humility as he stood, scraping the floor with his feet, before the unopened door. He rested his hawthorn stick against the wall, took off his three-cornered hat, pressed it to his breast with his left hand, bent his head humbly, and knocked at the door. It opened. "What do you want?" inquired a gruff voice.

"I am Michael the wagoner, and this is my daughter Eva, and she is very much afraid; so I thought I would ask whether I might come in to court with her."

"No," was the rude answer; and the door was slammed in his face so heavily that he staggered some steps backward. He had no opportunity of advancing his other argument,--that in strictness he ought to appear before court and not Eva, as the house before which the May-pole was belonged to him.

With both hands folded upon his hawthorn stick, and his chin resting upon his hands, Michael the wagoner sat beside his daughter in the entry, and looked at the stone floor, which seemed almost as void of sympathy as the face of the official. "If Buchmaier was at home," he muttered, "they would strike up another tune." Eva could not speak a word: she only coughed once or twice into her neatly-ironed handkerchief.

Summoned at last, she rose quickly. Neither spoke, but, after a mute, parting look, Eva disappeared behind the door. At the door she stood still: the judge was not there, but the clerk sat playing with his pen, while the two "assessors" whispered softly to each other. Eva shook and trembled in every limb: the silence lasted ten minutes, which, to the poor girl, seemed half an eternity. At last the clink of spurs announced the judge's arrival. Eva seemed to find favor in his eyes, for he tucked her chin, stroked her burning cheeks, and said, "Sit down." Eva obeyed, just seating herself on the very edge of the stool. After going through the customary catechism of name, station, age, and so on, the judge asked,--

"Well, who put up your May-polo?"

"How can I know, your honor?"

"Didn't you drop the rope out of the dormer-window to tie it with?"

"No, your honor."

"And don't you know who is your sweetheart?"

Eva began to weep aloud. It was dreadful to deny; and yet she could not confess it. In America such a question would have had no other result than a reprimand from the bench to the counsel putting it. But so defenceless is the condition of parties and witnesses where justice hides in corners, that the judge even went further, and said,--

"It's no use to deny it: Mat is your sweetheart, and you're going to get married very soon."

Eva remembered that four weeks later they intended to ask that same court for permission to get married,--an indispensable formula under the code of that happy country. If she denied it now, she thought they would refuse to give her the "papers" and the "acceptance," and, besides, it was against her conscience to say "No." Her heart beat quickly; a certain feeling of pride arose within her; a consciousness of superiority to all the ills that flesh is heir to pervaded her being: she forgot the papers and the judge, and only thought of Mat. The last tear dropped from her lids; her eyes brightened; she arose quickly, looked around as if in triumph, and said, "Yes: I'll never have any one but him."

"So Mat put up your May-pole?"

"It may be, but of course I couldn't be by, and that night I was----" Here the tears choked her utterance again. It was well for the poor girl that she held her hands before her eyes, and could not see the smiles of the men of justice.

"Confess, now, he put up your May-pole, and nobody else."

"How can I know?"

By all sorts of cross-questions, and the oily assurance that the punishment would be but slight, the judge at last wormed the confession from her. The minutes were now read to her in fine book-German and in connected periods: of her tears and sufferings not a word was written. Eva was astonished to find that she had said so much and such fine things; but she signed the minutes unhesitatingly, only too glad to get away at any price. As the door closed behind her and the latch fell into the socket, she stood still, with folded hands, as if chained to the ground; a heavy sigh escaped her, and she almost feared the earth would open under her feet, for she now reflected, for the first time, how much harm she might have done to her beloved. Clinging to the balusters, she came slowly down the stone steps, and looked for her father, who was keeping up his spirits with a stoup of wine at the Lamb Tavern: she took her seat by his side, but said nothing, nor brought a drop to her lips.

Mat was now called up again, and Eva's confession read to him. He stamped his foot and gnashed his teeth. These gestures were immediately recorded as the basis of a confession, and, after sufficient baiting, Mat found himself completely caught: like game in a net, his desperate efforts to disengage himself only entangled him still further.

Being asked where he had got the tree, Mat first said that he had taken it out of the Dettensee wood,--which was in the duchy of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and therefore under another sovereignty and jurisdiction. But, when another investigation and a report to the court at Haigerloch was talked of, he at last confessed that he had taken it out *of his own wood,*--"by the Pond,"--and that it was a tree which would have been marked for felling in two or three days by the forester.

In consideration of these extenuating circumstances, Mat was fined ten rix-dollars for having taken a tree out of his own wood before it was marked.

Up at the stile where Mat had torn off a sprig the day before, he met Eva and her father, who were coming up the hill-slope. He would have passed on without a greeting; but Eva ran up to him and cried, huskily, "Don't sulk, Mat: I'll give you my cross and my garnets if they make you pay a fine. Thank the Lord, you're not locked up any more."

After some altercation, Mat gave in: hand in hand with Eva he walked through the village, and received kind congratulations from all he met.

This is the story of the May-pole before Michael the wagoner's house: on the wedding-day it was decked with red ribbons. The heavens and the earth seemed to like it better than the good government or the vigilant police, for it unaccountably took root and sent forth new branches. To this day it graces the house of the happy couple as a living emblem of their constant love.

2.

This story is connected with another, of more general interest. The prevalence at this time of the wicked custom of putting up May-poles, as well as other offences against the peace and dignity of the forests, induced the judge to issue an ordinance which had long hovered at the nib of his pen. From immemorial times it has been the custom of the peasantry of the Black Forest to carry a little axe in their left hand whenever they go abroad. Only the "men"--that is, the married men--do so; and it is a badge which distinguishes them from the "boys," or unmarried young fellows. It is said to be a remnant of the ancient time when every one bore arms.

On Whitsunday the following ordinance was found on the blackboard nailed in front of the town-house of every village in the presidency:--

"It having been found that many offences against the forest are occasioned by the improper practice of carrying axes, the public are hereby notified,--

"That from this day forth every person found upon the road or in the woods with an axe shall be held to give the gamekeeper or ranger accurate information of the purpose for which he has the axe with him; and, if he fails to do so, he shall be punished by a fine of one rix-dollar: upon a repetition of the offence he shall be fined three rix-dollars: and, upon a further repetition, with imprisonment for not less than one and not more than four weeks.

"RELLINGS,
President-Judge."

A crowd of farmers flocked around the town-house at the close of the afternoon service. Mat, who was now one of the "men" also, read the ordinance aloud. All shook their heads and muttered curses: the old squire said, audibly, "Such a thing wouldn't have been done in old times: these are our privileges."

Buchmaier was now seen coming down from the upper village with the axe in his hands. Every eye was turned toward him as he walked along. He was a stout, strong man, in the prime of life,--not large, but broad-shouldered and thick-set. The short leathern breeches had allowed his shirt to bag a little round his waist; the open red vest showed the broad band which connected his suspenders, and which was woven in various colors and resembled a pistol-belt in the distance; the three-cornered hat was fixed upon a head disproportionately small; the features were mild and almost feminine, particularly about the mouth and chin, but the large, bright blue eyes and the dark, protruding brows spoke clearness of apprehension and manly boldness.

Mat ran to meet the new-comer, told him of the ordinance, and said, "Cousin, you are not good councilmen, any of you, if you knuckle under to this."

Buchmaier continued his regular pace without hastening his steps in the least: he walked straight up to the board, everybody stepping aside to let him pass. He raised his hat a little, and there was an expectant silence. He read the ordinance from beginning to end, struck the flat of his hand upon the crown of his head,--a sign that something decisive was coming,--took the axe into his right hand, and with a "Whew!" he struck it into the board in the middle of the ordinance. Then, turning to the by-standers, he said, "We are citizens and councilmen: without a meeting, without the consent of the councils, such ordinances cannot be passed. If the clerks and receivers are our lords and masters, and we are nobody, we may as well know it; and, if we must go before the king himself, we can't put up with this. Whoever agrees with me, let him take my axe out and strike it into the board again."

Mat was the first who stepped forward; but Buchmaier held him by the arm and said, "Let the older men come first."

This movement turned the scale in the minds of those who had halted between two opinions, not knowing whether to imitate Buchmaier's course or to condemn it. The old squire made his essay first, with a trembling hand; after him, no one kept aloof, and the name of the judge in particular was hacked into a hundred pieces. By degrees, all the village assembled, and every one contributed his stroke amid shouts and laughter.

The acting squire, informed of what had happened, thought of calling the military from Horb. But his sapient minister dissuaded him from such a requisition, as it would be of no use; "and, besides," thought he, "let them make as much rebellion as they can; there will be a fine crop of summonses, and every summons is a creutzer to me. Hack away, boys: you are hacking into your own flesh, and that flesh is my copper." With a joyous mien he counted his coming gains as he drank his stoup of wine in the Adler.

Thus it happened that not one in the village remained innocent of the offence except Soges and the squire.

Next Tuesday, at the suggestion of the old squire, the councilmen went to court of their own accord and gave information of what they had done. The judge stormed. His name--Rellings--is a word used in the Black Forest to designate a tom-cat; and he might then really be compared to a shorn puss, with spectacles on its nose and spurs at its feet. He talked of locking up all the offenders at once; but Buchmaier stepped forward with great decision and said, "Is that all you are good for? Locking up? You won't do that yet a while. We are here to stand by what we have done: we avow it freely, and there can be no such thing as imprisonment before trial. I am not a vagrant. You know where I live. I am Buchmaier, this here's Beck, that there's John the Blacksmith, and that's Michael's son Bat, and we're all to be found on our own freeholds. You can't lock us up without a sentence, and after that the way is still open to Reutlingen and to Stuttgard, if need be."

The judge changed his tone, and summoned the men to appear before him at nine o'clock of the following day. This was well at least, so far as Soges thereby lost his creutzers. Thus do great lords and little lords frequently err in their calculations.

Next day an array of more than a hundred farmers, with axes in their hands, marched through the village. They often stopped before the door of a house and called for the belated master, who rushed out in great haste, pulling on his coat as he walked along the road. Jokes and witticisms were passed about, but died away whenever the speaker's eye fell upon Buchmaier, who walked on silently with contracted brows. Not a drop had been tasted before going to court. Business first, pleasure afterward, was the motto of the farmers.

The judge was lounging at the window in his dressing-gown, with his long pipe in his mouth. On seeing the approach of the armed force, he closed the window in all haste, and ran to ring the bell; but, as his boots were always spurred, he stumbled over the window-curtain and fell at full length upon the floor. His long pipe lay beside him like a weapon of offence. He rose quickly, however, rang for the tipstaff, sent him to the commandant and to the captain of the gens-d'armes, and ordered them all to come up with arms heavily loaded. Unfortunately, there happened to be but four men in the town. He now ordered them to remain in the porter's room and hold themselves in readiness to act at a moment's warning. He then gave directions that but one farmer should be admitted at a time, and the door always closed upon him.

Buchmaier, being first called in, said, holding the door in his hand, "Good-morning, your honor;" and then, turning to the others, "Come in, men: we have a common grievance I'm not going to speak for myself alone."

Before the judge could interfere, the room was filled with farmers, each carrying an axe on his left arm. Buchmaier stepped up to the clerk, and said, stretching out his hand, "Write down word for word what I say; I want them to read it at the Provincial Government." Then, after passing his hand twice through his shirt-collar, he rested his hand upon the green baize of the table, and continued:--

"All respect and honor to you, judge: the king has sent you, and we must obey you, as the law requires. The king is a good and a true man, and we know it isn't his will to have the farmers knocked about like dumb cattle or boxed on the ears like children. But the little lords and gentlemen that hang by one another from the top to the bottom are mighty fond of commanding and giving orders: one of these days they will set it down in notes how the hens must cackle over their eggs. I'm going to lift the lid off the pan and just give you a bit of my mind. I know it won't do any particular good just now; but, once for all, it must be said: it has been tickling my throat too long, and I'm going to get it out of me. The commune is to be put on the shelf altogether, and all things to be done in the rooms of you office-holders. Then why don't you sow and reap in the rooms too? Such a little whippersnapper of a clerk twists a whole town-housefull of farmers on his fingers, and before you know it you find clerk after clerk saddled upon us for a squire: then it is all fixed to the liking of you pen-and-ink fellows. What is true is true, and there must be law and order in the land; but the first thing is to see whether we can't get along better without tape-fellows than with them; and then we don't carry our heads under our elbows, either, and we can mind our own business, if we can't talk law-Latin. There must be studied men and scholars to overlook matters; but, first, the citizens must arrange their own affairs themselves."

"Come to the point," said the judge, impatiently.

"It's all to the point. You've ordered and commanded so much that there's nothing left to be ordered or commanded, and now you begin to prevent and precaution: you'll end by putting a policeman under every tree to keep it from quarrelling with the wind and drinking too much when it rains. If you go on this way a body might as well ride away on the cow's back. You want to take every thing from us: now, there happens to be one thing our minds are made up to hold on to." Raising his axe and gnashing his teeth, he continued:--"And if I must split every door between me and the king with this very axe, I will not give it out of my hand. From time immemorial it is our right to carry axes; and if they are to be taken from us the assembly of the hundred must do it, or the estates of the realm; and before them we shall have a hearing also. But why do you want to take them from us? To protect the forests? You have woodrangers, and laws and penalties, for that, and they fall alike on the noble and the beggar. How many teeth must a poor farmer have to eat potatoes with? Pluck out the rest, so that he may not be tempted to steal meat. How do you come to let the dogs run about with their fangs? When a boy is eight or nine years old he has his knife in his pocket, and if he cuts his finger it's his own fault, and there's an end; if he hurts anybody else he gets his fingers chowsed. Who told you that we are worse than little children, and you our teachers and guardians? You gentlemen seem to think that if it wasn't for you I'd jump out of the window this minute and dash my brains out. In all the main matters of life everybody must care for himself, and every commune for itself, and not you lords and gentlemen. Lords, did I say? Our servants you are, and we are the lords.

You always think we are here on your account, so that you may have something to give orders about: we pay you that there may be order in the land, and not for the purpose of being bothered by you. You are the servants of the State, and we, the citizens, are the State itself. If we must look for our rights, we don't mean to go to the spout, but to the well; and I will sooner lay my head on the block and let the hangman chop it off with my axe than give up my axe to an office-holder against my will. There! I've done."

There was a general silence; the spectators looked on each other with twitching eyes, which seemed to say, "There! he's got his pipe stuffed: now let him smoke it."

Bat whispered to Beck, "He knows how to ask for a piece of bread and butter when he wants it." "Yes," said Beck; "he doesn't carry his tongue in his pocket."

The judge did not suffer the impression made by this speech to remain long undisturbed. Twirling a bit of paper in his fingers, he began calmly to dilate on the enormity of the offence which had been committed. Many a side-thrust was levelled at Buchmaier, who only shook his head slightly, as if he were driving flies away. At length the judge came to speak of barrators and unquiet spirits, of conceited gentlemen-farmers who had once drunk a stoup of wine with a lawyer, who heard a bell ring without knowing where it was. Returning from this digression, he entered once more on the case in hand; he spoke of some of those present by name, and praised them as good, orderly citizens, utterly incapable of such an action. He expressed his firm conviction that they had been misled by Buchmaier's bad example: he conjured them, by their conscience, by their loyalty to their king and country, by the love of their wives and children, not to load this heavy guilt upon themselves, but frankly to confess the seduction, and their punishment would be lenient.

Again there was silence: some looked at each other and then cast their eyes on the ground. Buchmaier's mien was bold and confident: he looked them all in the face, his breast heaved, and his breath remained suspended with expectation. Mat had already opened his mouth to speak, but John, the blacksmith, stopped his mouth; for at this moment the old squire, who alone of all present had occupied a chair, was seen to rise. With heavy steps, hardly lifting his feet, he came up to the green table and spoke. At first he panted a little, and often stopped for breath, but soon his speech became quite fluent:--"Many thanks to your honor," said he, "for the good opinion your honor has of me and of some others; but what Buchmaier has said I say, to the last I dot. If there was any more proof wanted that the gentlemenfolks look at us as if we were under age, or little children, your honor has given it just now. No, your honor: I am seventy-six years old, and have been squire for twenty years; we are not children, and we don't do things because we have been misled into doing them by naughty boys. My axe sha'n't go out of my hand until I am laid between six boards myself. If there are any children here, let them say so. I am a man, and know what I am about; and, if there's punishing to be done, I am ready to be punished as well as another."

"So are we!" said all the farmers with one voice. Mat could be heard above the rest.

Buchmaier's face was as if bathed in light: he pressed his axe closer to his bosom.

The necessary formalities were soon concluded and the minutes signed. After Buchmaier had requested a copy of the latter, the farmers quietly left the court-house.

Several other communes also remonstrated against the ordinance, and the matter was carried up to the Provincial Government. Those communes who had protested so violently with the axes themselves were mulcted in a heavy fine. Judge Rellings, however, was removed after a time, and the ordinance became obsolete. The men carried their axes on their left arms, as they had done before.

I may have something more to tell of Buchmaier at some other time.

THE HOSTILE BROTHERS.

In the little cold alley called the "Knee-Cap" is a little house, with a stable, a shed, and three windows glazed with paper. At the dormer-window a shutter dangles by one hinge, threatening every moment to fall. The patch of garden, small as it is, has a division-line of leafless thorns to cut it into two equal halves. The premises were inhabited by two brothers, who had been in constant warfare for fourteen years. As in the garden, so in the house, all things were partitioned into halves, from the attic down to the kennel of a cellar. The trap-door was open, but underneath the domain of each was enclosed in lattice-work and padlocked. All the other doors were likewise hung with locks, as if an attack of burglars was looked for every moment. The stable was the property of one brother, and the shed of another. Not a word was ever spoken in the house, unless when one of them cursed or swore for his own edification.

Mike and Conrad--such were their names--were both past the prime of life and alone in the world. Conrad's wife had died early, and now he lived by himself; and Mike had never been married.

A blue chest, of the kind called "bench-chests," was the first cause of the quarrel. After their mother's death all the property should have been divided between them: their sister, who was married in the village, had received her share in advance. Conrad claimed the chest as having been bought by his own money, earned by breaking stones on the turnpike: he had only lent it to his mother, he said, and it belonged to him. Mike alleged, on the other hand, that Conrad had eaten his mother's bread and therefore had no property of his own. After a violent altercation, the matter came before the squire, and then before the court; and it was finally decided that, as the brothers could not agree, every thing in the house, including the chest, should be sold and the proceeds divided. The house itself was put up at auction; but, as no purchaser was found, the brothers had nothing to do but to keep it.

They were now compelled to publicly buy their own chattels,--their bedding and other furniture. Conrad disliked this greatly. There are many things in every house which no stranger is rich enough to pay for, for there are associations connected with them which have no value for any one but the original possessor. Such things should descend quietly from generation to generation: this preserves their value unimpaired. But, when they must be torn from the hands of strangers by the force of money, a great part of their value is lost: they are thenceforth things purchased for coin, and have not the more sacred character of an inheritance. Thoughts like these often made Conrad shake his head when some old utensil was knocked down to him; and when the velvet-bound hymn-book of his mother, with the silver studs and buckles, came up, and a peddler weighed it in his hand to judge of the value of the silver, Conrad reddened up to his eyes. He bought it at a high price.

The box was sold last. Mike hemmed aloud, and looked at his brother in defiance: he bid a large sum. Conrad bid a florin more, without looking up, and pretended to count the buttons on his coat. Mike, looking saucily around, went still higher. None of the strangers present interfered, and the brothers were both determined not to give way. Each comforted himself with the thought that he would only have to pay half of what he bid, and so they continued to raise the price up to more than five times its real value,--when it was knocked down to Conrad for twenty-eight florins.

Then he looked up for the first time, and his face was entirely changed. Spite and mockery leered out of his glaring eyes, his open mouth, and his protruding mien. "When you die, I'll make you a present of the chest to lie in," he said to Mike, trembling with rage: and those were the last words he had spoken to him for fourteen years.

The story of the chest was an excellent theme for fun and waggery in the village. Whenever anybody met Conrad,

something was said about the mean way in which Mike had acted toward him; and Conrad talked himself into a rage against his brother, which increased with every word he said.

The brothers were of different dispositions in all things, and went their different ways. Conrad kept a cow, which he would yoke with the cow of his neighbor Christian to do field-work. When there was nothing to be done afield, he broke stones on the turnpike for fifteen creutzers, or about five cents, a day. He was very near-sighted. When he struck a flint to light his pipe, he always held his face very near the spunk, to see whether it was lit. All the village called him "blind Conrad." He was short and thick-set.

Mike was the opposite of all this. He was tall and lank, and walked with a firm step. He dressed like a farmer, not because he was one, (for he was not,) but because it was of advantage to him in his business. He dealt in old horses; and people have great faith in a horse bought of a man who is dressed in farmers' clothes. Mike was what is called in Germany a "spoiled blacksmith,"--one who had deserted his trade and lived by dickering. He rented out and sold his fields, and lived like a gentleman. He was a person of importance in the whole country round. In a circuit of twenty miles--in Wurtemberg, in Sigmaringen and Hechingen, and in Baden--he knew the condition and the muster of every stable just as accurately as a great statesman knows the statistics of foreign states and the position of cabinets; and, as the latter sounds the state of public feeling in the newspapers, so did Mike in the taverns. In every village he had a scapegrace as minister-resident, with whom he often held secret conferences, and who, in cases of importance, would send him couriers,--to wit, themselves,--asking nothing but a good drink-money, in the strict sense of the word. Besides these, he had secret agents who would incite people to revolutions in their stables; and thus his shed, which served the purpose of a stable, was generally tenanted by some broken-down hack in the course of preparation for publicity,--*i.e.* for sale on market-day. He would dye the hair over its eyes and file its teeth; and, though the poor beast was thereby disabled from eating any thing but bran, and must starve on any thing else, he cared little, for at the next market he was sure to sell it again.

He had some curious tricks of the trade. Sometimes he instructed an understrapper to pretend to be making a trade with him. They would become very noisy, and at last Mike would say, in a very loud tone of voice, "I can't trade. I've no feed and no stabling; and, if I must give the horse away for a ducat, away he must go." Or he would pay some stupid farmer's lout to ride the horse up and down, and then observe, "If a man had that horse that knew what to do with it he might make something out of it. The build is capital: the bones are English. If he had a little flesh he would be worth his twenty ducats." If a purchaser turned up, he would undertake to get him the horse, stipulating a commission for himself for the sale of his own property. What he hated most was a warranty: rather than sign that he always agreed to throw off a ducat or two. Nevertheless, he had many a lawsuit, which eat up the horse and the profit; but the unsettled life he led had such a charm that he could not think of leaving it, and he always hoped that the profit on one speculation would compensate for the losses on another. His principle was never to leave the market without a bargain. The Jews of the markets were also his accomplices, and he would return their favors in kind.

Sometimes, in riding out on these excursions, or in coming home, he would pass his brother breaking stones on the road. He would look at him half in pity and half in contempt, saying to himself, "This poor devil works from morning to night for fifteen creutzers; and, if I have any luck, I clear fifteen florins."

Conrad, seeing a little of these thoughts in spite of his nearsightedness, would strike the stones until a thousand splinters flew on every side.

We shall see hereafter whether Mike or Conrad did better in the end.

Mike was what is called "good company." He could tell stories day and night, knew a thousand tricks, and was acquainted, as the German proverb has it, with God and the world. Not that his acquaintance with God was very intimate,--though he went to church now and then, as no one in the country can avoid doing; but he went, like many others, without thinking much about what he heard there, or endeavoring to act accordingly.

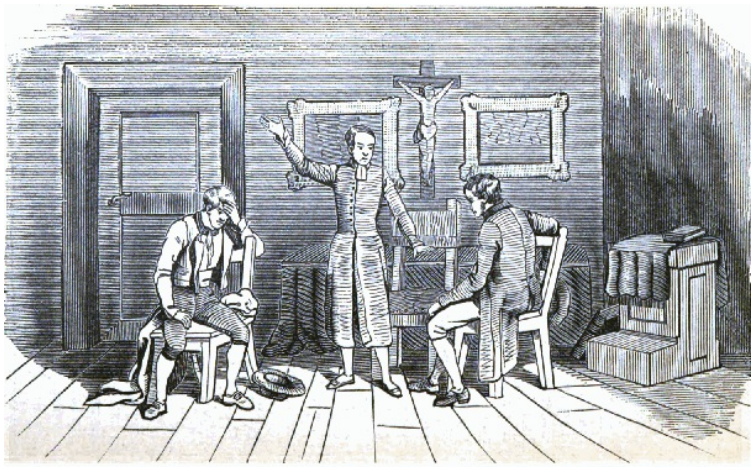
Conrad also had his faults, among which perhaps the greatest was his hatred of his brother and the manner in which he expressed it. When asked, "How's Mike comin' on?" he would answer, "He'll come to this some day," passing his hands under his chin as if to tie a knot, and then lifting them up and stretching out his tongue. Of course people were not chary in putting the question; and, whenever the standing answer came, it was the signal for peals of merriment. In other ways, also, people would try to keep the hatred of the brothers at the boiling-point, not so much from malice as for fun. Mike never did more than shrug his shoulders contemptuously when the "poor devil" was mentioned.

They never remained in the same room. When they met at the inn, or at their sister's, one of them always went away. No one ever thought of making peace between them; and whenever people lived at daggers' points it became proverbial to say, "They live like Mike and Conrad."

When they met at home they never spoke a word, nor even looked at each other. Yet, when one perceived that the other was lying ill in bed, he would go all the way to their sister's, who lived away off in Frog Alley, and say, "Go up: I guess he's poorly:" and then he would make as little noise as possible while he worked, so as not to disturb the other.

Out of doors, however, and among the neighbors, they kept up their feud without blinking; and no one would have thought of finding a spark of brotherly love in their hearts.

This had now lasted wellnigh fourteen years. Mike, with his traffic and dickering, had let the money received for his two acres slip through his fingers,--he scarce knew how. Conrad, on the contrary, had bought another field from an emigrant, and very nearly paid for it. Mike did a commission-business, and thought of selling another field to set himself afloat again.



"Now, there arose up a new king over Egypt," is a verse of which the people of the village might have made a peculiar application. The old parson was dead. He was a good man, but let things go their own way. The new parson was a young man of great zeal. He was bent upon righting all things, and did accomplish a great deal, until at last he got into a declared connection with Lisa, the Lamb Innkeeper's daughter; after which he ceased to meddle with people's private affairs,--for then he might have been told to sweep at his own door. But as yet he was in the full tide of reform.

One Sunday afternoon, when church was over, people sat about on the lumber brought for the new engine-house which was to be built near the town-house well. Mike was there too, sitting with his elbows on his knees and chewing a straw. Peter, Shackerle's John's boy, who was only five years old, was passing. Somebody cried, "Peter, I'll give you a handful of nuts if you'll do like Conrad: how does Conrad do?" The child shook his head, and was going on, for he was afraid of Mike; but they held him fast, and teased him till at last he did the tying of the knot, the pulling up, and the stretching out of the tongue. The shouts of laughter could have been heard through half the village. The boy called for his nuts, but the contractor was found unable to furnish them; so Peter kicked at him,--which made them all laugh again.

The new parson, who chanced to be coming down the little hill at the town-house, had stopped to see the whole transaction. When the boy was on the point of being pummelled for his indignant dunning, the parson stepped up quickly and took the boy away. The farmers all arose in great haste and pulled off their caps. The parson walked on, taking with him the image-keeper, who happened to be among the crowd. From him he heard the story of the feud between the brothers.

Next Saturday, as Conrad was breaking stones in the village, he was summoned to meet the parson next morning after church. He looked astonished: his pipe went out, and for two seconds the stone under his plank-soled foot remained unbroken. He was at a loss to think what could have happened at the parsonage, and would rather have gone there at once.

Mike received the same invitation as he was "greasing his old nag's Sunday boots,"--as he termed getting up his hoof's for market. He whistled a naughty tune, but stopped in the middle of it, for he well knew what was coming. He was glad of the chance to prepare himself for a good counter-sermon, a few sentences of which he already mumbled between his teeth.

On Sunday morning the parson took for his text, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm cxxxii. 1.) He showed that all the happiness and joy of earth is void and vapid if not shared between those who have slept in the same mother's womb; he said that parents can neither be happy here nor at peace hereafter if their children are sundered by hatred, envy, or malice; he referred to Cain and Abel, and spoke of fratricide as the first venomous fruit of the fall. All this was uttered in a full, resounding voice, of which the farmers said, "It pries the walls apart." Alas! it is often almost easier to move stone walls than to soften the hard heart of man. Barbara wept bitter tears over the evil ways of her brothers; and, although the parson declared again and again that he did not allude to any one in particular, but desired one and all to lay their hands on their hearts and ask themselves whether the true love for their kindred was in them, yet every one was content to think, "That's for Mike and Conrad: the shoe fits them exactly."

The two latter stood near each other, Mike chewing his cap, which he held between his teeth, and Conrad listening with open mouth. Once their eyes met, and then Mike dropped his cap and stooped down quickly to pick it up.

The hymn at the close had a calm, pacifying influence; but, before the last sounds had died away, Mike was out of the church, and knocked at the door of the parsonage. Finding it locked, he went into the garden. He stood before the beehives, and watched their restless labor.

"They never know when Sunday comes."

And he thought, "I have no Sunday either, with my traffic; but then I have no real working-day." Again he thought how many hundred brothers lived together in a beehive, all working like the old folks. He did not dwell upon such reflections, however. He made up his mind that the parson should not bridle him; and when he looked at the graveyard he remembered the last words of Conrad, and his hand clenched.

In the parsonage he found the parson and Conrad in earnest conversation. The parson appeared to have given up the expectation of his coming. He offered him a chair; but Michael answered, pointing to his brother,--

"No offence to your reverence, but I never sit down where he is. Your reverence hasn't been long in the village yet, and don't know his tricks. He is a hypocritical doughface, but false and underhanded. All the children imitate him," he continued, gnashing his teeth: "'How's Mike coming on?'" and here he gave the well-known pantomime again. "Your reverence," he went on, trembling with rage, "he is the cause of all my mishap: he has ruined my peace at home, and so I have sold myself to the devil for horses. You've prophesied it, you bloodhound!" he roared at his brother: "I'll hang myself with a halter yet, but your turn shall come first."

The parson gave the brothers time to vent their wrath, only exerting his dignity so far as to prevent personal violence. He knew that after their anger was poured out love must appear also; yet he was half deceived.

At last the two brothers sat motionless and speechless, though breathing hard. Then the parson began to speak words of kindness: he opened all the secret corners of the heart, but in vain; they both looked at the floor. He depicted the sufferings of their dead parents: Conrad sighed, but did not look up. The parson gathered up all his powers; his voice surged like that of an avenging prophet; he told them how after death they would appear before the Lord's judgment-seat, and how the Lord would cry, "Woe be unto you, ye hardened of heart! Ye have lived in hatred, ye have withheld the grasp of a brother's hand from each other: go, and suffer the torments of hell, riveted together!"

There was silence. Conrad wiped his eyes with his sleeve, got up from his chair, and said, "Mike!"

The sound had been so long unheard that Mike started and looked up. Conrad went up to him and said, "Mike, forgive me." The hands of the brothers were firmly clasped, and the hand of the parson seemed to shed a blessing on them both.

All the village rejoiced when Mike and Conrad were seen coming down the little hill by the town-house, hand in hand.

They did not relinquish their grasp until they had reached home: it was as if they desired to make up for the long privation. But here they hastened to tear off the padlocks; then, going into the garden, they tore away the dividing hedge, heedless of the cabbage destroyed in the operation.

Then they went to their sister's, and sat side by side at the dinner-table.

In the afternoon they sat in church together, each holding one side of their mother's hymn-book.

They lived in harmony from that day forth.

IVO, THE GENTLEMAN.

1.

THE FIRST MASS.

One Saturday afternoon the busy sound of the hammer and of the adze was heard on the green hill-top which served the good folks of Nordstetten as their public gathering-place in the open air. Valentine the carpenter, with his two sons, was making a scaffolding designed to serve no less a purpose than that of an altar and a pulpit. Christian the tailor's son Gregory was to officiate at his first mass and to preach his first sermon.

Ivo, Valentine's youngest son, a child of six years of age, assisted his father with a mien which betokened that he considered his services indispensable. With his bare head and feet he ran up and down the timbers nimbly as a squirrel. When a beam was being lifted, he cried, "Pry under!" as lustily as any one, put his shoulder to the crowbar, and puffed as if nine-tenths of the weight fell upon him. Valentine liked to see his little boy employed. He would tell him to wind the twine on the reel, to carry the tools where they were wanted, or to rake the chips into a heap. Ivo obeyed all these directions with the zeal and devotion of a self-sacrificing patriot. Once, when perched upon the end of a plank for the purpose of weighing it down, the motion of the saw shook his every limb, and made him laugh aloud in spite of himself: he would have fallen off but for the eagerness with which he held on to his position and endeavored to perform his task in the most workmanlike manner.

At last the scaffolding was finished. Lewis the saddler was ready to nail down the carpets and hanging. Ivo offered to help him too; but, being gruffly repelled, he sat down upon his heap of chips, and looked at the mountains, behind which the sun was setting in a sea of fire. His father's whistle aroused him, and he ran to his side.

"Father," said Ivo, "I wish I was in Hochdorf."

"Why?"

"Because it's so near to heaven, and I should like to climb up once."

"You silly boy, it only seems as if heaven began there. From Hochdorf it is a long way to Stuttgard, and from there it is a long way to heaven yet."

"How long?"

"Well, you can't get there until you die."

Leading his little son with one hand, and carrying his tools in the other, Valentine passed through the village. Washing and scouring was going on everywhere, and chairs and tables stood before the houses,--for every family expected visitors for the great occasion of the morrow.

As Valentine passed Christian the tailor's house, he held his hand to his cap, prepared to take it off if anybody should look out. But nobody did no: the place was silent as a cloister. Some farmers' wives were going in, carrying bowls covered with their aprons, while others passed out with empty bowls under their arms. They nodded to each other without speaking: they had brought wedding-presents for the young clergyman, who was to be married to his bride the Church.

As the vesper-bell rang, Valentine released the hand of his son, who quickly folded his hands: Valentine also brought his hands together over his heavy tools and said an Ave.

Next morning a clear, bright day rose upon the village. Ivo was dressed by his mother betimes in a new jacket of striped Manchester cloth, with buttons which he took for silver, and a newly-washed pair of leathern breeches. He was to

carry the crucifix. Mag, Ivo's eldest sister, took him by the hand and led him into the street, "so as to have room in the house." Having enjoined upon him by no means to go back, she returned hastily. Wherever he came he found the men standing in knots in the road. They were but half dressed for the festival, having no coats on, but displaying their dazzling white shirt-sleeves. Here and there women or girls were to be seen running from house to house without bodices, and with their hair half untied. Ivo thought it cruel in his sister to have pushed him out of the house as she had done. He would have been delighted to have appeared like the grown folks,--first in negligee, and then in full dress amid the tolling of bells and the clang of trumpets; but he did not dare to return, or even to sit down anywhere, for fear of spoiling his clothes. He went through the village almost on tip-toe. Wagon after wagon rumbled in, bringing farmers and farmers' wives from abroad: at the houses people welcomed them and brought chairs to assist them in getting down. All the world looked as exultingly quiet and glad as a community preparing to receive a hero who had gone forth from their midst and was returning after a victory. From the church to the hill-top the road was strewn with flowers and grass, which sent forth aromatic odors. The squire was seen coming out of Christian the tailor's house, and only covered his head when he found himself in the middle of the street. Soges had a new sword, brightly japanned and glittering in the sun.

The squire's wife soon followed, leading her daughter Barbara, who was but six years old, by the hand. Barbara was dressed in bridal array. She wore the veil and the wreath upon her head, and a beautiful gown. As an immaculate virgin, she was intended to represent the bride of the young clergyman, the Church.

At the first sound of the bell the people in shirt-sleeves disappeared as if by magic. They retired to their houses to finish their toilet: Ivo went on to the church.

Amid the ringing of all the bells, the procession at last issued from the church-door. The pennons waved, the band of music brought from Horb struck up, and the audible prayers of the men and women mingled with the sound. Ivo, with the schoolmaster at his side, took the lead, carrying the crucifix. On the hill the altar was finely decorated; the chalices and the lamps and the spangled dresses of the saints flashed in the sun, and the throng of worshippers covered the common and the adjoining fields as far as the eye could reach. Ivo hardly took courage to look at the "gentleman," meaning the young clergyman, who, in his gold-laced robe, and bare head crowned with a golden wreath, ascended the steps of the altar with pale and sober mien, bowing low as the music swelled, and folding his small white hands upon his breast. The squire's Barbara, who carried a burning taper wreathed with rosemary, had gone before him and took her stand at the side of the altar. The mass began; and at the tinkling of the bell all fell upon their faces, and not a sound would have been heard, had not a flight of pigeons passed directly over the altar with that fluttering and chirping noise which always accompanies their motion through the air. For all the world Ivo would not have looked up just then; for he knew that the Holy Ghost was descending, to effect the mysterious transubstantiation of the wine into blood and the bread into flesh, and that no mortal eye can look upon Him without being struck with blindness.

The chaplain of Horb now entered the pulpit, and solemnly addressed the "primitiant."

Then the latter took his place. Ivo sat near by, on a stool: with his right arm resting on his knee, and his chin upon his hand, he listened attentively. He understood little of the sermon; but his eyes hung upon the preacher's lips, and his mind followed his intentions, if not his thoughts.

When the procession returned to the church amid the renewed peal of the bells and triumphant strains of music, Ivo clasped the crucifix firmly with both his hands: he felt as if new strength had been given him to carry his God before him.

As the crowd dispersed, every one spoke in raptures of the "gentleman," and of the happiness of the parents of such a son. Christian the tailor and his wife came down the covered stairs of the church-hill in superior bliss. Ordinarily they attracted little attention in the village; but on this occasion all crowded around them with the greatest reverence, to present their congratulations. The young clergyman's mother returned thanks with tearful eyes: she could scarcely speak for joyous weeping. Ivo heard his cousin, who had come over from Rexingen, say that Gregory's parents were now obliged to address their son with the formal pronoun "they," by which strangers and great personages are spoken to, instead of the simple "thee and thou," by which German villagers converse with each other.

"Is that so, mother?" he asked.

"Of course," was the answer: "he's more than other folks now."

With all their enthusiasm, the good people did not forget the pecuniary advantage gained by Christian the tailor. It was said that he need take no further trouble all his life. Cordele, Gregory's sister, was to be her brother's housekeeper; and her brother was a fortune to his family and an honor to all the village.

Ivo went home, each of his parents holding one of his hands.

"Father," said he, "I wish Gregory was pastor here."

"That won't do: nobody ever becomes pastor where he was born."

"Why not?"

"Confound your why and why not: because it is so," said his father. But his mother said, "He'd have too much bias in the village, and wouldn't be impartial." She either did not know or could not explain to the child that in the case of a native of the village the sanctity of the office and the reverence of the minister's person would suffer, his human origin and growth being so familiarly known.

After some time Valentine said again, "A minister's life is the best, after all. His hands are never sore with ploughing, nor his back with reaping, and yet the grain comes into his barn: he lies on a sofa and studies out his sermon, and makes his whole family happy. Ivo, if you are good you can be a gentleman. Would you like to?"

"Yes!" cried Ivo, looking up at his father with his eyes opened to their full width. "But you mustn't say 'they' to me," he added.

"Plenty of time to see about that," replied Valentine, smiling.

After dinner Ivo stood on the bench behind the table, in the corner by the crucifix, where his father had been sitting. At first he only moved his lips; but gradually he spoke aloud, and made a long, long sermon. With the most solemn mien in the world, he talked the most rambling nonsense, and never stopped until his father laid his hand kindly on his head, and said, "There! that's enough, now."

His mother took Ivo upon her lap, hugged and kissed him, and said, almost with tears, "Mother of God! I would be content to die if our Lord God would let me see the day on which you held your first mass." Then, shaking her head, she added, in a low voice, "God forgive me my sins! I am thinking too much of myself again." She set down the boy, and placed her other hand on his head.

"And Mag shall be my housekeeper, sha'n't she?" said Ivo; "and I'll have city dresses made for her, just as the parson's cook wears."

Madge, Ivo's cousin from Rexingen, rewarded him for his sermon with a creutzer. Then he ran out to Nat the ploughman, who was sitting under the walnut-tree at the door, and told him that he was going to be a gentleman. Nat

only shook his head and pushed the glowing tobacco down into his pipe.

The afternoon service was not so well attended as usual: the morning had absorbed all the devotion of the worshippers. Toward sundown the young minister, with the chaplain of Horb and some other clergymen, took a walk through the village. All the people who sat before their houses arose and greeted them: the older women smiled on the pastor, as if to say, "We know you and like you. Do you remember the pear I gave you? and I always said Gregory would be a great man some day." The young men took their pipes out of their lips and their caps from their heads, and the girls retreated into a house and nudged each other and looked out stealthily. The children came up and kissed Gregory's hand.

Ivo came also. Perhaps the young clergyman perceived the boy's tremor and the pious warmth of his kiss; for he held his hand a while, stroked his cheek, and asked, "What's your name, my dear?"

"Ivo."

"And your father's?"

"Valentine the carpenter."

"Give my love to your parents, and be good and pious."

Ivo remained spell-bound long after the men had passed on: it seemed as if a saint had appeared and conversed with him. He looked upon the ground in wonder; then, hastening home in long leaps, he told the whole adventure.

The family were seated on the timbers under the walnut-tree, Nat not far from them, upon a stone by the door. Ivo went to him and told him what had happened; but the ploughman was out of humor that day, and Ivo sat down at his father's feet.

It had grown dark, and little was spoken. Once only Koch the cabinet-maker said, "I'd like to see you get money under five per cent."

Nobody answered. Ivo looked up at his father with a silent light beaming out of his eyes: no one could guess what was stirring in that infant soul.

"Father," said Ivo, "does Christian the tailor's gentleman sleep just like other folks?"

"Yes; but not as long as you do: if you want to be a gentleman you must get up early and mind your prayers and your books. Off with you now to bed."

Ivo's mother went with him; and in his evening prayer he included the name of the minister as well as those of his parents and his sister.

The ceremony was not without immediate results. The next day, our old friend Hansgeorge, of the pipe of war, called, with his son Peter, on the chaplain at Horb; and rich Johnny of the Bridge, sometimes called Mean Johnny, brought his son Constantine, a bright, quick-witted lad. Both of them were admitted to the grammar-school at once: Ivo was yet too young.

We shall probably meet with both of these boys again. For the present we must remain with Ivo and watch the progress of his boyhood as closely as we can.

2.

THE TEACHER.

The schoolmaster of the village was a clear-headed man, but of a violent temper. His fancy and his strong point was music. He had but little influence on Ivo,--which is not surprising, as he had a hundred and twenty boys to attend to. The boy's best teacher--though you would not have thought it--was Nat, who could not write, and hardly read.

Even in towns the servants of a household may be called the "lesser Fates" of the family. In a village this is doubly the case, for the whole house is there a community of labor and repose. When in such close contact with their employers, bad servants become insupportable and are not long retained: one, therefore, who is good enough to be a servant of the family is generally good enough to be intrusted with the company and unconscious education of the children. Nat, at all events, was safe enough. In the crib and on the hay-loft he would erect his professional chair, answer the eager questions of his pupil or tell him wonderful stories.

Nat liked to be with the animals on which he waited; yet, though he could speak to them, and though the dun horse at least was as sensible as a man, they could not give a satisfactory answer to what was told them. Ivo, on the contrary, was always able and willing to clap his hands and say, "Oh, my!" So Nat was never tired of Ivo's company. As a colt runs by the side of the horse, bounding and frisking, so did Ivo skip around Nat wherever he went.

Sometimes they would sit quietly together on the straw, Nat telling the story of Firnut Pete, of the juniper-king, or of the charmed lady of Isenberg; while the muffled noise of the feeding horses and cows accompanied the story with a mysterious undertone. Firnut Pete--who wantonly pulled the crests from the young firs while they were still bleeding--is doomed, as a restless ghost, to haunt the heath of Eglesthal; and the juniper-king has one gray and one black eye, which exchange their colors every year. These stories Nat had to tell again and again; for children are not so spoiled as to be always craving for something new.

But these repetitions gave Nat some trouble; for as often as he had forgotten a little of the story, or wished to tell it in a different way, Ivo would say, "Why, that isn't the way it was." Nat would take him on his lap, saying, "You're right: I didn't exactly remember. There's a good many other things in my head, you see." Then Ivo would tell the rest of the story with great interest, so that Nat was delighted at the aptness of his pupil.

Often, also, they would speak of the fortunes of life, and things of which children brought up in towns have little idea or knowledge until they grow older,--of poverty and wealth, honesty and knavery, trade and barter, and so on; for the life of a village is a life in public: the inmost recesses of every house are known to all the inmates of every other.

One day, as Ivo was going home with his father from the place where the latter had been at work, "Father," he asked, "why didn't our Savior make the trees grow square and save all the trouble of chopping?"

"Why? You stupid boy, there wouldn't be any work for carpenters then, and no chips."

Ivo said nothing; and his father reflected that, after all, the boy had a good head, and that it was not right to speak so harshly to him. So he said, after some time, "Ivo, you must ask your teacher in school, or his reverence the parson, about such things: remember that."

This was well done in Valentine. Few parents are sufficiently shrewd and conscienscious to hit upon this only means of escape from their own ignorance.

But Ivo, instead of going to the schoolmaster or the parson, asked Nat, and received for answer, "Because trees are wanted for a great many things besides building."

Ivo was astonished: that, he thought, was an answer worth giving.

A consequence of his intimacy with Nat was that Ivo had no companion of his own age. But then Nat regarded him as his confidant, and would call him, caressingly, a "good old soul." In particularly-favored moments he would tell him of his dog Singout, who had been with him when he had watched the sheep, and who "had more wit than ten doctors." "I tell you," Nat asseverated, "Singout used to understand my secret thoughts: if he only looked at me he knew what I wanted immediately. Did you ever look at a dog right sharp? They often have a face on which grief is poured out, just as if they meant to say, 'I could cry because I can't talk with you.' When I looked at Singout then, he would bark and howl till my heart ached. If I said a single cross word to him, he wouldn't eat a morsel for a whole day. The dumb beast was too good for this world."

"Do dogs go to heaven?" asked Ivo.

"I don't know: there's nothing written about it."

What pleased Nat most of all was Ivo's love for animals; for both old people and children, who do not know exactly what to love, make animals the objects of their affections. These pets make no pretensions, exact no duties; and never contradict us, which is particularly distasteful to young and old children.

"What a poor beast piggy is!" said Ivo at one time: "she isn't in the world for any thing but to be killed: other beasts are of some use while they're alive." Nat nodded complacently. After a while he said, "Perhaps that's the reason a pig squeals worse than any other beast when they kill it."

His merry questions, remarks, and odd speeches gained for Ivo throughout the village the reputation of a "smart, quick-witted boy." Nobody surmised to whom this early activity of his mind was to be ascribed. The schoolmaster was displeased with him because he never went home from school quietly, as the rules prescribed, but always screamed and whooped like an Indian. Poor children! For hours they are compressed into themselves: when released at last, how can they be blamed for shaking themselves and greeting the free air to which they return? That is the reason that eleven o'clock in a village often seems to be the hour for the Wild Huntsman to make his round.

No one doubted that Ivo would be a good parson in time, he was so orderly and well-behaved. Valentine once boasted at the Eagle that his Ivo would go far ahead of George's Peter and John's Constantine.

We shall see.

3.

CHILD'S LOVE.

Next door to Valentine lived Mike Shackerle, a poor man, whose sole wealth was in his children, the youngest of whom was called Emmerence: the carpenter's wife was her godmother, and Emmerence spent almost all her time at. Valentine's house, ate and drank there, and only slept at home. She was of Ivo's age exactly, and the two children were inseparable. Although his ungallant schoolfellows called him "girl-runner," he stuck to Emmerence. They had a partnership in a lot of fruit they had buried in the hay-loft. Over this treasure they would often sit with quiet joy. Ivo showed himself as a man in being able to count up to a hundred. Emmerence listened devoutly and spoke the numbers after him. The damaged and the odd pieces were consumed in equal portions. Disputes were not wanting; when the partnership-goods were divided at once. But the separation never lasted longer than a day; for, if they did not "go joints," how could they talk to each other of their fortune?

Great changes took place, however. Ivo received from Nat the present of a whip, and Emmerence learned to knit. In towns children are presented with drums or with toy-shops, to play soldier and trader until life begins in earnest: in the village they begin to play farmer with a whip. Ivo would stand before the empty wagon, smack his whip at the bare pole, and cry, "Whoa! Gee! Get up!" The moment he came home from school, his slate and ruler were laid upon the footstool behind the stove, his whip cracked, and the geese and chickens routed up and down the road. While thus roystering about one day, he saw Emmerence sitting under the walnut-tree with her knitting. Her little kitten lay near her, purring and puffing in the sun. The plump little yellow-haired girl was taking up her stitches with a zeal which kept her eyes riveted to her work; her lips were pressed together with an air of determination, as if she was bound to make a woollen jacket for old Winter himself.

Ivo stood quietly looking at her for a while, and then asked, "Are you knitting stockings for your puss?"

Emmerence took no time to answer, but went on knitting. The spirit of mischief tickled Ivo, and he pulled the needle out of her fingers.

Emmerence got up to throw a stone after him as he ran away; but, girl-like, she never lifted it over her shoulder, but let it fall immediately at her own feet. Having gathered up her needles, she went home crying.

In the afternoon Ivo soon obtained forgiveness for his cruelty by presenting Emmerence with a piece of a broken blue-glass bottle. They looked at the sun through it by turns, exclaiming, "Oh, my! how pretty!" Ivo wrapped the gem in a piece of paper and left it with Emmerence.

From time to time the village was visited by a man who, like the bold Ratcatcher sung by Goethe, always had the children at his heels. It was the "saint-man," who would sell pictures of the saints to the children for broken glass. Ivo always ransacked the house until the glittering coin was found, and then brought Emmerence the prize.

Not in the sunshine alone, but also in the storm, we find the children together.

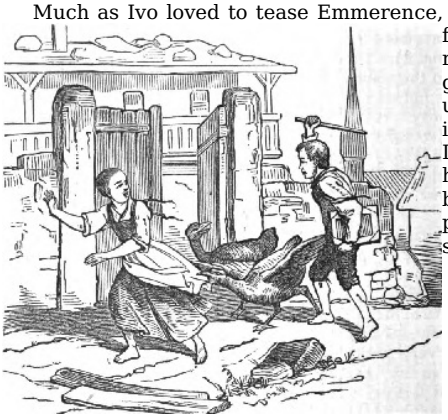
Old Valentine looked out of the window with a pleased expression in his face,--for it is easy to look pleased during a fine summer shower, even when there is not much to think about: body and soul are played upon as with a gentle dew, and the drops fall from the eaves of the opposite houses like the ripples of a stream: all around us--even the flood of the silent air itself--has acquired a voice and a meaning.

Ivo and Emmerence had taken refuge in the open barn: little Jake, the squire's son, who was but three years old, was there also. The chickens had betaken themselves to the same asylum: they stood beside the children, with drooping tails, often shaking themselves. The black kitten also crept along under the eaves of the house so softly that its coming into the barn was not perceived until the chickens cackled: it dived down into the stable immediately.

At first it dripped so slightly that you could only see the rain by looking at the dark windows opposite; but soon the drops swelled and pattered, and Ivo said, "Ah, this is first-rate for my pinks in the garden." "Pinks in t' garden," repeated little Jake. Again Ivo said, "Ah, that'll be a big puddle." "Big puddle," re-echoed little Jake. Ivo looked at him grimly.

Farmers drove by with empty sacks on their heads, crying out and trying to escape the storm: the children laughed at them and cried out, "Whew!" Emmerence stood with her head a little on one side, and her hands under her apron: just when it rained hardest, Ivo pushed her out under the eaves. Little Jake sprang out of his own accord, as if to challenge the rain, but still he shut his eyes and held down his head, so as not to get the very worst of it. With her apron over her head, Emmerence now did her best to get under cover again; but Ivo was on the look-out, and never let her in till she began to cry.

The rain at last stopped: the sun came forth brightly, and the children rushed out with unspeakable joy. The human plants seemed to derive as much benefit from the freshened air as any others. Yellow torrents poured down along the road: the children launched chips upon them, and waded about in the water, looking for bits of iron. Ivo, who always had extended projects, wished to build a mill; but long before the mill was ready the water had run off. How often do we build up machines to be moved by the stream of our lives, and ere the machinery is half constructed the water-course is empty and dry!



Much as Ivo loved to tease Emmerence, he never permitted anybody else to harm her. Once he was returning home from school, armed, as usual, with his buckler the slate, and his sword the ruler, when he saw Emmerence pursued by two evil spirits in the shape of old gray geese. Crying and screaming, the poor girl fled, with her eyes turned upon her foes. Already had one of them seized her gown and was tugging at it, when Ivo rushed upon them, and a hard-fought battle ensued, out of which Ivo at last came forth victorious. With the consciousness of heroism, he helped Emmerence up from where she had fallen, and walked triumphantly by her side, armed as he was. Nat had told him stories of knights rescuing poor, helpless damsels from giants and dragons: he now felt as if he was something like one of these knights himself.

4.

BRINDLE AND THE GOSLINGS.

The purchase of a horse or a cow is an event of absorbing interest in the family of every farmer; but, when it is remembered that in the Black Forest the dwelling-house, the stable, and the barn, are all parts of one and the same building, it is clear that the importance of such an occurrence is doubly great, for it makes a change, if not in the family itself, at least in the household.

An event of this kind took place one day when Valentine came home from the fair in the upper village with a fine heifer. Before it was taken into the house it was examined and praised by all the neighbors and passers-by. Ivo and his mother, and Nat, received the stranger at the door. A wooden horse fell to Ivo's share as his "fairing," and Valentine placed the end of the tether into Nat's hands, looked round with an air of triumph, and then dismissed the "cattle" into the stable with a good-humored stroke on the hocks. It was indeed a fine beast, just what farmers like to call a smart, strutty sort of cow.

Ivo, with his wooden horse on his bosom, hastened to help Nat prepare the stranger's supper. "Short feed" was heaped in the trough; but she would not open her mouth except to growl gloomily. Ivo passed his hand gently over her sleek hide: she turned her head and looked fixedly at the boy for a long time.

Ivo then played with his wooden horse, which showed no reluctance to make his acquaintance, but seemed at home everywhere and always carried its head high.

At night Ivo was waked out of his sleep by a wailing note which shook his soul. The poor heifer seemed to pour out her very bowels with lamentation.

Ivo lay awake a long time listening to the sounds which went forth so mournfully into the stillness. Whenever they ceased he held his breath, hoping that they would come no more; but the poor cow always began again.

At last Ivo waked his father.

"What's the matter?"

"The new heifer's crying."

"Let her cry, and go to sleep, you foolish boy: the heifer's homesick, and it can't be helped."

Ivo shut his ears with the pillows and fell asleep again.

For nearly three days the heifer refused to eat a morsel; but at last she grew accustomed to the other cattle in the stable, and ate quietly like the rest. But a new trouble arose when the claws of her fore-feet came off. She was only used to walk on soft pasture, but not to travel so much on hard roads as was necessary in passing between the stable and the fields.

Ivo often helped Nat to bind up the heifer's hoofs, and gave the greatest proofs of sympathy and tenderness; nor did she fail to return his kindness as far as she could, and Nat, who knew all about cows and their ways, used to say, "The herdsboy that minded her before must have looked like you, Ivo; be sure of that."

While the cow gave him so much pleasure, the wooden horse became a source of grief. It had become quite soiled. So, one morning, without saying a word about it to anybody, he ran down to the pond and gave it a good scouring, but returned home with loud wailing, for he found that all the color came out of it. Thus early did he discover how little artificial favorites are to be trusted.

But fate soon gave him ample compensation for his loss. Once more, late in the night, the whole house was astir on account of the heifer: she was calving. Ivo was not allowed to go into the stable: he only heard a low, distant wail,--for the curse is on animals also, and they must "bring forth with pain."

At dawn of day Ivo hurried into the stable. A fine brindled calf was lying at the dam's feet, and she kissed and licked it with her tongue. No one could go near it without setting the cow into a storm of rage; only when Ivo stepped up and timidly touched the calf she was quiet. Her first-born was a son, and Ivo never ceased to beseech his father to raise the calf until he consented.

From this time on Ivo was always in the kitchen when warm food or drink was being prepared for the mother, and no one but he had leave to hold the pail for her to drink.

But Ivo was destined to find that no pleasure is to be enjoyed without interruption. One day, coming home from school, he saw a large dog on the threshold. Passing him carefully, he went on to the stable. There he found a man in a blue smock and red and yellow checked neckcloth, which hung in a loose knot to his neck. In his hand he held a hawthorn stick with a handle of brass thread.

Ivo saw at once that he was a butcher. His father, who stood by him, was just saying, "For eight florins you may have it; but it's a pity to kill it with such fine hoofs."

"I'll give seven."

His father shook his head.

"Well, split the difference and say done."

Ivo saw what it all meant in an instant. Leaving his slate and books against the wall, he rushed into the stable, fell upon the calf's neck and cried, embracing it tenderly, "No, no, Brindle! they sha'n't stab your poor neck." He cried aloud, and could hardly pronounce the words, "Why, father, father, you promised me!"

The calf bleated with all its might, as if it knew what was about to happen, and the cow turned her head and growled without opening her mouth.

Valentine was puzzled. He took off his cap, looked into it, and put it on again. Smiling on Ivo, he said at last, "Well, let it be so; I don't want to fret the child. Ivo, you may raise it, but you must find the food for it."

The butcher walked away, his dog barking as he ran before him, as if to give vent to his master's vexation. He made a rush at Valentine's geese and chickens, and scattered them in all directions: it is the way with underlings to expend their ill will on the dependants of their master's foes.

The thought that he had saved the calf's life made Ivo very happy; yet he could not but feel sore at the idea that, but for an accident, his father would have broken the promise he had made him. He forgot all this, however, when the time came for him to lead his pet out into the grass and watch it while grazing.

One afternoon Ivo stood holding Brindle by the tether while it browsed. With a clear voice he sang a song which Nat had taught him. The tones seemed to tremble with half-suppressed yearnings. It was as follows:--

"Up yonder, up yonder,
  At the heavenly gate,
A poor soul is standing
  In sorrowful strait.
"Poor soul of mine, poor soul of mine,
  Come hither to me,
And thy garments shall be white
  As wool to-see.
"As white and as pure
  As the new-driven snow,
And, hand in hand, together
  Into heaven we'll go.
"Into heaven, into heaven,
  Upon the heavenly hill,
Where God Father, and God Son,
  And God the Spirit dwell."

Hardly was the song ended when he saw Emmerence coming toward him from the brick-yard. With a dry fir-twig she was driving some young ducklings before her. On coming up to Ivo she stopped and began to talk.

"Oh, you can't think," said she, "what trouble I had getting my four ducklings out of the puddle in the brickyard. Four gray ones and two white, you see. They're just a week old now. Only think, my mother made a hen sit on the eggs, and now the hen won't take care of 'em: they run about, and nobody looks after 'em at all."

"They're orphans," said Ivo, "and you must be their mother."

"Yes, and you don't know how pitifully they can look at you one-sided,'--this way." She laid her head on one side, and looked up at Ivo prettily enough.

"Look at them," said he: "they can't be quiet a minute, they keep splashing and floundering about all the time. It 'ould make me giddy to go on that way."

"I can't see," said Emmerence, looking very thoughtful, "how these ducklings found out that they can swim. If a duck had hatched 'em out, she might show 'em; but the hen never looked at 'em; and, for all that, as fast as they could waddle they toddled on till they got into the water."

Here the thoughts of two infant souls stood at the mysterious portal of nature. There was silence a little while, and then Ivo said,--

"The ducklings all keep together and never part. My mother said we must do so too; and brothers and sisters belong together; and, when the cluck culls, all the chickens run up."

"Oh, the nasty chickens! The great big things eat up all I bring my poor ducklings. If it would only rain right hard once more and make my ducklings grow! At night I always put 'em in a basket,--they're too soft to take in your hand,--and then they crowd up to each other, just as I crowd up to my grandmother; and my grandmother says when they grow up she'll pull out the feathers and make me a pillow."

Thus chatted Emmerence. Ivo suddenly began to sing,--

"Far up on the hill is a white, white horse,
  A horse as white as snow;
He'll take the little boys that are good little boys
  To where they want to go."

Emmerence fell in,--

"The little boys and the good little boys
  Sha'n't go too far away;
The little girls that are good little girls
  Must go as far as they."

Ivo went on:--

"Far up on the hill is a black, black man,
  A man as black as a coal;
He open'd his mouth and he grit his teeth,
  And he wanted to swallow me whole."

Then they sang on, sometimes one beginning a verse, and sometimes the other.

"Sweetheart, see, see!
  There comes the big flea:
He has a little boy on his back,
  And a little girl in his ear.
"Don't you hear the bird sing?
  Don't you hear it say,
In the wood, out of the wood,
  Sweetheart, where dost thou stay?
"Don't you run over my meadow,
  And don't you run over my corn,
Or I'll give you the awfullest waling,
  As sure as you were born."

Many such little rhymes did the children sing, as if each tried to outdo the other in the number of songs they knew. At length Ivo said, "Now you drive your duckies home; I'm coming soon too." He was a little ashamed of going home with Emmerence, though conscious of nothing but the fear that his silly comrades would tease him. After she had been gone for some time he followed with his calf.

It gave Ivo pain to see that, as soon as the calf was weaned, the heifer, its dam, seemed to care no more about it. He did not know that the beasts of the field cling to their young only so long as they actually depend on and are in bodily connection with them. It is only while young birds are unable to fly and get their own food, only while the young quadruped sucks its dam's milk, that any thing like childlike or parental love subsists. This connection once severed, the old ones forget their young. Man alone has a more than bodily relationship to his child, and in him alone, therefore, the love of offspring continues through life.

5.

LIFE IN THE FIELDS.

Ivo's life was rich in suggestions, not only at home, among men and beasts, but also with the silently-growing corn and in the rustling orchard. All the world, with its glories and its noiseless joys, entered the open portals of his youthful soul. If we could continue to grow as we do in childhood, our lot would be replete with all the blessings of Heaven; but a time comes when the sum of all things breaks upon us in a mass, and then the remnants of our lives are occupied in the dreary labor of dissecting, puzzling, and explaining.

During the summer holidays, in haying and harvest time, Ivo was almost constantly afield with Nat. There his real life seemed to begin; and, when he looked upward, the blue of his eyes was like a drop fallen from the sky which sprang its broad arch so serenely over the busy haunts of men; and it seemed as if this bit of heaven, straying upon earth,

"but long'd to flee
Back to its native mansion."

Something of this kind glimmered through Nat's thoughts one day when he took Ivo by the chin and kissed him fervently on the eyelids. The next moment he was ashamed of this tenderness, and teased Ivo and playfully struck him.

When the cows were hooked up, Ivo was always at hand, and took pains to lay the cushion firmly on the horns of the heifer: he was glad that the wooden yoke was not made to lie immediately on the poor beast's forehead. In the field he would stand near the cows and chase the flies away with a bough. Nat always encouraged him in this attention to the poor defenceless slaves.

Often Ivo and Emmerence would stand and dance on the wagon long before the cows or the dun were hooked up: then they would ride to the field, gather the hay into heaps, and push each other into it.

Whenever Nat went afield, Ivo stood by him in the wagon. Sometimes he would sit up there alone, with his hands in his lap, and as his body was jolted by the motion of the wagon his heart would leap within him. He looked over the meads with a dreamy air. Who can tell the silent life beating in a child's breast at such a moment?

Nor did Ivo fail to practise charity in his early youth. Emmerence, being a child of poor parents, had to glean after the harvest. Ivo asked his mother to make him a little sack, which he hung around his neck and went about gleaning for Emmerence. When his mother gave him the sack, she warned him not to let his father see it, as he would scold; for it is not proper for a child whose parents are not poor to go gleaning. Ivo looked wonderingly at his mother, and a deep sorrow shone out of his eye; but it did not long remain. With a joy till then unknown to him, he walked barefoot through the prickly stubble and gleaned a fine bagful of barley for Emmerence. He was by when Emmerence took a part of it to feed her duckies with, and mimicked them as they waddled here and there, grabbing at the grains.

One day Ivo and Nat were in the field. The dun--a fine stout horse, with hollow back, and a white mane which reached nearly down to his breast--was drawing the harrow. As they passed the manor-house farmer's, a whirlwind raised a pillar of dust.

"My mother says," Ivo began, "that evil spirits fight in a whirlwind, and if you get in between them they throttle you."

"We're going to have a gust to-day," said Nat: "you'd better stay at home."

"No, no; let me go with you," said Ivo, taking Nat's rough hand.

Nat had prophesied aright. Before they had been in the field an hour, a terrible hailstorm was upon them. In a moment the horse was unhooked from the harrow, Nat mounted on his back with Ivo before him, and they galloped homeward, Ivo nestled timidly in Nat's bosom. "The evil spirits in the whirlwind have brought this storm, haven't they?" he asked.

"There are no evil spirits," said Nat, "only wicked men."

Strange! Ivo began to laugh aloud for fear, so that Nat became very uncomfortable. Fright and pleasure are so nearly related that Ivo had almost an agreeable tingle in the trembling of his soul.

Pale as death, and with his teeth chattering, Ivo came home. His mother put him to bed, partly to conceal him from his father, who disliked to see the delicate child that was to be a parson going into the fields. He had not been in bed many minutes before Nat came with a phial and gave him a few drops, which threw him into a gentle sleep; and in an hour he awoke as sound as ever.

Never, perhaps, was Ivo happier than on one memorable day which he was permitted to spend entirely in the field without coming home to dinner. At early morning, long before matins, he went out with Nat and the dun, the latter dragging the plough to Valentine's largest and farthest field, which is far away toward Isenbrug, in the Worm Valley. It was the opening of a beautiful day in August; a little rain had fallen over-night, and a fresh breath of life passed over the trees and grasses. The red clover was winking at the coming sun, which could not be seen, though it was broad daylight: he had risen behind the hills of Hohenzollern.

The plough grasped well: a refreshing steam arose from the brown, dewy soil. The dun seemed to make little exertion, and Nat guided the plough as easily as if it had been the tiller of a floating skiff. Every thing around was bright and clear, and men and beasts might be seen here and there, working cheerily for their daily bread.

When the matin bell rang at Horb, Ivo stopped. The horse stood still; the plough rested in the furrow; Ivo and Nat folded their hands: the dun seemed to be praying too,--at least he flung his head up and down more than once. They then drew the furrow to the end, sat down on the fallow, and eat some bread.

"If we were to find a treasure to-day," said Ivo, "like that farmer, you know, that Emmerence's mother told of, that found a heap of ducats right under his foot when he was ploughing, I'd buy Emmerence a new gown and pay her father's debt on his house. What would you do?"

"Nothing," said Nat: "I don't want money."

He went to work again, and found it so easy that he began to sing,--not of ploughing or sowing, though, nor of any thing connected with work in the fields:--

"Oh, we are sisters three,--
Kitty and Lizzie, and she,
The youngest, she let the boy come in.
"She hid him behind the door
Till her father and mother were gone to sleep;
Then she brought him out once more.
"She carried him up the stairs,
And into her chamber she let him in,
And she threw him into the street.
"She threw him against a stone,
And his heart in his body he broke in two,
And also his shoulder-bone.
"He pick'd himself up to go home;
'Oh, mother, I fell and I broke my arm
Against such a hard, hard stone.'
"'My son, and it serves you right,
For not coming home with the other boys,
But running about at night.'
"So he went up-stairs to bed.
At the stroke of twelve he was full of fright,
At the stroke of one he was dead."

Here Nat jerked the rein, fixed his hat more firmly on his head, and sang, perhaps in remembrance of the past:--

"You good-for-nothing boy,

Your drink is all your joy;
Dancing's what you're made for,
And your coat has never been paid for.
"If I'm a little short,
What need you care for't?
When I've emptied my glass
They'll fill it, I guess.
"If I can't pay the score
They'll mark it on the door,
So every one can read
That I'm running to seed.
"So seedy I've grown,
Not a thing is my own:
The world's here and there,
But I haven't a share."

Nat suddenly broke off, and cried, "Hee, oh!" to the horse. It was hard to tell whether it occurred to him that Ivo was by, or whether he had forgotten him entirely. So much is certain, however, that this sort of songs is by no means so injurious to the children of a village as is generally supposed. From his very cradle, Ivo had heard all sorts of things spoken of by their most natural designations and without the least reserve, which to those who grow up in towns are first left unmentioned entirely, so that ignorance stimulates curiosity, and are then discussed in ambiguous terms, which aggravate the temptation to evil by the additional zest of the mysterious. Thus, instead of festering in his mind, they glided through it without leaving a trace behind them. Nat was full of reminiscences to-day; and, after a pause, he sang again, in a muffled voice,--

"I'm forty years to-day;
My hair is turning gray:
If none of the girls will marry me,
  I'll set my house on fire;
If none of the girls will marry me,
  I'll drown myself in the mire."

Immediately after, he sang again,--

"Sweetheart, sweetheart,
How is't with thee,
That thou wilt not speak to me?
"Hast thou another lover,
To make the time pass over,
Whom thou likest more than me?
"If thou likest him more than me,
I'll travel away from thee,
I'll travel away from thee.
"I travel far over distant lands,
Leave my love in another's hands,
And write her many a line;
    You must know
    Where I go,--
A horseman bold am I.
"I travel far over distant lands,
Leave my love in another's hands;
Oh, that is hard to do
When my love is fair and true!
"Oh, that is easily done
When love is past and gone!
To sleep without a sorrow
From the even to the morrow;
Oh, that is easily done
When love is past and gone!
"Fine cities too there are
Where I have wander'd far,--
In the Spanish Netherlands,
And in Holland and in France;
But over all this ground
My love nowhere I found.
"Who made the song and who sang it first?
He made it and he sang it first,--
  A fine young fellow,--
When his love was at the worst."

The long-drawn notes swept over the lea as if borne on the wings of old yet unforgotten wishes. But they died away, in all probability, long before reaching the ear for which they were intended.

Could the old ploughman still carry in his heart the roots of so deep-seated a passion?

At eleven o'clock there was another halt and another prayer; the horse was unhitched and received a bundle of clover for his dinner. Ivo and Nat sat down at the edge of the field, in what would have been a fence-corner if there were fences in that part of Germany, and waited for Mag, who soon appeared with their dinner. They ate out of one bowl, with a good appetite, for they had worked hard. The bowl was so entirely empty that Mag said,--

"There'll be fine weather to-morrow: you make the platter clean."

"Yes," said Nat, turning the bowl upside down; "you couldn't drown a wasp there."

After dinner they took a little siesta. Ivo, stretched out at full length, was listening to the many-voiced chirpings among the clover; and, closing his eyes, he said,--

"It is just as if the whole field were alive, and as if all the flowers were singing,--and the larks up there,--and the crickets----" He never finished the sentence, for he had fallen asleep. Nat looked at him for some time with an expression of delight; then he brought a few sticks, fixed them carefully into the ground, and hung the cloth in which the clover had been tied over them, so that the boy slept in the shade. This done, he got up softly, hitched the horse to the plough, and went on noiselessly with his work.

It would be hard to tell whether he kept down the songs which mounted to his lips, or whether solemn thoughts made him so quiet. The dun was very true to the rein, and a slight jerk was enough, without a word, to keep the furrow straight.

The sun was sinking when Ivo awoke. He tore away the tent which was stretched over him, and looked about him in wonder, not knowing, for a while, where he was. On seeing Nat he bounded toward him with a shout of joy. He helped Nat to finish the job, and was almost sorry to find that Nat had managed to plough without him; for he would fain have thought himself indispensable to the progress of the work.

At nightfall they quitted the field, leaving the plough behind them. Nat lifted Ivo on the horse, and walked by his side up the hill; but, suddenly remembering that he had left his knife where the plough was, he ran back hastily, and thus found himself again in the valley. Looking up, he saw the sun set magnificently behind two mountains draped in pine woods. Like the choir of a church built all of light and gold were earth and sky; the treasures of eternity seemed to blink into time; long streamers of all shades of red and purple floated about; the little cloudlets were like, angels' heads; while in the midst was a large, solemn mass of vapor like a vast altar of blue pedestal covered with a cloth of flame. The sight provoked a wish to rise upward and melt in rapture, and again an expectation to behold the bursting of the cloud and the coming forth of the Lord in his glory to proclaim the millennial reign of peace.

On the crown of the hill was Ivo. The horse, bound to the earth and tearing up its bosom all day, seemed now to stride in mid-air and to travel gently upward; his hoofs were seen to rise, but not to stand on ground. Ivo was stretching out his arms as if an angel beckoned to him. Two pigeons above his head winged their flight homeward: they rose high and far,--what is high and what is far?--their pinions moved not: they seemed to be drawn upward from above, and vanished into the fiery floods.

Who can tell the pride and gladness of the heart when, glowing with the spirit of the universe, it overpeers every limit and looks into the vast realms of infinity?

Thus Nat stood gazing upward, free from earth's sighs and sorrows. A beam of the inexhaustible glory of God had fallen into the heart of the simple-hearted working-man, and he stood above all principalities and powers: the majesty of heaven had descended upon him.

The memory of this day never faded from the hearts of Nat and of Ivo.

6.

THE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL.

An unavoidable change soon separated Ivo from the friend of his childhood. The time had come for taking the first step which led to his future calling. The change was external as well as internal,--the short jacket worn till now being replaced by a long blue coat, which, in anticipation of his growing, had been made too large in every direction.

As he walked toward Horb, with his mother, in this new garb, he dragged his heavy boots along with some difficulty, and often lifted up his hands to prevent the unruly flaps of his coat from flying away behind him. Valentine took but little further trouble about the future of his child. He had tasted the idea of having a parson for his son to the dregs, and would almost have been content had Ivo become a farmer after all. Indeed, the older he grew the less willing was he to take any trouble which carried him out of the beaten track of his daily toil. Mother Christina, however, was a pious and resolute woman, who had no mind to give up the idea which had once entered her head.

The chaplain lived next to the church. Mother and son went into the church first, knelt down before the altar, and fervently spoke the Lord's Prayer three times over. The soul of Mother Christina was full of such feelings as may have visited the soul of Hannah when she brought her son Samuel to the high-priest of the Temple at Jerusalem. She had never read the Old Testament, and knew nothing of the story; but the same thoughts came up in her mind by their own force and virtue. Pressing her hands upon her bosom, she looked steadfastly at her son as she left the church.

In the parsonage she set down her basket in the kitchen, and made the cook a present of some eggs and butter. Then, being announced to the chaplain, she advanced with short steps, dropping a shower of curtsies, into the open parlor. He was a good-natured man, and regaled all his visitors with sanctified speeches and gestures, during which he constantly rolled his fat little hands in and out of each other. Mother Christina listened attentively as if he had been preaching a sermon; and when Ivo was admonished to be diligent and studious, the poor little fellow wept aloud, he knew not why. The good man comforted and caressed him, and the two went on their way composed, if not rejoicing.

Their next visit was to an old widow who lived near the "Staffelbaeck." On the way, Ivo was treated to a "pretzel," which he devoured while sitting behind Mrs. Hankler's stove and listening to the negotiations between her and his mother. The good lady was a dealer in eggs and butter, and an old business acquaintance of Mother Christina's. It was agreed that Ivo should get his dinner at her house, and that Mrs. Hankler was to receive therefor a certain quantity of butter, eggs, and flour.

The moment Ivo had reached home, he threw off his coat, kicked the boots from his feet, and hastened to Nat in the stable. The latter passed his hand over his eyes when he heard that Ivo was now a student.

Next morning our young friend was sad when the time came for his first visit to the grammar-school. He was waked early, and obliged to dress in his best clothes. To make the parting less bitter, his mother went with him to the top of the hill. There she gave him a little roast meat wrapped up in paper, and two creutzers as a precaution against unforeseen emergencies.

Our readers have gone to Horb with us often enough to know the way. But, besides the winding road of only two or three miles which ascends the steep hill, there is a footpath which turns off to the left at the hill-top, and where you cannot walk, but only scamper straight to the Horb brick-yard. Ivo took this path: his heart beat high, and his tears flowed freely, for he felt that he was entering upon a new and a different life.

At the brick-yard he wiped his eyes and looked at the roast meat. It had a delicious odor. He unfolded the paper, and the meat smiled at him as if it wished to be kissed. He tried the least bit, then a little more, and in a short time he had

tried every thing but the paper. Yet, had he been ninety years old, he could not have done more wisely: the lunch restored his spirits and his courage, and he walked on with a smiling face and steady eye.

The boys at the school inspected the appearance of the new-comer with the minuteness of custom-house officers. The size of his clothes amused them particularly.

"What's your name?" asked one.

"Ivo Bock."

"Oh, this is Ivo Book,
Dress'd in the family frock!"

said a boy with a fine embroidered collar. The muscles of Ivo's face twitched as is usual when a crying-spell is setting in. But, when the boys gathered around him to follow up their words with practical pleasantry, he struck at them with his fists hard and fiercely. The rhymester with the collar now came up and said, "Never mind. Nobody shall hurt you: I'll help you."

"Are you in earnest, or do you only want to fool me more?" asked Ivo, with a trembling voice, still clenching his fists.

"In earnest, 'pon honor. There's my hand."

"Well and good," said Ivo, taking his proffered hand. Perhaps the boy's original intention had been to hit upon a new way of teasing Ivo, or to oppress him with the grandeur of his protection; but Ivo's firmness turned the scales.

The arrival of the chaplain brought them all to order. The instruction given was that usually awarded as the first lesson in Latin grammar. In this country the problem is to decline "*penna*:" in Germany "*mensa*" is the word. When it was over, the boy with the embroidered collar, and his younger brother, accompanied Ivo to Mrs. Hankler's door. It was at the hands of the sons of the President-Judge that he received this distinction. Henceforward we may look with composure on his fortunes in the good town of Horb.

Mrs. Hankler's door was locked. Ivo sat down on the step to wait for her. Sorrowful thoughts rose in his mind, though at first of every-day origin. He was hungry. He thought of them all at home,--how they were gathering round the table, while he alone was left outside and hungry in the world, with nobody to care for him. People ran by in a hurry, without even becoming aware of his existence. They were all going to the steaming bowls which awaited them: only he sat there as if he had fallen from the sky and had never had a home. "Every horse and every ox," said he, "has his food given him when it is time; but nobody thinks of me. I have two creutzers in my pocket; but then it would never do to break the money already."[8]

At last his home-sickness was too much for him: he jumped up and bounded homeward with long strides. As he turned the corner he met Mrs. Hankler, running over with apologies about having forgotten all about it and having been detained. "Come with me," was the peroration, "and I'll cook you some nice turnips, and put some pork in them for your mother's sake: your mother is a dear, good woman. And when you're a minister and I am dead, you must read a mass for me: won't you?"

Ivo was happy the moment he heard somebody talk to him about his mother. He felt as if he had travelled a thousand miles and had left home ten years ago. The Latin, the wide coat, the quarrels, the roast meat, the new comrade, the flight: he seemed to have had more adventures in half a day than formerly in half a year. He ate heartily: still, he was not quite at his ease with the strange old lady; something told him, indistinctly, that he had been removed from the basis of his prior existence, his father's house. A young forest-tree lifted out of its native soil and carried away on rattling wheels to adorn some distant hill might express, if it could speak, what was pressing so heavily on the heart of poor Ivo.

The afternoon studies were easier, being in German, and so conducted that Ivo could put in a word or two of his own now and then. In going home he joined the two other boys from his village,--Johnny's Constantine and Hansgeorge's Peter. Constantine said that it was the rule for the youngest student always to carry the books for the others; and Ivo took the double burden on himself without a murmur.

At the top of the hill they saw Mother Christina, who had come to meet her son. He was relieved of the books immediately. Ivo joyfully ran to meet his mother, but, suddenly checked himself, for he was ashamed to kiss her in the presence of the big boys, and even winced a little at her caresses.

With their caps on one side, and their books under their arms, the two elder students paraded the village.

Ivo had as much to tell at home as if he had crossed the sea. He also felt his own importance when he found that they had cooked and set the table expressly for him. Even Mag, who seldom had a kind word for him, was now in a better humor than usual: he came from abroad.

Thus did Ivo go to and from the grammar-school from day to day.

A great change had taken place with Brindle about this time: he no longer spent all his time in the stable, for he had been yoked. Ivo thought the poor beast suffered from his absence, and was often out of spirits about it.

But in the grammar-school all things went on as well as well could be. Ivo speedily filled up his new coat and his new position, to the admiration of everybody.

His intercourse with Nat could not remain the same, however. Even the detailed reports of Ivo's doings gradually ceased, as there was not often much to be told; and Ivo generally sat down quietly to his books as soon as he got home. With Mrs. Hankler, on the other hand, he was soon on the best of terms. She always said that "Ivo was as good to talk with as the oldest." She told him a great deal about her deceased husband; and Ivo advised her financially whenever a quarter's rent came to be paid.

With the sons of the President-Judge he kept up a friendship for which everybody envied him. And Emmerence,--she was now nine years old, went to school, and minded the schoolmaster's children in recess. At an age when children rarely have any thing more than dolls to play with, she had an exacting living baby to attend to; but she seemed to look upon it all as rare sport. When Valentine was away she was welcome to visit at the house with the child; not otherwise. The carpenter could not bear the child's crying. He was growing more and more querulous and discontented from day to day. Ivo saw Emmerence now and then, but the two children had a certain dread of each other. Ivo, particularly, reflected that it was not proper for a future clergyman to be so intimate with a girl. He often passed Emmerence in the street without

speaking to her.

In other respects, also, he was gradually warped away from his favorite associations. When he went into the stable, according to custom, to help Nat feed the steer, the cow, and the dun, his father would often drive him out, saying, "Go away! you have no business in the stable. Go to your books and learn something: you're to be a gentleman. Do you think a man is going to spend all that money for nothing? Hurry up!"

With a heavy heart, Ivo would see the other boys ride the horses to water or sit proudly on the saddle-horse of a hay-wagon. Many a sigh escaped his breast while translating the exploits of Miltiades: he would rather have been on the field by the target-place, raking the new-mown grass, than on the battle-field of Marathon. He would jump up from his seat and beat the empty air, just to give vent to his thirst for action.

He was also enstranged from his home by the occupation of his mind with matters of which no one around him had ever heard. He could not talk about them with anybody,--not even with Nat. Thus he was a stranger in his own home: his thoughts were not their thoughts.

Nat beat his brains to gladden the heart of the poor boy whom he so often saw out of spirits. Ivo had told him with delight of the pretty dovecote which the judge's sons had at home: so Nat repaired the old dovecote, which was in ruins, and bought five pairs of pigeons with his own money, and peas to feed them with. Ivo fell upon his neck when, one morning, without saying a word, he took him up into the garret and made him a present of it all.

Of a Sunday morning Ivo might have been seen standing under the walnut-tree, in his shirt-sleeves, with his arms folded, watching his little treasures on the roof, as they cooed and bowed and strutted and at last flew into the field. From possessions which he could hold in his hand, which walked the earth with him, he had now advanced to such as could only be followed with a loving look. It was only in thought he owned them: caress them he could not. They flew freely in the air, and nothing bound them but their confidence in his goodness. Is not this a symbol of the turn which the course of his life had taken?

When he whistled, the pigeons would come down from the roof, dance at his feet, and pick up the food he threw them. But he could not touch them to express his pleasure: he had to content himself with cherishing them in his soul, if he would not scare them suddenly away.

When Ivo entered the church, his soul was so full of love and childlike confidence that he almost always said, "Good-morning, God." With a happy home feeling, he then went into the vestry, put on his chorister's dress, and performed his functions during mass.

A deep-seated fear of God, sustained by a glowing love for the mother of God, and, above all, for the dear child Jesus, dwelt in the soul of Ivo. With especial joy he used to call to mind that the Savior too had been the son of a carpenter. Of all the festival-days he liked Palm-Sunday most: it made almost a deeper impression upon him than Good Friday. Huge nosegays as high as a man, made particularly odorous with wild sallow and torch-weed, were carried into the church. The nosegays were sprinkled with holy water, and after the ceremony they were hung up in the stables to protect the cattle from all harm. At home, all parties were solemn and serious; no one spoke above his voice,--not even Valentine; everyone was kind and gentle to everybody else, and this made Ivo happy.

But, with all this, a thoughtful spirit soon showed itself in him, even in religious matters. One day the chaplain was explaining that St. Peter carried the keys because he opened the gates of heaven for the redeemed.

"How so?" asked Ivo. "Where does he stay?"

"At the gate of heaven."

"Why, then, he never gets into heaven himself, if he is kept sitting outside all the time opening the door for other people."

The chaplain stared at Ivo, and was silent for some time; at last he said, with a complacent smile, "It is his celestial happiness to open to others the gates of eternal bliss. It is the first of virtues to rejoice in and to strive for the good fortune of others: such is the high calling of the Holy Father at Rome, who has the keys of Peter on earth as well as the keys of all those consecrated by him and by his bishops."

Ivo was satisfied, but not quite convinced; and he pitied in his heart the good Peter who is kept standing at the gate.

A load rested on Ivo's bosom from the day the chaplain told the children that it was their duty to ask themselves every evening what they had learned or what good they had done that day. He tried to act up to the letter of this behest, and was very unhappy whenever he found nothing satisfactory to report to himself. He would then toss about in his bed distractedly. Yet he was mistaken. The mind grows much as the body does: like an animal or a plant, it thrives without our being able, strictly speaking, to see the process. We see what has grown, but not the growth itself.

Another institution of the chaplain was wiser. He made the boys sit, not in the order of their talents, but in that of their diligence and punctuality. "For," said he, "industry and good order are higher virtues, for they can be acquired, than skill and talent, which are born with a man, and so he deserves no credit for them." Thus he constrained the talented to labor, and inspired those of lesser gifts with confidence. Ivo, who to very good natural parts added great conscienciousness was soon near the head of the class, and the President-Judge was pleased to see his sons bring him into his house.

We made the acquaintance of Judge Rellings in the story of "Good Government." Ivo, having heard many anecdotes of his harshness, was not a little astonished to find him a pleasant, good-natured man, fond of playing with his children and of doing little things to give them pleasure. Such is the world. Hundreds of men will be found who, when talking generalities, are liberal to a degree, asseverating that all men were born free and equal, &c., while the members of their household, and sometimes of their family, experience nothing but the most grinding tyranny at their hands. Others, again,--particularly office-holders,--treat all who are not in office like slaves and vagrants, and yet are the meekest of lambs in the four walls of their own dwellings.

Though not ill pleased with life in the town, yet Ivo never heard the curfew-bell of a Sunday evening without a little pang. It reminded him that to-morrow would be Monday, when he must again leave his home, his mother, Nat, and the pigeons. His daily walk gradually became invested with cheerful associations. He always went alone, dreading the society of Constantine, who teased him in many ways.

In summer he sang as he walked. In autumn there were some pleasant days when his mother and sister ground corn in Staffelbaeck's mill: at that season he did not dine with Mrs. Hankler, but met them in the trembling, thundering mill, and dined with them at the mill table. Winter was the most pleasant season of all. Nat, who was something of a Jack-of-all-trades, had shod Ivo's little sledge with an old iron barrel-hoop. At the hill-top he would sit down on his little conveyance and sweep down the road to the Neckar bridge swift as an arrow. With chattering teeth, he often said his rule of syntax or his Latin quotation for next day as he rode. True, in the evening he had to pull his sledge up the hill again by a rope; but that he liked to do. Sometimes a wagon would pass, and then, if the teamster was not very ill-natured, he would take the sledge in tow.

Ivo acted as a sort of penny postman for half the village: for one, he would carry yarn to be dyed; for another, a letter to the mail; and for another, he would inquire whether there was a letter for him. In coming home, his satchel sometimes contained a few skeins of silk, some herb tea, leeches in a phial, patent medicine, or some other purchase he had been commissioned to make. All this made him very popular in the village, while Peter and Constantine always scorned such uncongenial service.

One Sunday afternoon there was great excitement in the village when the President-Judge's two sons came in their red caps to visit Ivo. Mother Christina was looking out of the window when she heard them ask Blind Conrad the way to Ivo's house; and, although the room had been put into good order, she was in great trepidation. In her embarrassment she laid the stool on the bed, and took a pair of boots from the corner in which they had been stowed, putting them under the table in the middle of the room. Hearing the visitors come up the steps, she opened the door with great bashfulness, but yet with not a little pleasure, and welcomed them. Then she called out of the window to Emmerence, telling her to look for Ivo and for his father, and to send them in quickly to receive company.

Wiping off the two chairs, for the fortieth time, with her white Sunday apron, she pressed the boys to be seated. She apologized that things looked so disorderly. "It is the way with farmers' folk," said she, looking bashfully at the floor, which was scrubbed so clean that it was an easy matter to trace the joists by the nail-sockets.

Blind Conrad came and opened the door a little, to see what was the matter, and with an eye to the prospects of a good cup of coffee, or such other treat as might be looked for; but Mother Christina pushed him out without much ceremony, bidding him "come some other time."

Poor woman! At other times so strong in her religious force, and now so humble and abashed before the whelps of the mighty ones of the earth! But then she had grown old in the fear of the Lord and greater fear of the lordlings!

The elder of the two boys had, meantime, surveyed the room with great confidence. Pointing to the door of the room, he now inquired, "What is that horseshoe nailed there for?"

Folding her hands solemnly and bending her head, the mother answered, "Don't you know that? Why, that is because if you find a horseshoe between eleven and twelve o'clock in the day, and make no cry about it, and nail it to your door, no evil spirit and no devil and no witch can come in."

The boys stared with astonishment.

Ivo came, and soon after him his father. The latter took off his cap and welcomed the "young gentlemen;" then, rubbing his hands, he said, "What, wife! haven't you any thing in the house? Can't you get something to offer the young gentlemen?"

The mother had only waited to be relieved in entertaining the company. She hastened to find the very best the house afforded. Emmerence had had the good sense to drop into the kitchen, thinking that perhaps she might be wanted, for Mag had gone to take a walk with her beau. Perhaps she may have been curious also to see Ivo's great friends, for she shared the joy of the whole family at his exalted position.

Many of the neighbors' wives also found their way into the kitchen. Ivo's mother left them with complacent apologies, and took a big bowl of red-cheeked "Breitlinger" apples with her into the parlor. Emmerence brought two glasses of kirschwasser on a bright pewter plate. The boys ate heartily, and even drank a little of the fiery liquor, and Ivo's mother stuffed their pockets with fruit besides. At last she gave the youngest a particularly fine apple, with "her compliments to his lady mother, and she was to put it on the bureau."

After a long conversation, the boys took their leave. Valentine nodded pleasantly when they asked his permission to take Ivo with them: his mother arranged his collar, and brushed every mote of dust from his blue coat. Ivo was pleased to hear that he was to have a new one shortly.

Accompanied by the women, who had lingered behind the half-open door of the kitchen, Christina now walked into the street and looked after the three as they walked toward Horb, escorted by Valentine as far as the Eagle. The squire's wife was looking out of her window, and Christina said to her, "Those are the President-Judge's boys. They are going to take my Ivo out to their father in the Dipper. He likes to see them make friends with him: Ivo is quite smart, and they are quite fond of him."

Nor is it to be denied that Ivo felt some pride as he walked through the village hand in hand with his town acquaintances. He was pleased to see the people look out of the windows, and bid them all "Good-day" with great self-complacency. Who will think ill of him for this in a country where the very child in its cradle babbles of the omnipotence of the functionaries, where their existence and their activity is shrouded in awe-inspiring darkness, where all ages and all conditions unite in humble salutations to clerk and constable, knowing that there is no escape from their ill-will the moment the door of the secret tribunal is closed upon the unhappy mortal against whom an accusation, or a mere suspicion, has been uttered?

Mine host of the Dipper saluted Ivo very kindly, rubbing his hands the while, according to an old habit, as if he were cold. Ivo was now admitted to the "gentlemen's room," and to the table, where, screened from the vulgar gaze, the

Auditor-General and the President-Judge sat in undisturbed admiration of each other's respectability.

Two merchants of Horb stood at the entrance of this chamber of peers, in some little embarrassment. After considerable hesitation, one said to the other, "Well, Mr. Councilman, what shall we drink'!"

"What you please, Mr. Councilman," answered the other.

The two had just been elected to their present exalted station, and this was their first appearance at the gentlemen's table. They sat down with many profound bows, to which the President-Judge returned a sneer and exchanged a supercilious look with his colleague.

Ivo's satisfaction at being admitted into such great society was destined to be cruelly dashed. The boys told what they had heard from Ivo's mother about the efficiency of the horseshoe. The judge, who liked to play the freethinker in matters of religion, because it was a liberty not expressly removed by legislation, and because he thought it a mark of culture, interrupted the story with "Stuff! What do you talk of such brainless superstition for? Don't let every silly old peasant cram your heads with her nonsense. I have told you ever so often that there are no devils and no saints. The saints may pass, but not the devils, nor the witches."

Ivo trembled. It stung him to the soul to hear his mother spoken of in that manner and with such irreverence. He wished he had never dreamed of this great company. He hated the judge cordially, and eyed him with looks of fury. Of course the great man had no perception of the disgrace into which he had fallen. He waxed exceedingly condescending to the new councilmen, who were so charmed with his goodness that their organs of speech seemed to have lost every check-spring.

To Ivo's relief, the "gentlemen" at last departed, leaving him to comfort himself with the reflection that he had not bid the judge "Good-night."

7.

THE CONVENT.

Years glided by almost imperceptibly. Constantine and Peter had passed their examination in autumn, and were now destined to enter the convent at Rottweil. An event, however, which formed the theme of conversation for a long time to come, detained Peter at the village.

The second crop of grass had been mowed in the garden of the manor-house; the daisy--called here the wanton-flower because it presents itself so shamelessly without any drapery of leaves--stood solitary on the frost-covered sward; the cows browsed untethered; and the children gambolled here and there and assailed with sticks and stones the few scattered apples and pears which had been forgotten on the trees.

Peter sat on the butter-pear tree by the wall of the manor-house, near the corner turret. A bright golden pear was the goal of his ambition. Constantine, the marplot, wished to snatch the prize out of his grasp, and threw a stone at it. Suddenly Peter cried, "My eye! my eye!" and fell from the tree with the limb on which he had been sitting. The blood gushed from his eye, while Constantine stood beside him, crying and calling aloud for help.

Maurice the cowherd came running up. He saw the bleeding boy, took him on his shoulder, and carried him home. Constantine followed, and all the children brought up the rear. The train increased until they reached Hansgeorge's house: the latter was engaged in mending a wagon. At sight of his child bleeding and in a swoon he wrung his hands. Peter opened one eye; but the other only bled the faster.

"Who did this?" asked Hansgeorge, with clenched fists, looking from his wailing boy to the trembling Constantine.

"I fell from the tree," said Peter, closing the sound eye also. "Oh, God! Oh, God! my eye is running out."

Without waiting to hear more, Constantine ran off to Horb for young Erath, who now held the post of his late father. Finding that the doctor had gone out, he ran up and down before the house in unspeakable agony: he kept one hand pressed upon one of his eyes, as if to keep the misfortune of Peter vividly before his mind; he bit his lips till they bled; he wished to fly into the wide, wide world as a criminal; and again he wished to stay, to save what could be saved. He borrowed a saddle-horse, and hardly had the expected one come home when he hurried him on the horse and away; but he travelled faster on foot than the surgeon did on horseback. The eye was declared irretrievably lost. Constantine closed both his eyes: night and darkness seemed to fall upon him. Hansgeorge, with the tears streaming from his eyes, sat absorbed in bitter thoughts, and held the stump of his forefinger convulsively in the gripe of his other hand. He regarded the maiming of his child as a chastisement from God for having wantonly mutilated himself. He expended all the gentleness of which his nature was capable on poor unoffending Peter, who was doomed to expiate his father's sin. But Peter's mother--our old friend Kitty--was less humble, and said openly that she was sure that accursed Constantine was the fault of it all. She drove him out of the house, and swore she would break his collar-bone if he ever crossed the threshold again.

Peter persisted in his account of the matter, and Constantine suffered cruelly. He would run about in the field as if an evil spirit were at his heels, and when he saw a stone his heart would tremble. "Cain! Cain!" he often cried. He would fain have fled to the desert like him too, but always came home again.

It was three days before he ventured to see his companion. He prepared himself for a merciless beating; but the wrath of the mother had gone down, and no harm befell him.

He found Ivo sitting by the patient's bedside, holding his hand. Pushing Ivo aside, he took Peter's hands in silence, his breath trembling. At last he said,--

"Go away, Ivo; I'll stay here: Peter and I want to talk together."

"No: stay here, Ivo," said the sufferer: "he may know all."

"Peter," said Constantine, "in the lowest hell you couldn't suffer more than I have suffered. I have prayed to God often and often to take my eye away and let you keep yours: I have kept one of my eyes shut when I was alone, just to see no more than you. Oh, dear Peter, do please, please forgive me!"

Constantine wept bitterly, and the patient begged him to be quiet, lest his parents should find out about it. Ivo tried to comfort him too; but the ruling passion soon appeared again:--

"I wish somebody would tear one of my eyes out, so that I shouldn't have to be a parson, and sit behind a parcel of books and make a long face while other people are enjoying themselves. Be glad you have only one eye and needn't be a parson. But the last cock hasn't crowed yet, neither."

Ivo looked sorrowfully at the scapegrace.

Peter was, indeed, henceforth unfit for the ministry. For in Leviticus iii. 1 it is written, "If his oblation be a sacrifice of peace-offering, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord." A clergyman must be without bodily imperfection.

Even when Constantine came to take leave of Peter, before getting into the carriage which was to take him to the convent, he said, "I wish the carriage would upset and break my leg. Good-bye, Peter: don't grieve too much for your eye."

These words of Constantine, which betrayed the abhorrence of his inmost soul to the clerical function, had made a deep impression on Ivo. Often, in his solitary walk to school, he would whisper to himself, "Be glad you have only one eye: you needn't be a parson;" and then he would close each of his eyes alternately, to make sure that it was not his case. Constantine was a riddle to him; but he prayed for him in church for some time.

Meanwhile the time had come for Ivo in his turn to set out for the convent of Ehingen. His father's house was filled with the bustle of preparation, as if he were on the point of being married. At first the sight of his new clothes was a source of pleasure; but soon the thought of parting outweighed all others, and an inexpressible feeling of dread overcame him. It was a comfort to think that his mother and Nat, with the dun, were to accompany him. Having taken leave of the chaplain, of his companions at Horb, and of Mrs. Hankler, he devoted three days to going the rounds of the village. All gave him their best wishes,--for all thought well of him and envied the parents of so fine and good a lad. Here and there he received a little present,--a handkerchief, a pair of suspenders, a purse, and even some money: the last he hesitated to accept,--for, as his parents were well off, it seemed humiliating. But he reflected that clergymen must accept presents, and rejoiced over the six-creutzer pieces with childish glee. Having finished his parting calls, he avoided being seen before the houses he had visited; for there is something disagreeable in meeting casually with persons of whom you have just taken a final and long farewell: a deep feeling seems to be rudely wiped away and a debt to remain uncancelled. Ivo thus became almost a prisoner for some days, restricted to the society of his pigeons and the little localities which had become endeared to him in his father's curtilage.

On the eve of his departure he went to the house where Emmerence lived, to say "Good-bye." She brought him something wrapped up in paper, and said, "There, take it: it is one of my ducklings!" Although Ivo did not object, she pressed him, saying, "Oh, you must take it! Do you remember how I drove them in from the hollow? They were little weeny things then, and you used to help me get food for them. Take it: you can eat it for lunch to-morrow."

Holding the roast duck in one hand, he gave the other to Emmerence and to her parents. With a heavy heart, he returned home. Here all was in a bustle. They were to start at one o'clock in the night, so as to be in Ehingen betimes. On the bench by the stove sat an orphan-boy from Ahldorf, who was also to enter the convent, with a blue bundle of goods and chattels beside him. Ivo forgot his own sorrows in his pity for the orphan, whom nobody accompanied, and who was forced to rely upon the kindness of strangers. Seeing no other comfort at hand, he held the roast duck under his nose, and said, "That's what we're going to have for lunch tomorrow. You like a good drum-stick or a bit of the breast, don't you?" He looked almost happy; and, to assure the stranger of his share, he told him to put the duck into his bundle; but his mother interfered to prevent this, as it would stain the clothes.

They all went to bed early. The orphan, whose name was Bart, slept in Nat's bed, who stayed up to feed the horse and wake the others. When Ivo was already in bed, His mother stole softly into the room once more. She shaded the oil-lamp which she carried with her hand, in order not to disturb him if he slept; but Ivo was awake, and, as her hand smoothed the cover under his chin and then rested on his head, she said, "Pray, Ivo dear, and you'll sleep well. Good-night!"

He wept bitterly when she had gone. A vision of light seemed to have passed away, leaving him in total darkness. He felt as if a strange and distant roof covered him already. To-morrow he knew his mother would not come to him thus, and he sobbed into the pillows. He thought of Emmerence, and of the other people in the village: they were all so dear to him, and he could not imagine how they would do when he was gone, and whether things would really go on without him just as they always had done. He thought they ought to miss him as much as he longed to be with them: he wept for himself and for them, and his tears seemed to have no end. At last he nerved himself, folded his hands, prayed aloud with a fervor as if he strained God and all the saints to his bosom, and fell gently asleep.

With his eyes half shut, Ivo struck about him when Nat came with the light: he thought it absurd to get up when he had hardly begun his first nap. But Nat said, sorrowfully, "No help for it: up with you. You must learn to get up now when other people bid you."

He staggered about the room as if he were tipsy. A good cup of coffee brought him to his senses.

The house was all astir; and Ivo took a weeping farewell of his brothers and sisters. Bart was already seated by Nat's side on the board, which had the bag of oats for a cushion: his mother was getting into the wagon, and Joe, his eldest brother, held the dun's head. Valentine lifted up his son and kissed him: it was the first time in his life that he gave him this token of love. Ivo threw his arms around his neck and wept aloud. Valentine was visibly touched; but, summoning up all his manhood, he lifted the boy into the wagon, shook his hand, and said, in a husky tone, "God bless you, Ivo! be a good boy."

His mother threw his father's cloak around them both; the dun started, and they were on their way through the dark and silent village. Here and there a taper was burning by the bedside of sickness, while the unsteady shadows of the watchers flitted across the window. The friends who lived in all these silent walls bade him no farewell: only the watchman, whom they met at the brick-yard, stopped in the midst of his cry and said, "Pleasant trip to you."

For nearly an hour nothing was heard but the horse's tread and the rattling of the wheels. Ivo lay on his mother's bosom with his arms around her. Once he made his way out of the warm covering and asked, "Bart, have you a cloak?"

"Yes: Nat gave me the horse-cloth."

Ivo again sank upon his mother's bosom, and, overpowered by sorrow and fatigue, he fell asleep. Blest lot of childhood, that the breath of slumber is sufficient to wipe all its bitterness away!

The road led almost wholly through forests. They passed through Muehringen, traversed the lovely valley of the Eiach, and left the bathing-place of Imnau behind, before ever it occurred to Ivo to look about him. Not until they came down the steep that leads into Haigerloch did he fairly awake; and he was almost frightened to see the town far down in the ravine encircled by the frowning hills. As day broke they felt the cold more keenly; for it is as if Night, when she arises to quit the earth, gathered all her strength about her to leave the traces of her presence as deep as possible.

They stopped at Hechingen, at the Little Horse, where a young girl was standing under the door. Perhaps this reminded Ivo of Emmerence; for he said, "Mother, shall we eat the duck now?"

"No: we'll have it for dinner at Gamertingen, and get them to make us a nice soup besides."

The bright sunshine in the Killer Valley, the constant change of scene, and the novel details of rural life which he saw in the "Rauh Alb" Mountains, cheered Ivo a little; and when he saw a large herd of cattle grazing he said to Nat, "Mind you take good care of my Brindle."

"There's an end of my care of him: your father has sold him to Buchmaier, and he is coming to fetch him to-day and break him in."

Ivo was too well acquainted with the stages of a domestic animal's life to be much grieved at this news: he only said, "Well, Buchmaier is a good man, and deals well by man and beast; so I guess he won't work him too hard. And, besides, he don't yoke two oxen into one yoke, but gives each his own, so they're not worried quite so much."

The sun was near setting when they reached the valley of the Danube. Nat became quite lively. With his head bent back, he told all sorts of stories of the neighboring town of Munderkingen, of which much the same jokes are told as are sometimes expended upon the Schildburgers; for these towns are to the Wurtembergers or Suabians what the Suabians are to the Germans outside of themselves, and something like what the Irish are to the English and Americans,--a tribe upon which every cobbler of wit patches a shred of his facetiousness in the cheap and durable form of a "bull." Ivo laughed heartily, and said, "I wish you and I could travel about together for a whole year."

But this was soon to cease; for they were at the gates of Ehingen. Ivo started and grasped his mother's hand. They put up at the Vineyard, not far from the convent. Hardly had they seated themselves, however, before the vesper-bell rang: Ivo's mother rose without speaking, took the two boys by the hand, and went to church.

There is a peculiar power in the universal visibility of the Catholic religion: wherever you go or stand, temples open wide their portals to receive your faith, your hope, your charity; worshippers are everywhere looking up to the same objects of veneration, uttering the same words, and making the same gestures; you are surrounded by brothers, children of the great visible holy father at Rome. Halls are always open to receive you into the presence of the Lord, and you are never out of your spiritual inheritance.

Thus Christina and the two boys knelt devoutly at the altar. They forgot that their home was far away; for the hand of the Lord had erected a dwelling around and over them.

With an invigorated confidence, the mother once more took the boys by the hand and sought the convent-gate. There was much stir here, and men and boys might be seen walking and running to and fro in all directions, dressed in all the various costumes of the Catholic portions of the country. The famulus at the entrance, having examined their passports, brought them to the director. This was an old man of rather querulous mien, who answered every remark and every question of Christina with "Yes, yes: right enough." He had been catechized so much that day that his taciturnity was not to be wondered at. Feeling Ivo pulling at her skirt, she took courage to request that his reverence would permit Ivo to sleep at the hotel for the coming night.

After some hesitation he said, "Well, yes. But he must be here before church in the morning."

Bart took leave of Christina with a specimen of that verbiage of gratitude which he had learned by heart from frequent practice. This duty performed, he cheerfully followed the famulus to his room.

Ivo danced with joy at being allowed to stay with his mother. He continued chatting with her till late at night.

The next morning a beautiful clear Sunday was shining. An hour before church began, Ivo went to the convent with his mother, followed by Nat with the baggage and a bundle for Bart. She helped him to arrange his chattels in the press, counting over every piece, and often looking about sorrowfully to find that twelve boys were forced to live here in one room. At the sound of the convent-bell, mother and son separated, and the latter went to join his comrades.

After church his mother introduced herself to the stewardess, on whom as a woman she hoped to exercise some little influence. She begged her to give the boy a little something to eat between meals occasionally,--for he would certainly forget to ask for it,--and she would pay for it all honestly.

Ivo was permitted to join his mother again a little before dinner-time. She even tried to make interest with the hostess of the Vineyard, and implored her to give Ivo any thing he might ask for, and keep an account of it, and it would be punctually paid. The busy hostess attended to every thing, though she well knew that she could do nothing.

Ivo ate with a good appetite: he knew that his mother was with him. But after dinner he walked sadly to the Vineyard; for now the inevitable leave-taking was to come.

"Well, Nat," said he, "you'll always be my friend, won't you?"

"You may swear to that as if it was gospel," replied he, pushing the collar over the horse's head: he did not turn around, wishing to conceal his emotion.

"And you'll give my love to all the people that ask about me?"

"Yes, yes; indeed I will: only don't grieve so much about being far away from home. Why, it's pleasant to take leave when you know that there are people at home who love you dearly, and when you haven't done any harm." Nat's voice gave out; his throat was parched up, and his neck swelled. Ivo saw nothing of this, but inquired,--

"And you'll mind the pigeons till I come back again, won't you?"

"Sha'n't lose a feather. There now: go to your mother, for we must be off, or to-morrow will be lost too. Keep up your spirits, and don't let it worry you too much: Ehingen isn't out of the world, either. Hoof, dun!"

He led the horse up to the car, and Ivo went to his mother. Seeing her weep so bitterly, he suppressed his own tears, and said, "Mustn't be so sad: Ehingen isn't out of the world, either, and I'm coming home at Easter, and then we shall be so glad: sha'n't we?"

His mother bit her lips, bent over Ivo, embraced and kissed him. "Be pious and good" were the last words she sobbed out. She got on the car; the dun started, after looking around at Ivo, as if to take leave also; Nat nodded once more, and they were gone.

Ivo stood with his hands folded and his head sunk upon his breast. When he raised his tearful eyes and saw nothing of the loved ones, he ran out into the street to get one more look at the car: from the town-gate he saw it speeding on the dusty road. He stopped and turned to go back. Everybody around seemed so cheerful, and he alone was sad and a stranger! In the car his mother took her rosary and prayed,--

"Dear, holy Mother of God! Thou knowest what a mother's love is: thou hast felt it in sorrow and in joy. Preserve my child; he is the jewel of my heart. And, if I do a sin in loving him so much, let me atone for it, not him."

When Ivo reached the convent it was time for the afternoon service; but he found no devotion this time: his heart trembled too much with weariness. For the first time in his life he found himself in church without knowing it: he sang and listened unthinkingly.

This one circumstance was a feature of the life on which he was about to enter: the actions of his own will fell into the background; directions and precepts dictated his steps. His existence now became legally and strictly monotonous. The story of one day is the story of all.

The boys slept in large halls under the supervision of an usher. At half-past five in the morning a bell rang, which brought in the famulus, who lighted the lantern hanging from the roof and summoned them all to prayers. Then there was breakfast at the common table, succeeded by hours of private study which lasted till eight o'clock. The schools now began, and continued until dinner-time, after which there was an hour of "recreation,"--that is, of a walk taken under the eye of a functionary. After some more hours of instruction the boys were permitted to play in the yard, but never without being watched by a person in authority. The constraint indicated by the enclosed space was never relaxed even during "free time;" nowhere was there room for a spontaneous pleasure to spring forth, *nowhere a moment of unreconnoitred solitude*.

At home Ivo had been the pet of the family: when he sat at his books, his mother made it her especial care to see that no noise was made near him; scarcely was any one permitted to enter the room, and an impression was made as if a saint was engaged in working miracles there. Here, on the contrary, when the studies were resumed after supper, whispers would be heard here and there, which distracted his attention and took away the edge of his industry. Those who know the inscrutable power that often animates the soul which mirrors itself in its own thoughts or drinks in the thoughts of others, who are acquainted with that mute intellectual commerce which extends its organs and spreads its fragrance like a budding flower, will appreciate the regret of Ivo at never being left to himself. He was no longer his own property: a society moved him as if he had been one of their fingers or teeth.

At nine o'clock there were prayers once more, after which every one was compelled to go to bed. Here, at last, Ivo returned to himself, and his thoughts travelled homeward, until sleep spread its mantle over him.

Thus it happened that for some days Ivo felt as if he had been sold into slavery. Nowhere was there a trace of free will;

every word and every thought was hedged in by injunctions and commandments; the *inflexibility of the law* raised a cold high wall before him wherever he turned. It is a consistent deduction from the essence of every Church which has reached the development of a fixed and unchanging form of ritual and tenet, to begin in early youth with the task of tapping the fountain-head of individual self-regulation in the hearts and minds of its pupils, and of clapping them into the iron harness of its unbending forms. But the highest effort of education should be to draw out this self-regulating principle, and not to repress it; to educe the laws of right and wrong from the workings of the young mind, and not to nail a foreign growth upon the stock after having deadened the source from which alone a healthy fruitage could spring.

Ivo was so low-spirited that a single harsh word sufficed to bring tears to his eyes. Some of the naughtiest of his companions discovered this, and teased him in all sorts of ways. Many of these boys were of the coarsest stamp,--had left the most humble abodes behind them, and found every thing their hearts desired in the good food and the care taken of all externals. They noticed that Ivo was easily disgusted, and often amused themselves by getting up a conversation at the table which made it impossible for the poor boy to taste a morsel. At such times his mother's arrangement with the stewardess was of the greatest service to him.

Over-government always leads to circumventions of the law which the supervisors are forced to wink at: some of these tricks are handed down by a sort of secret tradition; others are invented with the occasion. Ivo never took part in these irregularities, nor in the practical jokes sometimes attempted to be played on the teachers and overseers. He was quiet and retiring.

His letter to his parents gives a vivid picture of his state of mind. It was as follows:--

"Dear Parents, Brothers, and Sister:--I did not wish to write before I had learned to feel at home here. Oh, I have lived through so much in these three weeks that I thought I should die! Indeed, if I had not been ashamed I would have run away and come back to you. I often thought that I was just like the cow that father bought: she could not eat any thing either until she had become accustomed to the rest of the cattle. We have very good eating here,--meat every day except Friday, and wine on Sunday. The stewardess is very kind to me. I cannot go to see the landlady at the Vineyard, as we are not allowed to go to taverns. We are kept strictly in all things:--we are not even permitted to take half an hour's walk by ourselves after dinner. If I only had wings, to come and fly over to you! What I like best is to walk in the road by which we came here: then I think of the future,--when I shall travel this road again in the holidays. It is very cold here, too. Would you please send me a flannel jacket, dear mother, slashed with green in front? I feel the cold much more here than when I used to go to Horb: there I could do as I liked; here I don't seem to belong to myself at all. Oh, my head is often so heavy with crying that I feel as if I were going to be sick! But don't grieve about it, dear mother: all will go on very well soon, and I am really in good health now: only I must pour out my heart before you. I will study very hard, and then God will make all things go rightly: I depend on Him, on our Savior, on the holy mother of God, and on all the saints: others have gone through with it all before me, and why should not I? Be happy among yourselves, and love each other dearly; for, when one is away, one feels how much those should love each other who are privileged to be together: I would certainly never be quarrelsome or discontented now, and dear Mag would not need to scold me. Good-bye. Give my love to all good friends, and believe me your loving son,

"Ivo Bock.

"P.S.--Dear mother, a new usher has just come,--Christian the tailor's son Gregory; but his sister does not keep house for him now, it seems: there is somebody else with him. Please get Christian the tailor to write to him to be a little kind to me.

"Dear Nat, my best love to you, and I think of you very often. The cattle here are almost all black; and whenever I see a farmer at work in the fields I can hardly help running up to him to help him. The steward has pigeons too, but he kills them all in winter.

"Bart lives in a different room from mine. He is very happy: he has never been so well cared for in his life. Poor fellow! he hasn't such a dear good mother and father as I have. If I only had one companion to my liking here--

"In the evenings we are allowed to visit in families: many of the boys do so, but I know nobody to go to. Oh, if I were only in Nordstetten----

"Pardon my scrawling. If I were only with you! I have many things on my heart still, but will close now: the night-bell is ringing. Think of me often."

This letter made a great impression at home. His mother carried it in her pocket, and read it again and again, till it fell to pieces. The High-German dialect in which it was written came so strangely from her child that she could hardly realize the fact: but then he was a "scholar," and the minister preached in the same way in church. The numerous dashes tried her patience sorely. What could the boy have been thinking of when he made them?

Nat at once offered to walk all night to Ehingen, to bring Ivo the things he had asked for and news from home. Walpurgia, the pretty seamstress, was taken into the house and set to work. Christina treated her to the best of fare, for it seemed as if she were feeding the jacket. Often she said, "Don't save any thing: it is for my Ivo." As it was near Christmas, some "hutzelbrod" was baked, being kneaded with kirschwasser and filled with dried apples, pears, and nut-kernels. This, with a great quantity of fruit, some money, and other knickknacks, was packed into a bag and laid upon the shoulders of the devoted Nat, who trudged out of the village late in the evening.

Ivo could hardly believe his eyes when, as the class were taking their afternoon stroll, he saw Nat coming up the road. He ran to meet him, and fell upon his neck. Many of the boys gathered round wondering.

"Bock," asked one, "is that your brother?"

Ivo nodded, unwilling to say that Nat was only a servant.

"What an old buck your father must be!" said another boy. The rest laughed,--all except Clement Bauer, a boy from the principality of Hohenlohe, who said, "For shame, you jealous daws! Why, a'n't you glad his brother's come to see him?" He ran to the usher in command and obtained permission for Ivo to go home with Nat alone. Ivo was delighted beyond measure to meet with such a fine boy. The thought awoke in his mind that perhaps Nat had helped him to a friend.

Hand in hand they turned toward the convent, Ivo talking and rejoicing incessantly. When the things came to be unpacked, he shouted with delight. He immediately laid up a reserve for the good Clement; but when the other room-mates returned he shared his treasure with them all. Nat had also brought a letter for Gregory, the tailor's son, which Ivo immediately carried to him, and received an invitation to come to him often and call upon him for aid and counsel.

In the evening he was allowed to go to the inn with Nat, where there was no end of their chatting. When the bell rang for prayer, Nat escorted him back to the convent. Ivo ascended the stairs as lightly as if an unseen hand supported him. He was quite at home here now, since all Nordstetten, in the person of its most acceptable envoy, had come to see him. Besides, he now had both a friend and a patron, all owing to dear good old Nat.

From this time forth Ivo's life was sustained by industry, cheerfulness, and friendship. His mother hardly suffered a bird to pass without charging it with something kind for her son. His chest was never without some little delicacy, nor his heart without some secret pleasure. A brighter light fell on all things around him, much of which was owing to the encouraging influence of Clement. Still, the two did not become intimate so quickly as might have been expected: an extraordinary occurrence was necessary to bring this about. The other boys, seeing that Ivo was in favor with Mr. Haible,--such was Gregory's surname,--left him unmolested, and even sought his good-will.

The study of music afforded Ivo particular pleasure. An orchestra was organized to perform at the church-festivals. Ivo chose the bugle as his instrument, and soon acquired considerable skill.

The principal once conceived the idea of giving the boys, who were condemned to such a dismal barrack-life, a taste of family comfort. So, after catechism, he invited twelve of the most advanced--Ivo among them--to come to his room in the evening. This invitation was understood as a command, and the boys marched in at the appointed hour, in the order of their seats at school, bowing and scraping.

The principal, who lived with his old maiden sister, had tea ready for them, to which they were helped, and of which they bashfully partook. The good old gentleman had unfortunately forgotten all about family comfort and domestic enjoyment himself; so, instead of asking questions about home, he conversed about books and studies. Once only, when he told a magnificent joke of the perplexity into which he was thrown in early childhood by finding two leaves of his Bible sticking together, a suppressed giggle passed around the room. He immediately went on to argue, however, that whenever we find it hard to understand any thing in the Bible we might be sure there was a leaf pasted down somewhere.

At nine o'clock he said, "Now let us pray." They prayed, and then he said "Good-night," and the boys went their way. They were not much the better for their taste of family comfort.

Thus the winter passed by. Sometimes it made Ivo sad to see the town-boys sledging or throwing snow-balls. When the snow thawed, however, and nature began again to thrive, his heart reverberated to the pulses which beat all round him. He yearned for his free sunny home.

8.

THE HOLIDAYS.

For several weeks before the holidays none of the boys had their minds fixed upon their studies; all skipped and danced with joy at the thought of going home. Ivo and Clement often walked hand in hand, telling each other stories of home. Clement was the son of a scrivener or actuary,--the lowest grade of those officials who form the great political and legal hierarchy of the continental states of Europe. He had had no settled home in his childhood, as his father had been transferred from town to town three or four times during his life.

On the last evening all the boys were packing their trunks, as if on the eve of a march or a retreat. In the morning there was divine service, and, though the singing was loud, it is to be feared that more thoughts were directed to earthly homes than to the heavenly one.

After taking an affectionate leave of Clement, Ivo set out, taking short steps at first, according to the rule among pedestrians, all impatient as he was. Bart kept him company: he was going to an aunt. He was an unpleasant companion, for he wanted to stop at every tavern-sign which showed itself. Ivo never assented until they had reached the valley of the Lower March, where their roads parted. Fortunately he here found some Jewish horse-jockeys from Nordstetten. They were very glad to see him, and he them. They took him in their car and gave him a lift of many miles. He heard of all the births, marriages, and deaths. Ivo thought that these were the three fates between which vibrates the life of the children of men; and, without halting at the redundant spondee, he quoted to himself

"Clotho colum retinet, et Lachesis net, et Atropos occat."[9]

When the road was up hill the travelling traders took their prayer-straps out of their pouches, fastened them to their foreheads and arms and offered up their long devotions. Ivo compared the breath which rose from their moving lips in whiffs of fume, to the incense of the Bible: he honored every creed, and particularly the Jewish one, as the oldest of all. He even glanced into the open prayer-book of his neighbor, and pleased him by showing that he was able to read Hebrew. Ivo admired the ease with which these horse-jockeys read the language: even the principal could not have kept pace with them.

On setting him down again, where they travelled in a direction different from his home, they made him promise not to go all the way to Nordstetten that day, so that he might not injure his health. Walking on silently, Ivo praised his beloved native village, in which every one, Christian and Jew, appeared to be equally good.

Although his thoughts all tended homeward, he was very observant of things around him, and even found time for some general reflections. More than once, when a distant village-spire hove in sight, he said to himself, "How well it is that the church-steeple is always the first thing to be seen as you approach a village! It shows that Christians live there, and that they dedicate their best and finest house to God."

At another time he thought, "These fruit-trees around every village are the best friends of man. Man comes first, cattle next, and then the orchard-trees,--for they also need the special care of man to prune and graft them and remove the caterpillars. How strange it is! All around is grass and puny herbage, and suddenly a great stem rears itself aloft and its crest is all white with blossoms.

"God's earth is full of wondrous beauty,
  A lovely place to dwell upon;
Then to rejoice shall be my duty
  Till in the earth I make my wonne."

Though so well entertained by communing with himself, he entered into conversation with more than one of the travellers he overtook, or who overtook him. They all were pleased with his open, kindly talk; and he quite rejoiced to find the world full of such good-humored people.

It was dark when he reached Hechingen. Though it was but five hours' walk to his home, and he felt no fatigue, he kept his promise to his friends. He wished, moreover, to come home in the daytime. "It was dark when I went away," he said to himself as he sat at the inn, "and it must be light when I return." He was even vain enough to wish that his father's house was at the other end of the village, so that his green knapsack and student's dress might attract universal attention.

The sun shone brightly when Ivo awoke. It was a happier waking than that on which the lantern of the convent used to look down. It was a beautiful day,--a day of jubilee for the birds in the air and the buds on the trees.

He longed for wings; and, in default of them, he flung his cap high in the air as he walked briskly along. He suddenly

stopped, sat down on the wayside, and, repeating the words of Exodus iii. 5,--"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,"--he obeyed the precept. Like an unshod colt, he 'bounded along for a time; but soon he found that the life of the convent had unfitted him for such exercise. Compressing his lips with pain, and resuming his shoes, he again thought of the beautiful Psalm,--"He shall give his angels charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Psalm xci. 11, 12.

At Haigerloch he bought two "pretzels,"--one for his mother and the other for Emmerence. "Didn't she give me the duck when I went away?" he argued to himself, to quiet his ecclesiastical conscience. He avoided the short turns which the footpaths offered, and followed the highroad, fearing to miss his way: besides, he had more of the village to pass through on this route than in going by the way of Muehringen. The nearer home he came, the more his heart bounded within him. Sometimes it all seemed too good to be true, and he dreaded some unforeseen disaster, or even that the weight of his exultation would drag him down: at such times he would sit down to recover his strength.

People were wrong in saying that it was but two hours' walk from Haigerloch to Nordstetten. "The fox must have measured this road and thrown in his tail," said Ivo, repeating the old German proverb: "it is eight hours' walk at least."

Near the beech farm he saw his Brindle pulling a plough. Running up to the ploughman, he asked how Brindle worked, and rejoiced to hear him praised. The brute had forgotten him, however, and let his head droop earthward under the yoke. Ivo was tempted to give him one of the pretzels to eat, but was ashamed of showing his weakness to the workman, and went on.

At the brick-yard he met Hansgeorge's Peter, the one-eyed, who shook his hand sadly, and said, "Constantine came last night."

Welcomed on every side, Ivo passed on. Every thing warmed his heart,--the things which moved, and those which moved not: every hedge, every stack of wood, looked like a friend, and seemed to be telling a good old story: when his father's house stood before him it trembled in his eyes, for the tears were running down his cheeks.

Emmerence sat under the walnut-tree with the school master's child on her lap. Instead of coming to meet him, she ran into the house, crying, "Ivo's come! Ivo's come!"

His mother left the wash-tub, rushed down the stairs, and, with her hands but half dried on her apron, embraced her darling. His father, Mag, and his brothers also came up in high glee; and his mother, with her arms still round his neck, almost carried him into the house.

Emmerence now came up also, saying, "I knew you were coming to-day. Constantine came yesterday. I saw him first, though,--didn't I, aunty?" she added, turning to his mother.

Nat now made his appearance, and, with a hearty "God bless you," he helped Ivo off with his shoes and brought him a pair of slippers.

After the vaulted chambers of the convent, the rooms of the farmhouse seemed no larger and no higher than the nests of a pigeon's cote: he stretched himself to reach the ceiling; but, much as he had grown, this was still out of the question. His mother hastened to make a soup for him and a "parson's roast," as a pancake is called in those parts, because it is the dish generally got up for sudden and unexpected visitors at a parsonage.

Having given his mother one of the "pretzels," Ivo went to the stable to talk to Nat. The beasts seemed to recognise him: the cow particularly was pleased to turn her head toward him and let him tickle her forehead.

"Haven't you brought me any thing?" asked Nat, smiling. Ivo found the remaining pretzel in his pocket and handed it to him in silence. He was thus relieved of the scruple which troubled him, that it might be wrong for him to make Emmerence a present: on returning to the kitchen, however, he heard Emmerence say,--

"Well, aunty, what are you going to give me for bringing you the good news?"

"Take the pretzel he brought for me: Ivo knows I am as thankful as if I had eaten it, but my teeth are giving out."

Ivo was but too well pleased to know that Emmerence had something from him, and highly indignant that the squalling baby forthwith laid her under contribution for half the prize. The baby found but little favor in his eyes at any time: it was so large that when Emmerence carried it--as it always insisted on her doing--she seemed in constant danger of losing her balance and falling. So he said, with some solemnity,--

"You do a sin against yourself and against the baby, Emmerence, if you drag it about all the time: it has strong feet, and ought to learn to walk; and you will drag yourself crooked if you go on so."

She set the child down instantly, and did not take it up again in spite of its crying. Wasn't Ivo a young parson now? and hadn't he said it was a sin?

This little reprimand was almost the only interest Ivo manifested in her to the end of the holidays. So much, he thought, his conscience could not possibly disapprove; but he would not go further. The eyes of the girl were often fixed on him, as if to inquire the cause of his studied indifference. Once only, in a favored moment, he asked, "What has become of your puss?"

"Why, only think, that tinker Caspar, 'the Dog Caspar,' stole it and took its pretty black hide off, and ate poor pussy."

In the afternoon Ivo enjoyed the full honor of being welcomed by all the villagers. He loved to stop at every door; it did his heart good to see people walk up to him as to one who had been in foreign parts, take him by the hand and admire his healthy appearance. Nor was it mere vanity that afforded him this gratification: he felt that he had a nook in the hearts of the eager welcomers, he was more or less beloved; and thus the prevailing desire of his nature was gratified.

At night the most delicious home feeling always overcame him when his mother visited his bedside and saw that he was well covered.

"Christmas white, Easter bright," had come true this year. The day after he came home was Easter Sunday. Every thing was doubly fresh and green. Once more Ivo stood under the walnut-tree, the leaves of which were just peeping out of their buds; once more he was wrapt in contemplation of his pigeons: he could not sing this time, for that would have been unbecoming his station.

When the afternoon service was over, Ivo set out on a walk to Horb. At the "Scheubuss," at Paul's Garden, he found several women seated on the little bridge by the weeping willow which droops its green arches over the runnel. They all rose reverentially at Ivo's greeting: one of them, however, stepped up to him, and, after rubbing her hand very hard on her apron, took that of Ivo. We have not forgotten her, though she has grown quite old: it was the gawk's mother, Maria.

"God bless you, Ivo!" she said. "How you have grown! I won't call you Mr. Bock until you are at the seminary in Rottenburg."

"You must always call me Ivo, aunty."

"No, no: that would never do."

The other women approached, and regarded the young "gentleman" with great attention; but not one ventured to open her mouth.

"How are Matthew and Aloys coming on in America?" asked Ivo.

"Now, how nice that is in you to think of them! I've just had a letter from Aloys. You know he's been married this long time to Mechtilde, the daughter of Matthew of the Hill: they have two children. Oh, if I could only have just one blessed look at them! It's like being half dead to be so uncommon far apart. I must see Mat's children, and Aloys'; and Matthew's wife, the American, I don't know at all. My boys are all the time writing to come and come: if it only wasn't so shocking far to that America! They say they will meet me at New York; and, if it's God's will, I think I *shall* go off after Whitsunday with some emigrants from Rexingen. If our Lord God wishes to take me away He will always know where to find me. Isn't it so?"

Ivo nodded; and Maria, taking from her pocket a paper which was very carefully wrapped up, went on:--"See, here's the last letter: how kind it would be of you to come in and read it to me once more! The schoolmaster is tired of it, and the Jew schoolmaster has read it three or four times too. There's a word in it that neither of 'em can make out: you can, though, I'm sure; for you've got learning."

Ivo went into the house with her, the other women following, first with hesitation and then with an air of great firmness and resolution. All sat down, prepared to listen attentively. Many of the gawk's old friends will be pleased to hear his letter also:--

"NORDSTETTEN ON THE OHIO, AMERICA,
October 18, 18**.

"DEAR MOTHER:--As you don't know how I'm getting along, I will write you all about it. At first I never wrote to you what a hard time I had of it; but now, with God's help, that's all passed and gone. I always thought, 'What's the use of making poor mammy fret about it? she couldn't do any good, anyhow;' so I swallowed it all down, and worked hard and tried to whistle."

Ivo paused a moment. He seemed to be drawing a lesson for his own guidance from what he was reading. He continued:--

"Now things are all put to rights; and it isn't a trifle, either, to build yourself a house, and clear all your fields and turn them over for the first time, and no help or counsel nowhere from a living soul: but now it looks nicer here than at Buchmaier's. Our arms and legs get stiff now and then; but we're all in good health, and that's the best of it. Many of our countrymen are here, and worse off than at home, and have to work at the canals and railroads. There's lots of swindlers here, that tell you all sorts of stories when you first come into the country, until you've spent the last cent in your pocket, and then they're nowhere. There are great hypocrites here as well as there: the voyage cleans, out their stomachs, but their souls are as dirty as ever. But the steamboat-man in Mayence gave us a good introduction to a society of fine men,--all Germans,--who tell you where it's best to go and what's best to be done: so none of us were ruined. I want you to tell all those that talk of coming over not to trust anybody but that man and that introduction. At first, when I used to go away from my guide a little, and run about in New York, while we were waiting for Mat to come on, I used to feel just as if I'd got among a herd of cattle,--God forgive me!--they were men just as much as I am; but they jabbered together just like that French simpleton, Joe, in Frog Alley: he talks a sort of hotchpotchcomambulation too. But it's English what they talk to each other. I can speak it a little too by this time: it's just like German sometimes, only you must handle your mouth as if you'd got your teeth twisted round a green apple. We were a large company at first; but one's gone here and another there. That's all wrong: we Germans ought to stick together. I always used to think only the Wurtembergers were my countrymen; but here they call us all Dutchmen; and when I see one from Saxony I feel just as if he were from the Lower Neckar Valley. I guess I'm writing all sorts of things you don't want to read; but this sort of thoughts go about in my head

so much that they pop out before I know what's what.

"Now, I must tell you something else. Did you notice that I wrote 'Nordstetten' at the top of my letter? Yes; so it is, and so it shall be. I've put up a post not far from my house, with a board and with 'Nordstetten' marked on it in large letters. It won't be long before other people 'll come and settle here, and then they'll keep the name. Then we're going to build a church, just like the church at home: I've picked out the hill for it already, right opposite my barn: we call it the Church Hill now. Then we'll send for a parson from Germany. And my fields have just the same names they used to have at home. I and my Mechtilde often talk about it nights how it'll all come some time or other. If we don't live to see it, why, our children will; and then it'll all be my doing, after all. If one of the Nordstetten students would only come here and be our parson, he'd have a nice place of it; but he'd have to work in the fields some. We choose our own parsons here: we take those we like best, and none of your consistories has any thing to say to us. So the parsons are not the lords over us, neither: here all are equal; they're no better than we are, only that they've got learning and been ordained. Three hours' walk from here we have one: he was born in Rangendingen. The swallows have built nests around my house already. Last year I wrote on a bit of paper, 'God bless you all over there,' and my name under it, and tied it to one of their necks. I thought, in my foolishness, they'd fly to Nordstetten with it some day; but--lo and behold!--she came back again, and she had another bit of paper, with χαιρε [Greek: chaire] on it. Nobody can tell me what that means: it looks just like kaibe;[10] and that would be a shame, wouldn't it?"

"Do you know what it means, Ivo?" asked Maria.

"Yes, Chaire: it is Greek, and means 'Hail.'"

The women lifted up their hands in amazement at Ivo's learning.

"But where did the swallow winter?" asked Maria, again.

"Among the Firelanders, I suppose," answered Ivo; and after a pause he read on:--

"I never knew till I got away from home how finely the larks sing. Only think! there are no larks here at all, and no nightingales either: but a great many other fine birds there are, and splendid pine and oak trees, and the tallest sort of timber.

"Dear mother, I wrote all this a week ago, and when I look over it I think I'm writing stuff and nonsense; but just now I feel as if I was sitting with you before Jacob the blacksmith's house at the well, and people passing by and saying, 'Ha' ye good counsel?' and my heart is so full that I don't know what I ought to say first and what last. We are all in very good health, thank God: we like what we eat and drink, and it feeds us well. We've had to widen all the clothes we brought with us from Germany. It's a good thing Mechtilde has learned to sew.

"Whenever I eat a good dinner I think how nice it would be if my poor mother was here: I could just lay out the best bits for her, and say, 'There, mother: that's for you to help yourself; there's a choice morsel;' and I know you would like living in our house.

"Our Bat is getting on finely: he never had any thing to ail him yet. Oh, if that dear little Maria was living yet! She would have been a year old next Michaelmas. She was a sweet little angel; she was only three weeks old, but when you called her by name she would look at you so cunning, and grab at your eyes. On All-Souls' day we are going to put an iron cross on her grave. Oh, my! oh, my! the dear child is in heaven now, and heaven is the real America, after all!

"I must write more about my household-matters. I oughtn't to think of the child so much; it works me too hard. I say, as the parson said, 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away: the name of the Lord be praised.'

"If the Lord will only keep us all in good health now! The Lord has always been very gracious to me: as far as the cattle go, I haven't lost one of them yet. There's nothing I like to think of more than that the cattle always have plenty to eat here. To the last day of my life I shall never forget what a misery it was when feed was so scarce, just the day before I went to Stuttgard, when there wasn't hardly a blade of grass on the ground. Do you remember what it used to be to get up in the morning and not give the poor beasts a quarter of a good breakfast, and then to see the flesh falling off their ribs? I often felt so unked I could have run away. Here the cows run about pasturing all the year round, and never know what it is to want; and yet I never had to kill one of them for having overeaten itself. Over there they stand in the stable all the year round, and then, when they do get into a clover-field, they eat till they burst. And just as it is with the cattle, so it is with men. Over there they have to stand in a stable, tied down by squires and clerks and office-holders, until their talons get so long that they can't walk any more, and the minute you let 'em out they go capering about like mad. This is what somebody was saying very finely in a public meeting the other day. Mother, it's a fine thing, a public meeting: it's just as if you were to go to church. And yet it isn't just so, neither; for everybody may speak there that can and likes: all are equal there. I want to tell you how they do it, and yet I believe I can't, exactly: only I must tell you that our Matthew is one of the principal speakers: they've put him on the committee two or three times, and the name of Matthew Schorer is one for which the people have respect. I have spoken in public once or twice too. I don't know how it is; at first my heart thumped a little, but then I just felt as if I was speaking to you, just free 'from the liver,' as we used to say in Germany. What they were disputing about was, a German, a Wurtemberger, or, as we say over here, a Swobe,[11] came here, and he'd been an officer, and the king had pardoned him; he'd got up a conspiracy among the military, and afterward he betrayed all his comrades: here he gave himself out for a friend of freedom; but a letter came from over there to say that he was too bad for the gallows, and the devil had kicked him out of his cart. So they disputed about it for a long time whether he could be an officer here or not, and at last I said, 'I can find a handle to fit that hoe. Let him show a letter from his comrades to say that he did the fair thing by them: I can't believe that any Wurtemberger could be so mean as to betray his king first and his comrades afterward.' And they agreed to do just what I told them; but, when I looked at the fellow's face again, I thought, 'Well, that trouble's for nothing: he looks as if he'd stolen the horns off the goat's head.'

"I'm an officer in the militia,--a lieutenant: they chose me because I was in the military over there and understand the business. We choose our own officers here, for here every thing is free. The squire in Nordstetten was only a corporal, after all. If I was to come home---- No; come to think of it, I wouldn't dress like an officer, neither. I'm a free citizen, and that's better than to be an officer or a general. I wouldn't swop with a king. Mother, it's a great country is America. You've got to work right hard, that's a fact; but then you know what you're working for: the tithes and taxes don't take the cream off your earnings. I live here on my farm, and no king and no emperor has any thing to say to me; and as for a presser, they don't know what that is hereabouts, at all. Good gracious! When I think how he used to travel through the village with the beadle, with a long list in his hand, while the people in the houses were weeping and wailing and slamming their doors; and then he would bring a pewter plate, a copper kettle, a pan, or a lamp, from a poor Jew's house to the squire! It is a shame there's so much suffering with us: it seems to me it might easily be done-away with. And yet I wouldn't coax anybody to come over. It's no trifle to be so far away from home, even if you're ever so well off. Every now and then something makes me feel so soft that, when I think of it, I am ashamed of myself; and then I want to bundle up right-away and go to Germany. I must see it once more while I have an eye open to look at it. I can't tell you how I feel: sometimes I almost go to pieces, and feel like howling as if I was a dog. I know that that would never do for a man, but then I can't help feeling so, and I needn't conceal any thing from you, you know. I think, after all, maybe it only comes of longing to see you so much. More than a thousand times I've said to myself, 'If only my mammy was here too,--my dear, good mammy; if she'd only once sit on that bench there!' How glad you'd be to see the big milk-pans! and, oh, to think of

your seeing little Bat, and the one that's coming soon! If I have ever done you any harm, forgive me; for you may be sure there's not a living soul on earth that loves you more than I do.

"I have been resting a little, and now I'm going on. What a fine thing it is that we've learned to read and write properly! I'm always grateful to you for having made me learn it. But you mustn't think I'm out of spirits. To-be-sure, I'm not so full of fun as I sometimes was, years ago, but then I've grown older, and had a good deal of experience; but still, sometimes I am so glad, and feel so kindly for every thing in the world, that I begin to whistle and dance and sing. Sometimes I feel a little pang when I call something to mind; but then I say, 'Whoa!' and shake myself like a horse, and away with it. I and Mechtilde live as happy as two children, and our Bat has bones in him as strong as a young calf, and muscles like the kernel of a nut.

"On Sunday, when we go to church, we take salt with us, and what we need besides; and Mechtilde once said we get heavenly salt for it in the mass and the sermon, and salt our souls with it. Mechtilde often makes fine riddles and jokes. We've bought a story-book, too, about Rinaldo Rinaldini: it's a shuddersome story of knights and robbers, and we've read it move than ten times and the other day, when I overslept myself, she sang a song out of it and waked me. Talking of songs, I want to ask a favor of you, but you mustn't laugh at me.

"You see, when a fellow gets out alone into the world and wants to sing by himself, he finds out, all of a sudden, that of ever so many songs he only knows the beginning, and that the rest of it he has only just sung after somebody else; and then I want to pull my head off because it won't come into my mind; but it won't come in, nohow. There's a good many things just so you think you know them until somebody says, 'Now, old fellow, do it alone, will ye?'

"Now, I'd like to ask you--but you mustn't laugh at me--to please get the old schoolmaster to write down all the Nordstetten songs. I'll pay him for it well. You won't forget, will you? And then send it to me, or bring it when you come.

"I must tell you something else, too. Only think, mother! last Tuesday three weeks, as I was sitting at my wagon and mending the tongue,--you can't run to the wagoner's here every five minutes: you must do such things yourself,--what should I hear but somebody say to me, 'Hard at it, Aloys?' and, as I looked up, who should stand there but Long Heartz's Jake, who was in the Guards? We didn't use to be the best of friends; but I forgot all about it, and fell on his neck and almost hugged him to death. I do believe if George himself was to come I'd shake hands with him just to think he came from Nordstetten. I called the whole house together and cut the throat of a turkey. Jake ate his dinner with me just as anybody else would. The laws about eating with Jews, and so on, are for the Old World, and not for the New.

"Jake stayed a week and helped me work in the field: he can do it just as well as a Christian. I was so glad to see he's come to understand that, for a soldier who has honor in him, it isn't the thing to run about peddling. He's going to buy land somewhere hereabouts. I'm helping him do it. I must have my dear Nordstetten Jews here too, for it wouldn't be Nordstetten without them. After that, he's going to join the militia. He'll be an officer before long, most likely. In the evening we used to sit together, I and my Mechtilde, my brothers-in-law and my sisters-in-law, and their boys and girls, and Jake, and we'd sing the songs we used to sing at home; and then I felt just as I did that time Mary Ann got her new distaff. But you mustn't suppose I think very often of Mary Ann. I love my Mechtilde very much, and she loves me too. I wish every couple loved each other as much as we do, and lived as happily together.

"Now, about your coming here. I don't want to beg you too hard: Mat'll write all about it. But, if it's possible---- No, no, I won't beg you. Jake tells me that our Xavier goes to see Valentine's Mag: well, she won't be afraid of the sea I guess, and he can bring her over too. It's all one now, Nordstetten here or Nordstetten there.

"Write me an answer right soon. Only send the letter to Mat, as you did before: he goes to town oftener than I do.

"Now, good-bye to you, and I hope this will find you very well indeed. Think of me sometimes. My Mechtilde and my Bat and my parents-in-law send you their best loves. My sister-in-law has taught little Bat to say, when they ask him, 'Where's your grandmother?' 'Over there in the Black Forest.' I am your loving son.

"ALOYS SCHORER.

"See how I reach my little hand Far over to your distant land.

"That's my Bat's hand: I drew it, dear mother, just as he laid it on the paper, because there was room enough."

Ivo was asked to read Mat's letter also; but he promised to do so another time, and took his leave, the grateful mother, who was wiping the tears from her eyes, having accompanied him to the door. Outside of the village he saw his sister Mag walking in the meadow with Xavier. He now understood what it was that often made her so disputatious and discontented: her father would not tolerate her acquaintance with "the American," as he called Xavier.

With a skip and a bound, Ivo shook off the oppressive dignity of his station. He danced and sung as he had formerly done, always clearing the heaps of broken stones at the roadside at a bound. The letter of Aloys had made a great impression upon him. He saw in it the picture of a truly honest living,--a life rendered happy by hard work and independence. For the first time he perceived how all the corporal powers of a student lie fallow, and learned to see that it was this which often so greatly "unsettles" the minds of those most favored by natural endowments among the youth of a country. He thought of going to America to be parson and farmer at one and the same time, to go visiting his sister, to travel from farm to farm, instructing the children, and fostering the effort to look upward among all with whom he conversed.

Absorbed with such reflections, he reached Horb. The town did not look near so fine, nor the houses so large, as before: he had seen larger ones. The chaplain was delighted with his former pupil, and Mrs. Hankler, who was ill in bed, said that it made her well only to see him. The Judge's sons were no longer there; for, as it may be remembered, their

father had been transferred to another district.

It was night when Ivo returned home. In the village he found Constantine leading Peter by the hand, and walking the street with the half-grown boys, singing. He taught them new songs, and made them laugh uproariously by recounting all sorts of tricks which he had played upon his teacher at the convent. Ivo walked with them quietly till they reached his father's house, when he said, "Good-night," and went in.

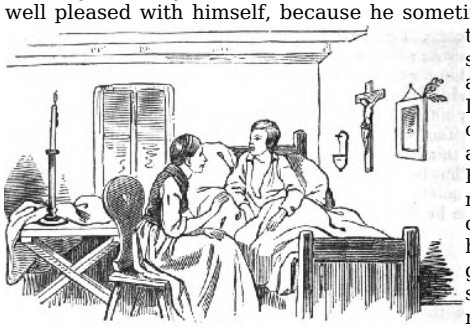
Throughout the holidays he was left much to himself. He would either take solitary walks in the fields, or practise at home on a bugle which he had borrowed from Conrad the baker. His mother always urged him to go out and not mope about the house. Sometimes he would walk out with the new schoolmaster. Constantine he never associated with, except when it was not to be avoided.

A deep sorrow stole into his heart when he became aware of the half-concealed dissensions existing between his parents. Before leaving home he had been so habituated to all the incidents of the household that it did not occur to him to speculate about them. At the convent his imagination had pictured home-life as a paradise embosomed in endless peace: all harsh and uninviting associations had disappeared from his memory. Thus, he returned to contrast with a highly-wrought ideal the sober realities of every-day existence; and much that he saw could not fail to shock him, and perhaps to appear even worse than it really was. He came fresh from a household where all things moved according to external laws fixed by unvarying regulations,--where discussion or contradiction was out of the question as much as in the interior of a piece of mechanism; and, though depressed by the rigor of these ordinances, he did not understand that in the free constitution of a family, where each one acts for the whole according to his individual judgment, much difference of opinion and many an altercation is almost inevitable. Even the loud tone of voice in which everybody spoke was not pleasant; and his father's manner, in particular, was such as to cause him frequently to shake his head. When his mother listened in silence to Valentine's expositions of his plans of building houses "for sale" and without previous orders, he would cry out, "There it is, you see: you never care a button for what I say: whether a dog barks, or whether I talk, it's all one to you." If she made objections, he said, "It's the old story: whatever I want to do never suits you." If Christina treated him gently and kindly, like one who needed indulgence, he would perceive it at once, and curse and swear. If, on the contrary, she was firm and decided, and stood her ground, he said, "All the world knows you don't live for me, but for your children: wouldn't you be glad if I was to die?" And then he would sit down, refusing to eat, or drink, or speak: he would go to the inn, but without getting any thing to eat there,--as he feared it would make people talk and grieve his wife,--so that he generally went to bed without his supper.

When such things happened, Christina would look at Ivo with indescribable pain. She saw all the anguish which her troubles wrote upon his face, and redoubled her efforts to conceal all things and smooth them over. The other children were accustomed to such scenes and no longer distressed by witnessing them.

Seeing the necessity of an explanation with her youngest son, she sat down one evening by his bedside and said,--

"Do you see? your father is the best and most upright man in the world; but he has an unlucky disposition, and is not well pleased with himself, because he sometimes neglects things and spoils a job, and things won't go as he likes; and then he wants other people to be all the better pleased with him. When he sees that that isn't so, and it can't be so, his spirit rises up in him still more: and yet I owe it to my children not to let things go backward. As for myself, I'm willing to eat dry bread all my life; but, for the sake of my children, I can't sit by and see us beggared in five years and my children jostled about among strangers. I know he loves me better than anybody else in the world. He would shed his last drop of blood for me, and I for him; but he wants to mortgage the house and the fields, and to go to work with Koch, the other carpenter, to build houses for sale; and that's what I won't do, and no ten horses shall drag me into it. It's my children's property, and I must be a good mother to them. We're not rich people any more, and the poor mustn't suffer by our losses, either: they must have their gifts just as before, if I must squeeze it out of my own eating. Yes, my dear Ivo, take your mother's advice, and don't forget the poor. The corn grows on the lea, though you give away some of it; and our Lord blesses the bread in the cupboard, so that it nourishes better. You love your father dearly too, don't you, dear Ivo? He is the best man in the world. You honor him, don't you? You are his pride, though he don't tell you so, for it's not in him to say it. When he comes home from the Eagle, where they're always praising you so much because Christian the tailor's son Gregory writes so well of you, you could twist him round your little finger. Just make up your mind not to be distressed by any thing, and don't be sad. What one firmly resolves to do, one can do, believe me."



Ivo nodded and kissed his mother's hand; but a deep sadness stole over him. The paradise of his parental home had sunk in ruins, over which the figure of his mother alone hovered like an angel of light; and once he said to himself, very softly, "Her name is not Christina in vain: she is just like the Savior. She bears the heaviest cross with a smile, and thinks not of herself, but of others."

Thus it came to pass that he looked forward to the end of the holidays with far less regret than he would have supposed when he first returned home.

9.

THE FRIENDS.

In the first few days of his renewed convent-life the old home-sickness returned. He reproached himself with not having enjoyed his holidays to the full, with having suffered himself to be put out by things which were not so bad as they seemed; but he had made up his mind to profit by the example of Aloys, and not add to his mother's troubles by writing her sorrowful letters.

During his former stay at the convent his thoughts had been so much at home that he had not identified himself with the peculiar circumstances and associations of this abode. All this was now otherwise. "My mother says we can do any thing we really want to do," he said to himself, "and that shall henceforth be my motto."

Ivo and Clement had welcomed each other warmly in the presence of the other boys. Everybody had a great deal to tell. At noon, when the class were taking their usual ramble, Ivo and Clement, as if by a tacit understanding, lagged behind; and, under a blooming hawthorn, where no one could see them, they fell upon each other's necks and kissed each other fervently. The larks roystered in mid-air, and the hawthorn waved to a gentle breeze. With faces radiant with joy, their arms flung around each other's necks, they went back to the road and rejoined their comrades. Ivo made a long imaginary speech, of which he only pronounced aloud the words "still and holy," and looked into the shining depths of Clement's eye, and they grasped each other's hands. Then Clement struck Ivo and ran away to the others. Ivo well understood this as a hint to conceal their league and covenant from general observation. They mingled with the others; but, soon finding themselves side by side again, they struck, chased, and dodged each other, until they were again separated from the crowd; then they began a sham wrestle, which soon turned to a warm embrace, and each murmured, "Dear Ivo," "Dear Clement." So inventive was this young friendship in its early bud.

Both of the boys now entered upon a new and happy life. Ivo had never had a brother's heart of his own age; Clement, in the frequent migrations of his father's family, had never attached himself to any one but an elder sister. Now Ivo, when he awoke in the morning, looked up joyfully and said, "Good-morning, Clement," although Clement slept in another apartment. Though away from home, he was a stranger no longer. The convent had ceased to be a place of coercion and unpitying law: he did all things willingly, because his Clement was with him. It cost him no further resolution to write cheerful letters home. All his life was a life of pleasure; and his mother often shook her head when she read his sounding periods. Clement, who had read innumerable fairy-tales and books of knight-errantry, introduced his friend to a world of wonders and strange delights. He made two banished princes of Ivo and himself, and a giant Goggolo of the director; and for a time they always addressed each other by the names of their imaginary characters.

The world of wonders and fairy-tales, which strive to outdo the riddle of existence by still more puzzling combinations and thus in a manner to expound the world of every day, this self-oblivious dream of a toying, childish fancy, had not hitherto met the mental gaze of Ivo. What Nat had told him was too much intertwined with the rude and simple experiences of field and forest life, and knew nothing of subterranean castles of gold and precious stones. He was entirely unprepared for the gorgeous trappings of these magic gardens and these cities at the bottom of the sea.

The hawthorn was venerated by both as the trysting-tree of their friendship, and they never passed it without looking at it and at each other. Ivo, whom we already know as well versed in the Bible, once said, "We have just had the same luck as Moses. Jehovah appeared to him in the bush, and it was burning, but yet was not consumed. Do you know what Jehovah means? I am he who shall be: it is the future of Hava. We shall be friends in future too, as we are now, sha'n't we?"

"I'll tell you a story," replied Clement. "Once there was a princess on an island: her name wasn't Leah, like the old lady in the Bible, but Hawa. She hadn't red eyes, either, but beautiful dark-blue ones. But she couldn't abide thorns: the least little thorn was a thorn in her eye, and the moment she saw one she always cried out, 'Oh dear! it is in me; I feel it in my fine dark-blue eyes.' So to please her they had to cut off every thing on the island which bore thorns, and to grub up every bit of the roots; and when the princess died they buried her; and, to punish her for hating thorns, a thorn grew out of each of her two eyes, and they bear beautiful blue eyes to this day, just like those the princess had, and they call them hawthorns."

Thus Clement ended his story with a triumphant smile. Ivo regarded him with a bright, merry face. Whatever Clement told was so delightful! His words clung to each other like the pearls of a beautiful necklace: all Clement did or said was far beyond compare with any thing else in the wide, wide world.

At Ivo's suggestion they had vowed to each other to be great men, and they now encouraged each other to the most unremitting industry. Every thing was easily done, as each did it for the other's sake. Ivo even kept the head-place in the class for a whole year. Clement was not so lucky, because his imagination always ran away with him. Whatever he saw excited him, and he forgot the subject on which he should have been engaged: when the teacher addressed questions to him he awoke as from a dream and answered awry.

The secret league, however, could not long remain concealed from their companions; for, as lovers often think themselves unperceived while giving the most unmistakable signs of affection, so fared our friends. Nevertheless, Ivo's high position soon put a period to the bantering which was at first attempted, and it was not long before others endeavored to thrust themselves into the league of friendship. But the gates were closed against them: Clement was particularly vigilant, and the advances ceased. Only when Bart persisted, with great submissiveness, in frequenting their company, did Ivo make an exception. He was favored to walk by their side after dinner, and to be near them when they were playing in the yard. When Bart had eaten his fill he was quite a bright lad and anxious to learn. He was ready to do any thing which could bring him near the head of the class, too. Fond as he was of Ivo and Clement, therefore, their high position in the class was one of the causes of his attachment; nor, by a special stipulation of Clement's, was he ever admitted into the inmost sanctuary of their friendship.

Leaving fairy-tales behind them, our friends entered upon another field, somewhat nearer the domain of reality: they began to look for historic examples to strive after for ideals. Once, on a long walk in the direction of Blaubeuren, they found themselves on a lofty hill on the edge of a rooky precipice, with the lovely valley of the Blau before them, and the cathedral of Ulm and the Danube visible in the distance. This spot Clement had specially ordained as the one where they were to disclose their aspirations to each other.

"Who is your ideal, Ivo?" asked Clement.

"Sixtus. My mother always says any thing can be achieved if you really will it. Sixtus showed that in his own example."

"So you want to be a pope?"

"If it should come about, why not? No harm trying."

"I have a much less saintly personage: my ideal is Alexander the Great." He did not explain in what respect he desired to emulate him; for Bart fell in, in a whimpering tone,--

"And whom shall I take for my ideal?"

"Ask the principal," said Clement, solemnly, tipping the wink to Ivo.

The moment they returned home, Bart knocked at the principal's door; and, on being invited to come in, he said, trembling and stammering,--

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I wished to ask you,--I wished to choose an ideal, and I don't know whom to take."

The principal stood still a while, and then said, with uplifted finger, "God."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said Bart, bowing and scraping himself out. He ran to his friends and told them, joyfully, "I've got one: I've got an ideal now."

"Whom?"

"God," said Bart, holding up his finger.

"Who told you so?" asked Clement, pulling Ivo by the sleeve.

"The principal."

Ivo, disregarding the stolen hints of his friend, explained to Bart that God could never be an ideal to any man except in a figurative sense, because it is impossible for any man to become almighty or omniscient: God must be the highest and final goal, of course; but the saints were to be found on the way to him, and were nearer to us and more accessible to our prayers, and perhaps we might come in some degree to resemble them.

"Saintly Ivo, I'll have nothing to do with you," said Clement, angrily, turning away. He was vexed to have his good jokes spoiled in this way, and did not speak a word to Ivo all that night and the next morning.

In many other respects Bart was the occasion of disagreements between his friends. Clement had taken it into his head that the interloper deprived him of a part of the friendship of his Ivo. He now seized various opportunities of feeding this jealousy. Once he did not exchange a word with Ivo for a whole week; while his eyes followed him everywhere as with a passion bordering on insanity. On the last evening he threw a bit of paper on the book Ivo was reading, on which he had written, "Come to the top of the church-steeple at the stroke of twelve to-night, or we part forever."

Ivo tossed about his bed in an agony of fear lest he should oversleep the time. When the first stroke of twelve was heard, he stole from his chamber; Clement came out of the one in which he slept at the same instant. They went up the turret-stairs in silence, and, when the last stroke had sounded and died away, Clement began:--

"Give me your hand and promise me to have nothing more to do with Bart, or I'll throw myself down this instant."

Ivo took his friend's hand, shuddering.

"Not a word! Yes or no!" muttered Clement.

"Yes, yes. But I pity the poor fellow. You've grown very strange this last week."

Clement embraced and kissed him, descended the steps in silence, and returned to his chamber.

Next day Clement was, as he had always been, cheerful and warm. He never permitted Ivo to speak by daylight of their nightly meeting. Bart's grief at his dismissal was not of long duration.

While Clement's restless spirit thus flitted about in search of adventure, Ivo experienced a different sort of disquietude. His body had grown with almost greater rapidity than his mind, and he was tall and broad-shouldered; but, when he sat at the desk with his books, the blood seemed to foam through his veins in torrents, often obliging him to get up and restore his internal balance by violent motions. He would fain have carried a heavy load suspended in his arms; but nothing offered resistance to his powers except sometimes a knotty construction in a classic author. Gymnastic exercises were not very assiduously cultivated, nor did Ivo take much interest in them: he longed to accomplish some real task with a definite object. In walking with his friend he would often complain that he was not allowed to plough or to reap. Inured from his childhood to bodily activity, during his visit to the grammar-school the long daily walk had compensated for the inaction of his arms: now he felt like a giant whose club has been taken from him and a sewing-needle thrust into his fingers.

Once he said to Clement, "Do you know I am so much troubled at having a scruple in regard to the Bible? it says that the great chastisement for original sin is that in the sweat of his brow shall man earn his bread: now, to my mind hard work, instead of a punishment, is the greatest delight."

"Oh," said Clement, "that's in the Old Testament. It's meant for the Jews, and it just suits them; for hard work is their favorite aversion."

Thus early did he stumble on the familiar device of the theologians when hard pushed in regard to some passage in the Old Testament. Clement did not suffer the matter to rest here, however. He confessed his own longing to incur dangers and to wander through distant countries. They even talked frequently of a flight from the convent. They pictured to themselves the romance of arriving on a distant island, struggling with wild beasts and subjugating the virgin soil. Of course the project was never executed. The laws of the convent and the ties of home were too strong for them.

The warmth of their friendship increased from day to day and bridged over all the chasms which the difference of their dispositions might have caused. Ivo forfeited his place at the head of the class without regret, and allowed even Bart to rise above him. This external abasement almost pleased him, for it marked his distaste for his studies. The consciousness of being better than he seemed was grateful to him and gave him a certain independence of the outward world. He formed a secret league with the wood-cutters, the lowest servants of the convent. He swung the axe with a vigor as if he would have cleft the globe. At length one of the professors detected these irregularities; and Ivo atoned for them in the lock-up of the establishment.

Thus, from having been one of the best and most diligent of the pupils, Ivo had sunk to be the lowest in the class and the most obstreperous.

At the arrival of the holidays the friends would part with almost feverish sorrow, consoling themselves with the hope of meeting again, and yet wishing never to return to the convent. On the way home, the world without had lost its lustre in Ivo's eyes, and the people he met no longer appeared so good and kind: the world within him had altered. At home he was not so shy of Constantine as formerly, and the state of things in his father's house had ceased to weigh upon his spirits: having learned that no man on earth is entirely happy within himself, he had no more reason to wonder at the marks of unhappiness which characterized the social relations of life and of men.

The gorgeous fabric of the ideal had sunk into ashes before him. Occasionally a fervent prayer would lift him above the jars and discords of earthly being; but even into these heavenly arcana would the misgiving of an insufficiency pursue him: he was very unhappy. People took his disordered air for a mark of over-application. It stung him to the soul when his mother begged him not to study too hard: he could not explain to her what troubled him; it was not even clear to himself. Thus, in the fulness of youth and health, he felt tired of life and weary of the earth: he had not mastered the riddle of existence, and fancied that death was the only solution.

In his last vacation before going to Tuebingen, he experienced a heavy loss: he no longer found Nat in the house. Mag, having overcome the opposition of her father, had married Xavier and gone with him to America. There was thus a lack of female help about the house, and Valentine's sons were old enough to do the field-work themselves. Nat was discharged: no one knew whither he had gone: the pigeon-cote was empty, and the beasts in the stable seemed to share Ivo's sorrow for his departed friend.

On the other hand, Emmerence now lived in the house as maid-of-all-work. She had grown up to be a strong, hearty girl, a little short and square in figure,--what is usually called "buxom:" she would have been classed with the comelier half of the village girls. It was long since Ivo had bestowed any attention upon her, so entirely had Clement occupied his heart. Whole vacations had passed without his even exchanging a word with her. Now he sometimes eyed her askance, but always turned away the moment she detected him. Once only, when he found her so cheerfully engaged in the stable, he said, "That's right in you, Emmerence, to take good care of the cattle: only don't forget the dun and the cow."

"I know they're your favorites," she replied; "I'm so glad you haven't given up liking them." And, as if to wake a reminiscence of his childhood, she sang, while filling the cow's manger,--

"Far up on the hill is a white, white horse,
  A horse as white as snow;
He'll take the little boys that are good little boys
  To where they want to go.
"The little boys and the good little boys

Sha'n't go too far away;
The little girls that are good little girls
Must go as far as they."

Ivo went silently to the field in which he had once spent a whole day ploughing with Nat: it seemed as if some clue to his whereabouts must be hidden among the stones. He envied his brothers who were at work here, who shared their joys and sorrows at a common board, who had no one to obey but their natural superiors.

On his return to the convent he attached himself still more closely to Clement, as if to indemnify himself for the loss of his earlier friend.

The last summer spent in Ehingen was a little less monotonous than the others. Clement, whose home was in a largely Protestant town, had acquaintances among the pupils of the neighboring Protestant convent, (for by that name the classical school was still called,) of Blaubeuren, who were a little less rigidly restrained than those of Ehingen. They sometimes came to Ehingen and went to the principal, one of them saying that he was a "fellow-countryman" of Clement's, and the other that he sustained the same mysterious relation to Ivo, and so on: the principal allowed the "countrymen" to make a half-holiday of it: they would saunter to the next village, and there, with festive songs and over the social glass, Ivo exchanged many a pledge of good-fellowship with the Protestant conventuaries. Neither they nor he were free,--although the Blaubeuren men had one or two immunities more than the others.

The time of student-life stood before the eyes of all these youths much like a taper-girt Christmas-tree before the visions of a German baby: they stretched out their hands impatiently to grasp the gilded nuts suspended from the boughs; and, though their clerical vocation was destined to cut down much of the liberties to which they looked forward, yet even what remained was far too slow in coming.

At last autumn set in. On the eve of their departure, Ivo and Clement went to the hawthorn where their friendship took its rise, and each of them broke off a twig and set it in his cap: then, taking each other's hand, they renewed their vow of eternal devotion. Ivo also promised to pay Clement a visit at Crailsheim during the holidays.

To quit a place of long abode, whether we have been happy or unhappy in living there, is always attended with regret: the mantle of the past drops away, and we know that we shall never return to the spot the same as we leave it: these houses, these gardens, and these streets are the birthplaces of a lot in life. Here the friends had first met, here their minds had risen to heights unthought of before, and here they separated with heartfelt sorrow. They vowed that in old age they would travel hither again and seek out the silent playgrounds of their youthful thoughts.

10.

A MEETING.

Having rested but a few days at Nordstetten, Ivo set out to visit his friend, whose home was at the other end of Wurtemberg, on the borders of Franconia. This brought him for the first time to the hill-top which had occupied his thoughts on the evening before Gregory's first mass, when he had thought that from there he might climb into heaven at once. Now he knew that there is no place on earth whence the entrance into heaven is open: alas! the goal itself now eluded his sight, and he asked, hopelessly, "Whither?" He looked for heaven upon earth, and knew not how to grasp it.

In silent thought he wandered through the towns and villages, watching the busy doings of men with curious eyes: the riddle of existence became more and more inexplicable. The vintagers were out in the fields, singing songs, firing off salutes of triumph; but Ivo only asked, "Are you making the wine which shall turn into blood?"

On the evening of the third day he was wandering toward the good town of Schwaebisch-Hall, in a bright sunset, just as that had been which he had seen in the field with Nat. He stood still, and thought sadly of the humble friend he had lost forever. His eyes fell upon a shepherd who stood with his back to the road, leaning upon his staff and looking into the fire of the sky. He sang,--

"Up yonder, up yonder,
At the heavenly gate,
A poor soul is standing
In sorrowful strait."

Something like a thrill of premonition passed through Ivo's veins: he ran into the field to ask the shepherd how far it was to Hall. The dog barked at him, and the shepherd turned round, saying, "Be quiet, Bless." With a cry of "Is it you?" Ivo lay in the arms of Nat.

There was no end of questions and answers. Late in the evening Ivo said, "Oh, I must go already; I must see to get a night's lodging somewhere."

"Why?" asked Nat, pointing to his red van: "don't you like the Red Cart Hotel? Stay with me; I'll huddle into one corner, and you shall sleep well enough; or, if you'd rather, I'll stay up all night: there's a beautiful star going to rise at two o'clock."

Ivo was quite ready to sleep with Nat.

"Are you hungry?" inquired Nat, again. "There's a cellar to my house."

He brought bread and milk and made a little fire to warm the milk for Ivo. Then, taking away the prop by which the rear end of the van was held above ground during the day, he said, "There! now we can sleep soundly: the face must be

turned toward sunrise."

It often happens that we begin to talk of the most indifferent things precisely when our minds are full of the most important matters. Ivo asked, "What do those queer characters mean, formed by the brass studs in this leather strap?"

"Those are the three great heavenly signs, and they protect the cattle against evil spirits. That's all I know about them."

As formerly in the days of childhood, Ivo sat at the field-side with Nat and partook of his frugal fare: but it was night; they were far from home, and many things had occurred in the mean time.

"How is Emmerence doing?" asked Nat.

"She is my mother's maid now."

"If you weren't going to be a parson, by George, you ought to have married her."

"So I would have done," said Ivo, with a firm voice, the darkness concealing the blush which overspread his features.

In answer to Ivo's inquiries in regard to Nat's fortunes, the latter answered, at length:--

"You're old enough now to be told all about it. Who knows whether I shall ever see you again? and I want you to hear it all from my own lips; for you're my heart's brother. I wasn't born in your parts, but on the other side of the Black Forest, toward the Rhine. As you come out of Freiburg, and go through the 'Kingdom of Heaven' and the 'Valley of Hell,' just as you get to the top of the 'Hell-Scramble' you see on your right a valley in which runs the Treisam, turning the wheels of ever so many foundries, saw-mills, and gristmills; and, if you go up the hill on the other side,--they call it the 'Wind-Corner,'--you see a great farm-house, the Beste farmer's house,--and he was my father. You may think it's a pretty fine sort of farm: it has sixty or seventy cows, and no need of buying a handful of hay.

"They don't live in villages there, as you do and as they do hereabout. Each farmer lives by himself in the midst of his own lands. The house is all made of wood: only the foundation is of stone. The windows are close to each other on the east side: a porch runs all round the house, and the roof hangs far over. It is a straw roof, which has grown gray with age, and makes the house warmer than the finest castle. If you ever can, you must go there some day, just to see where your Nat was raised. Our fields reach far up the hill and away down to the Treisam, and we had two hundred acres of woodland,--enough to cut ten thousand florins' worth of wood every year. It was glorious. Wherever you look, it's all your own, and all in apple-pie order. We were three children. I was the oldest, and I had a brother and a sister. In those parts, when the father dies or gives up farming, the farm isn't divided, but the eldest son takes it all, and the father makes an estimate how much money he ought to pay his brothers and sisters. If one of the children is dissatisfied and goes to law, the Government divides the farm. But such a thing was never done except once or twice, and never turned out well. Four hundred yards from our house, on a little patch of field, a widow had a lonely cabin, and lived there with her only daughter. They were the third generation of the descendants of younger children, and poor, very poor, but good as angels,--or, at least, I thought so. The mother was one of those lean, lank women that can always be pleasant and agreeable: as for Lizzie,--no, there wasn't a false vein about her; I will say that to my dying day. They supported themselves by making straw hats; for over there, on the other side of the mountain, in the Glotter Valley, the women-folks wear round, yellow straw hats, just as the gentlemen do in the cities, and the men wear black straw hats. A hat made by Lizzie of the Wind-Corner always sold for three groats more than another; and if a girl was ever so ugly and put one of her hats on it made her pretty. Lizzie had hands as delicate and smooth as a saint's; and yet she could work hard enough in the fields, too. When she sat at the window sewing, I often used to stand outside and watch her, and if she stuck her finger it seemed to go through all my bones. My father soon saw how matters stood between me and Lizzie, and would not hear of it; but I would sooner have died than live without Lizzie: so my father sent me away to the saw-mill. The saw-mill doesn't belong to our inheritance, but my father bought it. There I stayed; and through the week I never cast eyes on a living creature except the child that carried me my dinner and the workmen bringing down the logs and hauling off the boards. At night I used to run for miles, just to have one word with Lizzie. Then, all of a sudden, my father died, and left the whole property to my brother; and I was to have ten thousand florins, and my sister the same. You can't see ten thousand florins: it's hardly as much as you can cut timber for in a year. My sister married a watchmaker in Naustadt. I was wild with rage, and said I wouldn't go out of the house: I would go to law. One night I went over to Lizzie, and, when I looked into the window, who do you think was sitting in there, with his arm round Lizzie's waist, kissing her? My brother! And the old witch was standing beside them, smirking till her face was as long again as usual. I up and into the house, out with my knife, and my brother lay on the floor with a cut in his side,--all done before I knew where I was."

Nat sighed deeply, and was silent a long time. At last he continued:--"My brother never moved: Lizzie fell on her mother's neck, and cried, 'Oh, mother, this is your doing! Go away, Nat: I can't see you any more.'

"I ran away as if the devil was dragging me in chains, and every now and then I stopped and wished to hang myself on a tree. I met George the blacksmith, and went home with him, and hid myself in his house till the next day. A thousand times I prayed to God to take my life and save me from the guilt of my brother's death. I laid my hand on my heart, and swore from that time forth to lead a penitent life; and the Lord heard me. Next morning, very early, George the blacksmith came to the shed where I was lying buried in the hay, and said, 'Your brother is living yet, and may get well.'

"I went off over hill and dale, left every thing to my brother, and hired myself to Buchmaier as a shepherd. I did not like to be among men any more, but wanted to live alone in the fields. Singout, my dog, was my only friend. I used to tell you about him, you remember? I lost him shamefully."

Here Nat stopped again: his new dog crept to his side and looked sadly into his face, as if to show his regret that he could not compensate him for his loss.

"As I lived alone in the fields," Nat went on, "I used to study the herbs, and to gather them and make drinks of them: once in winter one of the hands at Buchmaier's had the ague so badly that it almost shook him out of his bed; and I helped him. From that time on the people in the neighborhood used to come to me whenever one of them was sick, and made me give them a drink. Do you remember the time you came home sick from the fields? Then I helped you too, and that was the first time afterward that I gave any thing to anybody. The doctor heard of it that time and complained of me at court. Then I received a notice to do no more quackery, on pain of great punishment. After that I never listened to anybody's begging or crying.

"Something happened about that time: you can't remember it; you were too little. Dick, who lives out in one of the houses off the main street of the village, had two sons. One was like a count: he was with the Guard in Stuttgard, and was home on furlough. His best friend was his younger brother,--a wild, half-grown boy whom they called Joachim. The guardsman went to see pretty Walpurgia the seamstress: you know her, I guess, she has such a white, delicate face, and always runs about in slippers: but she had another lover besides, from Betra. Dick's boys, the two brothers, once lay in wait for this chap to give him a good drubbing; but the Betra boy held his own: so little Joachim takes out his knife, makes a stab at him, and stabs his brother through the body.

"I was lying in my shepherd's van, and suddenly I heard people crying and calling. I got up, and there was a crowd of men, and Joachim among them, all begging me to do something for the wounded man. All this made me think of that awful night at home: Walpurgia even looked a little like Lizzie; and, in short, I let little Jake mind the sheep, and went with them. As I saw the guardsman lying at the point of death, my heart seemed to turn within me. I cried like a child,

and people praised my good heart: they didn't know what was the matter with me, and I couldn't tell them. I gave the guardsman a drink to keep off mortification; but afterward the doctors got at him, and he died after all. In short, they locked me up and put me in the penitentiary for a year. Joachim got into the penitentiary too. He was bad, and tried for a long time to put all the blame on the Betra man; but at last it was proved that it was nobody but him. Brother-heart," said Nat, taking Ivo's hand, "what I suffered in the penitentiary is more than can be told; you couldn't find worse company in hell itself. But I bore it all willingly, and thought it was a chastisement for my past life.

"Once I made shrift to the parson, and told him all about it. He said that I had done the greatest wrong in not getting all the property into the hands of the Church. I would rather be torn to pieces than go to a confessional again after that. When I got out of prison, my first thought was to find Singout again: Dick had taken charge of him. They told me that after I was gone the dog had gone mad, and they had knocked him on the head. Dick's people would have liked to keep me, but their household was all out of gear: the mother didn't gee daylight for a year, and only at night she took a lantern and went to pray on John's grave. She wore black all her life, as you may remember. As I was going out of the village again alone, and without even my dog, your mother met me. She know I wasn't bad, though I had been in the workhouse: and in this way I came to work in your father's house. I would not be a shepherd any more. I wanted to live among men. What happened afterward you know. I have a good place again now, on the Deurer farm here; but yet I always feel as if I ought to go back to my brother, and as if my penitence wasn't of the right kind until I took service in his house."

Nat paused, and pressed his hands to his eyes. Ivo said, "You ought to go into a monastery and be a monk; that would be the real thing for you."

"A priest!" said Nat, with more severity than was usual to him. "I'd rather have my hand cut off. To live on piety is poor fare. Don't take offence at my silly talk: I am a stupid fellow. You are going to be a parson, and you are right: your heart is pure. But come," he said, looking up to the stars, "it is near eleven o'clock: let's go to sleep."

With much agitation of mind, Ivo took his place beside Nat in the van.

"Do tell me," said Nat, "you've got learning: how is it that love brings all the trouble on men that they have? Wouldn't it be better if there were no such thing?"

Ivo was puzzled: it was a subject on which he had never reflected. In a sleepy tone he answered, "It comes from the fall,--from original sin. I will think about it, though. Good-night."

Ivo's weary soul and jaded body fell an easy prey to the advances of sleep. When he awoke next morning all yesterday had turned into a dream. Nat was gone from his side; and, when he looked out of the van, the shepherd stood whistling by his sheep.

After a simple morning relish the two friends separated, and Nat cried after Ivo, "If you ever go to Freiburg, come to the Beste farmer's: there you'll find me."

Ivo spent some happy days with Clement. Once only he shook his head at his young friend. He had told him of his meeting with Nat, when Clement exclaimed, "Thunder and Doria! what a magnificent adventure! You are a child of fortune, and I envy you. It is a fine piece of the terrible, that story of the serving-man: a ghost or a spook is all that is wanting."

Ivo could not understand how the hard realities of human fortune could be abused as footballs for the diversion of overheated imaginations.

11.

THE COLLEGE.

Without the escort of any of his family, Ivo went to his new place of abode. He had outgrown the ties of family, and went his way independent of them. The good city of Tuebingen seemed to smile upon him. He dreamed of the delights which awaited him there, although he well knew that a cloister-life, with only some partial alleviations, was all he had to hope.

The life of free science was now within his reach. He attended various philosophical lectures; but, in the recesses of his mind, all he heard assumed a theological, or, more strictly speaking, a Catholic signification. The drowsy lucubrations of the old professors, who seemed to be planting definitions like dry posts, idly imagining that they would bear fruits and flowers, were not calculated to raise his mind to the heights of science whence the structures of theology are seen in their circumscribed and confined positions.

He attached himself more closely than ever to Clement, with whom he was now privileged to take a daily walk without supervision. Other acquaintances turned up also: among the rest, the sons of the President-Judge. They were condescending. Their father had become Government-Councillor, and had received the order of merit: he was "Von Rellings." Although this did not ennoble the sons, they courted the society of the nobility, and were especially devoted to the son of a mediatized prince then studying at Tuebingen. Ivo met them one day as they were riding out with their noble companion. He ran up to them and held out his hand; but, as they had the whip and reins to hold, they could only give him one of their fingers. With an encouraging nod the elder said,--

"Ah! you've come here too, have you? Glad to see it."

And, putting spurs to their horses, they rode away. Ivo remembered the day on which he had walked with them through the village, and regarded the treatment he now received as a well-deserved punishment for his then vain-glory. Just as he had then superciliously acknowledged the salutations of the passing peasants, so the Rellingses now gave him the go-by to devote themselves to their illustrious acquaintance. Thus Ivo met with the rare mischance of finding the differences of station to intrude themselves even into the charmed circle of his university life; for in general this is the very point where alone these subdivisions are forgotten, and where young minds mingle untrammelled by any thing unconnected with their natural gifts and tendencies.

Another old acquaintance who greatly affected Ivo's companionship was Constantine. He knew every thing but what he ought to have studied: how to skulk the recitation and gain an hour for the tavern; how to get a free evening and join a gay carouse: all his efforts were for a time directed to the noble task of converting the new "freshmen" into well-seasoned sophomores. With Ivo he succeeded but indifferently; but Clement was doubly tractable: his adventurous spirit found in such pranks its most acceptable field of action. To let himself down from a window by a rope of handkerchiefs tied together, to sing and yowl in the taverns, then to go roystering through the streets, and finally to return to the cloister with double risk of detection, was the dearest joy of his heart. He knew not whether most to enjoy the pleasure of giving vent to all the wild fancies that were in him, or the satisfaction of setting the laws at defiance.

Though Ivo frequently admonished Clement to think more of the future, yet once he was persuaded to join in one of these nightly excursions himself. They were, as Constantine phrased it, "hard as bricks," wore many-colored caps, and Ivo was the noisiest of them all. But just this time they were caught in returning, and Ivo had to expiate his sins for several days in the "carcer."

Constantine was delighted to find that his friend had so thoroughly "seen the ropes." He often said, "You'll never see me a parson: the shears are not sharpened that will shave my head; only I must wait for something first." At another time he cried, "If you were the right sort of fellows we'd all make an agreement to leave the cloister, every one of us, and let the Lord see how to get through with his vineyard by himself. I don't see why that shouldn't do as well, anyhow."

"What do you mean to be?" asked Ivo, who was blushing up to the eyes at this ungodly speech.

"Just a Nordstetten farmer, and nothing more."

"To say the truth, I should like that best myself; but it is not to be."

"I'm going to make it be if you'll just wait a little," said Constantine.

Many of the college-men received visits from their parents, who were generally peasants and came in their ordinary costume, sometimes but meanly clad. It pained Ivo to see that the students were generally ashamed of their parents and disliked going out with them. When his mother came, he walked hand in hand with her through the town and never left her all day.

One February morning Constantine came to Ivo's room, which still wore the appellation of "Zion" conferred upon it in more religious times. Taking from his pocket a bunch of artificial flowers tied with red ribbons, he said, "This is what Hannah of the Hauffer has sent me. I am a recruit: I should have come out this year, but have drawn a clear ticket. And now, hurrah! I'm going out of the convent."

"How so?"

"Why, you lambkin pure as snow once followed to the pasture, I'll tell you how so; but, on your drinking-oath, you must swear to let nobody know it. If I were to leave of my own accord, I should have to pay my board and lodging and be a soldier: now I am free from the latter, and, if I manage to get myself expelled from this Wallachian hostelry, I shall have nothing to pay; as for the principal, I've an extra plum or two for him."

He stuck the red-ribbon bunch into his hat and walked swaggeringly across the convent-yard. He did not return all day, but occupied himself with the other students who had been drawn as recruits that year in walking arm in arm across the market-place with them, and singing, drinking, and shouting everywhere. Late at night he came home, and was immediately summoned into the awful presence of the principal.

That august personage was alone. Constantine remained near the door, holding the latch behind him with both his hands. The principal stepped toward him with a volley of denunciations. Constantine laughed, stumbled forward, and trod so heavily on the principal's toes that he screamed with pain and intensified his epithets; but Constantine continued to advance upon him, and backed him round the room without mercy. The poor principal seized the only chair in the room and attempted to make a shield of it; but Constantine only pressed him the harder, and drove him from side to side, crying, "Ya, hupp!" like the ring-master of a circus. At last the victim succeeded in reaching the bell-rope: the "famulus" came, and Constantine was thrown into the darkest "carcer."

For four weeks he had to languish here. When Ivo went to see him, he confessed that it was sinful to wreak his ill-will against the law upon its innocent administrator. Ivo said, justly, "It is doubly sinful. These old folks are the jailers who watch us; but they are in the prison themselves and worse off than we: the key to let them out is lost."

"Yes," said Constantine, laughing. "You know the old rhyme says,--

'England is lock'd,
And the key-hole is block'd;'--

and so I've gone to work and staved in one of the walls."

Constantine was expelled from the convent in disgrace.

When Ivo came home at Easter, Constantine gave him a hand in which three fingers were tied up. He had greatly distinguished himself in a row between the Nordstetters and Baisingers, which dated from the feud of the manor-house farmer, and a bottle had been shivered in his hand. The "college chap," as he was called, had already taken rank as the wildest scapegrace in the village. He had assumed the peasant-garb, and took a pleasure in divesting himself of every lingering trace of higher cultivation. With his two comrades--George's son Peter, and Florian, the son of a broken-down butcher--he played the wildest pranks: the three were always in league, and never admitted a fourth to fellowship with them. The behavior of Constantine toward Peter was particularly interesting. A mother's eye does not watch with more solicitude over the welfare of an ailing child--a gentle wife is not more submissive to a petulant husband--than Constantine was to Peter: he even suppressed his liking for George the saddler's Magdalene because he found Peter in love with her, and did every thing in his power to aid him. When Constantine was furious and apparently beyond all pacifying, Peter had but to say, "Please me, Constantine, and be quiet," and he was as tame and docile as a lamb.

Ivo had some difficulty in getting rid of Constantine; but at last he succeeded. He was quiet and serious: Constantine's wildest sallies failed to win a smile from him, and at last he gave himself no more trouble about the "psalm-singer."

On his return to the convent he found that a great change had gone on in Clement. He had been attached, while at home, to the daughter of the judge at whose court his father was employed, and his whole being was now in a glow of devotion. He would leave the convent and study law: he bitterly despised the ministry, and made it the object of the most vindictive sarcasms: he cursed himself and his poverty, which seemed to chain him to a hated calling: with all the irregular impetuosity of his character, he rattled unceasingly, and yet idly, at the chains which bound him. He saw nothing but slavery on every side: he walked from place to place abstractedly, pale as death, and often with gnashing teeth. With all the power of his love, Ivo strove to rescue his friend; but, soon convinced that a higher agency was at work, he contented himself with grieving for his heart's brother, whose tortures and whose frenzy he could but half appreciate. In the lectures, Clement sat staring into vacancy: while the others, with the conscienscious eagerness of German students, strove to record every word that fell from the teacher's lips, he occasionally wrote the name of Cornelia, and then crossed and recrossed it till it became illegible.

The spark of discontent which had slumbered in Ivo's heart threatened to burst into flame; but as yet the firm walls of obedience, and the habit of resignation to the dictates of fate, kept it half smothered beneath the ashes. But even here the fundamental difference in the character of the two friends displayed itself on all occasions. Clement sought amusement and noisy distractions, as means of *self-forgetfulness*; while Ivo became more and more retired and meditative, as if he knew that *knowledge of self* was the only escape from his dilemmas. Yet, although he kept the road, he travelled but slowly. His soul was hung in sables: he was less fond of life than formerly, and often declared that he should like to die and sleep the sleep that knows not waking.

"After all," he remarked one night to Clement, who lay beside him, "the best thing in the world is a bed. A bird in a cage is to be pitied, for he doesn't rest well even when he sleeps. He sits on his perch and must hold on with his claws; so that he still has something to do, and is never perfectly at rest. So, too, man does not rest well when he sits; for he must always exert some of his muscles to keep himself upright: it is only when he lies down that all exertion is dissolved and every muscle relieved of its strain. That is the reason birds are so fond of their nests and men of their beds.

"Plato calls man a featherless biped: never mind; he decks himself with borrowed feathers.

"Nat once told me that if you cage a bird of prey in a mill, where he cannot sleep, you can make him as tame as a sucking dove: that is just like the tyrant we used to read about at Ehingen, who had his prisoners waked out of sleep every hour of their lives. How ingenious men are in devising tortures! When it comes to giving pleasure, their wits are far less ready. The greatest miracles, in my eyes, were the saints of the pillars, who never sat down. That is the quintessence of self-denial. Just think of standing all one's life, until one's feet gather fur on them! 'Thank the Lord for a soft nest, a good rest, and a quick zest,' is what they taught us to say at home."

Clement listened to this dissertation in silence, only murmuring "Cornelia" from time to time. Ivo fell soundly asleep.

The world-spirit looks down at night upon convents and weeps with averted face.

At the last stroke of eleven Clement glided into the convent-yard. It was a balmy night in summer: a thunderstorm had rent the clouds, and their shattered masses still lingered in mid-air, now veiling, now releasing, the beams of the full moon. Clement knelt and cried, trembling and wringing his hands, "Devil! Beelzebub! Ruler of Hell! Appear and bestow thy treasures upon me, and my soul is thine! Appear! Appear!"

He listened with bated breath, but all was silent: nothing stirred, and nothing was audible but the distant baying of a watch-dog. Clement long remained cowering on the ground: at length, seeing and hearing nothing, he returned shivering to his bed.

Next day he sat at his desk pale and haggard. The black characters in his open book seemed to crawl around each other like snakes before his jaundiced eye. A letter was brought him. He had hardly read it when he sank fainting from his chair. An engagement-card slipped from his hand, on which was engraved "Cornelia Mueller and Herman Adam, betrothed." He was carried to his bed, where Ivo waited, trembling and in tears, until his friend drew breath again. A fever now ensued, in which Clement's teeth chattered and his frame writhed with convulsive starts. For three days he was delirious. He spoke of the devil, and barked like a dog: once only he said, gently closing his eyes, "Good-night, Cornelia." Ivo read the letter, as the footing upon which he and Clement stood fully justified him in doing; and here, at last, he found a slight clue to the jumble of occurrences which bewildered him. A wealthy uncle of Clement's mother had died, leaving her all his property: the brightest prospects opened to the future of the family. Ivo rarely left his friend's bedside, and, when compelled to do so, Bart usually took his place.

It was a painful duty. Clement generally brooded in a half-doze, with his eyes open, but apparently seeing nothing. He would ask Ivo to lay his hand upon his burning forehead, and then, closing his eyes, he said, "Ah!" as if the touch had expelled torturing spirits from the narrow tenement of his brain. At times he started up and furiously denounced the world and its heartlessness. If Ivo undertook to pacify him, he only turned his wrath against the comforter, struck at him with trembling hands, and cried, "You heartless loon, you can torture me, eh?"

Ivo bore all this calmly, though with tears. Sometimes he even experienced a sort of inward satisfaction at the thought that he was favored to suffer in the cause of friendship.

When Clement awoke on the fourth day, it seemed as if, somewhere in the infinity of space, and yet very, very near to him, a niche had opened filled with light: something around him, and something from within him, cried, "Clement!" He was restored to himself. For years after he was wont to tell how at that moment God seemed to shine upon him with all the rays of His glory, and to bring him back to Him and to himself. When he had recovered his composure, he said, lifting up his hands, "I hunger after the Lord's table." Calling for the confessor, he told him all,--how he had conjured the devil to aid him, how the devil had heard his prayer and then struck him to the earth. In deep contrition, he begged for a heavy chastisement and for absolution. The confessor imposed a slight penance, and urgently exhorted him to look upon what had taken place as a warning to flee from all worldly wishes and devote himself to the service of God alone.

Could any one have observed the face of Clement as he lay with his eyes closed in faith, while the confessor spoke the benediction over him and made the sign of the cross over his body in token of the forgiveness of his sins,--could any one have watched the tension of his muscles and the pulsation of his checks,--he would have felt with Clement the happy change which was going on within him. It seemed really and truly as if the ethereal hand of God were upon him, gently luring out the burden which oppressed him, and inspiring him with a new life and a better courage.

The new Clement was a different being from the old one. He moved about noiselessly, often looking around as if in dread of something. Then again he would suddenly stand still. Ivo could not encourage him; for not even to him had Clement dared to disclose the whole enormity of his wickedness.

After the next holidays, Clement was changed again. He looked fresh and blooming as before; but fires of a mysterious import darted from his eyes. One day, as they walked in the little wood called the "Burgholz," he drew his friend to his breast, and said, "Ivo, thank God with me, for the Lord has given me grace. It is our fault if the Lord does not do miracles in us, because we do not purify ourselves to be the vessels of his inscrutable will. I have made a vow to be a missionary and to announce to the heathen the salvation of the world. I have seen her again who stole my soul from the Lord; but in the midst of my gazes the world vanished from my eyes, the All-Merciful laid his hand upon me and gave me peace. I was drawn up into a mountain. There I sat until the sun went down and the night came on. All around was still and dead. Suddenly, afar off in the woods. I heard the voice of a boy singing, but not in earthly tones,--

"'Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand.'

"I knelt down, and the Lord heard my vow. My heart was no longer in my flesh: I held it in my hand. Kissing the rock beneath and the tree beside me, I inhaled the Spirit of God from them: I heard the leaves rustle and the clefts wail in whispered sorrow, weeping and yearning for the day when the cross shall be erected as the tree of life, standing aloft between earth and heaven, when the Lord shall appear and the world be saved,--when the rocks shall bound, and the trees sing songs of joy."

Falling on his knees, Clement continued:--"Lord, Lord, be gracious unto me! lay thy words upon my tongue, make me worthy to feel the love of the seraphs; pour out thy goodness richly over the brother of my heart; crush him; let him feel the swords which have pierced thy breast, and which rend the heart of the world. I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast wedded me unto holy poverty: yea, I will devote myself wholly to the bliss of the folly that is in thee, and will suffer men to revile and persecute me until the tenement of my body shall be taken away, until I shall have outlived the corruption of this life. Lord, thou had made me rich that I may be as one of the poor. Blessed are the poor! Blessed are the sick!"

Kissing the feet of his friend, he remained prostrate for a long time, with his head pressed upon the earth: then he rose, and both went home in silence.

A nameless fear agitated the mind of Ivo: he felt the fulness of the self-sacrifice to which Clement had given himself; but he saw also its dreadful aberration: a sword pierced his heart.

He willingly followed his friend into the nocturnal regions of man's feeling and thought: it seemed a duty to keep him company and be at hand to aid him.

The lives of the saints were the first object of their studies. Once Ivo said, "I am rejoiced to see that revelation is still upon its march through the haunts of men; saints arise wherever the Lord has revealed himself and thereby imparted his wonder-working power, and whoso truly sanctifies himself may hope to be favored in like kind. Nowadays every town has once more its true patron saint, as of old, among the Greeks, its false tutelary deity. God is personally near us everywhere."

Clement, without answering, kissed Ivo's forehead. Presently, however, he spoke warmly of the heroes who with empty hand had conquered the world.

The life of St. Francis of Assisi enlisted their special interest: the story of his conversion from the stormy life of the world, and the manner in which he first cured a leper with a kiss, was particularly attractive to Clement. Ivo was pleased by the childlike harmony of the holy man with nature, and by his miraculous power over it; how he preached to the birds, and called upon them to sing the glory of God; how they listened devoutly until he had made the sign of the cross over them and blessed them, and how then they broke into a sounding chorus; how he contended in song with a nightingale for the honor of God until midnight, and how at last, when he was silent from fatigue, the bird flew upon his hand to receive his blessing. Whenever he read of the lamb rescued by the saint from slaughter, which always kneeled down during the singing of the choir, Ivo thought fondly of his Brindle.

On reading that the saint was so highly favored as miraculously to experience in his own body the wounds of Christ, the pierced hands and feet, and the thrust of the lance in his side, Clement wept aloud. He repeated his vow to become a Franciscan monk, and called upon Ivo to do the same, so that, according to the rules of the Order, they might walk about the world together, courting tortures and troubles and living upon alms.

With insatiable thirst Clement drank of the streams of mysticism and hurried his friend along with him.

12.

THE COLLEGE CHAP.

In the holidays Ivo was again powerfully attracted to the realities of life. It was not so easy then to exclude the doings of the outer world, and wrap oneself up into self-suggested thoughts and feelings. Such exaltations are, in fact, only feasible outside of the family circle, and therefore outside of the sphere of real life. Scarcely had he returned to the village, when the family ties once more asserted their claims, and the manifold and interlaced fates and fortunes of the villagers forced themselves upon his interest and sympathy. He knew what lived and moved behind all their walls. He awoke to his former life as from a dream.

One evening he met Constantine standing before his house, chewing a straw and looking sullen.

"What's the matter?" asked Ivo.

"Pshaw! Nothing you can do any good to."

"Well, you'd better tell me."

"You've no taste for the world, and can't understand it. Whitsuntide is almost come, and then there's the bel-wether dance, and I haven't a sweetheart. I might have had one, but I was too saucy; and yet I don't want any other, and I'd be unconscionably mad if she were to take up with some one else. Such a bel-wether dance as this will be I would'nt give a copper for."

"Who is the proud beauty?"

"You know her well enough: Emmerence?"

Ivo barely repressed a start. He asked, quickly,--

"Have you gone with her long?"

"Why, that's what I'm telling you. She won't look at me. She's just as prudish and coy as a Diana."

"Do you mean to act fairly by her, and marry her?"

"What? Fairly? Of course. But I can't talk about marrying yet. Don't you know the old student-song?--

"I will love thee, I will love thee;
But to marry, but to marry,
Is far, far, far, far above me."

"Then I must agree with Emmerence."

"Fiddle! No offence, but you don't know any thing about it. These girls must be content just to get sweethearts like me. The squire's Babbett would stretch out her ten fingers to get hold of me: but she couldn't represent the Church any more, as at Gregory's first mass, and I don't want her."

During this colloquy Peter and Florian had come up to where they were standing.

"Ah!" said the latter, "does the doctor give us the light of his countenance? I thought the like of us weren't worth his while to waste words in talking to."

"Yes," added Peter; "all the boys in the village say that the like of you was never seen, Ivo. You behave as if you were born in Stuttgard and not in Nordstetten."

"My goodness!" said poor Ivo, thus beset on all sides, "I never thought of such a thing as being proud. Come; let's go get a drink."

"That's the way to talk," said Florian. "It's my blowout, for I am going off to-morrow."

The villagers opened their eyes at seeing Ivo passing through the street in company with the trio. It was an

extraordinary quartette.

"Have we so much honor?" said the hostess of the Eagle, as Ivo entered with the others. "I'll put a candle into the back-room right-away. What'll you have? A stoup from the other side the Rhine?"

"We'll stick to Wurtemberg for the present," said Constantine, "and Ivo is going to drink with us. He's a Nordstetten boy, like ourselves."

"Not like you for good luck," replied the hostess.

"I'll give you a riddle, you chatter-box: why are women like geese?" retorted Constantine.

"Because such gooseheads as you want to rule 'em," answered the hostess.

"Babbett, just you be glad stupidity isn't heavy to carry, or you'd 'a' been laid up this many a year. I'll tell you why they're like. Geese and women are first-rate, all except their bills. Go get us a quart of sixen."

"You're not good for a creutzer," said the hostess, laughing, as she went to execute the order. We have perhaps already recognised her as the Babbett who played a part in the story of the gamekeeper of Muehringen. Caspar had bought the Eagle; and Babbett was an excellent hostess. She could entertain all the guests, and had an answer ready for every question and a retort for every sally. The "gentlemen" no longer confined their custom to the Dipper, but now honored the Eagle with their visits likewise.

When all had "wetted their whistle," Florian began the song--

"A child of freshest clay
Doth at our table stay:
Hey! Hey!"--

with which students usually welcome a new arrival. This was followed by

"Ça, Ça! be merry,"

in which the words

"Edite, bibite"

had been paraphrased into "eating it, beating it." This introduction of university civilization into the retreats of village life was the work of Constantine. The boys were very proud of their new songs. Ivo joined in, lest he should appear "stuck up."

The three comrades were well drilled. Peter sang the air; and, though he had a fine voice, he spoiled it by bawling,--for peasants when they sing, and parsons when they preach, are equally apt to suppose that an overstrained voice is more beautiful and impressive than a natural one. Constantine always moved up and down as he sang, clenching his fists and buffeting the air. Florian rested his elbows on the table and sang with closed eyes, to exclude all outside distraction.

The first pint having been despatched in short order, the college chap cried, "Babbett, one more of them: it takes two legs to walk on," and then sang,--

"Wine, ho! Wine, ho!
Or I'll stagger to and fro.
I won't stagger, and I can't stand,
And I won't be a Lutherand.
Wine, ho! Wine, ho!
Or I'll stagger so."

Then, without a pause, he sang again:--

"She I don't want to see,
She's every day with me;
And she I love so dear,
She's far away from here.
"Can't get a pretty one,
Won't take a homely one;
Must have some sort o' one:
What shall I do?"

"Why, Constantine, are you so smart at Polish begging?" asked Babbett. "Is it true that Emmerence sent you next door with a 'God help you'?"

"I'll bet you three pints of the best that she'll go to the bel-wether dance with me, and with nobody else."

Florian sang,--

"Fret for a pretty girl?
That would be a shame:
Turn to the next one,
And ask for her name."

Peter fell in:--

"If I have no sweetheart,
I live without distress;
There's morning every day,
And evening no less."

Constantine sang,--

"When it snows the snow is white,
And when it freezes the frost is bright;
What noodles do with fear and fright
I do with all my might."

Florian began:--

"It's just a week to-day, to-day,
My sweetheart told me to go away:
She cried, and she sobb'd,
But I was gay."

And

"Three weeks before Easter
  The snow will be flush,
My girl will be married,
  And I in the slush."

"That's not the way," said Constantine: "turn round the handle:"--

"Three weeks before Easter,
  There'll be slush in the snow:
The jade will be married
  And I'll courting go."

Laughter and applause from all sides of the room were the reward of this poetic effort. Peter then struck up:--

"Sweetheart, you thief,
You're all my grief;
And while I live,
No comfort you'll give."

And

"If I but knew
  Where my sweetheart has gone,
My heart wouldn't be
  Half so weary and lone."

Florian sang again:--

"If you would live like a little bird,
  And have no cares to shend ye;
Just marry, till the summer's round,
  Whome'er the spring may send ye."

Constantine sang again:--

"I come to see you;
  It pleased me to come;
But I won't come any longer:
  It's too far from home.
"It wouldn't be too far,
  And it wouldn't be too rough,
But, just understand,
  You're not near good enough."

Ivo sat at the table, absorbed in unpleasant reflections. He called to mind how at this hour he was usually to be found at his solitary lamp, struggling to penetrate the mysteries of creation and redemption,--how far he was then removed from all the doings of men, from all the wishes and aims of individuals; and he contrasted all this with what he now saw of the life led by his natural comrades in age and station. The nucleus of all their thoughts and actions was love, whether they made it the subject of wanton jibes or of strains of tender longing. Once more existence lay before him, severed, as by a sharp steel, into two irreconcilable halves,--the secular and the ecclesiastical. Babbett, who had watched him closely, had not failed to perceive the irksome twitches of the muscles of his face: she now approached the singers, saying,--

"Why, a'n't you ashamed of yourselves? Can't you sing a single decent song?"

Constantine replied,--

"Well, if you don't like it,

I like it the more;
And, if you can do better,
Just put in your oar."

"Yes," said Florian: "we'll sing a good song if you'll join in."

"Oh, yes, I'll join in."

"What shall it be?" asked Peter.

"'Honest and true.'"

"'Is my wealth and my store'? no, I don't like that," said Constantine.

"Well, then, 'Ere the morning dew was wasted.'"

"Yes." Babbett sang lustily, and the others fell in:--

"Ere the morning dew was wasted,
Ere the night-blown grass was shrunk,
Ere another's eye had tasted,
On my love mine eyes were sunk.
"Shoot the fox and rabbit early,
Ere they travel in the wood;
Love the girls ere they grow surly,
Or forget how to be wooed.
"Till with vines the millstone teemeth,
And the mill-race runs with wine,
While life's current in us streameth,
Thou art mine and I am thine."

Ivo thanked Babbett warmly for the pretty song; but Constantine immediately followed it up with

"I'm as poor as a mouse:
There's no door to my house,
There's no lock to my door,
And I've no sweetheart more.
"It's all up with me
Over land and sea:
When the Danube dries up
Our wedding shall be.
"And it will not dry up,
And is wet to this day;
To find another sweetheart
I must up and away."

"Now let's have 'A boy he would a walking go,'" said Babbett.

"Keep your boy at home," replied Constantine.

"Oh, you! If you'd been kept at home, they wouldn't have turned you out like a dog in the wrong kennel."

"Strike up," said Florian; and they sang:--

"Blithe let me be,
If 'tis but well with thee,
Although my youth and freshness
Must wither hopelessly.
"No streamlet on the hill-side
But finds its course to run;
But not a hand to open
My pathway to the sun.
"The sun, the moon, the stars,
And all the firmament,
Shall hang in mourning for me
Till my long night be spent."

Ivo fidgeted in his chair: this song was the expression of his own fate.

"Don't go," said Constantine, perceiving his uneasiness.

"Babbett, you don't do like the host at Cana: you give the good wine first and the bad afterward. You've brought Lutheran and Catholic wine together: that'll be a mixed marriage."

"'When the mice have had enough, the flour is bitter,'" answered the hostess.

"'Tell you what," cried Constantine; "we'll drink hot wine now."

"You've had enough for to-day," said Barbara.

"What we can't drink we can pour into our shoes. Let's make a night of it. Are you for it?--and you? and you?"

Every one nodded, and sang,--

"Brothers, let's go it
And drink while we're young;
Age will come quickly
And dry up the tongue.
For the gentle wine
Was made for good fellows:
Brothers, be mellow,
And drink the good wine."

The "warm wine" which was brought would have provoked a smile from any American or English boon companion. It

bore about the same relation to mulled wine which water-gruel has to pepper-pot. The heat it had received from the fire was counterbalanced by the infusion of water until a child might have fattened upon it unharmed. But Germans can sing more drinking-songs over a cup of vinegar than would be heard in an American bar-room where brandy enough has been swallowed to account for a dozen murders.

Constantine welcomed the arrival of the beverage with a song, which he accompanied with his fists on the table:--

"I and my old wife,
  We go the whole figure;
She carries the beggar's pouch,
  And I sing the jigger.
Bring some Bavarian beer;
Let's be Bavarians here;
Bavarians, Bavarians let us be here.
"She's gone to town to beg,
  I wait and snicker;
What she'll bring back with her
  I'll spend for liquor.
Bring some Bavarian beer," &c.

It grew late. A boy had brought Ivo the key to his father's house. The beadle had come to announce the hour for silence, but Constantine quieted him with a glass of wine: the same deep artifice succeeded with the watchman, who came an hour later. Constantine began to mimic the professors and boast of his student's pranks. Ivo rose to go. The others tried to hold him, but Constantine made room for him: in Ivo's absence there was nothing to interfere with his making himself the hero of the adventures of other students. He called after him, however, to "take the room-door into bed with him;" but Ivo did not hear it, for he was already in the open air.

The soft light of the summer moon was poured over the land, and seemed to strew the earth with calm and quiet. Ivo frequently stood still, laid his hand on his beating breast, and took off his cap to permit the gentle gales to fan him. When, at home, he undertook to undress himself, he felt doubly how his quick pulses were chasing each other: he left the house once more, therefore, to find refreshment in the peaceful silence of night. He walked along the highroad and across the fields: he was happy, he knew not why; he could have walked on forever: with his heart beating joyfully, the love of life was revived in him, and carried him aloft over the lovely, peaceful earth. Having returned home at last, he saw that the door of the first-floor chamber was open. Almost unconsciously, he entered, and stood spell-bound; for there lay Emmerence. The moon shone on her face: her head lay under her right arm, and her left hand rested on the frame. Ivo's breast heaved: he trembled from head to foot; he knew not what befell him; but he bent over Emmerence and kissed her cheek, almost as gently as the moonbeam itself. Emmerence seemed to feel it, for, turning upon her side, she murmured, "A cat, cat, cat." He waited a while to see if she would wake. But she slept on, and the august stillness recalled him to himself. Striking his forehead, he left the room. Arrived at his own bedside, he threw himself upon the floor, and, torturing his inmost soul, he cried, "God forgive me! let me die! I have sinned! I am a castaway, a villain! Lord God, stretch out thy right hand and crush me!"

Shivering with cold, he awoke, and found it broad day. He crept into his bed. His mother brought him coffee, found him looking very ill, and urged him not to get up; but he would not be dissuaded, for he had made up his mind to go to church that morning.

In passing the stable he heard Emmerence singing within:--

"No house to live,
  No farm to tend,
No gauds to give,
  No money to lend,
And such a lassie
  As I am
Will never find a friend."

"What makes you so down-hearted?" Ivo could not refrain from asking. "Didn't you sleep well?"

"I don't know any thing about sleeping well or ill. I am tired when I go to bed, and my eyes shut. I just happened to think of the song, and so I sang it."

"You needn't deny it: you would like to have Constantine for your sweetheart, wouldn't you?"

"Him! I'd rather take the French simpleton, or Blind Conrad: I've no mind to make up the balance of his half-dozen. I don't want any sweetheart: I am going to remain single."

"That's what all the girls say."

"You shall see whether I am in earnest about it or not."

"But if you can get a good husband you oughtn't to be too dainty."

"What could I get? Some old widower who has furnished the gravedigger with two or three wives already. No! whenever I can't stay in your house any more, my mind's made up: I promised Mag when she went away to go to America. But I'm so glad to see you care about what's to become of me: sure, if you *are* going to be a clergyman, that's no reason why you should never look after your old friends."

"I should like nothing better than to do something for your comfort and happiness in the world."

Emmerence looked at him with beaming eyes. "That's what I always said," cried she: "I knew you were good, and I never would believe you were proud. Ask your mother: we talk of you often and often. Don't your ears ever tingle?"

Thus they chatted for some time. Emmerence told him that she read his letters to his mother, and that she almost knew them by heart. Ivo thought it his duty to say that he too had not forgotten her, and that he hoped she would always be good and pious. He said this with a great effort of self-command, for the girl's warm-hearted candor had made a great impression upon him.

The church-bell rang, and some old women who passed with their prayer-books under their arms made Ivo aware that he was too late for matins.

"Where are you going to work to-day?" he asked, before leaving.

"Out by the pond."

He went into the fields, but in the opposite direction: a violent yearning drew him toward the spot where he knew Emmerence to be; but he only walked the faster, to suppress the cry of his heart. At length he returned home and took up a book; but he could not rivet his thoughts to the subject. He began a letter to Clement, intending to pour out his heart to his friend; but he soon tore it up, and consoled himself with the reflection that he would soon see Clement again.

Contrary to all his former habits, Ivo was now rarely at home. He frequently spent half a day at a time in Jacob's smithy. Smithies in Germany, as here, are the resorts of various drones, old men, and idlers: wagoners from a distance, and from the village, come and go, to have their horses shod or their tools or vehicles repaired. As the bellows fan the fire, so the arrivals and departures keep up the stream of conversation. Ivo often asked himself how things would have been if the wish of his early childhood had been fulfilled and he had become a blacksmith. He resolved, when in the ministry, to frequent these places and endeavor at times to edge in a wholesome word of counsel or encouragement. Sometimes the thought struck him that possibly it would not be his lot to take orders, after all. "So be it, then," he would say: "only let me never be like the 'college chap.'"

13.

DISCORD.

On his return to the convent, Ivo suffered several days to pass before informing his now pale and wasted-looking friend Clement of the emotions which had gone on within him: he had a natural dread of this disclosure.

As they walked in the Burgholz together, Clement grasped Ivo's hand and said, "I saw in a dream how Satan laid his snares to entrap you."

Ivo confessed his love for Emmerence.

"Alas!" cried Clement, "alas! you too are pursued by the tempter. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. You must trample this spark of hell-fire out of existence, though life itself should follow."

Ivo went to confession. He never disclosed the penance imposed upon him; but he agreed readily to Clement's proposal to sleep on the ground in future and to subject themselves to various deprivations. Clement always slept upon the ground in a sitting posture and with his arms spread out to represent the form of the cross.

With the whole force of his will, Ivo disengaged his thoughts from the affairs of this world, and succeeded in confining them once more to subjects of ecclesiastical learning. But a new demon soon dogged him even into the sacred precincts. He never dared to tell Clement of this last machination of the evil one; for Clement would have raised a fresh hue and cry. This made a rupture of their intimacy inevitable, and accident soon brought it about. Clement was speaking of the Godhead of Christ as manifested in his having assumed the bitterness of death upon his cross, and said that this was needed to complete the revelation of him as God and as the Savior of the world.

"I see nothing so superhuman in death upon the cross," said Ivo, very calmly. "It is holy and grand, but it is not superhuman, to die innocently in the promotion of a great cause. I should have esteemed him equally if there had been no occasion for a martyrdom to prove the truth of his divine mission, and if the blind Jews had acknowledged him without it, and had suffered him to live. Not the crucified, but the living Christ, His divine life and divine doctrines, are my salvation and my faith."

Clement stood trembling from head to foot: his lips swelled, and his eyes rolled wildly. With clenched fist he struck Ivo's face, making sparks of fire start from his eyes and causing his cheek to tingle. Ivo stood unmoved, or motionless; but Clement fell to the ground before him, seized his hand, and cried,--

"Down into the dust, forsaken one! Verily, the heaviest chastisement which could befall thy blasphemy has the Lord visited upon thee by my hand: it was not my will, but the Lord's, which hurled my arm against thee. Thou art the brother of my heart, and by me thou must be smitten; for thou must feel two-edged swords piercing thy flesh.

"If thou thrust me away, the Lord's wrath is thereby visited upon thee still more: thou shalt lose the best friend thou hast. Do what thy spirit will, put me away, and thou shalt be doubly wretched. The Lord must plunge thee into the depths of darkness, that thine eye may be opened to receive the light. He must give thee sadness to drink and gall to feed upon, until the spirit of lies shall depart and the slime of sin fall away from thee. Lord, let this offering be pleasing in thy sight: I offer thee half of my heart,--my friend. Thou art my friend, O Lord! Forgive me that my soul still clings to one who is the food of worms. Be gracious unto me, O Lord! give me the full cup of sorrow, and lead me in the thorny path to thee, thee!"

Ivo stood sadly regarding his friend, whose rashness grieved but did not surprise him. He offered to raise him up; but Clement refused, and Ivo soon saw the entire meaning of this fit of ecstasy. With a sensation of indescribable pain, he thought he saw the corpse of his friend in the place of his living body; and then again his own disembodied spirit seemed to stand before his own lifeless frame and look upon its last convulsive movements. He was giddy. He offered again to assist Clement in rising; but the latter sprang to his feet, and demanded, peremptorily,--

"Will you do penance? Will you wash the rust from your soul with tears of repentance?"

"No."

"To hell with you, then!" cried Clement, again seizing him by the throat. Ivo, however, defended himself stoutly, and the savage said, imploringly, "Smite me; tread me under foot: I will undergo all things willingly: but I must save you, for the Lord wills it."

Ivo turned on his heel without another word, and quitted his friend in silence.

For days Ivo walked about in thoughtful silence. The string of his heart which had the fullest tone was cruelly snapped asunder: he had buried the bright promise of youthful friendship. Besides, the excess of religious frenzy which he had witnessed had given fresh vitality to many half-slumbering doubts and scruples. He was "doubly wretched," as Clement had foretold; but he knew not how to help himself.

The chaplain of Horb had come to Tuebingen as a professor: he had never lost his preference for Ivo, who now sought his friendship and acquainted him with his troubles.

Strange to say, it was the Virgin Mary who had provoked his doubts especially. He first inquired "whether, as a saint, she was also omnipresent?" as he thought she ought to be, seeing that prayers were everywhere offered up to her.

The professor looked at him with some astonishment, and said, "The notion of omnipresence is a purely human one, deduced from bodily things, and, in strictness, applicable to them alone. In coupling '*omnis*' (all) with 'present' we merely seek to comprehend the totality of existence: we do not really add to the number of our ideas, though we may seem to do so. Nothing which is not earthly can become, as such, the subject of our conceptions: for the same reason, we cannot legitimately undertake to subject a spirit to the measure of what is, in fact, a merely physical standard,--that of 'presence.' We must renounce, once for all, the idea of comprehending supernatural things logically: faith is the proper organ of their function, and no other."

Ivo was entirely satisfied with this answer, and only ventured timidly to ask how the *Virgin* Mary could be spoken of, when the Bible makes mention of brothers of Christ.

The professor answered, "The Greek word αδελφος [Greek: adelphos][12] is not to be taken literally: it is an Oriental expression, taken from the Hebrew, and signifies as much as 'kinsman,' or 'friend.'"

"Then I suppose the expression υίος θεου[Greek: huios theou][13] is not to be taken literally either, but is also an Oriental expression?"

"By no means! Such an idea is at once repelled by the Messianic passages of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the tenets of the Church. And, besides," added he, watching Ivo's features narrowly, "the incarnation of God has no other purpose than to give a hold to our human faculties, because, as I said before, we can form no conception of that which is not earthly: its essence is and must remain a mystery, which we can do nothing but believe in, and faith will be given you, if you take pains to keep your soul pure, childlike, and innocent."

"But that is not so easy," said Ivo, with some timidity.

"I will give you some advice which is founded on experience," answered the professor, laying his hand upon Ivo's shoulder: "as often as a thought arises within you which threatens to drift you away from the moorings of faith, banish it immediately by prayer and study, and do not suffer it to abide in your heart. We stand with our God much as we do with our friends: once estranged from them, it is not an easy matter to revive the old affection."

The advice and the illustration made a great impression on Ivo; but they came too late.

It must not be supposed, however, that inquiries of this kind carried Ivo out of the pale of the Church, and to the furthermost bounds of thought. He remained a believing spirit: he was firmly convinced of the reality of the miraculous: and only the soul which holds fast to this conviction is really within the pale prescribed for the genuine Churchman: faith is the surrender of the mind to the inexplicable, to a miracle.

His distaste to a clerical life was caused, in a far greater degree, by other considerations, which now pressed upon him with increasing vividness: he longed for a life of active energy. An early chain of reflections which had first manifested itself to his consciousness at Ehingen once more appeared on the surface of his thoughts. "Not the hard drudgery of hands," said he to himself, "is the punishment of sin; but, because mankind have once tasted of the tree of knowledge, they are now condemned everlastingly to seek it, without ever enjoying it to repletion. In the sweat of their brows they seek food for their minds: the dry rustling leaves of books are the foliage under which the fruit of knowledge is supposed to be concealed. Happy he to whom the Christmas-tree, with its tapers lighted by unseen hands, has proved this better tree of knowledge. Labor, Labor! Only the beast lives without labor: it goes forth to seek its food without preparing it: man, on the contrary, mingles his powers with the generative forces of mother earth, lends his aid to the activity of the universe, and thus the blessings of labor, rest, and peace of soul, fall to his share. Blind Roman, how vapid was your motto, that life is warfare! how tawdry the triumphs you held over subjugated brethren! Life is labor. True, even that is a strife with the silent forces of nature; but it is a strife of freedom, of love, which renovates the world. The stone's obduracy yields to the chisel's industry, and helps to form the shelter of the homestead. And more than all let me praise thee, tiller of the soil! Into the furrowed wounds of the earth thou strewest sevenfold life. The heart glows, the spirit moves, in thee. And as we subjugate the earth and make it serve us, so also we learn to govern and guide the earthly portion of our own natures; and as we wait for rain and sunshine from above to make our work take root and flourish, so it is thy will, O God, to pour out thy grace over us, to make the seed sown in our spirits to thrive and sanctify our bodies. Give me, O Lord, a little speck of earth, and I will plough it seven times over, so that its hidden juices may sprout forth in blades which bow their heads before the breath of thy mouth: I will raise the warts of my hands aloft to praise thee, until thou shalt draw me up into thy kingdom."

"I should like well enough," he once said to himself, "to be a parson on Sunday; but to spend a whole week occupied with nothing but the Lord and the nothing we know about him,--to be as much at home in the church as in one's bedroom,--why, that is to have no church and no Sunday at all. Oh, heavens! how happy was I when I used to go to church of a Sunday and say, 'Good-morning, God!' The sun shone more brightly, the houses looked better, and all the world was different from what it was on working-days." Perhaps he thought of Emmerence, for he continued,--"A Lutheran parson's life wouldn't suit me, either. To support a wife and a houseful of children on preaching? No, no!" Then his theological scruples returned, and he said, "Theology is the bane of religion: what need of so much subtlety? Love God: love thy neighbor. What more?"

Thus his whole being was racked and tossed. The thought of Emmerence would drive the fever-heat to his face, and then icy coldness returned when he thought of his own future. He was at a loss how to inform his parents of his irrevocable determination to leave the convent: it was hard to explain to them that he could not look upon a clerical life as his vocation, and that he did not find the faith within him strong enough to justify such a step.

This train of thought was interrupted by a letter from the squire of Nordstetten to the principal, requesting permission for Ivo to come home, as his mother had to undergo a severe surgical operation, which she wished to be performed in his presence.

Harrowed by anxiety, Ivo hastened home with the messenger who had brought the letter. He learned that his mother had broken her arm some time previously by falling down-stairs; that she had disregarded the injury, and that now she could only be saved by another artificial fracture and resetting of the limb; that she would have preferred death had she not thought it her duty to reserve herself for her children. Ivo was stung to the soul to find that the messenger always spoke of his mother as if she were already dead or, at least, beyond all hopes of recovery. "You couldn't find a better woman wherever cooking is done," was the curious proverbial expression which formed the burden of his answers.

The meeting between mother and son was heart-rending. "So, now! I can bear it all better," said she, "because you are here."

The surgeon came next day. He offered to blindfold the patient; but she said, "No: put the bed into the middle of the room, where I can see the Savior, and you will see that I won't budge nor murmur."

After much reluctance, her wish was complied with. In one hand--the hand of the injured arm--she grasped the rosary, while the other clasped that of her son. Her eyes rested on the crucifix, and she said, "Dear Savior, Thou hast borne the most cruel pain with a heavenly smile: dear Savior, give me Thy power, hold me when I would tremble; and, when the sharp swords pierce my soul, I will think of thee, O Mother of God, and suffer in silence. Pray with me, dear Ivo."

Without uttering another word, she suffered the operation to be performed; and when the bone cracked under the terrible pressure, when all around sobbed and wept, when Valentine was led half fainting into the adjoining room, and his suppressed sobs became louder as the door closed upon him, Christina was silent and motionless: only her lips quivered, her eyes were directed steadfastly upon the cross, and a holy brightness seemed to issue from them.

When all was over, and even the surgeon broke out into praise of the patient's fortitude, she sank upon her pillow, and her eyes closed; but a brilliant glory still rested upon her face. All the bystanders were dumb with admiration. Valentine had returned. He bent over his wife till he felt her breath, and then looked up with a heavy sigh and a cry of "God be praised!" Ivo kneeled at the bedside, looked up to his mother, and worshipped her. All folded their hands: not a breath was heard, and it seemed as if the living Spirit of God were passing through every heart.

When Christina awoke with the cry of "Valentine," the latter hastened to her side, pressed her hand upon his heart, and wept. "You forgive me, don't you, Christina?" he said, at length. "You shall never, never hear an unkind word from me again. I am not worthy of you: I see that now better than ever; and if the Lord had taken you away I should have gone mad."

"Be calm, Valentine. I have nothing to forgive you: I know how good you are, though you are not always yourself. Don't grieve now, Valentine: it's all right again. Our Lord only wished to try us."

She recovered with wonderful rapidity. Valentine kept his word most faithfully. He watched over his wife as over a higher being: the slightest motion of her eye was his command. He could scarcely be induced to allow himself the rest he needed.

Emmerence and Ivo took turns in sitting up with his mother; and she once said, "You are dear, good children: the Lord will certainly make you happy."

Often also, when his mother slept, and the one came to relieve the other, they had long conversations. Ivo confessed to her the longing of his mind for active employment; and she said, "Yes, I can understand that; I couldn't live if I hadn't plenty of work to do: I don't want to praise myself, but I can work just as hard as any in the village."

"And if you only had a house of your own you'd work harder still, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," said Emmerence, pushing up her short sleeves, and stiffening her powerful arms, as if to set about it at once: "yes, then; but even so I can do just as much work as turns up."

"Well," said Ivo, "do you think of any thing while you work?"

"Yes, of course."

"What, for instance?"

"Whatever happens to come into my head: I never thought of remembering it afterward."

"Well, give me an instance."

Usually so confident, the girl was in a perfect flurry of embarrassment.

"Are you ashamed to tell me?"

"Not a bit; but I don't know any thing to tell."

"What did you think this morning when you were cutting the rye? What sort of thoughts went through your head?"

"Well, I must think; but you mustn't laugh at me."

"No."

"At first, I guess, I thought of nothing at all. You might break me on the wheel, and I couldn't remember any thing. Then I came upon a nest of young quails,--dear little bits of things. I put them on one side, out of the way of the boys. Then I was wishing to see how surprised the old ones would be when they came to find their house in another spot. Then I thought of Nat's song, which you can sing too, about the poor soul. Then I thought, 'Where may Nat have gone to?' Then,--then I thought, 'I'm glad it's only half an hour till dinner-time,' for I was getting mighty hungry. There! that's all: it isn't much, is it?" She tugged bashfully at her sleeves, and could not raise her eyes to his face. Ivo asked again,--

"Don't you sometimes think how wonderful it is that God causes the seed which man throws out to bear sevenfold, and that the young crop sleeps under the snow until the sun wakes it in spring? How many millions of men have already lived upon the juices of the earth, and yet have not exhausted them!"

"Oh, yes, I often think that, but it wouldn't have occurred to me of my own accord: the parson says it often in sermons and in the catechism. You see, when you have to work at all these things yourself you don't find time for such reflections, but only think, 'Will it be ripe soon?' and 'Will it bear much?' The parsons, who don't work in the field, don't carry out the dung, and don't do any threshing, have more time for such thinking."

"But you must seek such thoughts a little, and then you will find them oftener. Won't you, Emmerence?"

"Yes, indeed I will: you are right: it is always well to admonish me. If you ask me often, you'll soon find I shall have more to tell you. I'm not so very stupid."

"You're a dear girl," said Ivo. He was on the point of taking her hand, but restrained himself with an effort, though he could not prevent himself from being more and more absorbed in admiration of her frank and sterling ways.

With a heavy heart Ivo returned to the convent. He admired the heroic endurance of his mother, and vowed to imitate it. But another subject occupied him. Through suffering and pain the paradise of his parental home had uprisen from its ashes, and he saw what an inexhaustible source of happiness is found in the attachment of two loving hearts which cling together the more closely the more rudely they are tossed by life's storms and changes. The undying sorrow of his heart broke forth again. He thought of Emmerence; and, sitting in the dark valley of pines, he wept. Down in the dingle was heard the harsh clang of a saw-mill; and Ivo wished that the boards being sawed there might be nailed into his coffin.

In the next holidays he was again almost constantly at home. Life was happy and peaceful there now. Valentine was regenerated, and a petulant word was never heard. Each member of the household behaved with tender consideration to all the others, and the Palm Sundays of early childhood seemed to have returned. But this very calm was to Ivo a source of unrest; in this very peace grew for him a tree of discord. He saw, with unmantled clearness, the solitary gloom of his own future, and knew that the happiness he witnessed was never to be his.

Two important events enhanced the interest of this vacation. Johnnie, Constantine's father, had had a house built for his son. Valentine and his sons had erected it; and Joseph, who became master-builder about this time, spoke the customary poem or oration.

The whole village had assembled before the building: the master and the journeymen were on the summit, engaged in fastening the crown of a young fir, hung with ribbons of all colors, to the peak of the gable. All were on the alert for Joseph's first performance. After a simple salutation, he began:--

"Here you see I have climb'd up unbidden:
If I had had a horse I would have ridden;
But, as I never had a horse,
I may as well talk about something else, of course.
The highest power in the State,
The Kaiser,--God keep him, early and late,--
And all the lords and princes round about,
The carpenters' trade could never do without.
A journeyman-carpenter here I stand,
And I travel through every prince's land.
I look about me with care,
Whether I can make a living there.
If I had every lassie's good-will,
And every master's craft and skill,
And all the wit of my friend the beadle,
I could build a house on the point of a needle;
But, as I can do nothing of the kind,
I must first have my house design'd.
He who would build on roads and streets
Must give every one a chance to try his wits.
I like what is fine,
Though it be not mine;
Though it cannot be my treasure,
It can always give me pleasure.
So I'll drink its health in some yellow wine:
Comrade, just fill up this glass of mine.
Builder! I drink to your satisfaction,
Not that I envy or wish you detraction,
But for good feeling and brotherhood.
Long life to the Kaiser and all his brood!
Destruction to every enemy,
And good luck to this worshipful company,
And to all the people, from far and near,
That have come to look at the building here.
Now I drink over all your heads:
Look out! what comes down's no feather-bed;
What goes up must come down:
Every man take care of his crown.
Now I'll think no more about it,
But drink the wine and throw away the glass without it."

Having dropped the glass, among the cheers of the crowd, he went on:--

"By God's help and his gracious power
We have finish'd this house in good time and hour.
And so we thank him, one and all,
That he has suffer'd none to fall,--
That none has been unfortunate
In life or limb, health or estate;
And also to our Lord we pray
Us henceforth still to keep alway;
And now I commend this house into his hand,
And all the German fatherland.
And hope the owner may use it so
As to make a good living out of those who come and go.
And I wish you, all together,
Health and success in all wind and weather.
And almost I had done great wrong
To have left the lassies out of my song,
Who have wound for us these garlands fine,
And hung them with roses and eglantine:
The flowers in our hats we mean to wear
In honor of our lassies fair."

With the rosemary in his hat, and the apron of skins, Joseph came down to receive the applause and congratulations of

his friends. His intended, Hansgeorge's Maria, took both his hands, gazed into his face with radiant eyes, and then looked triumphantly round on the bystanders.

Turning to Ivo, Joseph said, "I can preach too, if it comes to that: can't I, Ivo? This was my first mass, you see."

Ivo sighed deeply at the mention of the first mass.

All now returned home, except those specially invited by Constantine to partake of a grand dinner. Ivo, however, could not be persuaded to accept this invitation: he stood still a while, looking at the airy rafters, and thinking how happy Constantine must be in the possession of a house of his own. "As for these parsonages," he said to himself, "they are like sentry-houses, which belong to no one, and where no one leaves a trace of his existence: a solitary sentinel takes the place of his predecessor until he is relieved in his turn. But let me not be selfish: if the joys of a home are not for me, I will work for the welfare of others.

"I like what is fine,
Though it be not mine;
Though it cannot be my treasure,
It can always give me pleasure."

A week later was Joseph's wedding. It was a merry time. Christina sat at the head of the table, beside her son Ivo, who was and remained the pride of the family. Ivo danced a figure with his sister-in-law, and another with Emmerence. She was overjoyed, and said, "So we've had a dance together: who knows whether we shall ever have another?"

Ivo's second brother now brought his sweetheart to him, and said, "Dance together." When they had done so, his mother came to him and said, "Why, you dance splendidly! Where did you learn it?"

"I never forgot it: the spin-wife used to teach me, you remember, in the twilight."

"Shall we try it?"

"Yes, mother."

All the others stopped to see Ivo dance with his mother. Valentine rose, snapped his fingers, and cried,--

"Gentlemen, play a national for me, and I'll send an extra bottle. Come, old girl!"

He took his wife by the arm, skipped and jumped, and danced the old national dance, now wellnigh forgotten: he smacked his tongue, struck his breast and his thighs, swayed himself on his toes and his heels alternately, and executed all sorts of flourishes. Now he would hold his lady, now let her go, and trip round and round her with outstretched arms and loving gestures. Christina looked down modestly, but with manifest enjoyment, and turned round and round, almost without stirring from the spot on which she stood. Holding a corner of her apron in her hand, she slipped now under his right arm, now under his left, and sometimes they both turned under their uplifted arms. With a jump which shook the floor, Valentine concluded the dance.

Thus was their vacation full of joy, in the house and out of it.

14.

THE QUARREL.

Once more Ivo was compelled to leave these things behind and return to the convent. He no longer met Clement there, the latter having obtained permission to leave a year before the usual time, in order to enter a Bavarian monastery.

A new pang awaited him in the fate of Bart, of whom we, like him, have lost sight for some years. The poor, good-natured, but weak-minded, youth was in a terrible condition. He gnawed his finger-nails incessantly, and rubbed his hands as if they were cold: his walk was unsteady and tottering; the color of his face was a livid green; his cheeks were sunken; while the red nose and the ever-open mouth made the lank, ungainly lad a fright to look upon. He was not far from imbecility, and had to be transferred to the hospital. It was intended to make an effort for his recovery and then discharge him from the convent. Ivo shuddered when he went to see him. The only signs of mental vigor he displayed took the form of frenzied self-accusation.

The very air of the place now seemed infected. The design which had long worked within Ivo's breast at last became an outward act, and he wrote a letter to his parents, informing them of his unalterable resolution to leave the convent, as he could not become a clergyman: further than this he entered into no argumentations, well knowing that they would lead to no result. He would have been called ungodly if he had disclosed them fully, and thus the pain he caused would have been double. With a firm hand he wrote the letter; but with trembling he dropped it into the letter-box in the dusk of evening. As the paper glided down the opening, it seemed as if his past life was sinking into the grave; and every life--even a hopeless one--dies with a struggle. With a firm effort, however, he recovered his courage and looked the future in the face.

Some days after, Ivo had a visit from his parents. They took him with them to the Lamb Tavern. There Valentine ordered a room; and, when they were all in it, he bolted the door.

"What's the matter with you?" he said to Ivo, sternly.

"I cannot be a minister, dear father. Don't look so angrily at me: you have been young too, surely."

"Oh, that's where the shoe pinches, is it? You blessed scamp, why didn't you tell me that eight years ago?"

"I did not understand it then, father; and, besides, I would not have had the courage to say it."

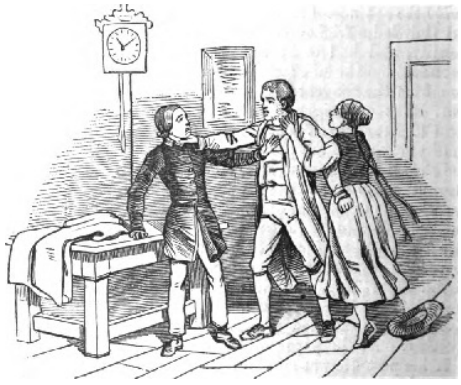
"Courage,--eh! We'll make short work of it, my fine fellow: you *shall* be a minister; and there's an end."

"I'd rather jump into the river."

"No occasion for that. You shall never go out of this room alive if you don't give me your hand upon it to be a clerical man."

"That I won't do."

"What? That you won't do?" cried Valentine, seizing him by the throat.



"Father," cried Ivo, "for God's sake, father, let me go: do not force me to defend myself: I am not a child any more."

Christina seized her husband's arm. "Valentine," said she, "I shall cry 'Fire!' out of the window if you don't let him go this minute." Valentine released his hold, and she went on:--"Is this the gentleness you promised me? Ivo, forgive him: he is your father, and loves you dearly, and God has given him power over you. Valentine, if you speak another loud word you've seen the last of me, and I'll run away. Ivo, for my sake, give him your hand."

Ivo pressed his lips together, and big tears stole down his cheeks. "Father," he sobbed, "I did not designate myself for a clergyman; nor are you to blame, for you could not know whether I was suited for it or not. Why should we reproach each other?"

He went up to Valentine to take his hand; but he only said, "Very fine; but what does the gentleman intend to be?"

"Let me go to the school for veterinary surgeons for a year, and I shall manage to get settled somewhere or other as veterinary surgeon and farmer."

"A good idea; and I'm to pay off the convent, I suppose? Two hundred florins a year? Then they can sell my house; and it'll be a glorious thing to say, 'Yes: Ivo's to be a cat-doctor, and so it is no great matter if the house does go by the board.' And what do you mean to study with? Live on the old Kaiser's exchequer?--or do you suppose I'm to pay? You can go to law with me and ask your motherly portion; but I'll make up a little account against you then, to show what you've cost me."

"I shall petition the ministry to have the indemnity to the convent charged upon my future inheritance."

"We've had our say, and you needn't talk any more," interrupted Valentine. "If you won't obey, only don't make yourself believe you have a father in the world. You've been my pride till now; but, after this, I can never look into any man's face again, and must only be glad if people are good enough not to talk about you." The tears trickled down his cheeks; and, pressing both his hands to his face, he continued:--"I wish a clap of thunder had struck me into the earth before I had lived to see this day!" He laid his head upon the window-sill, turned his back upon them, and struck fiercely at the wall with his foot.

Such, again, is man! Valentine had no hesitation in displaying his grief and hatred to his son; but he had always been ashamed to show his love and his satisfaction, and had buried them in his heart like the memory of a crime. Do not educated and uneducated men equally resemble him in this?

Hitherto Christina had contented herself with admonishing each party to silence and gentleness by looks and gestures; but now she began, with a firmer voice than her countenance might have led one to expect,--

"Ivo, dear Ivo, you were always good and pious: there never was a vein of evil in you. I won't say that I always thought it would be a good word for me in heaven if you were clerical: that's neither here nor there: it is you we must consider. For the sake of Christ's blood, examine yourself: be good, be true, and our Lord will help you and will purify your heart of all things that should not be there. Oh, you always had such a pious mind! You see I can't speak much: it seems to tear out my very heart. Be good and pious again, as you always were; be my dear, dear Ivo." She fell upon his neck and wept. Ivo answered, embracing her,--

"Mother dear, mother dear, I cannot be a minister. Do you suppose I would have given you all this unhappiness if I could have done otherwise? I cannot."

"Don't say you cannot: that isn't pious. Only set your will to it, make up your mind firmly, and shake off all evil desires, and indeed you will find it easy. The All-Merciful will help you, and you shall be our pride and our joy again, and a good child before God and man."

"I am not bad, dear mother; but I cannot be a minister. Do not rend my heart so. Oh, how gladly I would obey you! but I cannot."

"Let him go to the devil, the rascal!" said his father, tearing Christina away from her son. "Can you see your mother begging and imploring this way?"

"Tear me to pieces," cried Ivo, "but I cannot be a minister."

"Out with you, or I'll lay hands upon your life!" cried Valentine, with foaming mouth. He opened the door and pushed Ivo out.

"It is over," said Ivo, breathing hard as he went tottering down the stairs. A noise was heard above: the door opened, and his mother came down after him. Hand in hand they walked to the convent, neither of them speaking a word. In taking leave, she said,--

"Give me your hand upon it that you'll think of it again, and that you will not lay hands upon yourself."

Ivo gave the required promise, and went in silence to his cell. The floor rocked under his feet; but the purpose of his soul remained unshaken not to let thoughts of childlike affection sway him in the choice of his vocation for life. "I have duties to myself, and must be responsible for my own actions," thought he. "I could die to please my mother; but to enter upon a pursuit the root of which must be the firmest conviction that it is my appointed mission, is what I dare not and must not do."

But in the middle of the night he suddenly awoke; and it seemed as if a cry from his mother had roused him. He sat up in his bed; and now the calling he was about to abjure suddenly presented itself to his mind in its most elevated and holy aspect. He thought of being the loving, comforting, helping friend of the poor and distressed, the father of the orphan and the forsaken, the dispenser of light and happiness in every heart: he lost sight of all theological dogmas, and even

dreamed of taking part in the holy strife of liberating the world from superstition and human authority: he battled down the love of earth within him and resolved to live for others and for the other world: not a day would he suffer to pass without having refreshed some heavily-laden soul or gladdened some weary heart.

"Wherever a poor child of clay shall weep in bitter sadness, I will absorb his woes into my heart and let them fight their struggle there. I will dry the mourner's tears; and Thou, O Lord, wilt wipe the tears from my face when my spirit halts and I weep at night over my poor lonesome life."

Thus Ivo said to himself, and his heart was bright and clear. He seemed to have suddenly acquired the power of casting aside all earthly care, and winging his way to the fountain-head of bliss; and then again he experienced a sensation of triumph and of longing for the strife, as if he must go forth at once to battle. In an ecstasy of joy he called to mind the delight his return to his calling would awaken at home: his thoughts became indistinct, and he was again in the region of dreams.

Next morning he wrote a letter to his parents, announcing, with solemn earnestness and warm contrition, the recantation of his purpose, and praising the high character of the duties upon which he was resolved to enter. What he could not do to please his parents, he had achieved of his own free will. When he again heard the letter glide down into the box, he seemed to hear the swoop of the judicial sword: he had sentenced and executed himself. He returned, shaking his head. The elasticity of his spirit was bruised and broken. With all the power of his will, he returned to his studies, and succeeded for a time in quieting his mind.

At home the letter provoked the greatest exultation. But scarcely had the first flush of excitement passed away before a careful observer would have detected symptoms of uneasiness in the behavior of his mother. She often smiled sadly to herself, went thoughtfully about the house, and spoke little. Often, of an evening, she asked Emmerence to read the letter; and when she came to the words, "I will sacrifice my life to God, who gave it me; I will give you, my dear mother, the greatest earthly happiness," Christina sighed deeply.

One Saturday evening Christina and Emmerence sat together peeling potatoes for the next day: Emmerence, who had just read the letter once more, remarked,--

"Aunty, it always seems to me as if you were not quite happy to know that Ivo is going to be a clergyman, after all. Just tell me what you think about it. I see there is something the matter: you needn't conceal it from me."

"You're right. You see, I'll tell you. Before him" (meaning her husband) "I couldn't breathe a word about it, or the house would be on fire in a minute. It always seems to me as if I had done a great sin: I have made his heart so heavy. And he is such a good child: there's never a drop of bad blood in his heart; and now for love of me he's going to be a clergyman, when his heart clings to the world; and surely it's a great sin."

"Why, that's dreadful! Why, I wouldn't have a moment's peace. I'd make up my mind to set matters right immediately."

"Yes, but how? You see, I should like to tell him so, and unbeknown to him," (meaning her husband.) "I don't want to trust all this to the schoolmaster; and yet I can't write myself any more."

"Easy enough to help that. I'll write. I can write very well, and you can dictate to me."

"Yes, that's true: I never thought of that. You're a good child. Come; we'll set about it directly."

But another trouble soon arose, for nowhere was a pen to be found. Emmerence was ready to go to the schoolmaster to have one made and tell the schoolmaster's wife some story or other, if she asked questions; but Christina would not consent. "We can't begin with sinning," she said. With the same answer she dismissed Emmerence's second proposal, to steal one of the schoolmaster's pens, as she knew exactly where he kept them, and put a dozen fresh quills in its place. At length Emmerence cried, getting up, "I know where to get one. My sister's boy, Charlie, goes to school, and has pens; and he must give me one."

She soon returned in triumph, with a pen in her hand. Sitting down at the table, she drew up the wick of the lamp with a pin, squared herself to begin, and said, "Now dictate, aunty."

Ivo's mother sat behind the table in the corner under the crucifix, and tried to peel an additional potato. She said,--

"Write 'Dear Ivo.' 'Got that?"

"Yes."

"'I'm thinking of you now. Not an hour and not a day passes but I think of you; and at night, when I lie awake in bed, my thoughts are with you, dear Ivo.'"

"Not so fast, or I can't get it down," clamored poor Emmerence. She raised her blushing face, looked into the light, and gnawed her pen. These were the very words she would have written had she penned the letter in her own name. Laying her face almost on a level with the paper, she now began to write, and at last said, "'Dear Ivo.' Go on."

"No; first read to me what you have written."

Emmerence did so.

"That's right. Now write again, 'I am not quite easy about your having changed your mind so quickly'--Stop! don't write that: that's not a good way to begin."

Emmerence rested her chin on her hand and waited. But Christina said,--

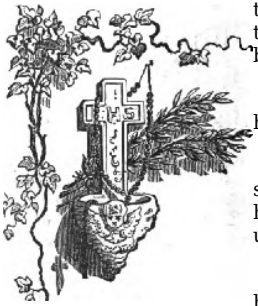
"You've found out what I mean by this time. Now just you write the letter yourself: that's what the schoolmaster always does."

"I'll tell you what," began Emmerence, rising: "a letter like this might get into wrong hands, or be lost; and we don't know exactly how to write it, anyhow. The best way will be for me to go to Ivo and tell him all about it. To-morrow is Sunday; so I sha'n't miss any working-time: the feed is cut for the cows; I'll put it into the trough over-night, and my sister can see to them for one day: the potatoes are peeled. I'll fix it so that you'll have nothing to do but put the meat over the fire. It's only seven hours' walk to Tuebingen by the valley, and I'll travel like a fire-alarm: Sunday is long, and to-morrow night I'll be back in good time."

"All alone will you go? And at night?"

"Alone? Our Lord God is everywhere, and he will hold his hand over a poor girl." Almost angrily, she added, "I must go at night, or I wouldn't be back to-morrow; and then he" (meaning Valentine) "would scold."

"I can't say no; I feel as if it must be so. Go, in God's name. Take my rosary with you: there's a bit of wood in it from Mount Lebanon, which I inherited from my great grandmother: that'll protect you." Taking her rosary from the door-post where it hung, she handed it to Emmerence, and continued, "Don't run too hard. Stay till Monday if you're tired: there's



time enough. I've a six-creutzer piece which I'll give you; and here, take this bread with you: there's a blessing on bread taken from the box. But what shall I say when people ask what's become of you? I couldn't tell a story."

"Just say that I've something very important to do: people needn't know every thing. I'll make haste, so as to be gone before he comes home."

With astounding readiness, Emmerence tripped up and down stairs and arranged all things as she had proposed: then she went into her room to put on her Sunday clothes. Christina helped her. As the girl drew her prettiest collar out of the chest, something wrapped up in paper fell upon the floor. "What is that?" asked Ivo's mother.

"A bit of glass Ivo once gave me when we were little bits of children," said Emmerence, hastily concealing it.

When the toilet was finished, Christina, untying her apron-strings and tying them again, said, "I don't know how it is; but you ought not to go, after all."

"Not go! Ten horses wouldn't hold me now. Don't balk, aunty: you've agreed to let me go: it would be the first time for you to break your word."

After going into the front room once more to sprinkle herself with holy water by the door, she started on her way. At the front door Christina made another effort to detain her; but she strode off briskly with a "God bless you!" Christina sent her good wishes after her, as she watched her till she disappeared at the lower end of the garden.

She had chosen this road to avoid meeting any of the villagers. As she walked through the target-field, the moon retired behind a large cloud; so that, when she entered the forest which covered the descent to the Neckar, it was almost "as dark as the inside of a cow." At first she shuddered a little, and it seemed as if some one were treading closely at her heels; but soon, finding that it was her own steps which she heard, she picked up her courage, and skipped securely over the roots which crossed the narrow wood-path. Emmerence "had good learning," and did not believe in spooks or spirits; but in Firnut Pete she had the most undoubting faith, for she knew how many people had been compelled to work for him. By shrugging her shoulders from time to time she made sure that the goblin was not seated upon them. She also believed in Little Nick, who rolls himself before people's feet like a wild cat or a log of wood, so that, when you undertake to sit down upon it, you sink into slime.[14] She held the rosary wound firmly round her hand.

In the glade where stands the fine old beech on which an image of the Virgin is fastened, Emmerence knelt down, took the rosary into her folded hands, and prayed fervently. The moon came forth full-cheeked, and seemed to smile upon the praying one, who arose with fresh courage and went on upon her journey.

The road now followed the course of the Neckar, on either bank of which the black fir woods rose to the tops of the hills; while the valley was, for the most part, so narrow as scarcely to hold more than the road, the river, and, at times, a narrow strip of meadow. All was silent, except that at times a bird chirped in its nest, as if to say, "Ah, I feel for the poor birds outside." The dogs gave the alarm as she passed the solitary farm-yards; the numerous mills rattled and thumped, but the heart of the girl outbeat them all.

Emmerence, who had never been more than two hours' walk from home before, was tossed by varied emotions. At first she praised her native village: "it lies upon the hills, and the fields have a soil like flitches of bacon." She only regretted that the Neckar did not flow across the mountain, so that the water might not be so scarce.

The stars twinkled brightly: Emmerence looked up to them, and said, "What a splendid sight it is to see those millions of stars just like a thousand lights twinkling on a rusty pan,--only much finer and more holy; and up there sits our Lord God and keeps watch. How much one loses by sleeping in the course of a year! And if you don't look about you you don't even see it when your eyes are open. He was right: I look out for things much more diligently now, and great pleasure it gives me." A shooting star came down. Raising her hands, Emmerence cried, "Ivo!" She stood still and looked blushing to the ground: she had revealed the inmost wish of her heart; for it is well known that what you wish when a shooting star falls will surely come to pass.

Still walking briskly on her way, Emmerence said again, "Oh, if I only had such a mill, wouldn't I work like a horse? Oh, my goodness! how fine it must be to look at one of these little properties and say, 'It's mine!' I should just like to know whom he would marry if he shouldn't be a minister. God is my witness, I'd run this errand for him just as willingly if he were to take another. Just as willingly? No, not quite: but still right willingly. He is right not to be a minister: to have nobody in the world to yourself, and belong to nobody, is a sorry piece of business. If it was our Lord God's wish that people shouldn't get married, he'd have made nothing but men and let them grow on trees. Well, if these a'n't the most wicked thoughts!" Emmerence closed her soliloquy, and ran the faster, to escape from her own reflections. With an effort, she directed her attention to external things, and, listening to the rush of waters which moved forward unceasingly like herself, "What a strange thing," thought she, "is such a stream of water! It runs and it runs. Ah, you'd like to just lumber along the road without working, wouldn't you? No, you don't, my darling; you must carry the rafts and drive the mills: every thing in the world must work, and so it should be. Why, that's Ivo's trouble, too: he wants to work hard, and not only preach and read mass and pore over his books. That isn't work at all, nor any thing like it. I'll tell him all about it; but what I think he shall never, never know."

Daylight came on, and with it all her natural high spirits returned. She smoothed down her clothes, stepped into the river, washed out her eyes, and combed her hair. She stood a while dreamily regarding her image, which the waters were struggling vainly to carry off with them: her eyes were riveted upon the billows, but she saw them not; she was in a brown study, for a thought had withdrawn her glance from surrounding things to objects which hovered before her soul. In passing on, Emmerence often looked around in a kind of wonder at finding herself on strange ground at the first dawn of morning, where no one knew her nor of her. Though her limbs assured her she had been walking, her eyes seemed to think she had been spirited there by magic.

It was a beautiful morning in August: the larks carolled in the air, and the robins shrilled in the brakes. All this, however, was so familiar to Emmerence that she did not stop to contemplate it, but walked on, singing,--

"The lofty, lofty mountains,
The valley deep and low!
To see my dearest sweetheart
For the last last time I go."

In Rottenburg she rested a while, and then set out with renewed energy. Not until she saw Tuebingen did she stop to consider how she should set about getting to see Ivo. She called to mind, however, that Christian's Betsy was cook at the

district attorney's: the cook of a district attorney, she thought, must surely know what to do, when all the world is always running to her master for advice. After many inquiries, she found Betsy; but Betsy had no advice to give, and submitted the case to the judgment of the groom. The groom, rapidly calculating that a girl who wanted to confer with a Catholic priest in secret was not likely to be hard to please, said, "Come along: I'll show you." He tried to put his arm round her neck; but a blow on the breast which made it ring again induced him to change his mind. Muttering something about "hard-grained Black Foresters," he turned on his heel.

"'Tell you what," said Betsy, the astute lawyer's cook: "wait here for an hour till the bell rings for church, and then go to church and sit down in front on the left of the altar, and you'll see Ivo up in the gallery: tip him the wink to come out to you after church."

"In church?" cried Emmerence, raising her hands! "Jesus! Maria! Joseph! but you've been spoiled in the city! I'd rather go home again without seeing him."

"Well, then, do your own thinking, you psalm-singer."

"So I will," said Emmerence, going. She took her way straight to the convent, asked to see the principal, and told him frankly that she wished to talk to Ivo.

"Are you his sister?" asked the principal.

"No: I'm only the housemaid."

The principal looked steadily into her face: she returned his look so calmly and naturally that his suspicions, if he had any, were disarmed; and he directed the famulus to conduct her to Ivo.

She waited for him in the recess of a window on the long vaulted corridor. He came presently, and started visibly when he saw her.

"Why, Emmerence, what brings you here? All well at home, I hope?" said he, with a foreboding of evil.

"Yes, all well. Your mother sent me to give you a thousand loves from her, and to say that Ivo needn't be a clerical man if he doesn't want to be one with all his heart. Mother can't make her mind easy: she thinks she has made his heart so heavy, and that he only does so to please her, and that was what she didn't want, and he was her dear son for all that, even if he shouldn't be a minister, and----Yes: that's all."

"Don't look so frightened, Emmerence: talk without fear. Give me your hand," said Ivo, just as one of his inquisitive comrades had passed. "We are not strangers: we are good old friends, a'n't we?"

Emmerence now related, with astonishing facility, how she had tried to write the letter, and had wandered all night to see him: she often looked to the ground and turned her head as if in quest of something. Ivo's eyes rested on her with strange intentness, and whenever their glances met both blushed deeply; yet they had a dread of each other, and neither confessed the emotions of their hearts. When her story was all told, Ivo said, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I only hope a time may come when I may requite a little of your kindness."

"That's nothing. If it was for your good, and you were to say, 'Just run to Stuttgard for me to the king,' I'd go in a minute. I just have a feeling now as if--as if----"

"As if what?" asked Ivo.

"As if every thing must turn out for the very best after this."

Without speaking a word, the two stood face to face for a while, holding in their hearts the fondest converse. At last Ivo drew himself up, with a heavy sigh, and said,--

"Say to my mother that I must think over all these matters again, and that she must not be uneasy any more. Take good care of her, and don't let her work too hard with the arm that was broken. Next to my mother, you and Nat are the dearest persons in the world to me."

Ivo as well as Emmerence looked down at these words, while the former continued:--"Have you heard nothing of Nat?"

"No."

The time allowed for their interview had passed by before they were aware of it. "You are going to church, a'n't you?" asked Ivo.

"Yes; but afterward I must make haste to get home."

"If I can arrange it, I'll see you once more after church, down in the Neckar Bottom, on the road to Hirsau; but, if it can't be, good-bye. God bless you! Don't walk too fast, and,--be a good girl."

They parted. Although an hour before Emmerence had scolded Betsy so lustily, she now took her seat in church on the left of the altar, and was rejoiced at Ivo's nod of recognition.

For an hour she waited in the Neckar Bottom; but no one came. She started on the road home, often stopping to look back: at last she resolved to do so no longer. "It is better so," she said. "I'm always afraid I haven't told him the matter just in the right way; but it's better so." Though she did not stop to look back any more, she soon sat down to eat her bread upon a hill which commanded a view of the whole length of the road to the city. Brushing the crumbs from her dress, she then rose up hastily and pursued her journey.

We cannot accompany her farther than to say that she arrived in good health and spirits. Our business is with Ivo, who was oppressed with heavy thoughts. He had in a manner domiciliated himself in the calling from which it seemed impossible to escape. The message from his mother had again unsettled the firm foundation of his will, and once more made him doubtful of himself. The sight of the girl of his heart had aroused a fresh straggle within him. He might easily have gone to the Neckar Bottom after church; but fear of himself and of others kept him away.

The pure, fresh action of the will which Ivo had vindicated before his parents was broken by his voluntary return, and it was not easy to reunite the fragments: It is very difficult to return to a project once firmly entertained but afterward abandoned. There is no vital thread to bind the future and the past: it is like the second crop of grass, which may be more tender than the first, but gives no nourishment.

RELEASE.

A frightful casualty was required to restore Ivo to his early resolutions.

On St. Bartholomew's day, Bart had escaped from his keepers in the hospital. Racked by qualms of conscience, he sprang from a window and dashed out his brains. To prevent the effect of this deed upon the reputation of the convent, and in charitable consideration of Bart's partial derangement, it was resolved to give him a burial in the usual form. The conventuaries, wearing crape, followed the corpse to the sound of funeral music. Ivo blew the horn: its tones fluttered in the air like the shreds of ribbons rudely torn. At the grave Ivo stepped forward and made a heart-rending speech in memory of his lost comrade. At first he stumbled a little: all his pulses were trembling. For the first time in his life Death had really rolled a corpse at his feet, crying, "Learn, by death, to study life!" As he had fancied Clement lying dead at his feet, so now in reality the corpse of a companion of his youth, with whom he had spent so many years, lay before him. First he spoke in praise of life,--of the free, glad air of heaven,--and desired to banish death far from the haunts of men; but soon his speech warmed, and his words flowed as from a living spring; and, with griefless fervor, he praised the lot of the orphan now happy with his Father in heaven. Consecration overtook him before the hand of a priest had touched his head. He soared upward to the throne of the universal Parent, knelt, and implored grace for his friend. In short and broken sentences he then prayed for grace to himself, and for his own happy end and that of all men.

To the sound of a triumphal march the conventuaries returned home. Though the contemplation of death was one of their chief exercises, yet, like the standing-armies of earth, they, the standing-army of heaven, were not left long to the influence of sorrow, but were required forthwith to renew their strides toward the goal of their efforts. Ivo's courage also returned. Fate had robbed him of the two associates who had stood nearest to him,--of the one by spiritual, and of the other by bodily, suicide. He was alone, and therefore untrammelled. When the others, who had looked upon life and death with less of seriousness, went in a body to a tavern to observe an old custom of drinking a hundred quarts of beer, each at one draught, to the memory of their comrade, Ivo, with his bugle under his arm, went alone across the bridge, and walked on and on. The sun was sinking: his last rays still lingered on the earth: but the moon was high in the unclouded sky, as if to tell the children of earth, "Be not afraid: I shall watch over you and shed light upon your silent nightly paths until the sun returns." Ivo said to himself, "Thus do men cry and clamor whenever an opinion is wrecked or a doctrine dislodged. A new light is always at hand, though sometimes unseen to them; but they dread eternal night, because they do not know that light is indestructible."

When the darkness had fairly set in, he stood still for a moment, but immediately resumed his march, saying, "On, on! never turn back." He turned into another road, to avoid his home. He thought of his mother's grief; but he would write to her from Strasbourg, whither he had resolved to go. He meant to support himself by his instrument, or to hire out as a farm-hand, until he should have laid up money enough to go to America. His books were forgotten as if he had never seen them. He thought no more of theological dogmas and systems. He seemed to have been born again, and the remembrances of the past were like a dream. Thus he walked on all night without resting; and, when at the first dawn of morning he found himself in a strange valley, he stood still, and prayed fervently for God's assistance. He did not kneel; but his soul lay prostrate before the Lord. As he walked on, he hummed a song which he had often heard in childhood:--

"Now good-bye, beloved father,
  Now good-bye: so fare ye well.
Would you once more seek to find me?
Climb the lofty hills behind me,
  Look into this lowly dell,
  Now good-bye: so fare ye well.
"Now good-bye, beloved mother,
  Now good-bye: so fare ye well.
You who did with anguish bear me,
For the Church you did uprear me:
  Let your blessing with me dwell.
  Now good-bye: so fare ye well."

Sitting on a stone, Ivo reflected on his fate. He had gone away recklessly: there was not a copper in his pocket, and nothing which afforded even a hope of money except his bugle. He could hardly expect to escape the necessity of asking the assistance of the charitable. Even in the purest heart, and with the consciousness of perfect rectitude, begging is a dismal prospect: he blushed scarlet at the thought. Nor must we forget that he was the son of rich parents, and could not but think of the plentiful supplies at home. He sang, with a sad smile, a snatch of the old song,--

"The world's here and there,
But I haven't a share."

A drove of oxen came down the road, two brindles leading the way. Ivo joined the drovers and asked where they were going. They were on the way to a rich butcher in Strasbourg, and now on the direct road to Freiburg. Ivo had gone round many miles, but was still on the right road. He now asked the men to let him travel with them and help them, and to pay his expenses: they looked at the strange man in black, with the bugle under his arm, from head to foot, and whispered something to each other.

"As for going to Algiers with the foreign legion, there's no use in that at all," said one.

"Much better sit out your two or three years at home: they can't pull your head off." The complacent smile with which this was said proved conclusively that the speaker's personal experience vouched for its correctness. It was clear that they took Ivo for a criminal,--a notion which he did not venture to dissipate, as their pity was indispensable to him. They said they could not make a bargain, but must refer him to their employer, whom they expected to meet at Neustadt.

Ivo followed humbly in the train of the oxen: the graduate of the penitentiary committed the sceptre into his hands, and he ruled over the subject herd with mildness.

"Where did you get those brindles?" he asked.

"Ah," said the enemy of Algiers, "you can see what sort of a stable they came from, can't you? They were bought from Buchmaier, at the Hornberg fair."

Ivo ran up to the beasts, and recognised his favorite by the upturned hair in the middle of the forehead. He almost feared that the fate of the poor animal would be his own, and that death awaited him also; but he could not and would not turn back.

But what was his astonishment when, on arriving at Neustadt, the drovers saluted their employer, who was looking out of the window of the inn, and he recognised him as Florian! He could not believe his eyes, until Florian came up and welcomed the odd-looking drover with shouts of laughter.

Ivo told his story, and Florian, striking the table, cried, "Hurrah for you! Another bottle, waiter. I'll see you through, take my word for it. But how do you expect to get to Strasbourg without a passport? Here," (slipping out of his blue

smock,) "put that on: that will make them all take you for a Strasbourg butcher. And," added he, laughingly taking up the heavy belt filled with money which lay before him, "carry that on your shoulder, and you'll be as good as one of us in earnest."

Ivo was well satisfied, and, after a hearty meal, he travelled on with Florian in good spirits. Florian was rejoiced to find such an opportunity of vaunting his prosperous circumstances, and of playing a trick on the Nordstetters: besides, he was really delighted to be of use to Ivo.

The day was hot. On the top of the Hell-Scramble they stopped for dinner. To escape Florian's unceasing invitations to help himself from the bottle, Ivo went into the adjoining smithy to chat with the blacksmith, as he had been wont to do at home. Suddenly he called to mind that this was the place and this the man with whom Nat had once been concealed: he was on the point of asking about him, when the blacksmith said to his boy, "There: take these two ploughshares over to the Beste farmer."

"How far is that?" asked Ivo.

"A good mile."

"I'm going with you," said Ivo. Running into the tavern and telling Florian that he would soon return and overtake him, he doffed his butcher's smock and took his bugle under his arm.

As they walked down the wood-path, he heard the torrent roar and the mills rattle; every tree seemed to stand between him and Nat. "Is the Beste farmer a fine man?" he asked the boy.

"Oh, yes; a finer man than his brother who is dead."

"What's the Christian name of the one that's on the farm now?"

"I don't know: we always call him the Beste farmer: he's been in many strange countries, as a serving-man and as a doctor."

Ivo fairly shouted with joy.

"Since when has he been here?" he asked, again.

"These two years. He worked for his brother a year, till he died: they do say he did it, for he's half a wizard: he wanted to kill him many years ago, and, as there were no children, the property came to him. Otherwise, though, he's a very fine man."

It was painful to be told that his dear Nat was under the suspicion of fratricide after all, as if to punish him for having once in his life meditated the sin; but Ivo soon reflected that such could only be the gossip of envious tongues and of old women.

They passed the saw-mill where Nat had spent so large a portion of his youth. Ivo was particularly pleased to see a fine walnut-tree flourishing in front of it, under the protection of the overtopping hill-side.

They ascended the hill on the other side. Ivo knew that a mile among neighboring farmers is of an elastic character; but he had not expected to find the distance greater than four miles,--as he did. Being very impatient, he relieved the boy of the heavy ploughshares, to enable the latter to keep up with him. The pitchy scent of the sun-stricken firs recalled the memory of home: he saw himself again seated on the harrow with Nat, in the field in the Violet Valley, singing and rejoicing. The associations of childhood danced around him. Having reached the "Wind-Corner," Ivo saw the well-known little cabin, from the window of which a pale female face was looking. It was Lizzie of the Corner, returned to her former solitude.

"How strange," thought Ivo, "that the Church should venture to prohibit what the Bible expressly enjoins! According to the Old Testament, the brother of a decedent was required to marry the childless widow; and this the canonical law expressly forbids. Nat and Lizzie could never marry." With a brush of his hand Ivo banished from his mind all remembrances of theological difficulties.

In the neighborhood of the great farm-house the roads were in fine condition. The stately building did not appear until they were almost at the door. Ivo saw Nat raking hay, while several farm-hands were at work around him. He did not run toward him, but set his bugle to his lips and played the tune of the old song,--

"Up yonder, up yonder,
  At the heavenly gate,
A poor soul is standing
  In sorrowful strait."

Then he cried "Nat," and they were in each other's arms.

* * * * *

After long pathless wanderings, our story has reached a smooth highway which will bear it rapidly to its close. Ivo remained with Nat, who treated him like a brother. As one of the richest farmers in the country, he could do much for him without feeling a sacrifice. He went to Nordstetten as his proxy, and brought Emmerence, with whom, on a bright, happy day, Ivo was united.

All the villagers, and even his parents, were reconciled to his change of pursuits. It is strange how easily people are

satisfied with their friends the moment they pay their own expenses.

Nat presented Ivo with the saw-mill, where he now worked to his heart's content, in company with his Emmerence. Often of an evening he sits under the walnut-tree and plays his bugle, which fills the valley with its melody. Far around, at the isolated farm-houses, the boys and girls stand in the moonshine listening to the plaintive tones. Emmerence once drew Ivo's attention to this; and he said, "You see, music is an emblem of human life as it should be. I play for our own satisfaction; and yet if I know that the sounds gladden the hearts of other men also, I am still better pleased, and play with more life and spirit. Let every man attend to his own business well, and he will help others too, and make them happy. I am not disinterested enough to be satisfied with playing tunes for other people to dance by. I like to dance myself."

"Yes," said Emmerence: "you are a learned man, and yet I understand you. When the boys used to sing while gathering fir-nuts in the Neckar valley, I always thought, 'Well, they sing for themselves; and yet it makes me happy to hear them too, and every one who has ears;' and so do the birds sing for themselves, and yet we are delighted; and if every one sings his part well in church it all chords well together, and is beautiful."

Ivo embraced his Emmerence with transport.

"If only winter never came here," she said; "for it is rather solitary."

"Well, in winter you must come and live with me," said the well-known voice of Nat.

FLORIAN AND CRESCENCE.

1.

THE GIRLS AT THE WELL.

On Saturday afternoon the house of the Red Tailor was alive with singing. Doors were opened and closed with a bang, windows thrown up, chairs and tables moved here and there, and the broom rattled among the lifeless bones; but over all was heard a rich, full, female voice, travelling up and down stairs, into rooms and out of passages. Song followed hard upon song, grave and gay meeting with equal favor. At last the singer was forthcoming,--a girl of stout proportions but the utmost symmetry of form. A jacket of knitted gray yarn set off the swelling outlines to the best advantage: one corner of the apron was tucked up and left the other hanging jauntily. With the milking-pail in her hand, she went to the stable. The words of the songs were now more distinctly audible. One of them ran thus:--

"I climb'd up the cherry-tree;
  For cherries I don't care.
I thought I might my true love see:
  My true love wasn't there.
"It isn't long since the rain came down,
  And all the trees are wet;
I had a true love all my own:
  I wish I had him yet.
"But he has gone abroad, abroad,
  To see what luck would do;
And I have found another love:
  He's a good fellow, too."

With a water-bucket under her arm, she made her appearance again, locked the door of the house, and concealed the key under a stack of kindling-wood. The well before the town-hall was empty and locked up; the upper well, also under lock and key, was only opened by Soges every morning and evening, and water distributed to each family in proportion to the number of its inmates. This scarcity of water is a great evil, particularly in the heat of summer. On the way our heroine was stopped by Anselm the Jew's Betsy, who cried,--

"Wait, Crescence: I'll go with you."

"Hurry up, then. When is your intended coming back?" returned Crescence.

"At our Pentecost,--this day fortnight."

"When is it to be?"

"Some time after the Feast of Tabernacles. You must dance with us all day, mind. We'll have one more good time of it: we've always been good friends, haven't we?"

"Betsy, you ought to have married Seligmann and stayed here. A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush. Going all the way to Alsace! How do you know what's to become of you after you get there?"

"Why, how you talk!" replied Betsy. "With my four hundred florins, how am I to choose? And over there it counts for almost a thousand francs; and that's more like. Are you going to live in the village always? When your geometer gets an appointment, won't you have to go with him? Oh, did I tell you?--my intended went with Florian to the Schramberg market the other day from Strasbourg. Florian had I don't know how many--at least three hundred--ducats in his girdle, to buy beeves with. He carries himself like a prince, and his master trusts him with all his property. And they do say he's going to give him his daughter."

"I wish him much happiness."

"Now, you needn't make believe you didn't like Florian's little finger better than the whole geometer."

"What if I did? He's got nothing, and I've got nothing; and 'twice nothing is nothing at all,' says George the blacksmith."

The two girls had reached the well, where many of their companions were already awaiting the arrival of the officer of Government.

"Have you heard, Crescence?" cried Christian's Dolly--"Florian's come back an hour ago: you've got a full team to drive now."

"You preach to your grandmother," retorted Crescence: "such a beanpole as you may open every shutter of her windows and '11 never catch a gudgeon."

"That's it," said a girl with forward air and manners, who bore the ominous designation of "Corpse Kitty," because she fitted the shrouds. Passing her hand over her mouth, she went on:--"Give her her change, Crescence: we know it's all cash-down where you come from." She accompanied the words with a significant gesture.

"Oh, you're nervous because nobody will lend you any thing," replied the assailed one. "You're a sweet one, Dolly, to set *her* a-going."

"Well, what did you fly at Dolly that way for?" said Melchior's Lenore: "she didn't mean any harm by it. Can't you take a little fun?"

"Has Florian really come home?" asked Crescence, softly.

"Of course he has," cried Corpse Kitty, aloud. "Just look out, you hemp-toad: you'll find you've 'most done carrying your head as high as a sleigh-horse: Florian will take the geometer's bearings before you know what's what."

Soges now appeared as another Moses to open the well for the daughters of Jethro: he did not seem to woo any of them, however, for he was not by any means in a bland or amiable frame of mind.

"Give Crescence the cream of the water: she's got to have the geometer's standees washed to-night," cried Kitty.

"Let her talk," said Lenore: "you can't worry her more than by not listening to her. She's just like the dogs: they bark at you, and if you walk on quietly they run home again and bark at the next person that comes along the road. She's after making everybody out as bad as she is herself, if she can. But you must be on the look-out about Florian now, or you'll get into trouble."

"Yes," said another girl: "he's brought lots of money with him, and the first thing he did was to give his father a gold ducat. The money must 'a' looked scared when it got into that room. The old fellow's so poor that the mice all ran away from him."

"Florian can dress and undress himself five times over and not take all the fine clothes out of his chest," said a third.

"And he speaks French 'most all the time."

"And he has a watch, with a chain, and all the tools of his trade hung to it in silver for charms."

"And he's got a black mustache you can hardly help kissing."

A dispute interrupted this torrent of items.

"What're you pushing me so for?" said Corpse Kitty to Kilian's Annie: "I'm not a rich chap."

"Hold your jaw, you!--you've been to the House of Correction twice already, and the third time's written on your forehead now."

"I'll mark your forehead," screeched Kitty, striking at Annie with her bucket; but she parried the blow, and struck another. A fierce struggle ensued: the buckets were dropped, and the combatants "clinched" hand to hand. After looking on passively a while, the others interfered, Soges particularly dealing official blows to the right and left with great vigor and impartiality. Like two fighting-cocks torn asunder, the hostile parties looked daggers at each other as they picked up their buckets. Annie brushed her hair out of her face, crying bitterly, and complaining that nobody was safe, nor ever would be, until Corpse Kitty was in the House of Correction for life.

Crescence's turn having come at last, she carried the heavy bucket home on her head and a still heavier load in her heart. Tears were rolling down her cheeks; but she pretended that they were drops from the bucket, and always wiped the lower rim of it with her apron. There was confusion in her heart now, and she foresaw still greater troubles in the future.

Having returned home, she went through with her work, but without singing another note.

Lest our readers should be at a loss to divine what a titled personage like a geometer should be doing in the village, it is proper to remind them that the general survey of the country took place about this time. Every nook and corner of the land was mapped, labelled, and numbered; and in the course of the operation a new element was infused into the life of the people. A race of "city fellows," belonging neither to the order of parsons nor to that of schoolmasters, made their way into the village: they were generally young, smart, and fond of enjoyment; and the importance they soon acquired among the female portion of the community has already become apparent.

These gentlemen received the sounding title of "geometers." A surveyor was a plain surveyor; and as these people, for some reason or other, were to appear to the peasantry in the light of a superior rank of beings, and, as it was important to disseminate a knowledge of and taste for the classics, they received the Greek addition. Crescence's playmate had married a geometer-general (should he not have been called a hypergeometer?) and lived at Biberach: this had made Crescence acquainted with one of his colleagues, and her parents were most anxious to push matters, for a better "providence" could not have been hoped for. The Red Tailor in his mind's eye already saw his daughter as Madame Geometrix-General.

2.

FLYING OFF THE HANDLE.

It was dark. Crescence stood by the fire in the kitchen: the College Chap came in with very audible steps, and said,--

"Crescence, how are you? I want a pound of that tobacco. Have you got any left?"

"Yes, walk in: my mother 'll wait on you."

"I won't poison your soup if I do stay here a bit," he said aloud: then he continued, very softly, "Florian's got home. Come out a little after a while, and you shall hear us."

Without waiting for an answer, he went into the room. When he came out again, Crescence was gone.

A little later the voices of the three comrades were heard before the Red Tailor's house, singing, whistling, and laughing. Florian's, which had long been wanting, was doubly clear and full. Finding all their efforts unavailing, Peter cried under the window,--

"Crescence, isn't this your goose running about here?"

The College Chap, crouching behind the wood-pile, was cackling with the accent of a native.

The window was opened; but, instead of Crescence, the tailor's wife looked out, and said,--

"Crack your jokes before somebody else's house."

With a roar of laughter the College Chap returned to the middle of the road.

Within, Crescence sat with the geometer, paying but little heed to his blandishments: at last she feigned a headache and went to bed.

Tired of their fruitless watch, the three boys in the road bent their steps toward the inn. They had not gone far before they encountered Josey, the French simpleton. The College Chap cried, seizing him by the collar,--

"*Qui vive? la bourse on la vie?*"

"*Paridadoin mullien*," calmly replied the person addressed, meaning to say, "What do you want?"

"Here's a jolly lark!" cried the student, triumphantly. "Let's take Josey with us and make him do the geometer. Come; we'll treat you to a mug of beer."

"*Moin paroula goin*," answered Josey,--as if to say, "I've no objections." His words were all formed by accident; and he eked them out with nods and grins. Originally Josey was not more than half a simpleton; but the half which Nature had denied had been carefully educated into him by the wags of the village. If any villager has a mole in his disposition, he may be assured that his townsmen will stretch it into a mountain for their common behoof and education.

Nobody knew, or cared to know, what had given Josey the notion that he was master of all the living tongues. Some contended that he had been dry-nurse so long as to have acquired the baby-lingo by incessant practice. Be that as it may, it was impossible to address him in any real or imaginary language without receiving an instantaneous reply. This apart, he was as good a field-hand as many others; and, whether he understood the language of the beasts or not, they understood him and did his bidding. In church Josey was the only member of the congregation who nodded at every word of the Latin mass, to imply that he understood it to perfection.

This individual was for this evening the fourth member of the usually so exclusive confederacy of three.

"*Bon soir*," said Florian, as they entered the bar-room. He received a kindly welcome at all hands. The assembled guests scanned him from head to foot, and nodded to each other with looks that seemed to say, "A fine fellow, Florian; yes, if you want to come home you must go abroad first."

One who sat behind the stove said to his neighbor, "This is a better way to come back than that thief Schlunkel's: he's been twice to the penitentiary, and has just come back. I wish we were rid of him again."

Florian ordered a bottle of wine for himself and his comrades, while Josey was regaled with a mug of beer at an adjoining table.

When Babbett brought the refreshments, he remarked, in an under-tone, but yet loud enough to be heard by all, "*Comme elle est jolie!--bien jolie!*"

"*Qui?*" returned the College Chap. The company nudged each other,--to think they could talk French so well together.

Florian treated the whole company,--to their great satisfaction, for, though frequenters of the tavern, they sat there as dry customers: the stimulus made their hearts glad, and the sensation was reflected upon the spirits of Florian. He seemed to have expended his stock of French; for "Snuff the *chandelle*" is not pure Parisian.

The point of the joke was lost, nevertheless; for the geometer, who put up at the Eagle, was not there.

"Are you going to stay with us, Florian?" asked Babbett.

"*Nous verrons*: we shall see."

"Tell us something of your travels," said Caspar, the host, who felt it incumbent on him to promote the conversation. "Have you been to Paris?"

"Of course," answered Florian, in a tone of voice in which a shrewd observer would have detected the ring of false metal; "but I didn't like it there. Nancy's the finest place yet. Go into a tavern there, and the walls are all looking-glasses, the tables are marble, and you eat and drink out of nothing but silver. You ought to go there once: you'd open your eyes and ears."

These signs of absorbing attention now showed themselves in Florian's own features; for the geometer, with his two colleagues, entered the room. They passed through to the little back parlor, where a table was set for them.

Florian seized his glass, made it clink against those of his friends, and said, "*A votre santé.*"

Caspar had lost his interest in Florian's narration, and hastened to meet the new-comers and light them to their supportable, which was set in the back room. Florian, twirling his mustache, asked Constantine, very softly, "Which is it?"

"The lobsided one, with long hair, that came in first."

For a time all were silent, and nothing was heard but the clatter of knives and forks behind the screen.

But suddenly Constantine began to sing:--

"Oh, man of geometry,
  Pull up your pegs:
How can you see straight with such
  Shocking round legs?"

A burst of laughter filled the room, instantly succeeded by another silence. The knives and forks behind the screen were breathless also.

Florian got up and said to Josey, "*Comment vous portez-vous, Monsieur Géomètre?*"

"*Quadulta loing*," replied Josey, who continued to talk gibberish, amid renewed peals of laughter.

"'Wish you joy of your berth," said Constantine, taking the mop from the slop-bucket. "Here: just survey this table for me: you can do it very well, you know, for there's no need of brains."

Amid constant and increasing merriment, Josey entered upon his labors, and proceeded until Babbett came up, saying,--

"Have done with this, now, and crack your jokes somewhere else. Be quiet, Josey, or go about your business."

Josey struck the table and jabbered grimly. The screen was suddenly pushed aside, and Steinhaeuser, the admirer of Crescence, appeared, restrained by his two comrades from assaulting the mocker. Caspar tried to pacify him, and, as soon as he had partially succeeded, he stepped up to the three, and said, with more decision than might have been expected,--

"I'll tell you what: this sort of thing can't be done on my premises; and the sooner you know it the better. Drink your wine quietly, or I'll show you what's outside of the door. I won't have my guests insulted while I'm master of this house. No offence to one; but I will have order."

"*Juste*," said Florian: "all right: I'll find the gentleman somewhere else in good time. You hear, you lobsided lout over there? If I catch you within half a mile of Crescence again, I'll knock your crooked legs into a cocked hat, and then you may toddle on your tripod."

"You ragamuffin!" roared Steinhaeuser, before whom Caspar had posted himself. Florian made for him with a "Comapulation smash! *foudre de Dieu!*" but Caspar hauled him back, and Constantine was shrewd enough to interfere as a peacemaker.

The three left the house, followed by Josey. On the road they vowed never to patronize the Eagle again. Florian made an effort to go back, however: he hadn't given the landlord all his change.

"Thunder an' ouns!" said Constantine, "stay here, I tell you. You're the best man for flying off the handle in Wurtemberg. Be quiet, now: we'll manage to lay the geometer out some time, and make him forget the resurrection of the legs."

This counsel prevailed; and, to compensate themselves for their enforced inaction, they travelled through the village, the College Chap howling like a whipped dog, and making, as he expressed it, all the dogs in the houses rebellious.

3.

WEEKDAY LIFE ON SUNDAY.

Next day Crescence did not dress in her Sunday clothes to go to church, but complained of being unwell, and remained at home.

The tailor, when he came home from church and saw his daughter in dishabille, said,--

"What's that? Be quiet, I tell you, once and for all," he continued, seeing Crescence about to speak. "You don't feel very well, because Florian's come back, and you don't want to be seen in the street. I've heard all about the fuss he had with the geometer last night. Now, just for spite, you must go to the Horb Garden to-day with the geometer. That's what I tell you: and one word's as good as a thousand."

"I'm sick."

"No use. Go up-stairs and dress yourself, or I'll measure your clothes with this yardstick."

"Let him talk," said the tailor's wife, who had entered by this time: "what he says is for the mice to dance by. Crescence, if you don't feel well, stay at home. If it depended on him, you wouldn't have a shred of clothes to put on, good or bad: all he can do is to put his feet under the table three times a day and get himself fed like a billet of soldiers."

The tailor advanced upon Crescence; but his wife posted herself in front of her, clenched her fists, and scared her liege-lord into a corner.

These people were fresh from church, where they had prayed and sung of love, peace, and happiness. Their hymn-books were still in their hands, and already had Discord resumed its reign.

Indeed, we have stumbled upon a peculiar household. The mother had been the parson's cook, and had married the tailor rather suddenly. Crescence was her oldest child, and she had, besides, a son and a daughter. She still wore citizen's dress, with the sole exception of the black cap of the peasant-woman, which, from its superiority in cheapness to the lace caps of the votaries of Paris, seems destined to survive all other traces of the peculiar costume of the peasantry.

During the early part of their wedded life they lived together very harmoniously; for where there is plenty of all things needful none but the most quarrelsome contract habits of dispute. Such a state of things is entitled, among the refined as

well as among the vulgar, a happy match!

The tailor worked at his trade, and his wife kept a little shop for the sale of groceries and odds and ends.

But what is more subject to the fashions than those kings of fashion, the tailors? Balt only worked for the gentlefolks and for the Jews, who also wore citizens' dress: make peasants' clothes he could not,--and would not, for he had been to Berlin. New competitors established themselves in the village and in the neighborhood, and Balt would run about for days without finding work.

This induced him to enter upon a speculation, in which we find him still engaged. He went to Stuttgard in company with Anselm Meyer, Betsy's father, and bought old clothes to make new ones of. He particularly affected the old scarlet swallow-tail coats of the court footmen, in procuring which Anselm was of great assistance to him, as he had made acquaintances in high places in the times when all things wanted for the court were obtained on the contract-system. These liveries were cut up into red waistcoats for the peasants, such as are worn in the Black Forest to this day. They also purchased the old uniforms of the officers, and transformed the red lining of the warrior's habiliments into vestments for the peaceful shepherd. It was said, however, that Anselm managed to monopolize the lion's share of the profits, besides securing an additional commission at the hands of the illustrious venders.

From the time that Balt went out of fashion and the fortunes of the house began to ebb, the couple ceased the practice of ever exchanging a word of good feeling. Balt was scarcely permitted to hold a spoon in his hand long enough to eat his dinner. He could hardly call his soul his own; and, though nominally the master-tailor, he had not the power to cut a piece of bacon to his liking of a Sunday. Wherever he was, he was in his wife's way: she was absolute mistress, for she went on a trip every fall, and after her return the establishment always showed symptoms of a good supply of funds.

The children clung to the mother, of course, for not only had Balt fallen from his high estate, but he was not much at home. He hardly showed himself, except to eat and sleep. The former was well salted with pithy conversation, and the latter soothed with a well-ordered lecture.

Crescence now looked contemptuously at her father. The geometer entered, and at once the father and mother ran over with the milk of human kindness and loved each other tenderly. Crescence alone looked sad, and her lips trembled.

"Hurry, Crescence, and get dressed," said her mother. "Mr. Geometer, will you take dinner with us to-day? Do, please. It's nothing much, to-be-sure,--sourcrout, dumplings, and ham; but you'll like it for all that: Crescence did the cooking." A shrill giggle accompanied almost every word, the effect of which was further enhanced by a way the good lady had of twitching her nose as she spoke.

Balt exerted all his eloquence, and almost resorted to "gentle compulsion," to induce the geometer to stay. He took his hat out of his hand and refused to return it, well knowing that if the geometer stayed there would not only be a peaceful dinner, but perhaps also a quart of beer. This hope was realized. Cordele, the youngest daughter, was sent to the Eagle, and returned with a bottle under her apron,--a concealment not owing to any scruple of public opinion on the subject of temperance, but to that desire to make a secret of every thing which arises in every village as a foil to the habitual endeavor of everybody to know every thing about everybody else's business.

Crescence, finely dressed, but with eyes inflamed with weeping, brought the dinner. To guard against inquiries, she complained of smoke in the kitchen. Thus the dinner was richly spiced with falsehood. Before the geometer had half cleared his plate the worthy hostess put another piece upon it. He thanked her heartily for this hospitality, not perceiving that the good lady had only removed the savory morsel to snatch it away from her lord and master, who had honored it with his preference. From a similar motive, she took such excellent care to keep the guest's glass replenished that very little of the beverage came to the tailor's lips. The conversation was carried on by the lady of the house and the geometer exclusively. When the latter narrated the insolence of Florian, Crescence blushed, but found an excuse for leaving the table.

After dinner Balt said, "Now, wife, get in a cup of coffee."

"None for me, I thank you," said the geometer.

The tailor's wife was not so ill-mannered as to press the refreshment upon her guest against his will, for she grudged her husband his share of it. She afterward boiled a cup for herself, and toasted a biscuit to eat with it.

When the afternoon church was over, Crescence could not avoid taking a walk with the geometer; but she managed to keep clear of the street and go along the back fences of the gardens. When they approached George's ninepin-alley, she started with fright on seeing Florian standing there in his shirt-sleeves with his back to the road. Throwing a piece of money on the ground, he said, "'Bet you six creutzers I'll make five." Under the pretext of having forgotten something, Crescence turned round quickly, and the geometer had nothing to do but to follow her. On arriving at home, they surprised her mother at her private cup of coffee,--which was unpleasant. They now took the street of the village.

Florian had no other design on this Sunday than to attract attention, in which he succeeded brilliantly. Everybody spoke of him,--of his black velvet roundabout with silver buttons, his free rifleman's vest of red and black stripes, and his other glories. The people of a village, as of a city, are grateful to any one who will furnish them with a subject of conversation. The old butcher, Florian's father, drank in the fame of his son from every mouth, and did his best to keep it at the full. He was still rather a handsome man himself, with a rubicund face and bright gray eyes. He walked about in his shirt-sleeves and carried his handkerchief in the armpit of his waistcoat,--which gave him an air of originality. Whenever he met any one, he drew out his snuff-box and offered a pinch of "doppelmops," saying, "My Florian brought it with him: he's a fine fellow, a'n't he? None like him for twenty miles around. His master would give him his daughter in a minute, but the rapscallion won't have her. His master makes more out of hoofs than three Horb butchers do out of beef: he kills eight calves every day and two or three oxen besides. What would you think," he would generally add, taking off his little frontless cap, formed in the resemblance of a cabbage-leaf, and putting it on again, "if I was to go to Strasbourg and marry the girl? If she must have a tall man, why shouldn't the old one be as good as the young? I won't back out for any one yet a while."

He stopped longest at the door of George the blacksmith,--a childless old man of more than eighty years of age,--who was always sitting before his house at the roadside and hearing the news from all who passed by. Old George and old Maurita of the Bridge were the two persons through whom a piece of news could be brought to the cognizance of every soul in the village. George repeated every thing, good or bad, to tease others and to show them that he knew every thing; Maurita told the good news to impart her gladness, and the sad ones to obtain sharers in her regret. George the blacksmith was the largest purchaser of the old butcher's vaunts.

Thus the Sunday passed; and, when Crescence returned with the geometer, long after dark, she thanked her stars that the dreaded fracas had not occurred.

4.

HOW FLORIAN AND CRESCENCE MET AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Crescence rose an hour before daybreak next morning, fed the cattle, and attended quietly to the house-affairs. Once she looked up with pain when it occurred to her that she had not hummed a single tune. She went into the field.

With a bundle of fresh clover on her head, she came up the valley on her return, looking beautiful, as the healthful exercise brought out her fine form in all its strength and pliancy. With her right hand she held the bundle, and with her left the rake, which lay on her shoulder and also served to steady the load. She walked with leisurely and measured pace, the red blossoms blinking into her rosy face. Not far from Jacob's crucifix, the voice of Florian, who said, "God bless you, Crescence!" rooted her to the earth.

"Come," said Florian, again; "I'll carry it for you."

"For pity's sake, don't make me stop here, Florian, when all the people are looking at us. You see I can't help myself now, and can't run away, but I'll never speak a word to you again as long as I live if you don't go away. Come to Melchior's Lenore to-night before curfew, and I'll tell you every thing."

"Shake hands, won't you?"

Laying her left arm across the rake, Crescence took his hand, saying, "Good-bye till to-night."

All at once, in resuming her steps, Crescence perceived what a heavy load she had to carry: she groaned as if Firnut Pete had clambered on her shoulders in broad daylight. Having reached the crucifix, she deposited the burden on the high stone erected there for that purpose. This silent assistant is always found beside the symbol of faith. At the feet of Him who laid the heaviest burden on himself to make men free and brotherly, men take off a while the load of the day, to gather strength for further toil.

Crescence looked intently at the crucifix, but without thinking of what she did; for her mind was occupied with dread of Florian's following her. She determined not to turn round to look at him, and did turn, nevertheless; while a glow of pleasure lighted her face as she saw the brisk young fellow striding across the field.

All that day Crescence was serious and taciturn. Before dark, she took a collar, to get Walpurgia to wash it, as she said; but, instead of going to Walpurgia, she hurried to Lenore's house. The latter came to meet her, saying,--

"Go through the barn: you'll find him in the garden."

"Come with me," said Crescence.

"I'm coming directly: just you go first."

As she entered the garden, Crescence saw Florian sitting on a log, stooping greatly, and digging into the wood with a knife which looked somewhat like a stiletto. His long chestnut hair nearly covered his forehead.

"Florian, what are you doing?" asked Crescence.

He threw the knife aside, shook his hair out of his face threw his arms around Crescence, and kissed her. She offered no resistance, but at length said,--

"There! that's enough now: you are just the same you always were."

"Yes; but you're not what you used to be."

"Not a bit changed. You are cross because I go with the geometer, a'n't you? Well, you know you and I could never have got married. My folks won't let me go to service; and stay with them I don't want to, either, until my hair turns gray."

"If that's the way, and you like the geometer, I've nothing more to say: you might have told me that this morning. I remember a time when the king might have come,--and he owns the whole country, which is more than helping to measure it,--and you'd have said, 'No, thank you: I like my Florian better, even if he have nothing but the clothes on his back.'"

"Why, how you talk! What's the use of all that when we never can get married?"

"Oh, yes: there's the Red Tailor's daughter all over. If I'd only never cast eyes on you again! If I'd only broken both my legs before they ever carried me back home!"

"Oh, don't be so solemn, now! You'll look kindly at me yet, and laugh with me a little when you meet me, won't you?"

She gave him a look of playful tenderness, and smiled,--though she was more disposed to weep. Florian, picking up his knife and putting it in his pocket, made a move to go, when Crescence seized his hand and said,--

"Don't be angry with me, Florian: talk to me, dear. Don't you see? I haven't married the geometer yet, but cut him I can't now: my folks would throttle me in my sleep if I was to turn him off. Nothing can come of it for two or three years, anyhow; and who knows what may happen in that time? Perhaps I shall die. I wish I would, I'm sure."

Her voice was choked.

Florian's manner suddenly changed. The languor so unusual in him was gone: their eyes met, and held each other beaming with joy.

"You see," he began, "as I sat there waiting, I felt as if somebody had broken all my bones. I was thinking how unlucky we are, and again and again I was tempted to stab myself with this knife. If some one had come under my hands, I don't know---- And I don't want to go away, either; and I must stay here; and I must have you."

"Yes; I wish you had; but we can't live on the old Emperor's exchequer. I know somebody who could help us, and *I* could make him."

"Never tell me about him: he's nothing to you, and shall be nothing. I won't have it: you are your father's child, and if

anybody says any thing else I'll stick him like an eight-day calf. My father has half emptied my pockets already, but I've got some money yet: I mean to stay here a while and work under my father's right as a master-butcher. I want to show these Nordstetters what Florian can do: they shall have respect for me, they shall."

"You're a fine fellow," said Crescence. "Haven't you brought me any thing?"

"Yes, I have. Here."

Taking from his pocket a broad ring of silver, and a flaming heart in colors, with a motto in it, he handed them to Crescence.

After the first expressions of delight, she offered to read the motto; but Florian stopped her, saying, "You can do that after I am gone: now let's have a talk."

"Yes; tell me something. Is it true that you are courting your master's daughter in Strasbourg?"

"Not a bit of it. If I was, I wouldn't stay here; and stay I shall. All the Nordstetters must say that the like of Florian's not to be seen anywhere."

They remained long together. When Crescence returned home, she found the geometer waiting for her, and was forced to receive him with smiles. With a heavy heart she reached her chamber at last, and read the motto on the flaming heart:--

"Better build my grave of stone
Than love and call you not my own."

Weeping, she laid the picture into her hymn-book. It was the old story of what occurs in thousands of instances, in town and country, though often the colors are more blended and the contrasts not so harsh. Crescence loved Florian, and yet could not renounce the hope of a good establishment, such as she might expect to receive at the hands of the geometer: love drew her in one direction, interest in another. It would be strange if such discords did not lead to misery.

5.

FLORIAN DROPS A BUTTON OR TWO.

Florian remained in the village, and slaughtered first one heifer and then another. Though at first things looked prosperous, the run of good luck soon came to an end. The old butcher went around hawking out the meat which had not been sold at the shambles; but he generally spent not only the profit, but the cost besides. The competition of the Jewish butchers was not to be overcome even by Florian's superior skill; for the Jews can undersell Christians in the hindquarters of beef, because an opportune provision of the Bible forbids them to eat any thing but the fore-quarters. Moreover, it is almost impossible in a German village to support a household on mechanical labor alone, without some resort to agriculture. Florian had no opportunity, and still less inclination, to till the soil. He preferred to go into partnership with a Jewish butcher for a time; but this was also of short duration.

His next resource was to assist the Strasbourg butchers in purchasing oxen. This helped him to some good commissions, and enabled him to make his father the happiest of men. The old gentleman was restored to his favorite occupation of guessing at the weight of oxen. It quite made him young again. Florian was the leading young man in the village. Unfortunately, he made the squire his enemy. The latter, wishing to sell his oxen to some dealers passing through the village, invited Florian to come to his house. "They weigh fourteen hundred, and over," he asseverated. "What they weigh over eleven," said Florian, "I'll eat raw." This was foolish; for from that day the squire hated him cordially.

Florian cared but little for this, however: he played the fine gentleman every Sunday, played longest at ninepins, and was a fast man generally.

It is strange how soon the glory of the stranger in a village is consumed. The honor acquired merely by presenting an unusual appearance ceases the moment all eyes have become accustomed to it: the rainbow would be forgotten if it were always in the sky. Thus, Florian soon sunk into oblivion; and it required a special occurrence to attract attention to him again.

One evening he was standing, with his comrades, near the Eagle, while the squire sat on a bench before the house, talking to the geometer. Florian perceived that they were looking at him: he saw the squire pass his hand over his upper lip, while the geometer laughed immoderately and said something which sounded like "Samson." Florian did not understand what it all meant; but he was soon to have an explanation.

He received a summons next day to appear before the squire, who, as our renders may remember, had formerly been a non-commissioned officer. He now ordered Florian to "take the hair off his mouth," because he had never been a soldier, and none but soldiers were allowed to wear mustaches. Florian laughed at the squire, who took it in dudgeon; Florian answered his vituperations, and was marched off to prison.

It is a dangerous thing to arrest a man who is innocent of crime: it palls his feeling and his sense of moral responsibility for those occasions in which these qualities are particularly tried.

When Florian came out he was compelled to obey the cruel behest. With an indescribable mixture of wrath and humiliation he stood before the looking-glass, compressing his naked lips and gnashing his teeth. A dreadful vow was formed in his heart. Nothing was talked of in the village but the loss of Florian's mustache; and, now that it was gone, all united in singing its praises. Florian felt as if his skin had been peeled off. Of course, when he appeared in the street, every passer-by regaled him with an expression of condolence. But ambition had already perverted him to such an extent that he fairly enjoyed even this sort of notoriety. To be thought about was the first thing; *what* people thought of him was only the second. He was never seen near the tailor's house in the daytime; and when he met Crescence in the evening, and she laughed at him, he swore to make the geometer pay him for every hair. She tried to pacify him; and he was silent.

Very soon after, the geometer, in returning home from Horb one evening, was waylaid by three men, who dragged him into the woods, and, with the cry of "Wale him! he's from Ulm!" beat him so unmercifully that he could scarcely walk home. One of them cried after him, as he went away, "This was out of kindness; but if you show your face in the village a week after this we'll try the other persuasion." The geometer thought he recognised Florian's voice. He tried to institute a prosecution; but the polities of the village were then in such a state of agitation that no business of public import was properly attended to.

The shaving of Florian was the last official act of the noncommissioned squire. The election came on, and Buchmaier received almost every vote. Under his administration people were free from paltry vexations, and Florian's mustache

regained its pristine beauty.

In spite of the exertions of the Red Tailor and mine host of the Eagle, the geometer transferred his head-quarters to Muehl.

Meantime Florian also had met with reverses. He appeared to have quarrelled with the Strasbourgers, for he no longer acted as their agent. The old butcher also was generally at home: he had found a new source of revenue, which was very productive. On his travels as a drover he had made the acquaintance of some smuggler in Baden, which at that time had not acceded to the Zollverein. He sold coffee and sugar free of duty, and made money by the operation. The Red Tailor found his grocery-business ruined by the interference of the secret competitor; and yet the quarrel existing between the parents on account of their children made it necessary to keep up a continental system and rigid prohibitory tariff. The tailor's wife, however, hit upon a fortunate expedient: the house of Corpse Kitty became the neutral ground for negotiations. Corpse Kitty bought the imported goods for the account of the legitimate trade. Thus intrigues are at work between the great powers even when to the uninitiated they appear to be at open war.

Almost every Sunday Crescence was compelled, with cruel maltreatment, to go with her father and meet the geometer in Muehl or at the half-way house in Eglesthal. She was then gay and sprightly against her will; and, after she had carried on this hypocrisy long enough, the wine would come to her aid and really elevate her spirits,--so that the geometer always ended with thinking that she was still really fond of him.

But in the evening she always contrived to meet Florian; and, when she returned home, new maltreatment awaited her. Thus poor Crescence led a wretched life,--though, fortunately for her, she was so much inured to deceit and untruth that she was not aware of the full extent of its depravity.

6.

FLORIAN IN CLOVER.

Florian tried to earn some money here and there, but rarely succeeded. He would only work at his trade or at some other agreeable occupation. Field-labor was beneath his dignity; and he would rather have starved than break stone on the highroad,--the usual resource of men without capital. Like many others, he would only work at what he liked,--a principle upon which very few men indeed ever manage to prosper. But a time came for him to obtain some funds and a plentiful supply of that glory which he so much craved. The bel-wether dance was approaching, and great preparations were being made for it. Mine host of the Eagle had made his peace with Florian and his friends; for he understood his position too well to keep up a feud with his neighbors in the quarrel of a customer who had left. Florian now slaughtered for Caspar a heifer and a hog. The latter ceremony was performed in the street, so that everybody stopped to watch the active functionary, whom it was indeed a pleasure to see in the labor of his trade. The muscles of his bare arms were so strong and smooth that the life and death of the poor beasts seemed indeed to lie in his hand. With three strokes upon the steel he whetted his knife so sharp that he could cut a hair loose at one end. But the greatest crowd of idlers always assembled when he began to chop the sausage-meat. He handled his cleavers as lightly as a drummer his sticks, whistling a waltz the meanwhile to keep himself in time. A particular flourish consisted in throwing one of the cleavers into the air while he chopped on uninterruptedly with the other, snapping the fingers of the empty hand, catching the cleaver again, and chopping on without getting out of the time. At this achievement all lifted up their hands in astonishment.

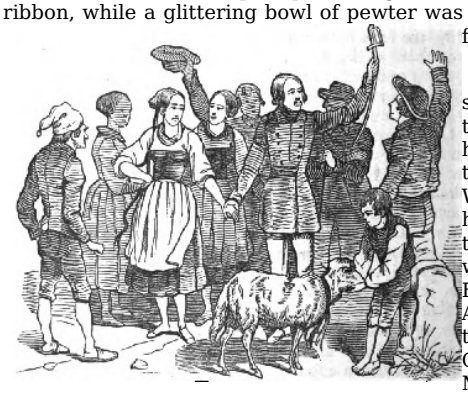
The old butcher was present also, mainly to assist in consuming the kettle-meat, fresh from the fire; after which the renown of his son afforded an excellent dessert. He strolled to George the blacksmith's door, and found him in deep lamentation. "All my subjects refuse to obey me," he said. "They leave me sitting here all alone and run to watch Florian. I'd give three creutzers if he'd come and do his killing here."

"Yes," added the old butcher, rubbing his hands, "the court-butcher at Stuttgard can't come up to my Florian. He once made a bet with his friends in Strasbourg to get four calves and two hogs into marketing-order without bringing a speck on his clothes; and he did it, and his apron and his shirt were as white as the driven snow."

Florian now received so many orders that he found no rest by day or night, and when the day of the bel-wether dance came he overslept the morning service.

Crescence had promised the geometer an interview at Eglesthal; but Florian easily succeeded in inducing her to break her word.

The close of the afternoon service was the signal of rejoicings throughout the village. In the yard of the manor-house a number of stakes were put up in a ring, with a rope around them. In the middle stood a fine wether, decorated with a red ribbon, while a glittering bowl of pewter was on a little table beside him. The band of musicians headed the procession, followed by the boys and girls in couples, hand in hand.



At the gate of the yard a clock had been fastened so that it could not be seen. At the stroke of two the "free dance" began. A march was played, and the couples walked around the rope in strict order. An old-fashioned sabre had been stuck into one of the stakes; and whenever a couple came up to it the man pulled it out and thrust it into the next stake to which they came. When Florian and Crescence reached the sword, the former balanced it on his teeth, and thus carried it in safety to the next station. A general "Look a' there!" was his reward. Corpse Kitty prophesied that he would win the wether. Thus they all went round and round, laughing and talking. When Florian took the sword for the second time, the clock suddenly struck three. A hurrah resounded on all sides. The rope was torn away, and the wether, the ribbon, and the bowl were brought to Florian. The girls came up, wished Crescence joy, and wound the ribbon into her hair. "It's all right now," said Melchior's Lenore: "you're bound to have each other before the year's out." Crescence was weeping, however, for her father stood before her, clenching his fist.

They now followed the band to the inn, where Florian and Crescence opened the dance.

Buchmaier, the new squire, had revived an ancient custom. Instead of ordering the beadle or a *gens d'armes* to keep order during the dance, he had summoned all the boys who had passed their eighteenth year to meet on the preceding evening for the purpose of electing two "dance-boys." Constantine, and Valentine the carpenter's son Xavier, received the greatest number of votes: the winner of the wether was to be the third, the squire only stipulating the right of nominating him in case this good fortune should befall one of the two who had been elected. Florian now entered upon this office, and was marked, like his colleagues, with a white ribbon tied round his arm. These three were made responsible for any disturbances; but no disturbance occurred,--for people are always easily governed by rulers of their own selection.

Crescence was overflowing with happiness, and forgot all about the geometer. None--not even George--could dance

like Florian: he clapped his feet together at every bar of the music, so that all eyes were directed to his glistening boots. Sometimes, in the middle of the dance, he would cry, "Sing out!" Not his feet, but all his body and soul, rose and sunk in accordance with the music: he was a dancer all over. He would not stand still for an instant; and, when the musicians stopped to rest a while, he said to the clarionet, "Make your old bones rattle." "Pour something in to make it swell," was the answer. Florian threw six creutzers on the table.

Late at night the "barber's dance" was executed, in which Florian appeared in all his glory. A man was brought in, looking as white as milk, with a hump before and behind, and bandaged from head to foot with white sheets and kerchiefs. You would hardly have recognised the College Chap. The band played the air of the song,--

"Oh, my! I feel so bad!
Bring me the barber's lad."

A chair was placed in the middle of the room, and the patient deposited upon it. The expected man of simples came, hung round about with knives, with a huge pinch nose, and a wig of tow. It was Florian who thus entered, amid roars of laughter.

With comical gestures, he skipped around the patient, opened the bandage on his arm, bled him, and finally stuck a knife into the hump and left it there. The sick man fell dead, and a funeral-march was played. The unlucky surgeon rushed around the room in an agony of despair, pulled his wig out by handfuls, and threw them into the faces of the company. The music died away. At last, laying his hand upon his forehead, he collected his scattered wits, and cried, "Music!" Notes of mourning responded. He knelt down beside the dead man, opened his mouth, and drew out yards on yards of white tape, but without producing any relief. Then, taking a quart-tumbler, he filled it to the brim with wine, placed it on his forehead, and lay down on his back beside the sick man, moving in time to the music. All held their breath in expectation of a crash; but the feat was successfully performed. The entire contents of the glass were now poured down the patient's throat. He struck about him and threw off his disguise. Florian did the same: the band struck up a gallop: the old squire's Babbett ran up and danced with Constantine, Crescence and Florian followed suit, and all were once more in motion. The fictitious misfortunes with which they had amused themselves gave an additional zest to the return of pleasure.

Some hours later, when they were all seated at table, drinking and singing, Florian favored the company with a new song which he had picked up on his travels:--

"In Strasbourg on the rampart,
  She loved me much indeed:
She always brought my breakfast
  And a letter for to read.
"I always got the letter:
  The breakfast never came:
And in it there was written,
  'Winter has come again.'
"Winter has come, as usual;
  The bosses are feeling good:
They say to the poor journeymen,
  'Go out and split some wood.
"'And mind you make it small enough,
  And make it not too small;
And you shall be my journeymen,
  As you have been this fall.'
"And winter is past and over;
  The jours are full of pluck:
They come to the boss's table
  And tell him what's o'clock.
"'Come, boss; its time to settle:
  Bring out your little bill:
You gave us beans this winter,
  And we have had our fill.'
"'Oh, if the bread's not white enough,
  I'll get another kind,
And if your bed's not soft enough----'"

At the lines which followed, sad to say, Crescence did not blush, nor did any of the other girls; but all received the production with unmingled merriment.

Who could doubt, after this, that Florian was the leading young man in the village?

But when Crescence came home she had to expiate her glory with bitter sufferings: her mother was sick, and her father, for the time-being, reigned supreme. But she bore all without a murmur, knowing that Florian would be hers; for hadn't they won the wether?

7.

DOWN HILL.

With the jollification the importance of Florian came to an end. He was pushed into a corner, like a bass-fiddle in working-time: people went about their business, and thought little of the fun-makers. Florian alone had no business to go about: he hung around the taverns until he ceased to be welcome even there.

In a village it is very difficult to keep up appearances on fictitious capital. Baden had joined the "Zollverein," and the old butcher's occupation was gone likewise. Nevertheless, Florian continued to walk about, erect and proud, in the fine clothes he had purchased in his best days. He was always neatly brushed; and, though his boots were soleless, the upper leathers shone as heretofore.

"They can look at my clothes, but not into my stomach," was his motto.

The watch with the silver seals he wore on Sunday only, having received this privilege when he left it with old Gudel.

The fair at Horb brought another holiday for half the village. At daybreak the old butcher was seen standing at Jacob's Well, while all the farmers who passed on the road with their cattle asked him what they weighed. He was delighted with this occupation, for it made him feel as if he could buy them all himself; and, besides, he hoped that one or the other would invite him to go to town. In this he was disappointed, however,--poor fellow! He had handled so much fine meat in his time, and for two weeks he had been compelled to put up with a vegetable diet! Finding all his trouble in vain, he

sighed heavily, wiped the sweat from his forehead, went home to get his stick and walk over to the fair on speculation, to look out for something to turn up.

Florian ran distractedly up and down the village. He met Crescence, who was going to the fair with her father, but ran past them without stopping to talk: he had not a copper, in his pocket. Whenever he met a young man, he meditated asking him for a loan, but would stop himself with "Oh, he won't give me any thing," or, "He hasn't much to spare, and then I'd only have the shame of it." Thus he suffered one and another to pass by. "What should I go to market for? They're not selling me out there, and there's a great many not going besides myself; but then that is because they don't want to, and I don't go because I can't." It now seemed to him as if a joy never to be replaced would be lost if he remained at home: he must go: every thing depended upon it. With a flushed face and flashing eyes, he walked along the village, constantly talking to himself. "There lives Jack the blacksmith. I treated him ever so often at the bel-wether dance; but he won't give me any thing, for all that. There's Koch the carpenter: he's been abroad like myself. I'll go to him: it's the first time I'm so familiar with him; but it can't be helped."

He found Koch the carpenter untying a heifer from the crib, complaining bitterly of hard times. He went away without mentioning the object of his visit. The College Chap had left home already, and Florian made up his mind to go to the Eagle and say that the College Chap had sent him to ask for a loan of six dollars: he scorned to ask for a trifle. Mine host of the Eagle answered, "I won't lend any thing to anybody: it only sets the best of friends by the ears." "Just what I said myself," said Florian, laughing bitterly, as he turned away.

With a feeling of utter desolation, he walked about, thinking, "Without money a man's a stranger in his own house." Suffused with perspiration, he ran up one street and down another: it seemed as if every minute wasted was a loss not to be retrieved. He now bethought himself of the aristocratic expedient of borrowing from a Jew. Like the noble lords and ladies who first invented this practice, he had no reason to fear the reproving looks of these people in his further extravagances and vain-glory. "Jews' claims are no disgrace," he said to himself, and applied to Mendle's son Meyer, who was going to market with a belt full of money, for the loan of some ducats at a high rate of interest. The offer was rejected.

At last it occurred to him to go straight to Horb and pretend that he had lost or forgotten his money. Vexed with himself for not having thought of this before, he set out immediately. He passed George the blacksmith, sitting at his front door as usual, and in the best of spirits,--for the marketers afforded him plenty of entertainment.

"Where bound so fast, Florian? You look as if you could buy the world out."

Florian stared, and stood still. He forgot that it was George's peculiar delight, when people passed with a heavy burden, a sack of corn, or a bundle of clover, to hold them fast with questions. Many were caught in this trap; and then the old gossip would rejoice that he could sit there doing nothing while others toiled and struggled. He was equally fond of laying hands on such as had heavy loads upon their hearts; for it was just at such times that they were likely to be most communicative. All this escaped Florian; and he inquired,--

"How do you know that?"

"Can't you tell by looking at a stocking when the leg's out of it? I know all about it. Crescence went up just now, with her mother's husband, going to market, too."

"Never fear."

"I know all about it. They say you're well tied up with her." Florian smiled and passed on, glad to know that the truth was not suspected.

In the hollow Florian saw Schlunkel,--an outcast of a fellow, who had been to the penitentiary twice, sitting by the roadside and counting money. At another time he would not have honored such a wretch with a look; but now he could not help addressing him with, "Shall I help you count?" The fellow looked at him without answering.

Florian sat down beside him and at last asked him for a florin. Schlunkel grinned, tightened the strings of his purse, passed his finger across his mouth, and whistled. Florian held his arm convulsively.

"You wouldn't take the money from *me*, would you?" asked Schlunkel. "What do you want so much money for?"

"I want to buy something."

"Well, I'll go to Horb with you."

Florian would rather have perished on the spot than to have been seen walking with Schlunkel in broad daylight. "Give me six creutzers," he said: "I'll meet you in the 'Knight' in an hour, and pay you."

Schlunkel gave him the money, and Florian ran away with the speed of lightning, often putting his hand into his pocket to make quite sure of how much he had. He squeezed the four coins through his fingers one by one, as if to make each one bring forth another. He went whistling through the cattle-fair, to reach the fancy fair in the upper part of the town.

8.

FLORIAN LOSES MONEY AND WINS CRESCENCE.

He was brought to a pause by the sight of a gaming-table. He passed on, and inspected the tobacco-pipes in the next booth. Turning back, he resolved merely to look at the others who were playing. One was particularly fortunate with No. 8. Putting his hand in his pocket, he set a three-creutzer piece on the same number, and lost it. He tried again, and again he lost. He bit his lips until they bled, but immediately looked around with a smile, to conceal his vexation. He lost again. He felt his knees knocking, and his intestines boiled. With hot, trembling hand, he threw down his last coin, and looked another way. He won back all the money he had lost. He seized it hastily, thinking, "There! so much for playing with

edged tools. I'll hold on to you now, my darling!" Yet he remained rooted to the spot. It would not do to let people see how glad he was to walk off without being fleeced.

Then again he reflected that he must, somehow, raise money to pay Schlunkel. He would try one piece, and put the rest of his money into his right pocket, where he never put his hand.

He played: he did put his hand into his right pocket; and he walked away with empty pockets. With inexpressible grief and self-accusation, he now ran about the market: thousands of things were offered for sale, but he could not stretch forth his hand to take them. A terrible curse against the world rose to his lips: he longed to turn every thing topsy-turvy.

We might be tempted to ask, "What reason has a man like Florian to rave at the world? The world has done him no harm: he is himself the cause of his own distress." But then people like Florian--whether they belong to the class of society which wears gloves, or to that which wears them not--are never ready to think: when in bad luck they scold.

His only comfort was that he was firmly resolved never to touch a die again as long as he lived. To-be-sure, it was easy to shut the stable-door after the horse was stolen: still, there was some comfort in a virtuous resolution.

He met his father looking very happy. "Have you any money, father?" said Florian, running up to him.

"Yes: I've earned three six-creutzer pieces, selling some oxen. See!"

"Give me two of them."

Without waiting for an answer, he disappeared with the money. He now walked up and down among the booths in good spirits, sustained by the consciousness of possession. He no longer cast a look upon the gambling-tables.

But soon he began to think that he had been very stupid in skipping about from one number to another: how could he help losing them? Should the rascally sweat-cloth fellows have the satisfaction of keeping it? But then he had sworn never to touch a die again! Well, he would keep his vow: he would go where the croupier made the die roll through the coils of a snake, and where he might play without touching any thing.

At first he played for creutzers, like the others. He used great circumspection, taking care to remember the numbers which had won frequently, and betting upon the others. For some time he neither lost nor won. Finding this tedious, he staked larger pieces, and tried several numbers at a time, and with success. Seeing some of his acquaintances, he beckoned to them to come up and join him.

But the tide soon turned, and Florian lost. He now wandered about the board, passed every number, and changed his bet before the throw fell. When, at such times, the deserted number proved the winning one, he laughed aloud. Fortune frowned more and more, though he returned to his old system of remaining true to certain numbers. Taking his last groat, he laid it upon the table with such force as to make the table quiver,--and lost.

Florian continued to regard the board intently, with breath almost suppressed, though a tempest of emotion was raging within him. Having stayed long enough to prevent his acquaintances from suspecting the true state of the case, he stole away. Now he had neither vows nor curses, neither good nor evil intentions: he wandered from place to place like a body without a soul, without thoughts, without will, dull, hollow, and ruined.

The sound of music awakened him from his trance, and he found himself before the Rose Inn. The French simpleton, who was standing at the door and waiting for somebody to treat him, cried, "*Drenda marioin*," and made a sign of thirst; but Florian pushed him aside and went up into the dancing-hall.

Every one treated him: he only sipped at the glass and offered to set it down again. "It's in good hands," was the cry,--meaning, "Drink it all." "High up behind, they say at the Rhine," he would then say, and drain the glass at a draught.

The frequent repetition of this ceremony infused new life into him: the various kinds of wine had the same effect, and he wiped his forehead. At length Peter came up to him, saying, "Have you seen Crescence? She is sitting at the Knight with the geometer."

Florian hardly stayed to drain his friend's glass. An object had appeared upon which to vent his wrath: he had an excuse for committing a crime, for destroying himself and others. Through lanes and alleys, passing the little apothecary-shop where the crowd never came, he made his way to the Knight, and bounded up-stairs, taking three steps at a time.

Oh that men would run to do good with half the impetuosity which wafts them on the road to evil! How often do they scorn wind and weather, distance and darkness, in the gratification of their baser passions! but, when a duty is to be done, every breath is too rude, and every pebble an insurmountable hindrance.

As he entered the room, panting and out of breath, Crescence ran to meet him with beaming eyes, and, taking his trembling hand in hers, she said, "God be praised, you are mine again, and I am all yours now: I've just sent the geometer about his business for good and all. It's been boiling in me a long time, and at last it ran over. Oh, I'm so glad! I don't know what to do. I know whom I belong to now, and I belong to you, and will belong to you, no matter what happens. What makes you look so cross? A'n't you glad, too, that there's an end of this lying?"

She straightened his cap, which had been pushed to one side of his head. Florian suffered her to say and do what she liked. He awoke from a dream of vice, blood, and horror, to find himself in the arms of love and peace. He almost recoiled from this true-hearted love which came to him in the abyss of his degradation. Nothing had been left him but his poor, wasted life, which he would so gladly have thrown off likewise: now he learned to prize it again when he saw another life twined so confidingly around it. Smiling with a mixture of sadness and glee, he said at last, "Come, Crescence: let's go."

Crescence made no objection, though she could not help looking up with a smile at hearing the musicians strike up a fresh waltz: full as her heart was, she would gladly have danced a little, though she refrained from saying so,--not so much to guard against misunderstanding as because it made her happy just to live according to Florian's pleasure.

Near the front door Schlunkel was sitting over his wine without a companion. To the astonishment of Crescence, he asked Florian to drink with him; and Florian not only acknowledged the salutation, but said to her, "Go on a little: I'll come right-away."

She waited for him on the front door-steps. Schlunkel said, "Well, where's my money?"

"I can't pay you now: I can't cut it out of my ribs."

"Then you must give me the knife there in pawn."

"Oh, now, just wait till to-morrow night: do. If I don't give it to you then, you shall have it double."

"Oh, yes: you can promise it double; but who's to give it to me?"

"I am."

"Will you come to me to-morrow night?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm agreed."

Florian passed on, and when Crescence asked him, "What does that wretch want of you?" he blushed like a fire-thief, and answered, "Nothing: he wanted me to sell him my knife."

"Don't let him have it: he'd murder somebody with it."

Florian shuddered; and it pained him to see the undoubting faith with which Crescence received his words.

9.

WHAT BECOMES OF A SCAPEGRACE AND OF A LOVING GIRL.

Half the world do not know how the other half lives. People could not imagine how Florian managed to get enough to eat. The truth was, he very often had not enough. In one of these emergencies he applied to the College Chap for a loan.

"Why, Florian," was the answer, "this sort of thing won't do: you must manage to get a living: you can't go on this way."

"That's neither here nor there," replied Florian: "you can tell me all that some other time when I'm not head over ears in trouble. Help me out now, and preach your sermons afterward."

The admonition was ill-timed, and therefore worse than useless: Florian pitied instead of blaming himself, and thought himself more sinned against than sinning. With a certain air of forgiveness, he repeated his request.

"It won't do," said the College Chap, "for a man to scatter his money about just when he's going to be married. You'll have to get along without me."

The College Chap was betrothed to the old squire's Babbett,--although, as the readers of Ivo's story may remember, he was not inordinately fond of her. He had asked for the hand of Buchmaier's Agnes, and had met with a refusal. This he told wherever he went, calculating that he must pass for a trump card if people knew he'd had the pluck to try for the first girl in the village: "they all knew that the richest would come in for their turn in no time." But they did not come in, and he contented himself with Babbett.

Like many other spendthrifts, the College Chap was no sooner thrown upon his own resources than he turned stingy and unfeeling.

It was Florian's misfortune that of all others the College Chap was his most intimate companion. He could not but say to himself, "He isn't a bit better than I am: why am I so much worse off?" He quarrelled with his fortunes more and more, lost his energy, and became morose and querulous.

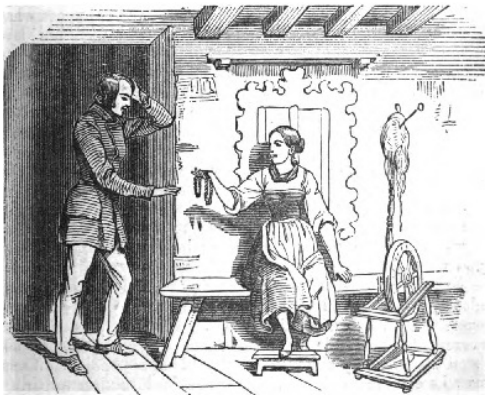
Meanwhile Crescence was quite happy. Her father's ill-treatment of her, though unrelenting, afforded her at bottom more gratification than regret. She was restored to herself from the moment she had determined to be his alone whom her heart had chosen. Knowing Florian's circumstances, she did not scruple to relieve him by all the means in her power. She took tobacco and other creature-comforts out of the store, and forced them upon Florian's acceptance. Though at first ashamed to receive them, he soon came to devising plans with her for more extensive peculations, having found means of disposing of them through Schlunkel's intervention. Crescence obeyed in all things. To her mind Florian was lawfully the lord of the world and of all it contained, and entitled to regard all men as his subjects. For a while, she thought, he chose to live without the insignia of his power, but he would soon arise and show the world what was really in him. She hoped that the time was at hand when he would come forth in all his glory. This hope was as clear and confident in her heart as her expectation of the coming day; and yet she knew not what she hoped. But a storm soon broke in rudely upon her daydreams. The tailor detected the embezzlements of his daughter, and drove her out of his house, threatening to hand her over to justice if she returned. Her mother was at the point of death and unable to protect her.

Crescence knew not where to turn. She went to Florian's door; but he was not at home. When told the name of the nightly associate with whom he had gone abroad, she wept aloud. Drawing her gown over her head to ward off the beating rain, she wandered up and down for hours in a state bordering on distraction. Could she but have crept away from herself! At length she took courage to seek out Melchior's Lenore, and was kindly received by her father.

Every effort at a reconciliation with her father failed. She now knitted stockings and worked by the day: sometimes Florian assisted her, for he had again found means to raise the wind. But she could not touch a single coin without a shudder: in looking at the portraitures of the august sovereigns which they bore, Schlunkel's features seemed to peer out of every one of them.

Lenore always found out when the tailor went to Horb with his wallet, and at such times Crescence would go home and supply herself with such things as she most needed.

Florian also was often on the watch to see whether he might go to see Schlunkel without impairing his reputation. A characteristic occurrence, however, soon put an end to this joyless companionship. Schlunkel had stolen two wethers from the paper-miller of Eglesthal. One day when Florian was with him he called upon the latter to slaughter and dress them. Florian's pride and glory up to that time had been his art and mystery: the request was therefore the greatest affront he could possibly have received. "Before I'd butcher stolen cattle in secret," said he, "I'd cut your throat and mine both."



"Oh, you soft-head," said Schlunkel, adroitly snatching Florian's knife out of his pocket, "I'll never let you get out of this room alive unless you slaughter these wethers, or pay me my two dollars."

"I'll see you!" Florian had him by the throat, and dragged at the knife with all his might. They both struggled fiercely, without any success on either side; but, suddenly hearing a noise, Florian released his hold and jumped out of the window.

He went to Crescence sorrowfully and told her all.

Without saying a word, she took her necklace of garnets, with the brooch, from her neck, drew her silver ring from her finger, and handed them to him.

"What's that for?" asked Florian.

"To pawn or sell and pay the wretch with."

Florian embraced and kissed her, saying, "Do you do it; there's a good girl: you shall have 'em back, depend upon it."

Crescence did as requested, and brought him his knife. There was no blood upon it: he rejoiced greatly to know that his treasure had not been abused.

10.

FLORIAN DISDAINS THE HELP WHICH IS OFFERED HIM.

"Crescence," said Florian, one day, "this sort of thing must come to an end. I can't go abroad any more, because of you, and because it's a matter of honor for me to get through without it. What do you say to seeing the parson? If we can get a few hundred florins out of him we can get married."

"I thought you didn't want to have any thing to do with him."

"What must be must," replied Florian. "Will you give me a letter to him, and get your mother to sign it?"

"Just as you please: you know best. I'll do exactly as you wish me to."

Next day Florian was under way. His thoughts were gloomy when he reflected upon where he was going; but the exercise soon improved his spirits. For many weeks he had scarcely been outside of the village. All his thoughts had been absorbed by paltry troubles and circumscribed efforts: now he once more found a larger standard to measure things by, and said to himself, "Why can't we live somewhere else? The Nordstetten grass can grow without us. I can be happy with my Crescence, even though George the blacksmith and the host of the Eagle know nothing about it: but they must respect me first, and then I'll go. Not a living soul must ever hear a word of this trip that I'm on now."

It was late in the afternoon when he reached his destination. At the parsonage he found no one but the housekeeper,--a well-fed, proud-looking personage. She made various efforts to fathom his purpose, but could obtain no other answer than that he must see the parson himself. At length he came, preceded by his brace of half-shorn Pomeranian poodles, who offered to attack the stranger, but were deterred by a single look. It was not without reason that people said Florian could charm dogs with magic: the most furious suddenly took fright when he eyed them sharply.

When Florian saw the parson, his own eyes fell. He was a powerful, thick-set man, with a white-and-black cravat. Crescence was his image, to the very freckles. The parson saw something suspicious in the shyness of his visitor, and asked him what he wanted.

"I wish to speak a word with you alone," said Florian.

The parson bade him follow to his study.

Florian delivered the letter, and the parson read it. Florian watched the play of his features narrowly.

"From whom is this letter?" asked the parson. "I don't know the person."

"You know the Red Tailor's wife, surely? Her name is below there, and the letter is from her oldest daughter. The tailor's wife is at the point of death, and won't get well again."

"Sorry to hear it. Give the people my good wishes, and if I can do any thing for them it shall be done."

"And you won't do something particular for Crescence now?"

"I don't see why."

"But I see it, your reverence. Not a soul shall ever hear of it, I'll take my oath and sacrament upon it; but help us you must, or I don't know what's to become of us both."

The parson fumbled in his pocket for his keys, and, having found the right one, he twirled it in his fingers, saying, "I always like to assist the poor, but can do very little just now."

"Then give me your handwriting for the balance."

At these words the parson looked around him with an air of wrath and terror. He thought he must have betrayed himself in permitting Florian to make such a demand. With forced hardness in his tone, he repeated, "Once for all, I have nothing to do with these people; and here is something toward your expenses."

Florian flung the money at his feet, crying, "I want to know whether you mean to do your duty by your child or not. She's as like you as one rain-drop's like the other. Yes or no? You are the father of my Crescence. I dare not hurt you, and I will not hurt you; but--Lord God!--I don't know what I am doing!" He seized the handle of the knife in his pocket, snapped the lock of the door with his other hand, and went on:--"I never slaughtered the wrong sort of cattle yet; but----" He foamed and trembled with fury.

"You villain!" cried the parson, making for the window and opening it.

Suddenly the wall opened, and the housekeeper entered by a masked door, saying, "The councilmen and the squire are over there, your reverence, and want you to come over directly."

The knife almost fell from Florian's hand. The parson stood in the open door in safety.

"What is your last word?" demanded Florian, once more.

"Clear out of my house this instant, or I'll have you arrested."

Florian departed with faltering steps: the last bough of the tree of his hopes was broken. He wandered home in the darkness, accompanied by dreadful thoughts. Once, looking up to the stars, he broke out into, "Good God in heaven, can it be thy will that there should be men on earth who must deny their children and cast them into misery? But it's all my own fault. Why didn't I stick to my principle and have nothing to do with him?"

It was three days before he set foot in the village again. He felt as if a heavy chastisement were awaiting him,--as if he would be made to do penance there; and yet he knew of no crime he had committed.

But, when some tale-bearers informed him that during his absence people had said he had run away, his blood boiled within him. He had sacrificed every thing to his reputation among the villagers; and now he found the dearly-bought prize so fragile of texture that it could not live three days without his nursing. A bitter contempt of humanity began to take root in his soul.

On Sunday, as Florian was standing among the usual group of idlers in front of the Eagle, Buchmaier stopped before him and said, "Florian, let's have a word with you: I want to ask your advice about something."

"Certainly," said Florian, going off with him: "what is it?"

"I only said that because the others were listening. I want to talk with you, but frankly. Where were you last week?"

"I can't tell you."

"Well, as you please. But look here, Florian: you are a smart fellow, a quick and ready fellow: you understand your business through and through."

"There's something behind all that. Out with it."

"I'd like to see you make something out of it all."

"All in good time."

"Now, listen to me quietly. I'm not talking to you as squire now, but I say this because I wish you well. If you stay here as you do now you'll go to wreck. What are you waiting for?"

Florian was evidently struck by the force of this question. After a considerable pause, Buchmaier went on:--

"I know how it is very well. It's just like getting up out of bed: let it be ever so hard, you don't like to stay there; but the minute you're up and doing you feel a great deal better. So take my advice, and go. If there was war I should say, 'Florian, take two suits of clothes, and if one won't wear the other will;' but even as it is you can make out finely without going to butchering men. But stay here you can't: you must go."

"But I can't go, and won't go; and I'd like to see who's going to make me."

"That's neither here nor there. You needn't come the fiery game over me. I know you go to see Crescence. Well, if you have luck you can come and fetch her. But here you're not respected."

"Who says that? Why, squire, if this was anybody but you, I'd show him. Who can say any thing against my reputation?"

"Not a soul; and that's the very reason you ought to go now."

"But I can't, and I won't."

"If you're short of change, I'll try to get you a loan from the treasury of the commune."

"I tell you I'd rather rob the saints. I'd rather lay my hand on this block and chop it off than touch a pittance out of the public chest."

"You're far gone: you want to make a ten-strike, and there are only nine pins standing. Florian, Florian, consider, there's not only a right and a left, but there's a straight road too. If you don't ask too much you shall have any money to travel with,--not as a gift, but as a loan. 'Only half your money's lost on a young loafer,' they always say: don't take it amiss, though."

Florian answered, gnashing his teeth, "I didn't ask your money nor your advice, and no one has a right to call me names."

"Well, I've done: I've nothing more to say. But, if you should think better of it, come to see me again to-morrow. Good-bye."

He left Florian harrowed in his inmost soul. Whistling a lively air, he sauntered down the village, looking every one in the face, as if to ask them, with defiance, whether they did not respect him.

Crescence never knew that this interview had taken place; and Florian strove to banish it from his own recollection.

11.

FLORIAN HELPS HIMSELF.

Autumn had come: the Feast of Tabernacles was over, and Betsy's wedding once more brought back the spirit of fun and frolic to the village. According to the Hebrew ritual, the marriage was performed on the highroad, under a spreading baldachin. The fanners--always glad of an excuse to be idle--gathered around with open mouths: Florian and Schlunkel were both among them. The latter pulled his former comrade by the sleeve, whispering that he had something important to tell him; and when the ceremony was over he stole round the rear of the manor-house into the vaulted springhouse. Florian followed after some time, he knew not why.

Schlunkel came to meet him, saying, "Shake hands: we'll both be rich to-morrow." Without understanding him, Florian took his hand, saying, "How so?"

"Just this way," said Schlunkel, with a skip and a jump. "This morning Mendle's Meyer came home from the horse-market, where he sold all his horses. He must have brought at least seven or eight hundred florins home with him. I saw the belt: it looked like a liver-pudding. You know how to handle a liver-pudding, don't you? We'll slice this up tonight. A week ago the fire-committee had Meyer's bake-oven pulled down, because it was in the corner there. He had the hole walled up with brick. I helped to do it; and I laid one of the bricks so that you can just take it out with your hand. So to-night, when they're all at the wedding, we'll slip in and fetch the Jew's sausage."

"Not I," said Florian.

"Just as you please: you can get the money the commune offered you, if you like that better, and see how far it'll go."

"How do you know that?"

"I've got a little bird that told me: you fool, all the swallows in the chimneys are talking of it."

Florian stamped and bit his mustache. If he could have set fire to the village at that moment he would gladly have done so. He saw them all laughing at him, pitying him: the goal of his ambition--the veneration of the community--had fallen to ashes. At last he was ready for any thing. The enormity of the crime proposed never occurred to him for a moment. As honor was lost, he would go away laden with booty. Like one awaking from sleep, he said,--

"I'm in for it. What time?"

"About eight o'clock, I guess."

After another shake of the hand, Florian left his accomplice. As he emerged from the dark house to the sunlight, he staggered like a drunken man, and was obliged to stand still for a time and steady himself by the wall. Then he went all through the village, whistling and singing: Crescence alone he avoided with a sort of terror.

It seemed as if the crime were already perpetrated. He looked at people's faces, to see whether their features showed any marks of suspicion; and then, again, "What's the odds?" he said to himself: "they don't think much of me, anyhow." Still, he was glad to remember that the thing was not yet really accomplished. Once, on seeing Buchmaier, he felt a desire to run away; but, ashamed of his weakness, he renewed his vow not to falter in his purpose.

After dark, the boys and girls came to the dance, some of them bringing wedding-presents. According to custom, they had three dances each.

Florian was among these arrivals. The bride came to welcome him, saying, "Are you here too? Where's Crescence? I suppose she don't feel much like dancing. Be sure you do the fair thing by her, Florian. Come; let's have our last dance together."

The best dancer in the village was for once soon compelled to stop. His knees shook: with such thoughts in his heart as he had, and with no soles to his boots, it was not easy to waltz well.

"What's the matter with you? Why, you always danced like a humming-top," said the bride. "Well, never mind. You don't know how sorry I am not to see Crescence any more. We were always the best of friends; but we're going off very early to-morrow morning. Come: I'll give you a piece of wedding-cake for her: bring it to her, and say 'Good-bye' from me."

Florian followed her into the back room, where he received the cake and a glass of warm wine, which he swallowed at a draught. He found new vigor coursing through his veins. As soon as he could, he stole away,--soon returned, however, and then left again.

Schlunkel was already waiting behind Meyer's house with a little ladder. There was no light: the whole family had gone to the wedding. The breach was soon effected, and they slipped in. Having forced the kitchen and the room door and the press, they found the money and pocketed it, as well as some silver spoons and cups.

Florian was in the yard again, while Schlunkel tugged at a piece of bedding which would not pass through the narrow aperture. Just at this moment the owner of the house, who was coming up the stairs and had seen the doors open, entered the kitchen and saw the pillow in motion: he seized it on the inside and shouted lustily for help. Schlunkel released his hold, fell upon the ground, and broke his leg. Florian tried to help him; but, hearing the sound of footsteps, he only whispered, "Don't betray me: you shall have the half," and made his escape.

Schlunkel persisted in saying that he had had no accomplices. In regard to a piece of wedding-cake which, was found in the yard, his declarations varied: at first he pretended to know nothing about it, but subsequently he remembered it was one of the articles stolen. Florian had been seen at the dance about that time, and no one dared to suppose he was in any manner connected with the crime.

12.

NEW BOOTS, AND HOW THEY PINCHED.

Florian intended to run away with the money and to send for Crescence to follow him; but his boots would not consent to the plan. So he went to town and bought a pair of new ones. What a comfort it was! For months he had walked with downcast eyes, carefully avoiding every little puddle; and at last he could tread the slippery road without fear or favor. To enjoy the change fully, he even extended his walk a little farther than was necessary.

But soon his walks came to a sudden close. He had accidentally paid out a perforated dollar, of a description exactly answering to that of one designated by the man who had been robbed. That same evening the squire came, with a beadle and a *gens d'armes*, to arrest him.

At his earnest request, Buchmaier consented to have him led through the gardens instead of along the street.

As he walked along he complained bitterly of his misfortune, and protested his innocence. This is usual when persons are arrested, whether guilty or innocent. It is so natural to appeal to the humanity of those who surround the prisoner like moving walls, ere he has reached the heartless stones of the jail. When the Jeremiad is finished, the answer is, invariably, "We shall see that at the proper time: it's none of our business now." Then the unfortunate one comes to understand that he has been asking the stone hurled by a force outside of itself, "Why smitest thou me?"--that he has been begging the net in which he is ensnared to pity him and set him free.

Florian had spoken without any ulterior design at first; but presently it occurred to him that it might be well to talk in the same strain before the judge. He therefore spoke at great length,--for lies are easier when you have practised them than when they appear as first efforts.

Not more than fifty florins had been found in Florian's possession; and these, he said, he had won at play at the Horb fair. Besides the perforated dollar, an important circumstance going to show his guilt was the wedding-cake found in the yard: several of the girls had seen the bride give him the present. Florian denied every thing. He had heard somewhere that "denial was lawful in Wurtemberg;" and this maxim comprised his entire knowledge of jurisprudence.

Many of the villagers, who previously would never have allowed themselves to suspect any evil of Florian, now boasted loudly that they had said ten years ago that Florian would come to no good, and revived the memory of all the forgotten, pranks of his boyhood.

Florian meditated a flight. One night he pulled down the tile stove which stood at the wall of his cell and formed a part of it, and escaped by the hole thus made in the wall. His escape was just like the crime. This brought him to the corridor, but no farther. It was locked; and to jump out of the window was as much as his life was worth. His eye fell on a broom which stood in a corner. Without hesitation, he opened the window, pressed the end of the broom into the corner formed by the junction of the tower with the side-building, balanced himself on the handle, and slid down to the ground.

The watchman had seen him; but he crossed himself three times and ran up the nearest alley,--for he had beheld the devil himself riding through the air on a broomstick.

Thus Florian was free, Running up the street, he crept into a covered sewer, tore up the earth with his hands, found the money, and ran off through the woods.

During his imprisonment, Crescence's mother had died, and the Red Tailor, forced to yield to one of those general bursts of neighborly feeling which are the relieving features of village life, had allowed his daughter to return to his house.

In the night of Florian's escape she awoke from her sleep in terror. She had dreamed that Florian had called her out to dance, and, do what she would, she could not get her stocking on her foot. Weeping, she sat up in her bed and spoke the prayer for the poor souls in purgatory. Hearing the clock strike four, she arose and did all the housework. Before daybreak she went into the wood to get kindling. Indeed, ever since her misfortune her activity was morbid: she seemed anxious to compensate for the idle life of Florian. Though no thanks rewarded her industry, she had scarcely left a nook or corner of the house not garnered with dry sticks and fir-cones.

At the edge of the wood she found a white button, which she recognised as belonging to Florian's jacket and secreted in her bosom. Looking over the landscape, she said to herself, "My cross is great; and if I were to climb to the top of the highest hill I couldn't look beyond it."

She returned without having gathered any thing. On hearing of Florian's flight, she wept and rejoiced: she wept because she could no longer doubt he was a criminal, and rejoiced to know that he was free.

13.

THE GAUNTLET.

At night Florian built himself a hut of some sheaves in a harvest-field and slept in it.

In a tavern he had stolen a knife, having at the same time concealed twelve creutzers in the salt-cellar: with this implement he now scraped off his mustache.

Nevertheless, he had no sooner crossed the frontier than he was arrested. This time he did not stop to enlist the pity of the *gens d'armes*, but defended himself with all his might and made desperate efforts to get free: he was thrown down, however, and manacled.

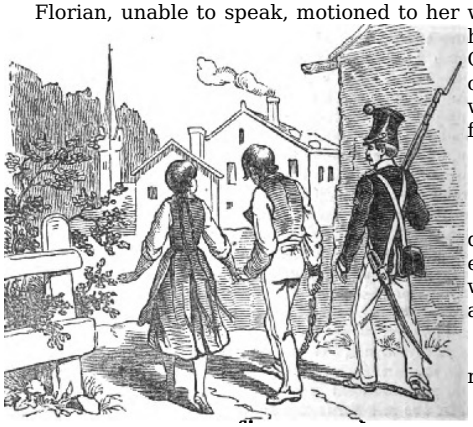
He was now forwarded from circuit to circuit by the hands of the *gens d'armes*. In silence he walked along, his right hand chained to his right foot: he looked upon himself as upon an animal driven to the slaughter.

But when, coming from Sulz, he issued from the Empfingen copse and found that he was to be dragged in chains through his native village, he fell on his knees before the *gens d'armes* and begged him with tears to be so merciful as to take him around outside of the village.

But the voice of authority answered "No," and Florian struck his left hand into his eyes to blind himself to his own degradation: his right hand rattled helplessly in the chain. Florian--the cynosure of neighboring eyes, he who had known no keener joy than to be the object of universal attention--was now to be exposed in these shameful trappings and in such disgraceful company. For the first time in his life he could have prayed that people might not have eyes to cast upon him. As he passed the Red Tailor's house, Crescence was chopping wood at the pile. The hatchet dropped from her hand, and

for a moment she stood paralyzed: the next instant she rushed upon Florian with open arms and fell upon his neck. The *gens d'armes* disengaged her gently. "I'll go with you through the village," said Crescence, without weeping. "You sha'n't bear your shame alone. Does the iron hurt you? Don't fret too much, for my sake."

Florian, unable to speak, motioned to her with his left hand to turn back; but she walked by his side, as if riveted to him by an invisible chain. The news spread through the village like wildfire. Caspar and Babbett were standing before the Eagle: the former had a mug of beer in his hand, and brought it to Florian to drink. The *gens d'armes* would not permit it. Florian begged them not to let Crescence go any farther, and Babbett at last persuaded her to remain. All were weeping.



He went alone through the rest of the familiar streets.

George the blacksmith, prevented by the cold from sitting in front of his door, saw him from behind his window and touched his cap from sheer embarrassment. At the manor-house farmer's he met the French simpleton, who pointed to his upper lip, saying, "*Mus a loni ringo*." In spite of himself, a painful smile passed over Florian's features.

When at last he had left the last hut behind him, he vowed never to return to his old home again.

His incarceration was now more severe than it had been: though in the same tower as formerly, he was kept in the most secure apartment. He often looked through the grating; but when a Nordstetter passed he started back as if he had been shot.

As the anguish of his mind became more subdued, he tried many devices to pass away the time. He walked about with a blade of straw standing on his forehead: when this became easy, he added others, until at last he could build a whole house and take it to pieces again. With much exertion, he learned to stand out horizontally from the iron bars, and even acquired the art of placing his knees behind his head.

One day, in looking through the grating, he saw Crescence coming to town. Hot tears fell on the iron bars: he could not speak to her,--scarcely give her a sign.

At night he heard a cough beneath the window, which was repeated several times. Recognising Crescence, he returned the signal. Crescence unwound the red ribbon which had adorned her hair since the bel-wether dance, tied it round a letter and a stone, and flung it up to Florian, who caught it adroitly. She went briskly away; but in the distance Florian caught the last words of the song,--

"The fire may be extinguish'd,
Love cannot be diminish'd;
Fire burns to scathe and kill,
But love burns hotter still."

Florian never dosed an eye that night: he had a letter from Crescence, and yet he could not read it. At the first ray of morning, he was at the window, and read:--

"I don't know whether this letter will get into your hands or not; and so I won't sign my name. I have been to town to get my certificate of settlement. Betsy has got a place for me in Alsace: I'm going off the day after to-morrow. I have had a long dress made, too. My mother is dead, and my father is going to marry Walpurgia the seamstress. I need not tell you that I can never forget you, even if you had done I don't know what. If you have been bad once, you're not bad now. I know that. Be good and patient, and bear your fate. Our Lord is my witness, I'd gladly take it on myself. I got your father to give me your knife, which you always liked so much; I hope, with God's blessing, to see you work honestly with it, someday. Only don't give up hope; for then you would be quite lost. Don't reproach yourself about what's past and gone: that won't do any good: but be good now. With the first money I earn I'm going to redeem your ring and my garnets. Oh, I have so much to tell you! ten clerks couldn't write it down. I will close, and be yours till death."

The letter was bathed in a flood of happy tears. Never till now did Florian know the treasure he possessed in Crescence. And he had not a little joy left, besides, for the thought that his precious knife was safe.

14.

MISERY AND FUN.

Florian was sent to the penitentiary for six years. He was almost pleased to lay aside his velvet roundabout and put on in place of it the gray coat of the convict; for his favorite was thus saved for those happy days in which he hoped to see Crescence again. Indeed, the six years seemed a mere week to his imagination. His heart was so full of hope again that he skipped over the interval of time as if it had been but a span.

Monarchical governments have their advantages, and in some respects put those of republics to shame. Here every man is fortunate as long as he is free; but, once immured in the walls of a prison, his rights and his comforts become every man's business, and therefore nobody's, and society neither knows nor cares whether he is properly fed, clothed, and watched, or whether his jailors enrich themselves on the sale of the food he should eat, or make his ordinary comforts contingent upon the alacrity he displays in doing their menial services. In Europe it is otherwise. There the government, and its hirelings the office-holders, consider every individual their natural enemy so long as he lives on his own exertions, and withholds a fragment of his existence from the surveillance of the high and mighty. With unrelenting taxation, and interminable regulations, prohibitions, and prescriptions, they waste his substance and goad him into prison; but, once there, their wishes are accomplished, and they treat him henceforth with paternal kindness. Favors shown to prisoners can never be regarded as concessions to civil liberty, and therefore they are freely extended. Whoever finds his way there may calculate upon friendly treatment. Perhaps, instead of opposing the government, it would be better for the citizens to bring about a general measure of criminal incarceration as the surest road to the good-will of their sovereigns.

Still, the time passed but slowly. He learned the art of making brushes. When at length and at last the day of delivery came, he hastened to Crescence. He was received with open arms. With a little money, which she had saved out of her earnings, they both travelled from village to village as brush-makers. But soon Florian renounced this trade for one more satisfactory to his peculiar desire for admiration. He attended the fairs, markets, and harvest homes as rope-dancer and juggler. His great exploit was the sword-trick, which consisted in throwing three swords around in a circle and always catching them by the handle: he had mastered the principle when engaged in chopping sausage-meat. Crescence clung to him faithfully through all this; and once, when he fell from the rope and broke his leg, she nursed him with the most tender care.

After this he purchased a gambling-table and frequented the markets and harvest-homes of the adjoining countries of Germany,--the game of dice having been, in the mean time, prohibited in Wurtemberg. It is the peculiar good fortune of Germany that every one may cultivate his besetting sin there to his heart's content, if he can only find the proper principality. What would have become of Florian had he not been a son of that favored country? He could not have made a living out of that which had first led to his ruin. Whenever this occurred to him, he raised his voice, as if to encourage himself: his morsel of French stood him in good stead,--for it is the most respectable dress for immorality that was ever fashioned.

"*Messieurs, faites votre jeu!*" he would say. "Step up, step up: play here, gentlemen. *Messieurs*, eight creutzers for one creutzer: one creutzer has eight young ones. *La fortune*, *la fortune*, *la fortune!* A creutzer is nothing: out of nothing God made the world: out of no money money will come. Step up, *Messieurs: faites votre jeu!*"

Often, when his tricks began to pall on the taste of the crowd, and he found time to observe the young fellows dancing and making merry, a two-edged sword would pierce his heart: he had been like them once, and like the finest among them; and now he was a despised joker for the amusement of others. To banish such thoughts, he would grow, more and more extravagant in his sallies, and endeavor to persuade himself that he was doing it all for his own edification.

Of four children, only two survived,--the oldest boy and a little girl. Never would Florian suffer them to look at him when he drove his trade. They were kept in a barn or a farmer's room, with the household goods of the family.

Once only Crescence took courage to suggest that it might be for the advantage of their children if they were to go home and try to support themselves there by their daily labor.

"Don't talk of it," said Florian, gnashing his teeth: "ten horses wouldn't drag me up the Horb steep again. I lost my honor there; and never, never will I look at the Nordstetten steeple again!"

15.

A CHILD LOST AND A FATHER FOUND.

In Braunsbach by the Kocher, opposite Maerxle's house, is a linden-tree, toward which a strolling family might have been seen making their way one Sunday afternoon. The father--a powerful man, in a blue smock and gray felt hat numerously indented--was drawing a cart which contained a whetstone and some household-utensils. A gaunt, brown dog, of middle size, was his yokefellow. The woman assisted in helping the cart forward by pushing from behind. The two children followed, carrying some dry sticks gathered along the road. Arrived at the tree, the man took off the strap by which he was harnessed, threw his hat on the ground, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and sat down with his back resting against the tree. Though much altered, we cannot but recognise Florian and his family.

The dog had lain down beside him, resting his head on his fore-paws. The boy caressed him.

"Leave Schlunkel alone now, Freddie," said Florian. "Go and help your mother."

The boy obeyed quickly: he knew that his father was out of humor by his calling the dog "Schlunkel,"--for whenever Florian was ill at ease he tortured himself by giving to the sharer of his burden the name of the man who had first made him unhappy.

Crescence, meantime, had taken the stand and the kettle from the cart, had made a fire and placed the kettle filled with water upon it.

"Go and got us some potatoes," said she to Freddie. He took a pot and went up to a house which looked down upon their resting-place. The beams of the framework in the walls--visible, as is always the case in that part of the country--were painted a bright red. An elderly man was looking out of the window.

"Won't you be so kind," asked Freddie, "as to give us some potatoes? God reward you!"

"Where are you from?" asked the man, who looked as if he had eaten a good dinner.

"My father always says, 'From the place where people are hungry too.'"

"Is that your father down there?"

"Yes: but don't be too long about it if you want to give us any thing, for our wood's all burning away."

The man came down and opened the door: the neighbors wondered how Peter Mike came to open his house to a beggar.

Freddie soon came out again with a potfull of potatoes and a little lard in a bowl. Soon the boiled potatoes became a porridge, and after all the family had dined the dog received permission to lick the plates.

Florian arose, and passed through the village, crying, "Scissor-grinder from Paris!" Freddie went from house to house to get work, promising the best of Parisian edge. And, without doubt, Florian was perfectly master of his new trade.

Peter Mike spent the afternoon in following the scissor-grinder from place to place. It gave him pleasure to follow his agile motions and hear the pretty tunes he whistled. He also chatted a little with the woman and the children. At dark he even tendered them his barn as a night's lodging. All the village cried, "A judgment! a judgment! Stingy Peter Mike is getting kind!" And yet this was but a trifle compared with what followed. Peter Mike sat down with them in the barn, and said, "Let me keep this boy of yours. I'll do well by him. What do you say to it?"

Seeing them look at each other in astonishment, he went on:--"Sleep on it, and tell me what you think of it in the morning."

Florian and Crescence talked for half the night without coming to any conclusion. The mother, much as her inclination protested against it, was ready to give up her child, in order to give it a prospect in life, and the hope, at least, of an ordinary education.

Florian said little, but looked at the boy as he slept in the moonlight, looking very beautiful.

"He'll be a rouser some day," he said at last, turned over on his side, and fell asleep.

It may seem strange that Peter Mike, with such a reputation for avarice, should suddenly offer to adopt the child of a stroller; nor was charity his only motive. He was alone and childless,--had rented out his fields, and lived upon his income. His brother's children--the only kindred he had--had offended him in someway; and he wished to mark his displeasure by the adoption of a stranger's child. Besides, the boy with the clear blue eyes had inspired him with an unaccountable affection.

At daybreak Peter Mike was at the barn-door, and asked whether they were awake. Being answered in the affirmative, he requested Florian and Crescence to come up to his room, in order to discuss the question. They complied.

"Well, how is it? Have you made up your minds?" he asked.

"Why," said Florian, "the plain English of it is, we should like to give up the boy very well, because he would be in good hands with you and could learn something; but it won't do: will it, Crescence?"

"Why won't it do?"

"Because we want the boy in our business; and we must live too, you know,--and our little girl."

"See here," said Peter Mike: "I'll show you that I mean you well. I'll give you a hundred florins,--not for the boy, but so that you can go about some other business,--a trade in dishes, or something of that kind. A hundred florins is something. What do you say?"

The parents looked at each other sorrowfully.

"Crescence, do you talk. I've nothing more to say: whatever you do, I'm satisfied."

"Why, I don't think the boy'll want to stay and leave us. You mean well, I know that; but the child might die of home-sickness."

"I'll ask him," said Peter Mike, leaving the parents more astonished than ever; for habitual poverty deprives people of the power of forming resolutions, and makes them surprised to find this faculty in others. Neither spoke: they dreaded the forthcoming answer, whatever it might be.

Peter Mike returned, leading Freddie by the hand. He nodded significantly, and Freddie cried, "Yes, I'll stay with cousin: he's going to give me a whip and a horse."

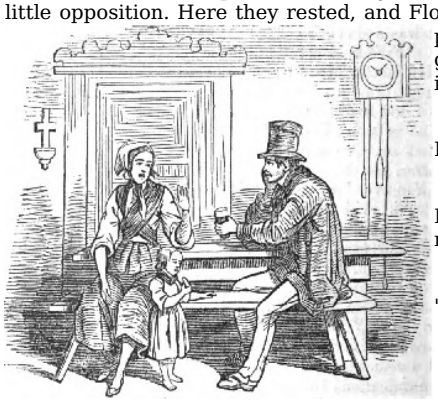
Crescence wept; but Florian said, "Well, then, let's go; what must be, the sooner it's done the better."

He went down-stairs, packed the cart, and hitched the dog. Peter Mike brought him the money.

When all was ready, Crescence kissed her son once more, and said, weeping, "Be a good boy, and mind your cousin: go to school and learn your lessons. Perhaps we shall come back in winter."

Florian turned his head away when his son took his hand, and tightened the strap by which he pulled the cart. Freddie put his arms round the dog's head and took leave of him.

Not a word was spoken until they reached Kochersteinfeld: each mentally upbraided the other for having made so little opposition. Here they rested, and Florian called for a pint of wine to cheer their spirits. Taking a long draught, he pushed the glass over to Crescence, bidding her do the same. She raised the glass to her lips, but set it down again and cried, weeping aloud, "I can't drink: it seems as if I had to drink the blood of my darling Freddie."



"Don't get up such a woman's fuss now: you ought to 've said that before. Let's sleep over it: we shall feel better tomorrow."

As if to escape from their own thoughts, they never stopped till they got to Kuenzelsau. On the way they held counsel as to the best investment of their money, and agreed to act upon the advice of Peter Mike.

Next day they set out for Oehringen; but suddenly Florian stopped and said, "Crescence, what do you say to turning round and going back for Freddie?"

"Yes, yes, yes! come."

In a moment the cart was headed the other way, and the dog leaped up Florian's side, as if he knew what was going on. But suddenly Crescence cried, "Oh, mercy, mercy! He'll never let us have him: there's a whole florin gone,--the night's lodging; and I've bought Lizzie a dress!"

"O women and vanity!" groaned Florian. "Well, we must try it, anyhow. I'm bound to have my Freddie back."

The dog barked assent

It was noonday again when the caravan reached the linden-tree. Freddie ran to meet them, crying, "Is it winter?"

His mother went up to Peter Mike, laid down the money, begged him to overlook the florin which was gone, and demanded her child.

The parson was in Peter Mike's room, and had almost succeeded in persuading him to be reconciled to his brother's children and to give the adopted child but a small portion of his property. At sight of Crescence he rose, without knowing why, and raised his hands. He tried to induce the woman not to give her child away; and, when she answered, the sound of her voice was like a reminiscence of something long unthought of.

Peter Mike had called Florian. When the latter saw the parson, he rushed up to him, seized him by the collar, and cried, "Ha, old fellow! I've caught you again at last." Crescence and Peter Mike interfered. The parson, with a husky voice, begged the latter to retire, as he had important communications to make to the strangers. Peter Mike complied.

"Is your name Crescence?" asked the parson.

"Yes."

"My child! my child!" said the parson, hoarsely, falling on her neck.

For a time all wept in silence. The parson passed his hand over her face, and then made them both swear never to reveal the relation in which they stood to him. He would give them a house and set them up in business. Crescence was to be regarded as his sister's child.

Thus the vagrant family settled in the village. Florian has returned to the active use of his faithful knife.

The wife of the Protestant minister, who is very religious, claims to have discovered beyond a doubt that Crescence is not the parson's niece, but his daughter; but people don't believe it.

The dog, who is also in the butchering-line, has exchanged his name of Schlunkel for the honest one of Bless. The gloomy recollections of the past are buried in oblivion.

THE LAUTERBACHER.

The clear tones of the church-bell melted into the bright glow of noonday, and the peasants came homeward from the fields. The men carried their caps in their hands until they reached the highroad: the voice of God had called upon them to lay their farming-utensils aside and to seek refreshment in prayer and in bodily food. A young man of slender form had come up the road leading from the town to the village. He was attired in citizen's dress, and carried a brown "Ziegenhainer" walking-stick, with numerous names engraved upon it, in his hand. On coming in sight of the village, he stood still, listened to the song of the bell, and surveyed the forest of white-blossomed orchards in which the hamlet was imbedded. He saluted the people who came from the fields with a peculiar earnestness, as if they were his friends. They returned the greeting with almost equal cordiality, and often turned round to look at him again. It seemed to them as if he must be some native of the village returning home after long journeys; and yet they could not recall his features.

When the last sound of the bell had died away, when all the fields were hushed and not a human being remained in sight, while the larks alone continued to revel in the skies, the stranger sat down upon a bank, and, after another long look at the village, he drew out his note-book. Having assured himself that he was unobserved, he wrote into it as follows:--

"Greeks and Romans, how your triumphs rent the air and your trumpets brayed! But it was left for Christianity to steal the ore from the dark bowels of the earth, to hang it aloft in mid-air, and pour its tones over the land, summoning mankind to devotion, to joy, to mourning. How glorious must have been the sound of harp and drum at Jerusalem! But now there is no longer but one temple upon earth: Christianity has raised them by thousands, far and near. When I heard the sound just now, it was like a heavenly welcome to my entrance into this place. You looked at me in astonishment, good people. Ye know not what we are to be to each other. Oh for a magic charm to obtain, the entire control over the minds of these beings, so that I might free them from ignorance and superstition and give them a taste of the true pleasures of the mind! They walk the earth even as the cattle which they follow, seeking nothing but food for their mouths.

"This, then, is the spot where my new life is to begin,--there the dingles and the downs on which my eye shall rest when my mind is full of the experiences of labor and exertion! Wherever flowers are seen, the earth is beautiful and gladdening. And, though men do not understand me, thou dost understand me, O deathless Nature, and dost reward my attention to thy revelations with a kindly smile. Here the trees send forth their blossoms, and in the village I hear the merry shouts of the children into whose minds I am to cast the light of education."

He ceased writing, and, looking at his cane, he said to himself, "Ye are scattered to the four winds of heaven, ye friends of my youth, and your names alone are left me; but I lean upon the memory of your names in crossing the threshold of my new existence. I commit my greetings to the spring: may the birds of the air convey it to your ears and refresh your hearts!"

He rose and walked briskly to the village.

It is not necessary to say that it was the new schoolmaster whose acquaintance we have just made. He asked for the squire, and was directed to Buchmaier's house.

Buchmaier and his numerous household were at dinner when the stranger entered. With a hearty welcome, he was invited to take a seat at the table, but politely declined.

"Oh, pshaw!" said Buchmaier, who had resumed his seat and his masticatory operations without delay: "move up a little, you. Quick, Agnes! get a plate. Sit down, Mr. Teacher. We don't do like the Horb folks: they always say, 'If you'd only come sooner.' Whoever comes into our houses at dinnertime must help us. You'll be too late for dinner where you're going; and we're just sitting down. You must take pot-luck, you see. It's a regular Black Forest dinner,--little fried dumplings and dried apples, boiled."

Agnes had brought a plate; and the teacher, to avoid giving offence, took his seat at the table.

"My Agnes here," said Buchmaier, after heaping his plate, "you'll have in Sunday-school."

"Oh, you won't have much more to learn," said the teacher, by way of saying something. The girl's eyes were fixed bashfully on her plate.

"Why, Agnes, why don't you talk? You generally carry your tongue about you. Do you know every thing?"

"Wall, I kin sheow a fist at readin' good enough, but the writin' won't gee no more, noheow, a body gits sich nation hard fingers workin' all the week."

We have attempted to reproduce Agnes' speech in the broadest Yankee brogue; but it is entirely insufficient to give the reader an adequate idea of the effect produced upon our hero's mind by the guttural consonants and parti-colored vowels of the original. All the beauty of the lips disappeared from his view when he heard what issued from them.

After the closing grace, one of the hands, who had been sitting near Buchmaier at the table, placed himself before him and said, pocketing the knife with which he had eaten, "'Guess I'll go out alone with the horses."

"Yes, I'm coming out d'rectly. Take a boy with you to hold the sorrel: he won't fall into the harness well."

"Oh, never you mind: I'll look out for all that," said the ploughman, walking away heavily. The teacher shook his head.

Agnes cleared the table, and hastened to the kitchen to exchange notes with the hired girls about the stranger.

"A good-looking chap enough," said Legata, the oldest, Agnes' special confidant. "He looked at you: I didn't know whether he wanted to give you a kiss or a slap. Wouldn't he do for you? He's a single man."

"I'd rather be single myself till a cow's worth a copper."

"You're right," said another girl: "why, he feeds himself with both hands. Did you mind how he held the knife in his right hand and his fork in his left? Who ever saw an honest man doing the like of that?"

Until a very short time ago not only the peasantry, but *all* classes, of Germany, ate with the fork alone, which they held in the right fist and handled like a shovel.

"Yes," said a third: "he never got outside of his father's dunghill before, I bet you. He cut the dumplings with his knife, instead of pulling them to pieces; so they got as tough as tallow. Served him right, for a tallow-head as he is. He gulped at 'em till I thought he'd choke."

While the girls were thus washing the dishes and overhauling the guest, the conversation in the room had taken a turn not calculated to remove the unfavorable impressions already produced on the teacher's mind.

"By your talk," said Buchmaier, "I should judge you were raised in the lowlands."

"Not exactly: I am from the Tauber Valley."

"Oh, we're not so particular about that: we call it all lowlands the other side of Boeblingen. What's the name of your place?"

The teacher hesitated a little, laid his hands upon his breast, and finally answered, with a bend of the head, "Lauterbach."

Buchmaier burst into a shout of laughter, which the teacher received in solemn earnestness. At last the former said, "Don't take it amiss: why, Lauterbach,--every child knows of Lauterbach,--it's in the song, you know. What made you hem and haw about it? There's no shame in't, I'm sure. Now, couldn't you tell me--I always wanted to know--why did they just put Lauterbach into the song?"

"How should I know? I suppose there is no reason for it. These stupid songs are generally made by simpletons who take any town they happen to think of, if it fits the metre: I mean the verse."

"Oh, I don't think the song so stupid as all that, and it has a funny tune: I like to hear people sing it."

"You must permit me to differ with you."

"What about permitting? If I didn't permit it, you'd do it anyhow. Just tell me, straight out, why you don't like it."

"What idea, what common sense, is there in a song like this?--

'At Lauterbach my stocking slipp'd off:
  Without a stocking I can't go home;
So I'm just going back to Lauterbach
  To buy another stocking to my one.'

That is sheer nonsense; and that you call funny? How can a song be funny when there isn't a single idea in it? Is nonsense fun?"

"Well, that may be as it will: it's funny, anyhow: it just suits you when you're----" Buchmaier, at a loss for words, snapped his fingers, and went on:--"I mean to say, when you're a little over the traces. We have a fellow here, his name's George: you must hear him sing it once: he thinks just as I do about it. Some joker once told me that it ought to be 'shoe' instead of 'stocking,' and that it was Lauterbach because there are so many old shoes lying about in the streets. But what have we to do with it now? Let's talk of something else. Have you got any friends here?"

"Not a single acquaintance."

"Well, you'll find 'em: the people hereabouts are a little rough sometimes; but it isn't that: it only looks so. They're a little fond of a joke, too, and sometimes it comes out of season; but they don't mean any harm by it; and you must only pay 'em back, and be quick on the trigger; and if you manage 'em right you can twist 'em round your little finger."

"I shall certainly treat them all with gentleness and kindness."

"Oh, I was going to say, don't forget to visit the councilmen and the committee-members; and go to see the old schoolmaster, who's been out of office these twenty-five years: he's a fine man, and 'll be glad to see you. He's one of the old sort, but as good as gold. I went to school with him myself, and I know mighty little,--that's a fact. The last schoolmaster made him mad because he didn't go to see him; and if you want to do him a particular favor, let him play the organ sometimes of a Sunday. Now I'll show you where you're to live: your things came yesterday."

With a discontented air, the teacher walked up the village at Buchmaier's side. The transcendent anticipations with which he had come were writhing under the pitiless blast of rude reality. More than once he heard the persons they passed stop and say to each other, "That's the new schoolmaster, I guess." At the Crown Tavern they encountered our old friend Mat, now a member of the committee of citizens. Buchmaier introduced the new-comer. Some of the villagers overheard this, and now the news spread like wildfire. Mat turned and walked with them.

The instinctive affection of the children, of which the teacher had been dreaming, was so great that they scampered away the moment they saw him in the distance. Here and there only a very courageous boy would remain standing, and acknowledge his presence with a friendly nod, though without taking off his cap,--the latter for the simple reason that he wore none.

Near the schoolhouse they found a fine boy of six or seven years of age. "Come here, Johnnie," cried Mat: "see, Mr. Teacher, this is my boy. Keep a tight rein on him: he can learn well enough, only he don't always want to. Shake hands with the gentleman, Johnnie: he's your teacher now: you must mind him. What do you say to a stranger?"

"God greet you!" said the boy, stretching out his hand without hesitation.

The teacher's face beamed at this welcome from childish lips. He was in his paradise again the moment he divined a kindly inclination of a childish heart toward him. Stooping down to the boy's face, he kissed him.

"Will you be fond of me?" he asked.

The child looked at his father.

"Will you be fond of the gentleman?" asked Mat.

The boy nodded, but could not speak,--for the tears were coming into his eyes.

The three men went on their way, and the little fellow ran home in all haste, without looking behind him.

Buchmaier and Mat installed the teacher in his new dwelling.

"There's a woman wanted here," said Mat: "a schoolmaster ought to have a wife. This is the first time we ever had a single one; and we have smart girls here, I can tell you. You must look about a bit. The best way is to take one that belongs to the place: if you come into a strange place and marry a stranger you'll be a stranger always. Isn't it so, cousin?"

"Perhaps Mr. Teacher has picked one out already," replied Buchmaier; "and, let her come from where she will, she shall be welcome here."

"Yes: we'll ride out to meet her," said Mat, thinking, in his heart, "Buchmaier's a smarter boy than I am, after all." The teacher answered,--

"I am free and single, and have time to think about it for a while." To himself he said, "Before I get into the clutches of one of these peasant-camels, I'll run away with a baboon."

"Well, you must excuse me now," said Buchmaier. "I must go afield: I'm just trading for a horse, and must see how he behaves in harness. See you to-night, I hope. Goodbye, meanwhile. Going up street, Mat?"

"Yes. Good-bye, Mr. Teacher, and if the time is long take it double."

The teacher did not quite understand the last speech of Mat, which was a figure derived from a long thread or string. When the door closed upon the peasants he gave it another push, as if to assure himself that he was now alone. He was oppressed in spirit, though without knowing why. At length the story of the Lauterbacher recurred to him. He regarded it as a piece of coarse vulgarity, sufficient to make him forget all the well-meant attentions otherwise rendered. Such is man. Once irritated, he remembers only what has offended him, and forgets the greatest kindnesses accompanying it.

Rousing himself from his reverie, he proceeded to unpack his trunks. The sight of the familiar objects tended in some degree to soothe his spirits; but his meditative mood would not be dispelled. "I am like a hermit in the wilderness," thought he. "What makes me happy has to the people round me no existence. This squire is nothing but a shrewd peasant a little proud of his coarseness. There may be a spark of mind slumbering in their bodies; but it is smothered in ashes. Let me summon up all my strength to guard against being transformed into a peasant. Every day of my life I will upheave my soul from its inmost fastenings, and not suffer a blur to settle upon it.

"I have seen teachers enter into office filled with the free aspirations of the time, and in a few years they had sunk into the slough of routine and become peasants like the peasants around them. Even their exterior was careless and slouchy." Writing "Memento" upon a bit of paper, he stuck it into the looking-glass.

At last he threw off his languor and walked out into the fields and on the road by which he had come. The farmers working here and there said, "How goes it, Mr. Teacher? 'Getting used to it?" He answered kindly but curtly: their familiarity struck him as odd, and almost offensive. He did not know that these people thought they had a claim upon him because they had first seen him and received his first salutations.

After a long ramble, he found in "The Bottom" a solitary pear-tree of picturesque growth. Having walked round and round it until he found the most fitting spot, he sat down upon a corner-stone and began to sketch. The farmers gathered around and looked on. The rumor went rapidly from mouth to mouth that "the new teacher was copying the trees."

As a background he drew the hill beyond, with the hazel-bush and the blackberry-hedge which wound around a cliff, as well as the little field-house built to keep farming-implements or to protect field-hands against sudden showers: last of all, he added a farmer, with horse and plough.

Late in the day he rose to return, with his spirits much calmed by his occupation. Several peasants joined him and gave evidence of a burning thirst for information. Our friend submitted to it all with the best grace he could assume. But it was unfortunate that, when asked whether "it wasn't a fine country hereabouts," he answered, "Tolerable." He saw but little in it of the picturesque.

Being struck with the clumsiness of the church-steeple, he asked who had built the church. They looked at each other in astonishment; for they could not bring themselves to think that there should ever have been a time when that church was not standing.

At home the teacher sat waiting for Buchmaier, who, he thought, would come to meet him. The dusk of evening brought out a more lively hum of voices: the teacher alone sat silently at his open window. The suggestion of Mat could not but return to his mind; and he thought seriously of seeking a companion who would rescue him from the lot of being

"Among monsters the only heart feeling a throb."

It was Friday evening: the young Jews passed, singing through the streets, according to custom. There was a voice among them once which no longer sings so merrily. Some songs were given from books: just as they passed the schoolhouse they sang the beautiful air,--

"Heart, my heart, why weep'st thou sadly?
  Why so still, and why so grave?
Sure the stranger's land is lovely:
  Heart, my heart, what wouldst thou have?"

As the sound died away, the teacher felt the full force of the music in his soul. He took up his violin and played that remarkable waltz ascribed to Beethoven,--Le Désir. Nothing of the kind had ever been heard in the village, and a crowd soon assembled at the window. To please them as well as himself, he struck up another waltz, full of life and frolic. The shouts and laughter of the listeners rewarded him.

Tired at last of solitude, he left the house, and, meeting Mat, inquired where Buchmaier might be looked for.

"Come along," was the answer: "he's at the Eagle every Friday night."

The teacher complied, though he thought it very wrong for the squire to be sitting in the tavern like anybody else. He found a large concourse, engaged in animated conversation. The Jews, who are generally out of the village at other times, were now mingling with their Christian fellow-citizens and drinking: they testified their reverence for the Sabbath only by abstaining from the use of tobacco.

After a brief halt consequent upon the new schoolmaster's entrance, Buchmaier, who had made room for him at the table, continued his remarks:--

"As I was saying, Thiers wanted to do France brown with a slice of German lard; but he's found the mess too salt for his fancy, and another time he won't be so greedy. What do you think of it, Mr. Teacher?"

"You're very right; but we ought to have Alsace back again besides."

"So we ought, only the Alsatians won't come back. The last time I was in Strasbourg I was right-down ashamed of myself the way they treated me,--wanting to know whether we wouldn't soon have some more counterfeit money that didn't belong anywhere. A real fine man I met with said that the office-holders over there would like to be German very much, because here they are paid best and cared for to the third and fourth generation, and sure of their places, but in

France they can't come it quite so strong. And, if it was to be German again, who should have it? A son of the counterfeit sixer? I believe there's one in circulation yet? Or a sweated Hanoverian ten-guilder piece? I guess they wouldn't give it to any one alone: they'd cut it into snips, just as they chipped up the left bank of the Rhine, so that everybody might see it was German and no mistake."

"While the teacher sat dumb with, astonishment at this audacious utterance, a stout man, whose dress and accent bespoke the Israelite, began:--

"Yes; and the Jews in Alsatia--there's lots of 'em, too--would rather be butchered than made Germans of. Over there they're every whit as good as the Christian citizens, and here they pay the same taxes and serve in the army just like the Christiana, and only have half their rights."

"You're right, Mendle, but you won't be righted," replied Buchmaier.

After a pause, Buchmaier began again:--

"Mr. Teacher, what do you think of the cruelty-to-animals societies? Can anybody tell me not to do as I like with my own? Can anybody punish me for such things?"

In this question again the teacher saw nothing but coarseness and barbarity: with vehemence he advocated the ordinances and regulations prohibiting the practices in question. Buchmaier rejoined:--

"In cities it may be right enough to admonish people not to be hard on their cattle; but punishing is nobody's business. These coachmen and omnibus-drivers and liveried officials--I mean to say, liveried servants--have no feeling for their cattle, because very often they don't even own 'em, and, as for having raised 'em, that's not to be thought of. But in the country I've seen people cry more when one of their cows falls than when their children die."

"The gentlefolks ought to stop being cruel to the peasants first," said Mat. "The old judge always talked to his dog as if it was his baby, and snarled at the farmers as if they were other people's dogs. Let them get up a society first that nobody's to say 'sirrah' to a farmer any more."

"Yes," said Buchmaier: "the point of the joke is that the office-holders would like to have a little government over the cattle. Mark my words: if things go on this way it won't be ten years before a man will receive a command that he's to plant this and not that, and that he's to plough this field and let that lie fallow: there'll be societies about cruelty to the fields, and all that sort of thing."

"If men are not rational enough," said the teacher, "to be moderate in all things, it is the duty of the state to inculcate what is good by the fear of punishment."

"Never, if I live a hundred years," said Buchmaier, fiercely, suddenly checking himself, however, either because he bethought himself of the dignity of his station, or because he really had nothing else to say. He emptied his glass by slow pulls; while a man with curled hair, somewhat grizzled, said, in High German, but still in the singing tone of the Jews, "Men may be punished for doing wrong; but there's no such thing as forcing them to be good: goodness effected by compulsion is not goodness."

"Right," said Buchmaier. The teacher, however, did not heed the remark: it is not to be supposed that, like other learned men, he chose to treat an objection urged by a Jew as if it had not been uttered; but he probably regarded Buchmaier alone as his adversary, for he asked him,--

"Do you believe that the state has a right to compel people under a penalty, to send their children to school?"

"Of course; of course."

"But why?"

"Because that's all right and proper."

"But you say we have no right to compel people to be good."

"Yes; but you can punish people when they do wrong; and a man does wrong who won't send his child to school. Isn't it so?" he concluded, turning to the man who had spoken before.

"Certainly," answered the latter. "The state is the guardian of those who don't know how to take care of themselves. Just as it is its duty to watch over a child that has lost its parents, so it must vindicate its rights when infringed by those who are too mean or too ignorant to do their duty by them."

"Right; just right," said Buchmaier, triumphantly.

Without either addressing or avoiding the speaker, whom he regarded as an interloper, the teacher said, "If the state is the guardian of the unprotected and the defenceless, it is also bound to see to the well-being of the cattle, for they are in like case as children are."

"Apple-cores and pear cider! How came the beets into the potato-sack?" said Buchmaier, laughing. "By your leave, Mr. Teacher, you've got into a snarl there. I've a heifer at home that hasn't a father nor a mother; and I'll have to call the town-meeting to-morrow to appoint a guardian."

Roars of laughter shook the building. The teacher made great efforts to define his position, but could not obtain a hearing. The whole company were but too glad to see the conversation--which had become almost serious--turn into this comical by-way. All he could do was to protest that he had never intended to rank children and cattle alike.

"Oh, of course not!" said Buchmaier. "Why, you kissed Mat's Johnnie to-day, and that's more than anybody does to a beast. But now it seems as if I was three times more certain than ever that these cruelty-to-animals societies are like tying up the hens' tails,--as if they didn't carry them upright, anyhow."

The tide of merriment swelled into a torrent, and what it carried on its bosom was not all of dainty texture. The teacher was not in a mood to be carried away by the current: on the contrary, it harassed and worried him. He soon quitted the inn with that gnawing sensation which befalls us when we have been misunderstood because not heard to the end. He perceived how difficult it is to lead an assemblage of grown persons through the profound and exhaustive analysis of any subject. But, leaving this train of thought, he soon suffered himself to suppose that he had met with that phase of barbarism which consists not in the absence of polish, but in the conceited disdain of culture and refinement. He was much mortified. The resolution to confine himself exclusively to the companionship of docile childhood and of uncorrupted nature was confirmed in his mind.

Next day (Saturday) the teacher called on the councilmen, but found none of them at home. His last errand was to the old schoolmaster, whose house he found at the lower end of a pretty garden which opened on the road. The beds were measured with lead and string, and skirted with box; the hedge of beech which enclosed the whole was smoothly shorn, and, at regular intervals, little stems rose over the hedge, crowned with spherical foliage. In the midst was a rotunda,

forming a natural basin, girt with box and garnished with all sorts of buds and flowers. At the foot of the garden, near the arbor, voices were heard in conversation. Advancing in that direction, he said to the two men whom he found there,--

"Can I see Mr. Schoolmaster?"

"Two of 'em: ha, ha!" said the elder, who was without a coat, and had a hoe in his hand.

"I mean the old schoolmaster."

"That's me; and this is the Jew teacher: ha, ha!" answered the man with the hoe, pointing to his companion, who was dressed as befits the Sabbath.

"I am glad to have the pleasure of meeting you also. Have we not seen each other before?"

"Yes,--when you were conversing with the squire."

The old gentleman threw away his hoe, took his pipe out of his mouth, and seized his coat, for the purpose of putting it on,--a design against the execution of which our friend interfered.

"We must not stand upon ceremony," said he: "we are colleagues. I am the new teacher. Is this garden your property?"

"Ha, ha! 'should think it was," replied he. Every word he said was accompanied with a peculiar chuckle, which appeared to come from his inmost soul. "Welcome to Nordstetten," he added, extending his hand, and shaking that of the newcomer with a grip which reminded him of Goetz von Berlichingen.

The Jewish teacher stood rubbing his hands in great embarrassment. He knew not whether to offer his hand or not. He feared to be thought obtrusive, as he was not the object of the visit; and, again, he was disposed to resent this want of attention as a slight, and dreaded lest his dignity should be compromised by an advance on his part.

These mingled feelings--the fear of obtrusiveness and ill-will on the one hand, and of excessive sensitiveness on the other--are the two thieves between which Jew is crucified in the conventional intercourse of European society, and must continue to be so until his social position shall become firm and well defined.

Like all educated Jews of the older generation, the Jewish teacher was conversant with the text of the Bible, and never forgot the maxims, "Love the stranger, for ye were strangers also in the land of Egypt," and, "Offend not the stranger, for ye know his thoughts." He remembered the pleasure he had himself derived, years before, from a smiling welcome. Thus he stood, his lips moving silently, and the muscles of his face twitching. At length he stepped up to the new-comer, extended his hand, and expressed his pleasure in his arrival. The stranger said, "You would certainly do me a great favor, gentlemen, by giving me some advice in reference to my line of conduct. I know no one here."

"I can understand that very well," replied the Jewish teacher. "I also came here for no other reason than that I was sent by the consistory, and did not know a soul. I often longed for a charm to make myself *incognito* for a while, so as to study closely the character of the parents; for, without the parents to help you, nothing is to be done with the children. What made matters particularly difficult for me was that it became my duty, twenty-five years ago, to organize a regular school,--a matter till then entirely unknown among the Jews. At first it seemed to me that I had been spirited into a strange world by enchantment."

"Yes, you came into an enchantment soon enough, and married the prettiest girl in the village: ha, ha! And so you ought," fell in the old man. Turning to our friend, he continued,--"You must marry a girl from our village, too."

The new teacher recoiled in such haste as to set his foot ruinously into one of the immaculate flower-beds. After stammering out an apology, he said, "I only refer to my relations with the parents and the children."

"Be strict with them: that's the main point," said the old gentleman, repairing the damage with the hoe. "As to the new ways of teaching, I don't understand them. They ask the children, 'Who made the table?'--just as if they didn't know that without teaching. And then they give only the sounds of h, k, l, m, like the dumb, and the alphabet's gone out of fashion entirely."

"Strict, you say?" interposed the new teacher, to avoid the shoals and quicksands of a discussion.

"Yes. Of all the men running about the village now, there's not one who hasn't had his good salting down from me many and many a time; and I leave it to you whether they don't respect me to this day."

"Most certainly," responded the Jewish teacher, smiling. The old gentleman went on:--"And when there's a festivity in the village it won't do to play the gentleman of refinement and look on a while to see how the ignorant vulgar amuse themselves; but you must go in and help them. I've been the wildest among 'em all. The barber's dance they learned from me, and the seven-league jump I always led them in, with my Madge: my legs itch when I think of it."

"You were born and bred here, and had no need of establishing a reputation."

"I was not born and bred here. All this country fell to Wurtemberg in the year five: before that time it had belonged to Austria. I was born at Freiburg."

"You have seen much of life?"

"I should think so. People that are thirty years old nowadays don't know any thing of the world, for now every thing rolls as smoothly as a tenpin-alley. I don't refer to you: but what can a teacher be expected to know nowadays? Where has he been in the world? In books up to the eyes. Every thing runs like clock-work now, and it's one, two, three, pupil, student, teacher. I was a soldier, a musician, and a court clerk, in the lands of many rulers. I have gone through with Russians, and Frenchmen, and Saxons, and other deviltry. I began a copy-book here, in the finest of German text; and when I'd got as far as F, down came those lubberly Frenchmen, and they turned all our German text into French; and there was an end of it."

Leaning on his hoe, he went on to tell the two grand stories of his life,--the one of a pot containing two hundred florins, which he had buried in the cellar, but which the French discovered notwithstanding, and the other of how, on a bitter cold winter's day, he had gone with the parson to Eglesthal to administer extreme unction to an old woman, and they were met by a Cossack, who relieved the teacher of his mittens of fox's skin. An elaborate description of the mittens was interrupted by the stroke of eleven, which put an end to the colloquy. Our friend walked with the Jewish teacher to the Eagle, where he had taken board.

Next morning the new teacher's performance on the organ attracted great admiration. From various groups which formed as the congregation were leaving the church, the remark was heard,--

"He's 'most as good as the old teacher."

He sought out the latter, and requested him to officiate in the afternoon.

The old man laughed with joy, and said at last, in the short, broken sentences usual to him, "Oh, yes! young folks can learn something if they wish to. I was sub-organist in the Freiburg Cathedral for two years and a half: ha, ha! Yes, the last professor drove me out of the church. I didn't go there for a whole year: I couldn't stand his squeaking; and even after that I only went to mass, and to hear the sermon: when the singing began I had to run away."

He played in the afternoon; but the bizarre and fantastic movements he made on the sacred instrument caused the young man more than once to shake his head. The rest of the auditory, however, gave tokens of unalloyed satisfaction.

For his attention to the old teacher the new one was greatly praised; while he was blamed in the same degree for calling on the councilmen on a weekday, when he might have known they could not be found at home. Of both praise and blame the teacher remained equally unconscious.

On Monday the school began. The parson, a man of pleasing manners and high tone of character, introduced the teacher to his new sphere of duties with a pithy address, in the presence of the entire council and committee of citizens.

From this day forth the teacher ceased to take his dinner at the public house: the noise and confusion of the place disturbed him, and he wished to be left to himself after the unruly tribe of children was dismissed. In fact, he lived a life of entire seclusion: the duties of his station were conscienscious performed, but beyond that he studiously avoided all society. At rare intervals only would he take a walk in company with the Jewish teacher or with the old one. The latter he soon fathomed. In the mind of the former the foreground was occupied by the political and social affairs of his brethren, and he found but little congenial to his own turn of thinking. The remainder of the citizens--even Buchmaier himself--were as much strangers to him as before he had entered the village. He never went to the inn, nor ever joined the knots of talkers assembled in front of some of the houses, after dark. When school was over, he rambled alone through the woods and fields, sketched the landscape, or took notes of his thoughts and feelings. In the evening he read, or practised on his violin.

As we cannot produce copies of his drawings nor repeat his musical performances, we must content ourselves with a copy of his reflections, under the title given them by the author himself.

"WISDOM IN THE FIELDS.

"(Lying on the grass.) Every resuscitation is mingled with remnants of decay which it displaced. Look at the pastures in spring, and you will find many a day blade of last year's growth amid the fresh grass of the present: its destiny is to wither away and serve as manure for future crops. When fools perceive this, they say, 'There is no spring, and there never will be: look at these wilted wisps.' Is it not the same case with all intellectual growth? Is not the old schoolmaster a blade of dry grass of this sort?

"To me all nature is but a symbol of the mind: it appears like a mere mask, behind which the mind is hidden. These poor peasants! They live in this free growth of nature with the same feelings as if they inhabited a dead-house: in all the fields and woods they see nothing but the profit, the number of sheaves, the sacks of potatoes, the cords of wood: I alone inhale the spiritual essence that breathes from it all. Let me turn my eyes from these human grubs who creep sightlessly through all this splendor; let me elevate my thoughts above this paltry traffic, and as the bee makes honey from the spiked thistle which the ass merely swallows, so let me derive the sweet intellectual savor out of all things. Assist me, thou Eternal Mind, and let me not be like those who cleave to the sod until the sod rolls over their coffins! And you, ye master-minds of my nation, whose works have followed me hither, strengthen me, and let me sit at your feet continually.

"Every patch of ground has its history. Could any one unravel the mutations which transferred it from hand to hand, and the fortunes and sentiments of those who tilled it, he would understand the history of the human race; while its geological structure, traced to the centre of the earth, would unfold all the developments of the earth's formation.

"Every thing on earth becomes the food, or in some way the consumption, of something else: man alone appropriates all things, himself remaining free and unsubdued until the earth opens and swallows up his body. This brings me, by a way of my own, to the commonplace remark that man is the lord of the earth. But there is really no other truth but that self-acquired knowledge which we attain by the labor of our own spirits.

"I once heard, or read, that it is only where the number of domestic animals exceeds that of human beings that a state of society obtains in which all may be comfortable and none need be wretched.

"Is there a parallel truth,--that the number of irrational men must always be greater than that of men of reason?

"A dreadful thing to think of! And yet----

"It is clear that agriculture was the beginning and the first occasion of civilization. As long as men depended on hunting and fishing, they were but like the beasts, who *seek* their subsistence. It was when they began to *prepare* their food, by observing and directing the natural laws of vegetation, planting and nursing, that they first attached themselves to particular spots, and were impelled to study the elements and their combinations, and to exert an influence upon the world without and the world within them.

"Agriculture is the root of all civilization; and yet the agriculturists of the known world have never tasted but a small portion of its fruits. Is this unavoidable?

"Upon the unsteady flower that rocks in the breeze the bee makes her perch and gathers her honey: thus man enjoys the fleeting things of earthly life, while all things rock under his feet.

"(At the Beech-Pond.) A drop from the sky falls into the pond, forms a little bubble for a while, then bursts, and mingles with the morass; another falls into the stream and becomes a part of the living billow. Is my existence like that of such a rain-drop? Then let me be resolved into a living stream: it must be so.

"Every bird flees from the rain: only the swallow revels in it.

"When I go abroad to refresh myself with a little bodily fatigue, I meet the farmers returning wearied from their work: it almost makes me ashamed to be out sauntering.

"In the morning and in the evening we perceive the changes between light and darkness; yet this change is going on to the same extent throughout the day.

"Is not the development of the human mind in the same case?

"I have looked upon numberless sunsets, and yet no two were alike. Such is the endless variety of nature; and therein lies its inexhaustible beauty.

"In watching the sunset, we are tempted to suppose that from where we stand, as far as the western horizon, the red glow of evening extends and there is light, but that behind us all is darkness. Those again who stand farther eastward imagine that the light extends quite to their feet, though no farther. Thus every man measures the horizon from the little spot on which he stands, and all regard themselves as the last remnants of enlightenment.

"Why is a sunset more attractive to most men than a sunrise?

"Is it because but few ever see the latter, or because that which departs has more of our sympathies? I think not. The sunset comes to a beautiful mysterious close in the shade of night and the stillness of universal rest; but the sunrise never comes to a conclusion: it is dissipated in the glare and noise and turmoil of the day. Beautiful is death! Oh, how I long----

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"(Behind the manor-house garden.) When a post is driven into the earth, the end must be charred to keep it from decay: he who is touched by the fire of the mind can never die.

"The hide of one poor beast is sliced into harness for another. The application is easy.

"If a man is told that a place he desires to reach is nearer than it really is, his fatigue is doubled,--the result probably of his over-eagerness to get to the end of his journey.

"I have erred in thinking the way to the goal of my life shorter than it turns out to be.

"In mowing you must take short steps and walk forward in a straight line. The more sparse the clover, the more fatigue in the labor: the scythe reels about the hard earth, and at last plunges in the air without effecting any result. Significant!

"Green feed, and every thing brought home in the sap, is free from tithes.

"In cutting corn, the reaper must lay the swath behind him, so as to have nothing before him but the blades still standing. So with the deeds that we have done. They must be out of the sight, so that all our attention may be turned upon what yet remains to do.

"When in the distance I see the mowers bowing and rising so regularly, it seems as if they were going through some ceremonious ritual of prayer.

"The new paling of the manor-house garden is being painted green. Dry wood rots in wind and weather if not covered with a coating. Nature furnishes a secure vestment for all her creatures: men tear off these natural coats and are compelled to replace them with artificial ones.

"What if education were nothing more than oil-paint, a poor surrogate for the fresh lustre of Nature? No: it is Nature itself, elevated, purified; men like those around me here----

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"Valentine, the old carpenter, is so forgetful that he walks along the road with the cart-whip on his shoulder, and cries 'Hoy!' without perceiving that his cows have turned into a wrong road forty yards behind him. Is not this the lot of many rulers?

"In a garden by the roadside is a weeping willow, the boughs of which have been tied and twisted into all sorts of ellipses, circles, oblique and right angles, until they have taken this shape permanently.

"The boughs of sorrow are tractable, and may be cramped into almost any deformity; still, the irrepressible vigor of Nature will restore the original growth and proportion. What is it that makes farmers so fond of distorting Nature? Why are they so prone to maltreat the weeping willow, the loveliest of trees? Perhaps there lies at the very root of human nature a disposition to indemnify one's self for a year's hard labor by making a plaything of the subject of it on a holiday.

"(At the crucifix in the Target Field.) Although there were some Jews living in the place where I was born, I never thought much about them. I only remember that when a little boy, like the other little boys, I jeered and even struck the little Jews at every opportunity.

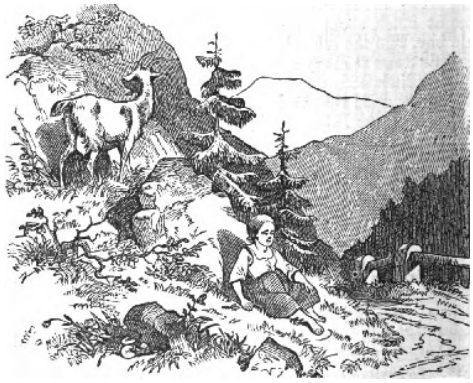
"It as little occurs to us to meditate upon our relation to the Jews as upon that we hold to horses or other cattle. On the contrary, the Bible inspires every Christian child with an indistinct impression of having received some personal wrong at the hands of every individual of the Jewish persuasion. A mysterious abhorrence of them gradually settles upon the infant mind. I involuntarily regarded every Jew as having some disease of the skin. A child thus educated will caress an animal, but never a Jew.

"I am now thrown into frequent intercourse with the Jews. The Jewish teacher is a man remarkably free from prejudice, and possessed of a degree of culture such as I have not often met with. He is more conversant with theology than with the natural sciences. Is that the case with Jews in general? His method of instruction is highly intellectual, but a little wanting in system and regularity,--a disadvantage for children not extraordinarily gifted. A strange sensation overcame me on my first visit to the synagogue. The Hebrew words have wandered from the slopes of Lebanon to these German pine-forests. And yet, is not our religion derived from the same spot? Again, while ancient Rome could not vanquish the Germans, nor make them speak the language of the Capitol, modern Rome perfected the achievement. Every Sunday the Roman language is heard upon these distant hills.

"Over against the school-house is the so-called Burned Spot, the site of the house in which a whole Hebrew family--the grandmother, daughter-in-law, and five grandchildren--fell a victim to the flames. It is now the favorite resort of children when they wish to play at hide-and-seek. The old ruins abound in choice hiding-places. The rosy-cheeked boys clamber up and down the blackened walls, and shout and yell; just where the flames crawled! Such things occur in the history of great things also.

"The bel-wether dance has just been held. "These things are no longer suited to our times: they are a feature of the Middle Ages. Then the lord of the manor may have looked with complacency from the turret of his castle upon the follies of his villeins: he had given them the wether and the ribbon, and probably gave the winning pair pittance of a marriage-portion. All these things are at an end; and why continue the form of that which no longer has a substance?

"Sometimes a chord of the music steals out into the fields and strikes upon my ear; but it is only the braying of the grand trumpet that becomes thus distinguishable. Like me, the peasants here are beyond the reach of the harmonies produced by the intellectual efforts of humanity: not until the great trumpet brays or the bass-drum rattles does a solitary link attach them to the mighty chain, and, for a space, they keep step with the pace of time. Of the gentle adagio and the more intricate harmonies they know nothing.



"It is well that spots of ground are always to be found in which, strictly speaking, no man has a property, and where the poor may pluck their bundles of grass without molestation. Such are the steep banks, cliffs, gulches, and so on. And where even the poor can no longer find a footing, the goat--the companion of the needy--makes her way and picks a scented herb or an aromatic twig.

"On 'wood-days' the poor are allowed to appropriate the dry boughs of the green trees. I have read somewhere that kind Nature herself instituted this traditional charity, and throws to the poor the crumbs of her laden board. The poor and the dry sticks.

"The weeds in the corn-fields are also no man's property until the poor take them away and convert them into nutritious food. Do you ask, of what use are weeds? Perhaps many other things should be judged by the same rule."

These leaves were the product of three months of comparative solitude. His habit of writing when abroad had been discovered, and had subjected him to various uncharitable suspicions. As the reader may have divined, many of them were but the answers given by the peasants to questions on matters very familiar to them, and indeed to everybody except the very learned men of learned Germany. The villagers were at their wits' end. They could not conceive how any one could be ignorant of these matters.

Those who travel afoot must have noticed the demeanor of peasants when asked the way to a place in the immediate neighborhood. At first they suspect that a joke is being played upon them; and then they give an explanation which presupposes a perfect acquaintance with other localities in point of fact equally unknown to the questioner. Yet educated men are often no wiser. Perfectly at home in a certain sphere of ideas, they take for granted that every one else is equally so, and explain themselves in such a manner as to leave the hearer more mystified than he was before.

Of course the teacher was no better known to the villagers than they to him. Very few of them had ever heard his name. One thing, however, they had discovered,--that the teacher came from Lauterbach; and this single fact was used by the wit and humor of the village as the rod with which to punish his pride and reserve. In the evening, whenever he was known to be in, the young fellows assembled under his window and sang the "Lauterbacher" without cessation. As he had taken the part of the societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, they generally wound up with,--

"I won't sing any more:
A mouse ran over the floor;
I'll hunt it and I'll find it,
Put out its eyes and blind it,
Take out my knife and skin it,
And lay it out and pin it,"
&c. &c. &c.

This piece of vulgarity vexed the teacher; but he never quite understood the meaning of it all until the College Chap joined the singers; for, though a married man, he could not forego the privilege of being the leader in all sorts of mischief. He made a new verse, which was repeated again and again:--

"At Lauterbach I was born so proud,
And proud I am going to die:
Oh, carry me back to Lauterbach:
That is where I ought to lie."

A light flashed upon the teacher's mind. It grieved him to the soul to find himself thus abused by those whom he meant so well. He mourned within-doors, and without the noise grew louder and louder. He gathered himself up, intending to open the window and address the crowd in conciliation: luckily, however, his eye fell upon his violin, and, taking it down, he played the air of the song with which they were persecuting him. There was a sudden silence below, interrupted by low chucklings. Presently the singing recommenced, and the teacher resumed the accompaniment as often as the provocation was repeated.

At length he appeared at the window, saying, "Is that the way?"

"Yes," was the general answer; and from this time forth he was unmolested,--for he had shown that his temper was proof against teasing.

But on this occasion he formed the resolution of seeking intercourse with his neighbors more than formerly. He saw that his duties to his fellows were not circumscribed by the school-room.

The execution of this design was not long without its reward.

One Sunday afternoon, on returning from church-service, he took his way by the street which skirted the hill-side, called the "Bruck," or Bridge. An old woman was sitting in front of her house with her hands folded and her head shaking with palsy. He said, kindly,--

"How do you do? The sunshine does you good, doesn't it?"

"Thank you, kind gentleman," answered the old woman, still nodding.

The teacher stood still.

"You have seen many summers, haven't you?" said he.

"Seventy-eight: a good number. Seventy years is the life of man, says the Scripture. I often think Death must have forgotten me. Well, our Lord God will fetch me in his own good time: he knows when. I sha'n't get out of his sight."

"But you seem to keep up very well."

"Not very well,--the cramp; but this helps it." She pointed to the gray threads she had tied around her arms, the veins of which were swollen.

"What is that?"

"Why, a pure virgin spun this before she broke her fast in the morning, and spoke the Lord's Prayer three times while she did it. If you put that round your arm, and don't cry out about it, and speak the prayer to the Lord's holy three nails nine times over, it drives away the cramp. I have to cough so much," she said, pointing to her chest, to excuse the frequent interruptions in her speech.

"Who spun the threads for you?" inquired the teacher, again.

"My Hedwig,--my grand-daughter. Don't you know her? Who are you?"

"I am the new teacher."

"And don't know my Hedwig! Why, she's one of the choristers. What's the world coming to, I'd just like to know! The schoolmaster doesn't know the choristers any more!

"I used to sing in the choir myself,--though, to hear me cough, you wouldn't think so. I was a smart lass: oh, yes. I was fit enough to be seen: and once a year there was a grand dinner, and the parson and the schoolmaster were there. Oh, they did use to sing the funniest songs then, about the Bavarian Heaven, and such things! That's all over now: the world isn't what it used to be when I was young."

"You love your grand-daughter very much, don't you?"

"She is the youngest. Oh, my Hedwig is one of the old sort; she lifts me up and lays me down, and never gives me an unkind word. I almost wish to die, just for her good,--she's kept home so much on account of me; and, after I'm dead, I'll pray my best for her in heaven."

"Do you pray a great deal?"

"What can I do better? My working-days are over.

"I know a prayer which brings the souls out of the moon right into heaven, and so that they don't get into purgatory at all. The Holy Mother of God once said to God the Father, 'My dear husband, the way the poor souls squeak and howl down there in purgatory is too bad: I can't stand it any longer.' So he said, 'Well, I don't care: you may go and help them.' So, there was a man in the Tyrol with eight children: and his wife died, and he went on about it dreadfully when they carried her to the churchyard. But the Mother of God came every morning and combed the childrens' heads and washed their faces, and made the beds; and for a long time the man never found out who did it all. At last he went to the parson, and the parson came very early with the sacrament, and saw the Mother of God flying out of the window, as white as snow; and the prayer was lying on the sill; and they built a church on the spot."

"And you know this prayer, ma'am?" said the teacher, taking a seat beside her.

"You mustn't say 'ma'am' to me: it's not the way hereabouts."

"Have you more grandchildren?"

"Five more; and fourteen great-grandchildren,--and I'm going to have another soon by my Constantine. Don't you know my Constantine? He is studied too, but he's a wild one. I have no reason to complain of him, though, for he's always good to me."

Suddenly there appeared, coming from behind the house, a girl, closely followed by a snow-white hen. "Ha' ye gude counsel, grandmammy?" she asked, scarcely looking up as she passed. The teacher was so taken by surprise that he rose involuntarily and touched his cap.

"Is that your grand-daughter?" he asked, at length.

"To-be-sure."

"Why, that is splendid," said the teacher.

"Isn't she a smart-looking lassie? Old George the blacksmith always tells her, when she goes into the village, that she's just like his grandmother. George the blacksmith is the last of the young fellows I used to dance with: we might as well be three hundred miles apart as the way we are: he's down in the village and can't come up to me, and I can't get down to him. We'll have to wait until we meet each other half-way in the churchyard. I expect to find all the old world there, and in heaven it'll be better yet. My poor Jack Adam has been waiting a long time for me to come after him: he'll be getting tired of it."

"All the people in the village must like you," said the teacher.

"Call into the wood, and you'll have a good answer. When we're young, we want to eat everybody up,--some for love, and some for vexation: when we're old, we live and let live. You wouldn't believe me how good the people are here if I were to tell you: you'll have to find it out yourself. Have you been much about in the world?"

"Not at all. My father was a schoolmaster like myself, and when he died I was only six years old: my mother soon followed him. I was taken to the Orphans' House, and remained there--first as a pupil, and then as an incipient and assistant--until this spring, when I was transferred here. Ah, my good friend, it's a hard lot to have almost forgotten the touch of a mother's hand."

The old woman's hand suddenly passed over his face. He blushed deeply, and sat for a moment with closed lids and quivering eyeballs. Then, as if awaking from a dream, he seized her hand, saying,--

"I may call you grandmother, mayn't I?"

"Yes, and welcome, my kind, good friend: a grandchild more or less won't break me, I'll try it, and will knit your stockings: bring me your torn ones, too, to mend."

The teacher still kept his seat, unable to tear himself away. The passers-by were astonished to find the proud man chatting so cosily with old Maurita. At last a man came out of the house, rubbing himself and stretching his eyes.

"'Had your nap out, Johnnie?" asked the old woman.

"Yes; but my back aches woefully with mowing."

"It'll get well again: our Lord God won't let any man get hurt by working," answered his mother.

The teacher recalled the thoughts suggested by the bowing motion of the mowers. He saluted Johnnie, and walked out into the fields with him. Johnnie liked those conversations which were not attended with drinking, and, therefore, free from expense. He found the teacher, who was an excellent listener, in the highest degree amiable and smart. He favored him with an exposition of his finances, with the story of Constantine, and many other interesting particulars.

In the evening he informed all his friends that the teacher wasn't near so bad as people made him out to be, only he couldn't drive his tongue very well yet: he hadn't got the right way to turn a sharp corner.

The teacher, on coming home, wrote into his pocketbook,--

"Piety alone makes even the decrepitude of age an object of admiration and of reverence. Piety is the childhood of the soul: on the very verge of imbecility it spreads a mild and gentle lustre over the presence and bearing. How hard, tart, and repulsive is the old age of selfish persons! how elevating was the conversation of this old woman in the midst of her superstition!"

He wrote something more than this, but immediately cancelled it. Wrapt in self-accusation, he sat alone for a long time, and then went out into the road: his heart was so full that he could not forego the society of men. The distant song of the young villagers thrilled his breast. "I am to be envied," said he to himself; "for now the song of men is more potent over me than the song of birds. I hear the cry of brothers! Men! I love you all."

Thus he strolled about the village, mentally conversing with every one, though not a word escaped his lips. Without knowing how he had come there, he suddenly found himself once more in front of the house of Johnnie of the Bruck. Every thing was silent, except that from the room the occupation of which was part of the dower of old Maurita issued the monotonous murmur of a prayer.

Late at night he returned home through the village, now still as death, except that here and there the whispers of two lovers might be heard. When he re-entered his solitary room, where there was no one to welcome him, no one to give answer to what he said, to look up to him, and to say, "Rejoice: you live, and I live with you," he prayed aloud to God, "Lord, let me find the heart to which my heart can respond!"

Next day the children were puzzled to know what could have put the teacher in such good humor. During recess he sent Mat's Johnnie to the Eagle to say that they need not send him his dinner, as he was coming there to eat it.

It was unfortunate that, in approaching the life that surrounded him, his thoughts were pitched in such an elevated key. Though he had wit enough to refrain from communicating these flights of imagination to others, he could not avoid seeing and hearing many things which came into the most jarring discord with them.

As he entered the inn, Babbett was in the midst of an animated conversation with another woman. "They brought your old man home nasty, didn't they?" she was saying: "he had the awfullest brick in his hat. Well, if I'd seen them pour brandy into his beer, as they say they did, I'd 'a' sent 'em flying."

"Yes," returned the woman: "he was in a shocking way,--just like a sack of potatoes."

"And they say you thanked them so smartly. What did you say? They were laughing so, I thought they would never get over it."

"Well, I said, says I, 'Thank you, men: God reward you!' Then they asked, 'What for?' So I said, says I, 'Don't you always thank a man when he brings you a sausage?' says I; 'and why shouldn't I thank you,' says I, 'for bringing me a whole hog?' says I."

On hearing this, the teacher laid down his knife and fork: but, soon resuming them, he reflected that, after all, necessity and passion were the only true sources of wit and humor.

Whenever his feelings were outraged in this manner, he now fell back, not upon mother Nature, but upon Grandmother Maurita, who gave him many explanations on the manners and customs of the people. Many people took it into their heads that the old woman had bewitched the schoolmaster. Far from it. Much as he delighted to hold converse with her simple, well-meaning heart, it would have been much more correct to have accused Hedwig of some incantation, although the teacher had only seen her once and had never exchanged a word with her. "Ha' ye gude counsel, grandmammy?" These words he repeated to himself again and again. Though uttered in the harsh mountain dialect, even this seemed to have acquired a grace and loveliness from the lips it passed.

Yet he was far from yielding to this enchantment without summoning to his aid all the force of his former resolves. To fall in love with a peasant-girl! But, as usual, love was fertile in excuses. "She is certainly the image of her grandmother, only fresher and lovelier, and illuminated by the sun of the present time. 'Ha' ye gude counsel, grandmammy?'"

One evening, as he was sitting by the old woman's side, upon the same bench, the girl came home from the field with a sickle in her hand: her cheeks were flushed,--perhaps from exercise: she carried something carefully in her apron. Stepping up to her grandmother, she offered her some blackberries covered with hazel-leaves.

"Don't you know the way to do, Hedwig?" said her grandmother: "you must wait on the stranger first."

"Help yourself, Mr. Teacher," said the girl, looking up without hesitation. The teacher took one, blushing.

"Eat some yourself," said her grandmother.

"No, thank you: just help yourselves: I hope they'll do you good."

"Where did you pick them?" asked her grandmother.

"In the gully by the side of our field: you know where the bush is:" said the girl, and went into the house.

The bush which had formed the subject of the teacher's first sketch was the same from which Hedwig now brought him the ripened fruit.

Hedwig soon returned, still followed by the white hen.

"Where are you going so fast, Miss Hedwig?" asked the teacher: "won't you stop and talk with us a little?"

"No, thank you: I'll go and see the old teacher a little before supper."

"If you have no objection, I'll go with you," said our friend, and did so without waiting for an answer.

"Do you see the old teacher often?"

"Oh, yes: he's a cousin of mine: his wife was my grandmother's sister."

"Was she? Why, I'm delighted to hear it."

"Why? Did you know my grandaunt?"

"No, I was only thinking----"

On entering the old teacher's garden, Hedwig closed the gate hastily behind her: the white hen, thus excluded, posted herself before it like a sentinel.

"What makes that hen run after you so?" asked the teacher. "That's something extraordinary."

Hedwig pulled at her apron in great embarrassment.

"Are you not permitted to tell me?" persisted the teacher.

"Oh, yes, I can, but---- You mustn't laugh at me, and must promise not to tell anybody: they would tease me about it if it was to become known."

He seized her hand and said, quickly, "I promise you most solemnly." It seemed a pity to let the hand go at once, and he retained it, while she went on, looking down,--

"I--I--I hatched the egg in my bosom. The cluck was scared away and left all the eggs; and I held this one egg against the sun, and saw there was a little head in it, and so I took it. You mustn't laugh at me, but when the little chick came out I was so glad I didn't know what to do. I made it a bed of feathers, and chewed bread and fed it; and the very next day it ran about the table. Nobody knows a word of it except my grandmother. The hen is so fond of me now that when I go into the field I must lock it up to keep it from running after me. You won't laugh at me, will you?"

"Certainly not," said the teacher. He tried to keep her hand as they walked on, but soon found reason to curse the economy of the old teacher, who had left so little room for the path that it was impossible for two to walk abreast.

His indignation grew still greater when the old teacher came to meet them with a louder laugh than usual, and cried, "Do you know each other already? Ah, Hedwig, didn't I always tell you that you must marry a schoolmaster?"

With a great effort he restrained himself from giving vent to the mortification caused by this rude dallying with the first budding of so delicate a flower. To his astonishment, Hedwig began, as if nothing had been said:--"Cousin, you must cut your summer-barley in the mallet-fields to-morrow: it's dead ripe, and will fall down if you don't take care."

But little was spoken. Hedwig appeared to be fatigued, and seated herself on a bench under a tree. The men conversed, our friend regarding Hedwig all the while with such intensity that she passed her apron several times across her face, fearing that she had blackened it in the kitchen while putting the potatoes over the fire. But our friend's attention was directed to very different matters. He perceived for the first time a slight cast in Hedwig's left eye: the effect was by no means unpleasant, but gave the face an interesting air of shyness which suited very well the style of the features. A fine nose of regular form, a very small mouth with cherry lips, round, delicately-glowing cheeks,--all were enough to arrest the delighted gaze of a young man of twenty-five. At last, after having given a number of wry answers, he became aware that it was time to go. He took leave, and Hedwig said, "Good-night, Mr. Teacher."

"Sha'n't I have a shake of the hand for good-night?"

Hedwig quickly put both her hands behind her back.

"In our parts we shake hands without asking: ha, ha!" said the old teacher.

At this hint our friend whisked round the tree to catch Hedwig's hand; but she drew them quickly before her. Not having the courage to pass his arms round her, he ran forward and backward around the tree, until he stumbled and fell down at Hedwig's feet. His head fell into her lap and on her hand, and he hastily pressed a warm kiss upon it and called her his in spirit. Finding him in no haste to get up, Hedwig raised his head, her hands covering his cheeks, and said, looking around in great confusion, "Get up: you haven't hurt yourself, I hope? See: this comes of such tricks: you mustn't learn them from my cousin here."

As he rose, Hedwig bent down to brush his knees with her apron; but this the teacher would not permit: his heart beat quickly at the sight of this humble modesty. He said "Goodnight" again; and Hedwig looked down, but no longer refused her hand.

He walked homeward without feeling the ground beneath his feet: a feeling of inexpressible power coursed through his veins, and he smiled so triumphantly on all he met that they stared and stood still to look after him.

But the mind of man is changeful; and when the teacher had reached his home he lapsed into cruel self-accusation. "I have suffered myself to be carried away by a sudden passion," he said. "Is this my firmness? I have committed myself,--thrown myself away upon a peasant-girl. No, no the majesty of a noble soul breathes from those lineaments."

Various other thoughts occurred to him. He knew something of the life of the villagers now; and, late in the evening, he wrote into his pocket-hook, "The silver cross upon her bosom is to me a symbol of sanctity and purity."

At home Hedwig had not eaten a morsel of supper, and her people scolded her for having overworked herself,--probably by having assisted the old teacher in the garden before supper. She protested the contrary, but made haste to join her grandmother, in whose room she slept.

Long after prayers, hearing her grandmother cough, and seeing that she was still awake, she said, "Grandmother, what does it mean to kiss one's hand?"

"Why, that one likes the hand."

"Nothing else?"

"No."

After some time, Hedwig again said, "Grandmother."

"What is it?"

"I wanted to ask you something; but I forgot what it was."

"Well, then, go to sleep, because you're tired: if it was something good, to-morrow will be time enough: you'll think of it again."

But Hedwig tossed about without sleeping. She persuaded herself that she could not sleep because she had lost her appetite; so she forced herself to eat a piece of bread with which she had provided herself.

Meantime the teacher had also made up his mind. At first he thought of probing himself and his affection, and of not seeing Hedwig for some time; but the more rational alternative prevailed, and he determined to see her often and study her mind and character as closely as possible.

Next day he called upon his old colleague and invited him out for a walk: he saw that, if only on Hedwig's account, he must cultivate this acquaintance. The old man never walked out, as his gardening afforded him all the exercise he needed; but our friend's invitation appeared to him an honor not to be refused.

It was long before a subject of conversation could be presented to the old man's mind which did not hang fire. His interest in every thing invariably went out as soon as his pipe,--for which he struck fire every five minutes. The young man did not wish to begin with Hedwig, but rather to study a little of the niece's character by the uncle's.

"Do you read much now?" he inquired.

"Nothing at all, scarcely. What would I make by it if I did? I've got my pension."

"Yes," replied the young man; "but we don't improve our minds only to make our money with, but to attain a more elevated mental existence,--to study deeper and understand more clearly. Every thing on earth--and intellectual life above all things--must first be its own purpose----"

The old gentleman stopped to light his pipe with great composure, and our friend paused in the midst of an exposition which had but recently presented itself to his own mind. They walked side by side without speaking for a time, until the younger began again:--"But you still practise your music, don't you?"

"I should think so. I sometimes fiddle for half a night at a time. I need no light, I don't damage my eyes, and I don't miss anybody's conversation."

"And you try to perfect yourself in it as far as you can?"

"Why not? Of course."

"And yet you don't make any thing by it."

The old man looked at him in astonishment. Our friend went on:--"Just as your perfection in music gives you pleasure without making you richer, so, methinks, it ought to be the case with reading and study. But in this respect many people are just like those who neglect their dress and personal appearance the moment they have no special interest in attracting some particular person. The other day I heard a young fellow scold a young married woman for her slatternly attire. 'Oh,' said she, 'where's the difference now? I'm bought and sold, and my old man must have me for better or for worse.' As if there was merely an external object in dressing ourselves neatly and it was not required for our own sakes, to preserve our self-respect. This is just the view many people take of education: they carry it on to subserve an external purpose, and the moment this incentive fails they neglect it.

"But, if we have a proper respect for our intellectual selves, we should keep them clean and neat, as we do our persons, and seek to bring out all their faculties to the greatest perfection attainable."

The young man suddenly perceived that he had been soliloquizing aloud, instead of keeping up the conversation; but the indifference exhibited by his companion dispelled every fear of having given him offence. With a sigh it occurred to him, for the hundredth time, how wearisome is the effort to give currency to any thoughts of a more general and elevated nature. "If the old teacher is so thick-skinned, what is to be expected of the farmers?" thought he.

After another pause, our friend began once more:--"Don't you think people are much more good and pious nowadays, than they were in the old times?"

"Pious? Devil take it! we weren't so bad in the old times either, only we didn't make such a fuss about it: too little and too much is lame without a crutch: ha, ha!"

Another long silence ensued, at the end of which the young man made a lucky move in asking, "How was it about music in old times?"

A light glistened in the old man's eyes: he held the steel and the tinder in his hand unused, and said, "It's all tooting nowadays. I was sub-organist in the Freiburg Cathedral for two years and a half. That's an organ, let me tell you. I heard the Abbé Vogler: there can't be any thing finer in heaven than his music was.

"I've played at many a harvest-home, too.

"In old times they had stringed instruments principally, and harps and cymbals. Now it's all wind,--big trumpets, little trumpets, and valve-trumpets, all blowing and noise. And what can a musician make at a harvest-home? Three men used to be plenty: now they want six or seven. It used to be small room, small bass, and big pay: now it's big room, double-bass, and half-pay.

"I once travelled through the Schaibach Valley with two comrades; and the thalers seemed to fly into our pockets as if they had wings. Once two villages almost exterminated each other because both wanted me to play at harvest-home the same day."

The old gentleman now passed on to one of his favorite stories of how a village had been so enchanted with his performance on the violin that they had made him their schoolmaster: the Government undertook to install another with dragoons, but the village rebelled and he kept his office.

"Didn't it injure your standing as a teacher to play at the harvest-homes?"

"Not a bit. I've done it more than fifty times in this village, and you won't see a man in it but takes off his cap when he meets me in the street."

The old man's eloquence continued to flow until they had returned to the garden. Our friend waited a long time, in the hope of seeing Hedwig, but in vain. Thus his first design was accomplished in spite of himself: he did not see Hedwig for a long, long time,--to wit, for full forty-eight hours.

Next day, as he strode alone through the fields, he saw Buchmaier driving a horse, which drew a sort of roller.

"Busy, squire?" asked the teacher: he had learned some of the customary phrases by this time.

"A little," answered Buchmaier, and drove his horse to the end of the field, where he halted.

"Is that the sorrel you were breaking in the day I came here?"

"Yes, that's him. I'm glad to see that you remember it: I thought you had nothing in your head but your books.

"You see, I've had a queer time with this here horse. My ploughman wanted to break him into double harness right-away, and I gave in to him; but it wouldn't do, nohow. These colts, the first time they get harness on 'em, work themselves to death, and pull, and pull, and don't do any good after all: if they pull hard and get their side of the swingle-tree forward, the other horse don't know what to make of it and just lumbers along anyhow. But if you have 'em in single harness you can make 'em steady and not worry themselves to death for nothing. When they can work each by himself, they soon learn to work in a team, and you can tell much better how strong you want the other horse to be."

The teacher derived a number of morals from this speech; but all he said aloud was, "It's just the same thing with men: they must learn to work alone first, and then they are able to help each other."

"That's what I never thought of; but I guess you're right."

"Is that the new sowing-machine? What are you sowing?"

"Rapeseed."

"Do you find the machine better than the old way of sowing?"

"Yes, it's more even; but it won't do for any but large fields. Small patches are better sown with the hand."

"I must confess, I find something particularly attractive in the act of sowing with the hand: it is significant that the seed should first rest immediately in the hand of man and then fly through the air to sink into the earth. Don't you think so too?"

"Maybe so; but it just comes to my mind that you can't say the sower's rhyme very well with the machine. Well, you must think it."

"What rhyme?"

"Farmers' boys used to be taught to say, whenever they threw out a handful of seed,--

"'I sow the seed:
God give it speed
For me and those in need!'"

"Such a rhyme ought never to go out of use."

"Yes; as I was saying, you can think it, or even say it, with the machine: it's a useful invention, anyhow."

"Is it easy to introduce these new inventions?"

"No. The first time I put my oxen each into his own yoke the whole village ran after me. And when I brought this contrivance from the agricultural fair and went out into the field with it, the people all thought I'd gone crazy."

"What a pity it is that the common people are so slow to understand the value of these improvements!"

"Whoa, Tom! whoa!" cried Buchmaier, as his horse began to paw the ground impatiently: then, holding the bridle more firmly, he went on:--"That isn't a pity at all, Mr. Teacher: on the contrary, that's a very good thing. Believe me, if the farmers weren't so headstrong, and were to go to work every year to try all the machines that learned men invent for them, we'd have to starve many a year. Whoa, Tom! You must study agricultural matters a little: I can lend you a book or two."

"I'll come to see you about it; I see your horse won't stand still any more. Good luck to your labor."

"Good-bye, sir," said Buchmaier, smiling at the parting salutation.

The teacher turned to go, and Buchmaier went on with his work. But hardly had the latter walked a few yards, before he started on hearing Buchmaier whistle the "Lauterbacher." He was inclined to suspect an insult, but checked himself, saying, "The man certainly means no harm." And he was quite right, for not only did the man mean no harm, but he meant nothing whatever: he whistled without knowing what.

In a ravine, after ascertaining that he was unperceived, the teacher wrote in his pocket-book,--"The steady and almost immovable power of the people's character and spirit is a sacred power of nature: it forms the centre of gravity of human life,--I might say, the *vis inertiæ* of all institutions.

"What a hapless vacillation would befall us if every movement in politics, religion, or social economy were to seize at a moment's warning upon the whole community! Only that which has ceased to vibrate, and attained a calm, steady course of progress, is fitted to enter here: this is the great ocean in which the force of rivers is lost.

"I will respect the way of thinking of these people, even when I differ from them; but I will endeavor----"

What he meant to endeavor remained unwritten. But he had been fortunate in detecting features of interest in the affairs of village life.

It was some days before he again found an opportunity to converse with Hedwig. He saw her from her grandmother's seat; but she appeared to be very busy, and hurried by with very brief words of recognition. Indeed, she almost seemed to avoid him.

Love of the peasant-girl was strong within him, but at the same time the people's life, which had broken in upon his vision, occupied much of his thoughts and feelings. He often walked about as if in a dream; and yet he had never understood the realities of life so well as now.

The College Chap also gave him much trouble and vexation. The latter was curious to know what his grandmother and the teacher could have found to converse about. He joined them more than once, and always came down with a rude joke whenever a vein of deeper sentiment was touched.

When the teacher inquired, "Grandmother, do you never go to church now?" the College Chap quickly interposed, "Perhaps you remember who built the church, grandmother: the teacher would like to know; but he says he isn't going to run away with it."

"Be quiet, you!" replied his grandmother: "if you were good for any thing you'd be master in the church now, and parson." Turning to the teacher, she went on:--"It's five years since I was in church last: but on Sunday I can hear by the bells when the host is being shown, and when they carry it around; and then I say the litany by myself. Twice a year the parson comes and gives me the sacrament: he's a dear, good man, our pastor, and often comes to see me besides."

"Don't you think, Mr. Teacher," began the College Chap, "that my grandmother would make an abbess *comme il faut*?"

On hearing herself the subject of conversation in a foreign language, the poor old lady looked from one of the speakers to the other in astonishment not unmingled with fear.

"Certainly," said the teacher; "but, even so, I think she can be just as pious and just as happy as if she were an abbess."

"Do you see, grandmother?" exclaimed the College Chap, in triumph: "the teacher says, too, that parsons are not a whit better than other folks."

"Is that true?" said the old woman, sadly.

"What I mean is," replied the teacher, "that all men can go to heaven; but a clerical man who is as he should be, and labors diligently for the welfare of souls, occupies a higher grade."

"I think so too," assented the old woman. The perspiration was gathering on the poor teacher's forehead; but the relentless student began again:--"Isn't it your opinion, Mr. Teacher, that clergymen ought to marry?"

"It is the canon of the Church that they must remain single; and any one who takes orders with a perfect understanding of his own actions must obey the law."

"I think so too," said the old lady, with great vehemence: "those that want to get married are devils of the flesh, and clergymen must be spiritual and not carnal. I'll tell you what: don't speak to him any more at all; don't let him spoil your good heart. He has his wicked day, and he isn't as bad neither as he makes himself out to be."

Finding his grandmother proof against all assaults, the College Chap went away in an ill humor. The teacher also took his leave: again had a fine and tender relationship been rudely jarred. Not till he reached his dwelling did he succeed in conquering his depression and steeling himself against these unavoidable accidents.

On Sunday he at last found another opportunity to converse with Hedwig. He found her sitting with the old schoolmaster in his garden. They did not appear to have spoken much together.

After a few customary salutations, the teacher began:--"How fine and elevated a thing it is that the seventh day is hallowed by religion and kept clear of labor! If things were otherwise, people would die of over-work. If, for instance, in the heat of midsummer harvesters were to work day by day without intermission until all was gathered in, no one could endure it."

At first Hedwig and the old man listened in surprise; but soon Hedwig said, "Were you here already when the parson allowed us to turn the hay on Sunday in haying-time, because it rained so long and the hay might have been spoiled? I was out in the field too, but it seemed as if every pitchforkful was as heavy again as it ought to be. I felt as if somebody was holding my arm; and all next day, and all next week, the world was like upside-down, and it was as if there hadn't been a Sunday for a whole year."

The teacher looked at Hedwig with beaming eyes. There was her grandmother to the life. Turning to the old man, he said, "You must remember the time when they introduced the decades into France?"

"Ducats, do you mean? why, they come from Italy."

"I mean decades. They ordained that people should rest every tenth day, instead of every seventh. Then everybody fell sick also. The number seven is repeated in a mysterious manner throughout the whole course of nature, and must not be arbitrarily removed."

"Why, they must have been crazy! A Sunday every ten days! ha, ha!" said the old man.

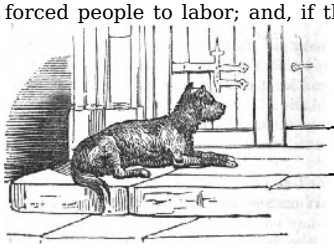
"Do you know the story of the lord who is hewn in stone in our church here, with the dog?" asked Hedwig.

"No: tell it."

"He was one of those fellows, too, that didn't keep holy the Sunday. He was a lord----"

"Lord of Isenburg and Nordstetten," explained her grand-uncle.

"Yes," continued Hedwig: "at Isenburg you can just see a wall or two of his castle. He never cared for Sundays or holidays, and loved nothing in the world but his dog, that was as big and as savage as a wolf. On Sundays and holidays he forced people to labor; and, if they didn't work willingly, the dog would fly at them of his own accord and almost tear them to pieces; and then the lord would laugh: and he called the dog Sunday. He never went to church but once,--when his daughter was married. He wanted to take his dog Sunday to church with him, but the dog wouldn't go: he laid himself down on the steps till his lord came out again. As he came out, he stumbled over the dog and fell down stone-dead; and his daughter died too: and so now they're both chiselled in stone in the church, and the dog beside them. They say the dog was the devil, and the lord had sold him his soul."



The teacher undertook to show that this myth was probably suggested by the sight of the monument, the origin of which had been forgotten; that the feudal proprietors were fond of being pictured with crests and symbols, and so on: but he found little favor with his hearers.

No one was disposed to continue the conversation. Hedwig made a little hole in the sand with her foot, and the teacher discovered for the first time how small it was.

"Do you read on Sunday, sometimes?" he said, looking straight before him. No one answering, he looked at Hedwig, who then replied, "No: we make the time pass without it."

"How?"

"Why, how can you ask? We talk, and we sing, and we take a walk."

"What do you talk about?"

"Well," she cried, laughing gayly, "to the end of my days I wouldn't have expected to be asked such a question! We haven't much trouble about that: have we, uncle? My playmate, Buchmaier's Agnes, will be here directly, and then you'll stop asking what we talk about: she knows enough for a cow."

"But haven't you ever read any thing?"

"Oh, yes,--the hymn-book and the Bible-stories."

"Nothing else?"

"And the Flower-Basket, and Rosa of Tannenburg."

"And what else?"

"And Rinaldo Rinaldini. Now you know all," said the girl, brushing off her apron with her hands, as if she had poured out her entire stock of erudition at the teacher's feet.

"What did you like best?"

"Rinaldo Rinaldini. What a pity it is he was a robber!"

"I will bring you some books with much prettier stories in them."

"I'd rather you'd tell us one; but it must be grizzly and awful. Wait till Agnes comes: she does like to hear them so

much."

At this moment a boy came to tell the old teacher that Beck's Conrad had just received a new waltz, and that he must come with his violin to play it. He rose quickly, wished the visitors "pleasant conversation," and went away.

The teacher's heart trembled on finding himself alone with Hedwig: he had not the courage to look up. At last he said, almost to himself, "What a good old man he is!"

"Yes," said Hedwig; "and you must learn to know him. You must not be touchy with him: he's a little short and cross to all teachers, because he was put out of office, and so he seems to think every teacher that comes here after him is to blame for it; and yet how can they help it, when the consistory sends them? He is old, you see; and we must be patient with old folks."

The teacher grasped her hand and looked tenderly into her eyes: this loving appreciation of another's feelings won his heart. Suddenly a dead bird fell at their feet. They started. Hedwig soon bent down and picked up the bird.

"He is quite warm yet," said she. "The poor little thing was sick, and nobody could help it: it's only a lark; but still it's a living thing."

"One is tempted to think," said the teacher, "that a bird that always mounts heavenward, singing, must fall straight into heaven when it dies, it soars so freely over the earth; and yet, at death's approach, every thing that rose out of the earth must sink into it again."

Hedwig opened her eyes at this speech, which pleased her greatly, though she did not quite understand it. After a pause, she said, "Isn't it too bad that his wife or his children don't seem to care a bit about him, but just let him fall down and die? but maybe they don't know he's dead."

"Animals, like children," said the teacher, "do not understand death, because they never reflect upon life: they see them both without knowing what they see."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Hedwig.

"I think so," replied the teacher. Hedwig did not continue the subject, as it was not her custom to follow up any idea to its source. But the teacher said to himself, "Here is a mind eminently fitted for cultivation and the germ of fresh and vigorous thought." Taking the bird out of her hand, he said, "This denizen of the free air should not be buried in the gloomy soil. I would fasten him to this tree, so that in death he may return to his native element."

"No, that won't do: there's an owl nailed against Buchmaier's barn, and I feel like taking it down every time I look at it."

So they buried the bird together. The teacher, having been so fortunate in his discoveries, desired to see how far Hedwig would be accessible to a more refined culture.

"You talk so sensibly," he began, "that it is a pity you should speak this harsh and unpleasant farmers' German, You could surely talk like me if you chose; and it would become you so much better."

"I'd be ashamed of myself to talk any other way; and, besides, everybody understands me."

"Oh, yes: but, if good is good, better is better. In what language do you pray?"

"Oh, that's quite another thing! I pray just as it's in the book."

"But you ought to talk with men in the same language in which you talk with God."

"I can't do that, and I won't do it. Why, I wouldn't have any thing to say if I had to be thinking all the time how it ought to be said. I'd be ashamed of myself. No, Mr. Teacher: I'll lay your words on silken cushions, but this won't do."

"Don't always say Mr. Teacher: call me by my name."

"That can't be, again; that won't do, you see."

"Why won't it?"

"Because it won't."

"But there must be some reason for it."

"Why, I don't know what your name is."

"Adolphe Lederer."

"Well, then, Mr. Lederer."

"No; I want you to call me Adolphe."

"Oh, now, don't. What would the folks say?"

"That we love each other," said the teacher, pressing her hand to his heart. "Don't you love me?"

Hedwig bent down and plucked a pink from its stem. The garden-gate opened, and Buchmaier's Agnes came in.

"Good gracious! I'm so glad I'm out!" cried she. "Good-day, Mr. Teacher. Hedwig, just be glad you needn't go into Bible-class any more. Mr. Teacher, you ought to manage so that big girls like us needn't go any more. It wouldn't do me much good, to-be-sure, for I'm coming out in fall."

"Give me the pink," said the teacher to Hedwig, in a tone of gentle entreaty. Blushing, she complied, and he pressed the symbol of requited affection to his lips.

"You'll catch it," said Agnes, "when old Ha ha sees that you've plucked one of his flowers: well, for good luck, he's sitting with Beck and playing the new waltz. Won't we dance it at harvest-home? You dance, I hope, Mr. Teacher?"

"A little, but I'm very much out of practice."

"Practice makes perfect:--loldeloleroldelol!" chirped Agnes as she skipped about the garden. "What are you making faces at, Hedwig? Come." She dragged Hedwig away irresistibly, but with so much awkwardness that they trod into a bed. Agnes loosened the earth, singing, and then said, "Come, let's get out of this garden, where there isn't room to swing a cat; the other girls are all out in the Cherry Copse, and he's been waiting for us this long time, I'll warrant."

"Who?" asked the teacher.

"Why, he," replied Agnes: "if you come along you may see him for nothing: we're good enough for you to go with us, a'n't we?"

The teacher took the hand of Agnes, and, holding it as if it had been Hedwig's, he went out into the fields with the two girls. At the cross-roads, where you turn up to the "Daberwarren," on a hemp-crate, they found a man of powerful frame, tall and straight as a fir, in whom the teacher recognised Buchmaier's ploughman. On seeing them approach, he sprang to his feet and stood rooted to the ground by some strange misgiving; but when Agnes walked up to him his brow relaxed, and he looked bright and cheerful. The teacher saluted Thaddie--such was his name--with great warmth, and the two couples walked on cosily together.

To inspire Thaddie with confidence, the teacher asked a host of questions about the sorrel, and how he took to double harness.

Thus had come to pass what, a little while before, the teacher would never have dreamed of: his beloved was a peasant-girl, and his comrade a ploughman.

Thaddie and Agnes went before, and the teacher, hand-in-hand with Hedwig, followed, chatting gayly. The teacher was now firmly convinced that there is such a thing as conversing a great deal even without having read books.

Near the "Cat's Well," from which the nurses are said to fetch little children when they are born, the party seated themselves upon a bank and sang. Hedwig had a beautiful contralto voice, and Thaddie sang a good accompaniment. The teacher greatly regretted his limited knowledge of the songs of the people: his musical education, however, enabled him readily to catch the simple melodies and to improvise a tolerable bass. With beaming eyes, Hedwig nodded her approbation. Often he was brought to a sudden pause by an unexpected turn in the air, introduced for the purpose of bridging a gap in the story or of smoothing the ruggedness of the rhythm. At such times Hedwig's encouraging look would say, "Sing on, if it does go wrong a little."

Thus he united his voice to those of the villagers. He had come so far that, where he furnished nothing but the tune, the peasants supplied the words and the meaning:--

"I mow by the Neckar,
  I mow by the Rhine;
My sweetheart is peevish,
  My sweetheart is mine.
"What use is my mowing?
  My sickle's not free;
What use is my sweetheart?
  She won't stay with me.
"And mowing by Neckar,
  And mowing by Rhine,
I'll throw in the ring that
  She gave me for mine.
"The ring in the water
  Is nabb'd by the fish;
The fish shall be brought to
  The king in a dish.
"The king he shall wonder
  Whose ring it might be;
Then out speaks my sweetheart:--
  'It belongeth to me.'
"Up hill and down valley
  My sweetheart shall spring;
And find me a-mowing
  And give me the ring.
"You may mow by the Neckar,
  Or mow by the Rhine,
If you throw in the ring that
  I gave you of mine."

After a while, Thaddie drew Agnes closer to him, and they sang:--

"Lassie, crowd, crowd, crowd;
  Let me sit close beside you:
I love you very much,
  I can abide you.
But for what folks say
You'd be my love to-day;
If the folks were all gone
You and I'd be one.
  Lassie, crowd, &c.
"Lassie, look, look, look
  Down my black eyes, and see them
Dance in the light
  The sight of you does give them.
Look, look in them deep:
Your likeness they must keep;
Here you must stay,
And never go away.
  Lassie, look, &c.
"Lassie, you, you, you

Must take upon your finger
The wedding-ring:
And may it linger, linger!
If I can't do so,
To the wars I'll go;
If you I can't have,
All the world is my grave.
Lassie, you," &c.

Many other songs they sang,--mostly sad ones, though the singers were in bounding spirits. As the spring flowed on at their feet and meandered through the fields, so the song-fountain in them appeared inexhaustible.

The teacher found himself in a world unknown to him before. Though he had heard and experienced something of the rich tenderness of the rude national ditties of Germany, he had tasted them as we eat the wild berries of the wood on a well-served table: we prefer them to the products of the greenhouse, yet sweeten them with sugar, and, perhaps, wash them down with wine. Here he plucked them fresh from the bush, and ate them not upon a piled saucer, but singly, as they left the stems. Their deep, untranslatable force and simplicity were revealed to him in all its glory: he felt how much his individual spirit was allied to that of the nation, and saw its lovely representative sitting by his side. He began to aspire to the priesthood of this marvellous spirit.

On returning to Hedwig's house and meeting her grandmother still at the door, he seized the hand of his beloved and pressed it to his heart, saying, "Not in bitter toil shall you lift these hands for me, but to give blessings, as becomes them."

Unable to say more, he walked quickly away.

The village gossips that evening were occupied with nothing but the fact that the new teacher went to see Johnnie's Hedwig.

Our friend, who had been so fond of seclusion, now found it impossible to spend fifteen minutes by himself after school-hours, in his house or out of it. Of all the books in his library, not one seemed to chime in with his frame of mind: and when he undertook to write into his note-book his lucubrations appeared so bare and profitless that he crossed them out immediately.

In the fields he never could collect his thoughts sufficiently to make sketches: he talked with every one he met. The people were friendly; for his open soul beamed out of his eyes. Frequently he would stand by them as they worked, in dreamy silence: he was reluctant to leave them and return to the solitary dignity which a little earlier he had thought indispensable.

Once he saw Hedwig cutting grain in the field, and hastened toward her. But he did not long remain there: it was insufferable to find himself the only idler among so many hard workers; and yet he was entirely unskilled in field-work, and knew what a sorry figure he should have made had he attempted it. Hedwig had gained in his eyes by having been seen at work. "Hosts and manna should be baked from the ears that she has cut," he said to himself, in turning away.

He was often absent-minded when conversing with her grandmother, and it was only when the old lady spoke of her parents and grandparents that she riveted his attention. It was delightful to climb up this family tree into the dim regions of the past. Her grandfather had fought in the wars of Prince Eugene against the Turks: and she had many of his soldier's stories by heart. At times also, without repining, she would predict that next winter she would meet all her ancestors again. It was easy to divert her mind from such reflections. He loved to make her talk of Hedwig's childhood, of the early loss of her mother, and of how she was distressed to find that her doll could not shut its eyes at night, and pasted paper over them. When the old woman spoke in this strain, her eyes and those of the listener beamed in the same brightness, like two neighbor-billows lit up by one moonbeam.

Hedwig is not mentioned in his note-book. The following passage, however, may have been suggested by the reminiscences of her aged relative:--

"We are prone to think that with a catechism of pure reason promulgated among the people it would be easy to convert them; but at every step we find ourselves upon the holy ground of history, and compelled to trace the footsteps of the past. Alas that our German history is so torn and disjointed! where shall we begin?"

He frequently called on Buchmaier also, and heard with delight the solid views, albeit at times a little roughly worded, of the squire. But the more intimate he became at his house the less kindly did he find himself received at Johnnie's. Even Hedwig began to avoid him, and her salutations became more and more shy and timid.

One evening Hedwig came to Agnes, weeping, and said, "Only think! that wild brother of mine won't allow it."

"What?"

"Why, the teacher to come and see me. He says if I am seen once more with the Lauterbacher he'll beat me and him to a jelly: you know he sulks because the teacher is friends with your father."

"Why, that is too bad! What shall we do?"

"Tell the teacher when he comes that he mustn't be angry: but he mustn't come to our house so much. I can't help it; I can't talk to him. *I* wouldn't mind it, if my brother was ever so wicked to *me*, but he might insult him somewhere, where everybody saw it; and if he did that I'd cry my eyes out."

"Make yourself easy," replied Agnes: "I won't tell him a word of all that, anyhow."

"Why not?"

"Why not, you crazy pigeon? Because I don't want him to think that the Nordstetten girls come running up to you the minute you whistle to 'em."

"He won't think any thing of the kind."

"But I a'n't a-going to run the risk of it. I won't say a word about you unless he begins. Let me fix it: I'll get him round. Jilly wo gee! And when he's pretty well buttered up I'll just slither him down a little, and say, 'Mayhap I might manage to get Hedwig to our house of a Sunday.' I'll see if the pears come off by shaking."

"Well, you may do as you like: you're your own mistress. But one thing I beg of you, don't worry him: you see, he's one of that kind of men that have a deal of thought about every thing; I've found that out well enough; so he might be sorry, and lose his sleep."

"Why, who told you all that?"

"Oh, I only think he does, and I do so myself sometimes."

"Well, never mind: I won't do him any damage. These teachers are always examining somebody else, and now I'd just like to see whether he's smart or not."

"He is smart: I can tell you he is!"

"Well, if he says his lesson well, may I kiss him?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then don't look so solemn: love must be merry and not mawkish. Last Sunday the parson asked, 'How must we love God?' So I said, right out, 'Merrily.' He smiled at that, and took a pinch of snuff, and said, 'That's right,'--you know that's what he says to any thing, if it isn't too awful stupid: but, after he has said so, he explains it, and then it turns out to be something else; and he went on to explain that we must love God as a child loves its father, with veneration; and then I said some children loved their fathers merrily, and then he laughed ever so much, and opened his snuff-box wrong side up, and all the snuff fell on the floor, and then we all laughed:--

'Always a little merry,
And always a little glad.'"

Thus singing, she wound up her exhortation and dragged Hedwig out into the garden, where she gathered up the clothes on the grass-plot, to bring them into the house, telling her that they were intended as a portion of her outfit.

Next evening the teacher came to Buchmaier's house, as usual; but Agnes forgot all her intended raillery when the first mention of Hedwig's name brought a deep shade to his brow, and he frankly told her all his troubles. She now explained to him the state of parties in the commune. The College Chap, having married the old squire's daughter, of course belonged to his party, and therefore regarded any associate of Buchmaier's as his sworn foe; and his animosity was still further increased by the election of Mat to the committee of citizens, against himself,--which he ascribed to Buchmaier's efforts.

"Alack-a-day!" said Agnes, in conclusion, "I had it all cut-and-dry about going to the harvest-home together. But never mind: the College Chap isn't smart enough to get ahead of me, and Thaddie must help us make plans, too."

Against this the teacher protested, to Agnes' great surprise. He obtained her promise, however, to invite Hedwig to come there, and even to feign sickness as a pretext, and to remain in-doors all day.

Late in the evening the teacher wrote into his notebook,--

"How easy is it to preserve the whiteness of our souls while we shut ourselves out from human intercourse and construct our own fabric of things and thoughts! But the moment we approach reality every step is fraught with dangers, and we find ourselves engulfed in all the quarrels of faction and of party-strife. I longed to taste the peaceful joys of these villagers; and here I am in the midst of their contentions, with which the every affections of my heart are intertwined."

Agnes kept her word. The stolen interview of the lovers broke down the last barrier of reserve between them. Denial had lost all pretext, now that they met in secret.

After an interchange of condolence, Hedwig was the first to take a more cheerful view of the subject.

"Is it true," she asked, "that you are from Lauterbach?"

"Yes."

"Why did you want to deny it, then? There's no shame in it, I'm sure."

"I never denied it.

"Well, isn't it a shame? how people tell stories! They all said that the reason you were by yourself so much, running about like a poor, frightened little chick, was that you were afraid they'd tease you about being from Lauterbach. Why, if you were from Tripstrill you'd be----"

"What would I be?"

He looked at her so penetratingly that she held her hands over his eyes; but he kissed her and strained her to his heart. "Dearest! dearest!" he cried; "it shall, it must, all be well."

"Don't do so," said Hedwig, but without trying to extricate herself: so he kissed her again. "Now talk to me, and tell me something. What have you been doing? You don't talk a word."

The teacher pressed her hand to his lips, as if to say that that was the only language he was capable of uttering. So Hedwig seemed to understand him, for she said, "No: you must talk to me; I love to hear you talk so much; and my grandmother always says you have such beautiful words,--my grandmother thinks so much of you."

Something like moisture must have been glistening in the teacher's eyes; for she went on:--"Never mind: there's nothing lost yet; and Constantine had better look out, or he'll find out in some way he don't like that I'm my own mistress."

Though opposed to tears in theory, she was fast lapsing into the practice. Rallying herself, "Come," said she; "let's think of nothing but the present. If it's God's will we should have each other, it'll come so: no doubt about it. I always think it would have been too good for this world if things had gone all right from the very first. I don't know how it is, but that Sunday when I came round the corner of the house and found you sitting there with grandmother, it seemed as if a fiery hand was passing across my face, or as if--I can't tell how, I'm sure."

"Yes; I loved you from that moment."

"Mustn't talk of it!" cried she, looking into her lover's face with beaming eyes. As a true peasant-girl, the more she loved, the more dread had she to hear love mentioned. "Talk of something else." Nevertheless, she was well content to sit in perfect silence, with her hand in his; while nothing was to be heard but the cooing of the turtle-doves in their cote and the monotonous tick of the Black Forest clock.

Agnes, who had wisely absented herself, at length returned.

"Make him talk," said Hedwig, rising. "Ho won't do any thing but look at me."

Her eye fell to the looking-glass as she passed it; but she quickly averted it, for she seemed to have seen a perfect stranger, so unaccountable was the change which had come over the expression of her features.

The teacher sat motionless, dreaming with open eyes.

Agnes sang, as she skipped about the room, snapping her fingers,--

"How is it, I wonder,
  When sweetheart I see,
I want to be talking,
  But yet it won't gee?
'No, no,' and 'Yes, yes,'
And 'I s'pose,' and 'In course,'
Is often the whole of our loving discourse."

"Come, wake up!" said she, shaking the teacher's arm; "stir your stumps. 'I lost my stocking at Lauterbach:'" and she danced around the room, dragging him after her.

Thaddie now came in, and general hilarity with him. In a grand council the politic resolve was taken that, if the Constantine question should be still unadjusted when harvest-home came on, the teacher was to attend Agnes at the festival, while Thaddie was to figure as the nominal escort of Hedwig.

After a long conversation in anticipation of what the future was expected to bring forth, Agnes called upon the teacher to reward her intervention by telling a story. The others joined their requests to hers. The teacher offered to go home to get a book; but this was not permitted: he had nothing to do but begin at once.

Collecting his thoughts with an effort, he launched into the story of the Beautiful Magelona. At first he spoke almost without intonation, hardly knowing what he said, and thinking more of Hedwig's hand, which rested in his, than of the tale. As the interest of the narrative increased, he closed his eyes, and resigned his imagination entirely to the world of wonders and witchery he was describing. His hearers hung upon his words with beaming eyes, and Hedwig's heart bounded within her.

When he had finished, Agnes took his head between her hands and shook it, saying, "He is a fine fellow, every inch of him. May I kiss him now, Hedwig?"

"Yes, with all my heart."

Availing himself of the permission, the teacher immediately turned to Thaddie and said, extending his hand, "Let us be friends too."

When he took his leave, Thaddie went with him to the door and said, on the steps, "Mr. Teacher, I want to ask a favor of you, and maybe I can do you another some day. I can read very well: won't you lend me one of your storybooks?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said the teacher, shaking hands warmly at parting.

Besides the happy change in his feelings which the love of Hedwig had effected, it was attended with a further consequence; for he was one of those sensitive natures in which the thirst for union and harmony brings all thoughts into very near juxtaposition and allows the electric spark of association to combine them with rare frequency.

The words that fell from Hedwig's lips were so sweet as to imbue with their charm even the harsh dialect in which they were spoken. He now determined to devote his particular study to this idiom, and, if possible, to make it the basis of the instruction of his pupils. He asked the old teacher to help him to some of the works written in the Upper Suabian dialect, and received that old gentleman's favorite work,--indeed, almost the only one he read,--Sebastian Sailer's poems.

With all his new predilections, it was some time before he could read these effusions with pleasure. The entire absence of what is ordinarily called refinement in the character of these people--that spirit which cannot deal even with the most sacred things save in a vein of blunt good-humor akin to burlesque--is here presented with overpowering truthfulness. The poet--a spiritual one, by-the-by--represents God the Father in the character of a village squire, and keeps up the *rôle* for many pages.

The old teacher explained that all this had not in the least affected the sanctity of religion. "In those days," said he, "when people's piety was in their hearts and not on their tongues, they could crack a dozen jokes, and yet their hearts remained the same: nowadays they're afraid of the snuffers coming near the candle, for they know it will take very little to put it out, and they must trim it all the time to keep it alive. I used to play jigs on the organ whenever I had a mind to."

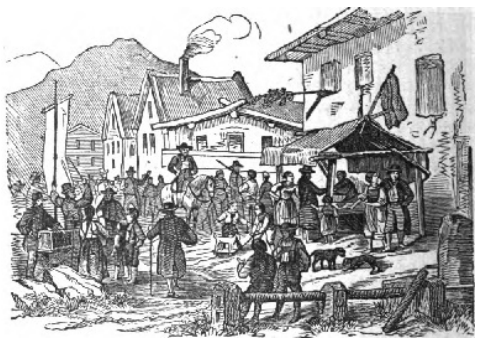
Our friend, while admitting the force of this argument, suspected that a little of the scoffing spirit of the last century had also found its way into the poet's rhymes, though, doubtless, not into the hearts of his public; but he kept this idea to himself, and drew from the schoolmaster a full account of the manner in which these extraordinary dramas used to be performed at Carnival-time. The old gentleman was particularly explicit in describing the costume he himself had worn in the character of Lucifer.

"Modern culture and refinement have taken many things from the people. What substantial joys have they received in return? Can they be compensated? and how?"

These words, taken from his note-book, appear to have been written about that time. A movement was going on within him.

One day Buchmaier urged him to apply for the right of citizenship in the village, as he might calculate upon receiving the office of town-clerk. Seizing the broad hand of his friend, he replied, joyfully, "Now you have it in your power to make peace in the whole village, if you will only get my broth--I mean the College Chap, this office: he is amply competent."

Buchmaier smiled, but would not consent. At the teacher's earnest entreaties, however, he agreed to abstain from all opposition.



The teacher hastened to broach the matter to the College Chap. The latter received the suggestion with some *hauteur*,

and said he did not know whether he could take the office. Nevertheless, he thanked the teacher for his good-will, and the preliminaries of a peace were concluded between the parties.

Harvest-home came, and the two couples went to the dance, as they had arranged.

No longer did the teacher loiter in the fields while the village was alive with dance and song: he was himself a participator in the revel; but even yet he was not entirely absorbed in it.

For two days he did not leave the dancing-floor, except once, to take a short walk with Hedwig and Agnes in the fields and refresh his powers for new exertions. At times a pang would strike him when an impure song was heard: he would fain have stopped his ears and Hedwig's against it. The idea of endeavoring to exert an influence upon this spontaneous product of the popular mind and heart recurred to him with more force than ever. He had acquired some popularity among the young fellows by his participation in their amusements; and upon this foundation he built a portion of his hopes.

For two whole nights he had kept it up; but when, on the third day, the harvest-home was buried with pomp and funeral solemnities, he could not induce himself to join in this extravaganza also. Standing before his door, he watched the procession as it passed up the street, preceded by the band playing a dead march, sometimes interrupted by a whining chant or dirge. A trestle, covered with broken bottles, glasses, and legs of chairs, was borne solemnly to the height and there cast into a grave and covered with earth, while the wit of the village expended itself in funeral orations.

Joy and sadness came and went by turns in Johnnie's house, after the harvest-home. Constantine was elected town-clerk, the teacher having electioneered for him in public. Peace was thus restored between the contending parties, and the College Chap made friendly advances to the teacher. The latter, in the gladness of his heart, addressed him, according to the German custom, with "thee" and "thou." Such an excuse for drinking a "smollis" was not to be neglected. The new town-clerk took the teacher's arm and dragged him by force to the inn, where the toasts were drunk in the most approved forms, the "brothers hail" standing arm in arm and clinking their glasses as they sang.

After these preliminary operations, the College Chap entered the family council at home, and advocated the teacher's suit of Hedwig with his usual eagerness and impetuosity.

The betrothal of the two lovers was solemnized with the accustomed ceremonies. They plighted their troth to each other in the presence of her father and brother, of the old squire, and of Buchmaier, whom the teacher had invited in lieu of kindred or other friends.

When the transaction was over, Hedwig left her room with the bridegroom--for to that name, in German parlance, he was now entitled--and embraced him for the first time, saying, "I do love you dearly,--dearly!"

They repaired to her grandmother's room, who was lying ill in bed, and knelt down at her bedside.

"He is mine now, forever," said Hedwig. She could not say more. The grandmother laid her hands upon them and muttered a prayer; after which she said, "Get up, and don't kneel here: you mustn't kneel anywhere but before God. Don't I tell you? I am the messenger who is to give them notice in heaven that you have found each other. Teacher, what's your mother's name? I'm going to her the minute I get there, and to your father too; and then I mean to take my Jack Adam, and my brothers and sisters, and my parents with me, and my three grandchildren that are gone, and we'll all sit down together and talk about you and pray for you; and then you must be happy. Hedwig, I leave you my necklace, you'll find it in the closet there. And there's a wreath beside it, from my wedding: take good care of it: it will bring blessings down on you. Let your children smell at it after the christening. And, though you should get married soon after I go, you must have music at your wedding. Do you hear? You sha'n't be grieving for me, and the seven-league dance you must dance for me: I will look down on you with joy, and the whole family up there shall celebrate the wedding too."

The lovers tried to dispel her anticipations of death; but she replied, "I feel just as if somebody was pulling my arm all the time, and saying, 'Make haste: it's time.' But it isn't hard enough yet: it must come harder. You mustn't cry now: don't. I am going into good hands, a'n't I? I thank the Lord for having let me live long enough to see Hedwig get a good husband. Love each other, and honor each other.

"Hedwig, he's a studied man, and they often get kinks into their heads: I know that from my sister. You must have patience with him. These studied men have very different notions from other folks, sometimes, and then they let them out the wrong way and to the wrong person. And you, teacher, when you get my Hedwig, my dear Hedwig----" She could not speak further: the girl lay on her neck, weeping.

The old woman had spoken quite fluently, her cough having disappeared entirely; now, however, she sank upon her pillow exhausted. The lovers stood looking upon her sadly. At last she raised herself again, and said, "Hedwig, go and ask Valentine's Christina to stay with me: I sha'n't die to-day yet. You mustn't come to me again all day. Go, now, both of you, and be in good spirits: promise me to be in good spirits."

The teacher executed the commission she had given to Hedwig, and then both were dismissed from the bedside. Their hearts continued to quiver with sadness until they had seen Buchmaier's Agnes, who managed to enliven them with her usual chat and raillery.

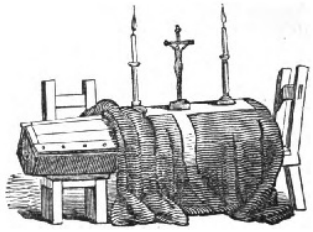
Then they walked in the fields, followed by the white hen. The seed was not yet in the ground,--so that there was no objection to her being at large. The breath of Nature recalled their souls to the full gladness of the occasion. Around them autumn was at work among the yellow leaves; but in their hearts it was all spring.

Next day Hedwig's grandmother called for the Eucharist. The teacher did duty for the sexton, and carried the lantern for the parson: a considerable portion of the congregation assembled at the door and prayed while Maurita was being "served" within. The only reflection occupying the teacher's thoughts during the ceremony was, "Would that all freethinkers could meet death with equal confidence!" Maurita received the sacrament with open, beaming eyes, then turned to the wall and spoke no more. When they looked at her after a time, she was dead.

Maurita was buried with silent and devout sadness, unaccompanied by loud weeping or wailing. The whole village mourned. Even old George the blacksmith said, with a seriousness unusual to him, "I am so sorry she is dead! My turn comes next."

When the teacher returned from the burial, Hedwig embraced him, and said, weeping, "I want you more than ever now: I have no grandmother any more."

The teacher had found another tie to attach him to the village: the corpse of a friend rested in its soil.



Thus we have accompanied the good Maurita to the entrance of the life beyond, and the teacher to the opening of a new life on earth. We cannot follow the good old grandmother to heaven: let us see, a little longer, what happened to the teacher.

His betrothal had given great satisfaction throughout the village. Even the children playing on the site of the fire were sometimes involved in excited discussions, as they endeavored to explain their relationship to Hedwig, and therefore to the teacher. Johnnie had not a great many friends in the village; but this event gave pleasure to all. Everyone whom the teacher met shook hands and wished him much joy and happiness. Every one had something good to tell of Hedwig. Men and women who would otherwise never have thought of conversing with the teacher now chatted like old acquaintances. Mat came to his house, shook his hands warmly, and said, "Ah, I was the one that told you it must come so: don't you remember? You might have given me a farm and you wouldn't have pleased me more. When the old teacher dies you shall have the two fields he farms now: it's good land, and, if you'll let me know, I'll work two or three days for you with pleasure."

The teacher was doubly pleased at this friendly spirit. He saw the good hearts of the villagers; and he also saw how firm a footing he had gained in their affections, and how much he had bettered the prospect of exerting a beneficent influence over them.

Mankind are no longer accustomed to receive benefits emanating from no other motive than the general desire to do them good. They have been betrayed and disappointed so often that now they meet the philanthropist with intuitive suspicion. They think so very general an aspiration must cloak some very particular design. They will permit no one to love them unreservedly but those who are related to them by some special bond of kindred or other relationship.

Winter stalked into the village with rapid strides. The villagers remained at home and enjoyed what their toil had gathered. Threshing, and a little manuring, was the only kind of labor that could be performed. When the grain was threshed, all was silent. Here and there a travelling peddler might be heard crying "Spindles! wives' spindles!" The snow drifted about the street, and all cuddled around the genial tile stove. At such times an evil spirit would walk in the village in broad daylight,--the spirit of idleness. Whomsoever the spirit looked at was doomed to yawn and gossip and quarrel. The time of rest was not a time of recreation, because there had been no exertion to rest from. Young men sat for whole days in the tavern, playing cards; and, though so sorely burdened with excess of time, they never thought of going home till the last stroke of the "police-hour" of eleven had brought in the beadle and the landlord's inevitable notice to quit. Others went to bed early and drowned their time in sleep; while still others soiled it with wickedness.

Idleness is the root of all evil. The industrious alone are intrinsically cheerful, peaceable and well meaning; idlers easily lean to gambling and drunkenness, and are prone to wrangling, quarrels, and treachery. It is for this reason, and this alone, that all the vices love to dwell among the so-called upper classes of society.

While the greater part of the villagers were thus vegetating, the teacher had awakened to a double existence. It sometimes happens that a man who has had a violent fever rises from his bed an inch or two taller than before. Thus our friend, while his flying pulses studied Hedwig's life and being, had made wonderful progress in the understanding of the people's character. As he had formerly "sipped the intellectual breath of beauty" from the productions of inanimate nature, leaving to others the task of turning into use her treasures, so now he recognised the presence of a higher principle in every living intelligence. Every person who crossed his path was a representative of some portion or place of the people's character. Instead of looking down upon others from the eminence of his own intellectuality, he forgot himself, and unconsciously looked up to the intelligence he detected in every other. The others were raised in his estimation, because he thought only of that which ennobled them: himself had sunk, because he was only reminded of himself by those petty occurrences of every-day life which brought out the lesser traits in his own nature.

He was a man who understood the inmost thoughts and feelings of all around him. He boldly followed up his resolve to give them a taste of the pleasures of the mind: he was sufficiently matured himself to penetrate the rough bark which concealed the core of their minds and hearts.

In the evening he would read aloud the papers at the inn. He had many explanations to give, and many false impressions to remove: for the College Chap, who had previously acted as oracle, had taken pleasure in "stuffing up the natives." A little circle habitually gathered round him, while others played cards at the table: even these, however, would occasionally listen to what he was saying, by which many a trick was lost.

Little by little the teacher obtained their confidence, and they spoke their minds more freely. With all the excellence of his intention, he still found it difficult to translate himself entirely into their ways of thinking. It is an easy thing to say, "I love the people!" but to be prepared at all times to receive all sorts of crudities with respect, without taking offence at habits and customs often repulsive and obdurate,--to follow the discursive ones through a thousand pointless digressions,--to sympathize with the impetuous in a jargon of incoherent impulses and sentiments,--requires a power of self-abnegation, a degree of control over one's own individuality, with which but very few are favored. Thanks to his clear understanding of the task, our friend was one of the number.

One evening Mat began, "Mr. Teacher, I'm going to ask a stupid question; but why is that paper called the 'Suabian Mercury,' and not the 'Suabian Markery'? Sure it is a markery; because every thing that happens is marked down there. Is 'Mercury' High German for 'Markery'?"

"You've caught the old robin in his nest," said the College Chap. "You're right there, Mat: those fellows in Stuttgard don't know any thing about it. If I was you I'd go down and tell 'em: they'll give you a premium, depend upon it."

The teacher explained that Mercury had been the messenger of the gods, and the god of trade, in ancient Greece.

"Yes; but how does he come to be called 'Suabian'?" asked Mat, again.

"Well, they chose to give that name to the paper," answered the teacher. He had never thought about it himself.

"I want to know," began Hansgeorge: "did the Greecelanders believe in more gods than one?"

"Of course," replied the College Chap. "One of 'em manured and the other sowed, one rained and the other thundered: they had a particular god or goddess for every particular job. The Greeks even allowed their gods to marry."

"I guess they were saints or angels," said Wendel the mason, "or tutelaries; but they must have had some sort of a captain over them, or it would be a carnival stupid enough to split your sides with laughing."

"You weren't by when they built the tower of Babel, neither, mason," said the College Chap. "Of course they had a captain, and a trump card he was: he had a jealous wife, though, and she gave him lots of trouble. Now, I'll leave it to the teacher whether all this isn't as true as gospel."

Suppressing a sigh, the teacher gave the company a cursory sketch of the Grecian mythology. Some of the wonders included in it created much sensation. It occurred to him, also, how strange it was that he should be expounding the Hellenic sages in a smoky bar-room of the Black Forest. All this was the doing of the Suabian Mercury.

It was almost impossible to persuade the farmers that the Greeks were not "jackasses." He told them of the wise and good Socrates, and of his martyrdom.

"Why, that was almost as bad as the way they treated our Savior," said Kilian of the Frog Alley.

"Certainly," replied the teacher. "Whoever undertakes to teach a new and wholesome truth by its right name and without circumlocution must take a cross for his pains." He sighed as he said this; for it seemed to have some bearing upon his own case: the task he had undertaken was not an easy one.

As they went away, the men said to each other, "We've had a fine evening for once: you get a little wiser, and time passes round before you know it."

The teacher had formed the design of reading something to the farmers about the Grecian mythology: fortunately, however, he laid his hand upon a very different book,--a collection of German proverbs. On entering the bar-room, he took the book from his pocket, saying, "Let me read you something."

There were wry faces on all sides; for farmers regard books as their natural enemies. Mat spoke first:--

"Better tell us a story, Mr. Teacher."

"Yes, yes; tell us something: don't read," was the general response.

"Well, just listen a little while," said the teacher: "if you don't like it, say so, and I'll stop."

He began to read the proverbs, pausing after every one.

"Why, that's what George the blacksmith says," and "That's Spring Bat's word," "That's what old Maurita used to say," "That's your speech, Andrew, Mike, Caspar," was soon heard from different quarters of the room. The players laid aside their cards and listened; for at times a pithy sentence would provoke general merriment.

The teacher could not refrain from asking, with an air of some triumph, "Shall I read on?"

"Yes; read on till morning," said every one; and Kilian of the Frog Alley added, "It must have been the smartest kind of a man that made that book; for he knew every thing. I wonder if he wasn't one of the ancient sages."

"Yes: those are your sort of folks, Kilian," said some one in a corner.

"Be quiet, now," cried others. "Read on, Mr. Teacher."

He did so. Sometimes corrections and additions were suggested, which the teacher would gladly have noted in writing, but refrained for fear of restraining the open-heartedness of the audience. They were overjoyed to find the whole stock of their collective wisdom thus heaped up in a single granary. One or two discussions arose in reference to the explanation, or the truth of this or that proverb, with which the teacher never interfered; others would urge the disputants to silence; while still others urged the teacher to proceed. A bright fire was burning, which our friend had the satisfaction of having kindled.

When he returned the next evening, he found more guests than usual. They had lost their dread of books, and immediately inquired whether he had not some similar entertainment for them.

"Yes," said the teacher, taking out a book. But this time things were not destined to go so smoothly; there were tares among the wheat, sowed by the College Chap, who had a deep-seated aversion to any thing serious or sensible. With some partisans whom he had enlisted, he sat at a table and began to sing. The teacher was at a loss.

"Why, Constantine," said Mat, "a'n't you ashamed of yourself, and you a town-clerk?"

"I've paid for my wine, and have as good a right here as the next man," replied the College Chap; "and the tavern isn't a place to read books in."

There was a general murmur.

"Hold on," said Mat, "we'll soon fix this. Landlord, I'll go and get some wood, and we'll make a fire in the room upstairs. Whoever wants to listen may come up, and whoever don't may stay where he is."

"I'll go," said Thaddie, who had come this evening also. The stove was soon in a glow, for Thaddie was afraid of losing something by making up the fire afterward. Mat sat down beside the teacher and snuffed the candle. The story was Zschokke's "Village of Gold-Makers."

In spite of its fine subject and elevating tendency, the book was far from earning the applause which the teacher had expected: it was so interwoven with the experiences of peasant-life that every one felt himself qualified to judge it. It would occupy too much of our space to repeat all the opinions expressed. Whenever the phrase recurred, "Oswald opened his lips and spoke," Buchmaier smiled in derision of its formality. Many of the ideas were lost; while others received a general nod of approbation.

To the teacher's surprise, the first thing manifest when the story had reached its close was that most of the company sided with the village and against Oswald. Mat soon hit upon the reason of this incongruity in saying, "What I don't like is that Oswald seems to do all the good in the village alone."

"And I," said Thaddie, "would like to pull off his feather and his star: he's a fine fellow, and don't want them gimcracks."

"You're right," replied Buchmaier. "He plays the gentleman too much, anyhow; and as for his hereditary prince, what's he good for? But what were you going to say, Andrew? Bring out the wild-cats."

"I think Oswald has no business to put his nose into other people's pots and pans. What's he got to do with their cooking?"

"And I think," said Kilian, "the farmers are made out a good deal too stupid: it isn't quite so bad, after all."

"And you're a learned man yourself, too," said Hansgeorge. Everybody laughed.

"My notion is," said Wendel the mason, "the village is a deal too bad at first and a deal too good afterward. I don't see how things can change so in one and the same place."

"What puts me out most," said Buchmaier, "is that they can't get through without even making out what sort of clothes people shall wear and what they sha'n't. That's just like the cruelty-to-animals societies. These things must be left to every man's own taste and fancy. And once I could hardly help laughing when Oswald, in his uniform and with the feathers on his hat, embraced the thirty-two men one by one: there's a job for you!"

The teacher called to mind that the book had been written years ago, when people were far more ceremonious than at present. He adverted to the fine moral of the book and the many fine passages it contained. He showed how great is the use of position, money, dress, and other externals to those who desire to carry out good intentions among men, and concluded by saying that it was unjust to make such incidental trifles an excuse for condemning the whole.

"No doubt about that," said Buchmaier. "If I could see the man that wrote that book, I'd take off my hat rather than to the king himself, and say, 'You're a good fellow, and mean well by us.' That's my notion."

When they rose to go, Thaddie nudged Mat, and said, in a whisper, "Come! out with it now, or they'll all run away."

"What do you say, men," began Mat, "to getting the teacher to read to us an evening or two every week?"

"Why, that would be first-rate," cried all.

"I'm quite ready," said the teacher. "Let's have a meeting to-morrow night, say in the school-room. Meantime, all can think about the society, and make proposals."

"Yes, that's right," said every one: and they parted in great good-humor.

The meeting, which was held next day, was stormy. The teacher, with Buchmaier's assistance, had prepared a draft of a constitution. It was read paragraph by paragraph, with a long pause after each. At every pause there was a buzz of conversation; but when the talkers were requested to express their opinions publicly they suddenly ceased. None but Mat, Hansgeorge, Kilian, and Wendel could be induced to address the whole company. A general tempest was provoked by the paragraph,--

"During the continuance of the reading-nights no smoking shall be permitted."

There was no end to the angry mutterings, until Buchmaier, nodding to the teacher, as if to say, "Didn't I tell you so? I know my men," moved to "strike out the law about smoking altogether."

"Yes, yes!" they all exclaimed as with one mouth. Buchmaier continued:--

"So, whoever can't do without smoking, let him smoke. It'll be hard for the teacher to read in the steam; so, if he has to stop, nobody can blame him. But one thing we will stick to: if any man's pipe goes out, he sha'n't light it again till the teacher's done reading. He may sleep if he can't keep his eyes open; but he sha'n't snore."

A roar of laughter ensued, after which Buchmaier went on:--

"So we won't put a word about smoking into the law, and we'll only have the understanding that, when the reading is all done, every man shall light his pipe with the wisdom he's got by listening, and smoke what's been told him. Is that right, or not?"

"Yes: that's right."

"And whoever wants to talk must take the pipe out of his mouth," said the voice of an unknown speaker, who has been too modest to reveal himself to this day.

Another knotty point was the place of meeting. With a fine tact, the teacher objected to the school-room. All the members of the town-council being present, the large anteroom of the town-hall was fixed upon.

On Jack George's motion, it was resolved that every man should be at liberty to have his glass of beer before him, but no more. This proposal made Jack George so popular that he was elected to the executive committee with Mat and Kilian.

There were many other difficulties to be overcome; but a knot of enthusiasts had gathered around the teacher, who carried him over every thing in triumph. The foremost of these were Mat and Thaddie. The latter only regretted that he could not find some herculean labor to perform for the teacher: he would gladly have run through the fire to please him.

On the other hand, the society had two mortal foes, in the landlord of the Eagle and the College Chap. The former feared for his custom, and railed against the teacher, who since his betrothal boarded with his intended father-in-law. The College Chap suspected "psalm-singing" in all things, and said that his brother only meant to catch the people first and pluck them afterward.

It is a customary trick of the monarchical Governments of Europe to disarm demagogues by appointing them to office. In pursuance of the same policy, the teacher made Constantine "alternate reader." Now that it afforded scope for his ambition, the College Chap was one of the most devoted adherents of the society.

Thus the teacher gradually learned to understand men and to govern them. He made efforts to gain the support of the old teacher and of the Jewish schoolmaster. What the former wanted in zeal the latter richly atoned for. Some Jews, who, being engaged in agriculture or in mechanical trades, were always at home, also took an active part.

The selection of the books was not easy. Our friend soon found that didactic reading, or that which aimed immediately at moral instruction and improvement, must not be allowed to preponderate. Without degrading the matter to mere amusement, he read extracts from the Limpurg Chronicles, Gleim's poems, and the lives of Schubart, Moser, Franklin,

and others. Particular success attended the reading of Paul and Virginia, and of Wallenstein's Camp, to which were added some chapters from Simplicissimus. The greatest attention, however, was excited by the reading of Kœrner's "Hedwig, the Bandit's Bride," by the teacher, the College Chap, and the Jewish teacher. The exalted diction and wonderful incidents produced a great impression. At the close of the piece, Mat inquired, "What became of the robbers in the cellar? Were they burned or hanged?"

The teacher could not repress a laugh at this sympathetic question, but he knew not what to answer. Perhaps one of our readers will have the goodness to inform him.

Sometimes the old popular books were read likewise: the Schildburgers aroused especial merriment.

The teacher now rarely found time to enter general reflections into his note-hook: what he thought was at once communicated to those around him, and what he felt was expressed to Hedwig. We find one or two observations, however, in those half-forgotten leaves:--

"When I look at these lucubrations, it occurs to me that I used to be a great egotist: I meant to swallow the whole world, instead of giving the world any benefit from my being in it. What is the value of all this selfish refinement of feeling compared to a single sound thought imparted to the mind of another! How glad I am to have all this behind me!"

"How easy it is to appear great, learned, and superior, if you withdraw from intercourse with the people, build a private palace of knowledge and thought, a castle on a hill, far from the denizens of the valley! But the moment you descend to mingle with the inhabitants of the plain, the moment you live among them and for them, you find to your astonishment that often you are ignorant of the simplest things and untouched by the finest thoughts. I have read of princes who never, or scarcely ever, are seen by the people. For them it is easy enough to be hedged with majesty."

"As the breath of the land and sea returns to them after having been congealed into rain-drops in upper air, so the spirit of a people must return from the lofty realms of literature to its source,--the people's heart."

"There can be no doubt that many of the world-renowned Grecian heroes were no more educated in what we now term education than my Hansgeorge, Kilian, Mat, Thaddie, Wendel, and so on, not to speak of Buchmaier, Bat, owing to the publicity of their political and social organization, of their arts, of the forms of worship which emanated from the very core of the people's heart, a world of thoughts, feelings, views, and delicate suggestions hovered in the air. People were not restricted to Biblical stories, narratives of men and women who had lived in other climes and under other traditions, having no immediate correspondence with their own condition. They heard of their own forefathers, who had lived as they lived, who had acted thus and so and thought so and thus: particular sentiments and anecdotes were handed down from generation to generation; all these things concerned them nearly; and at need the descendants emulated the heroism of their ancestors. We give the name of sacred history to the fortunes of a foreign people, and neglect our own as profane. The Greeks had Homer by heart; and this gave them a fund of sayings and images adapted to their condition. We Germans have no one to take his place: even Schiller is not in the reach of every class of the people. Almost all we have is a stock of national wisdom garnered up in the form of proverbs, which has developed itself independently of the Old and New Testament. We have the sentiment of the people incarnate in their songs. This the Greeks had not."

Soon after the reading-room was organized, the teacher established a musical association, which was joined by all the single men and a few of the married ones. This appeased mine host at the Eagle, as they met for practice in his room up-stairs. Though virtually the master-spirit of the whole, our friend devolved the ostensible management upon the old schoolmaster, who was marvellously well fitted for the office. They wisely devoted the most of their attention to popular songs. The villagers were delighted thus to come by their own again in a new dress and without the omission of the text consequent upon mere oral transmission. One by one, some new songs were cautiously introduced, great attention being paid to the time and emphasis.

As the opposition of the College Chap had been the chief obstacle of success of the reading-room, so the arrogance of George threatened to stifle the glee-club in the bud. Considering himself a singer of renown, he took the lead, but disdained any reference to time and measure. The steps taken to conciliate him failed: he left the club, and his secession threatened to dismember it. Its good effects had already been perceived: many vulgar and improper songs had been displaced by better ones; and, though the preference might be owing to their novelty rather than to their superiority, yet the better words and tones, once introduced, could not but exercise their legitimate influence.

George now noised abroad that the teacher meant to make the grown-up folks sing children's songs, and that it was a shame for grown-up people to sing them. He soon drew a party around him, and the number of those who remained faithful dwindled away. Thaddie offered to give George a good whacking; but Buchmaier found a more gentle method of preserving the club. He invited the parson and all the members of the club, except George, to sup with him on New Year's Eve. This infused new life into the dry bones.

The parson had left the teacher entirely undisturbed; for he was not one of those who decry every thing good which they have not originated themselves.

On New Year's Eve there was great rejoicing in Buchmaier's house.

"Mr. Teacher," said Buchmaier, "when you're married you must get up a glee-club for the girls."

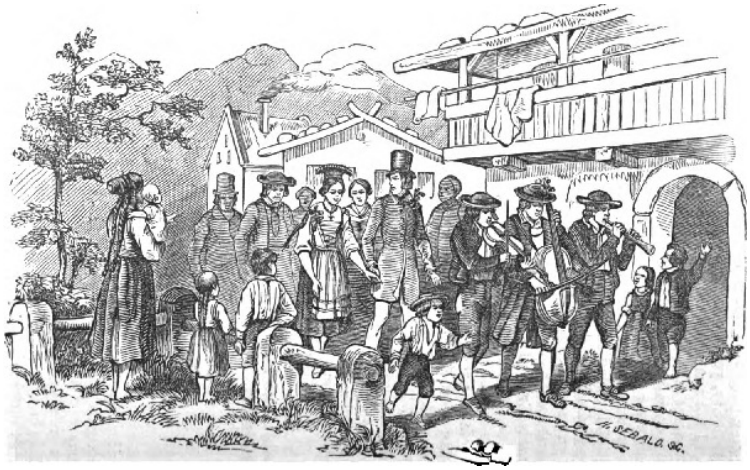
"And the young married women may come too," cried Agnes.

"Yes; but you must keep them singing all the time, or they'll talk the devil's ears off."

Many a toast was given. Boys otherwise noted for their bashfulness here made speeches in presence of the parson, the teacher, and the squire. At last Thaddie seized a glass and drank to "the teacher and his lassie," which was drunk with never-ending cheers.

With Hedwig he was on the happiest footing. She willingly followed all his suggestions the moment she was convinced that he no longer desired to remodel her whole being but only to further her native development. At first his experience was singular. Whenever he wished to direct her thoughts into a higher channel, he made a thousand preparations and inductions. He meant thus and so, and she must not misapprehend him. Once Hedwig said, "Look here: when you want me to think something, say it right out, and don't make so many concoctions about it. I'll tell you whether I like it or not."

So he dropped this last remnant of his solitary wanderings, and they understood each other perfectly. Even in school the new impetus to his mind was invaluable. He illustrated abstractions by illustrations drawn from what was familiar to all. He labored earnestly at a history of the village, intending to make it the starting-point for his instruction of the history of the country.



Some wiseacres predicted that the teacher's zeal would not be of long duration. We take the liberty to think otherwise.

Spring came, and the bells repaired to Rome to tell the story of the village: they had fewer sins than usual to report of the past winter.

After Easter came the wedding-day, which had been fixed on the anniversary of the teacher's arrival in the village. On the evening before, Hedwig went to the old teacher and asked him to do his best in the prelude next day. He smiled, and said, "Yes: you shall like it."

Next day they went to church, preceded by the musicians. Hedwig dressed like her playmate Agnes, the teacher decorated with a nosegay, like his playmate Thaddie, Buchmaier, Johnnie, and the Jewish teacher behind them. When all had assembled, the old teacher began the prelude. Every one smiled; for the old joker had interwoven the air of the Lauterbacher very skilfully into his piece. Soon after, the glee-club struck up the chant,--

"Holy is the Lord!"

and the nuptial tie was fastened with joyous earnestness, Blessings attend it!

FOOTNOTES:

Footnote 1: Bartholomew's Sebastian's.

Footnote 2: Not a lord of the manor, according to the English acceptation of the term, but a sort of village mayor, elected by the farmers out of their own number. Very little of the feudal tenure remains in the Black Forest, the peasants being almost everywhere lords of the soil.

Footnote 3: A ring of hard wood or stone fixed to the end of the spindle, to weigh it down and improve its turning.

Footnote 4: About half a cent.

Footnote 5: And thereby escape being taken as a recruit.

Footnote 6: Joseph; Joe.

Footnote 7: The name of a tract of ground. All the lands belonging to a village are divided into such tracts, every tract having particular qualifications. These are subdivided, and the subdivisions distributed among the farmers: in this manner every farmer has a portion of every kind of ground belonging to the farm-manor.

Footnote 8: If the American reader is tempted to doubt or to contemn this stretch of economy, he must remember the different standards governing the people of the Old and the New World in this respect.

Footnote 9: Clotho holds the distaff, Lachesis spins the thread, and Atropos severs it.

Footnote 10: Black Forest provincialism:--a scamp, a loafer.

Footnote 11: Suabian.

Footnote 12: Brother.

Footnote 13: Son of God.

Footnote 14: What temptation a counterfeit wild cat holds out to the traveller to sit down upon it, the translator is not in a condition to explain,--probably on instance of the matter-of-fact character of the American mind.

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The publication of Problematic Characters has been delayed on account of some difficulties with the translation. A new translation is now in press.

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