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In Three Volumes. Vol. I, by Berthold Auerbach**

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**JOSEPH IN THE SNOW,
AND
THE CLOCKMAKER.**

BY AUERBACH.

TRANSLATED BY LADY WALLACE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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JOSEPH IN THE SNOW.

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EPITAPH.

"Here lies a little child, lost in the forest deeps.—
At midnight from the slumbering fold he strayed;
But the lost lamb was found by One who never sleeps,
And to his everlasting Father's fold conveyed."

These lines are written on a small cross, in the churchyard of the village where the scene of the following simple story is laid. This mournful inscription would have been applicable once more, if a merciful Providence had not watched over Joseph. He retained however through life the appellation of "Joseph in the Snow," for being lost in the storm was the cause of his eventual good fortune, and of his rescue from destitution and misery.

JOSEPH IN THE SNOW.

CHAPTER I.

IS IT NOT YET MORNING?

"Mother, is it morning yet?" asked the child, sitting up in bed.

"No, not nearly—why do you ask? Lie still, and go to sleep."

The child was quiet for a short time, but then repeated in a low voice:—

"Mother, is it morning yet?"

"What is the matter, Joseph? do be quiet—don't disturb me, and go to sleep. Say your prayers

again, and then you will fall asleep."

The mother repeated the child's night prayers along with him, and then said, "Now, good night, Joseph."

The boy was silent for a while; but on hearing his mother turn in bed, he called to her in a whisper, "Mother!"

No answer.

"Mother! mother! mother!"

"What is it? what do you want?"

"Mother, is it not daylight yet?"

"You are a naughty child; very naughty; why do you persist in disturbing my night's rest? I am weary enough, for I have been three times in the forest to-day. If you wake me up again, the Holy Child will bring you nothing to-morrow but a birch rod."

The boy sighed deeply, and said, "Good-night, then, till to-morrow," and wrapped himself up in the bed-clothes.

The room where this dialogue took place, was small and dark; an attic under a thatched roof. The panes of glass in the little window were frozen over, so that the bright moonlight could not penetrate through them. The mother rose, and bent over the child; he was sleeping sound, and lying quiet. The mother, however, could not go to sleep again, though she had once more laid down and closed her eyes; for we can hear her saying distinctly, "Even if he some day asks me to share his home—and in spite of everything I firmly believe he will one day do so—he cannot do otherwise—he must—but even then, how cruelly he has slighted both me and our child! The years that are passed come no more: we can have them but once in life. Oh! if I could but begin life again; if I could only awake, and feel that it was not true, and that I had never sinned so heavily! but the weight of one sin is a burden for ever; no one can bear it for another. Can it be true that I was once so gay and happy as people say? What could the child mean by calling out three times, Is it morning yet? What is to happen in the course of this day? Oh, Adam! Adam! you don't know all I suffer; if you did, you could not sleep either."

The stream that ran past the house was frozen over, but in the silence of the night, the gurgling of the water was heard, under the covering of ice.

The thoughts of the wakeful woman followed the current of the brook, in its distant flow, when, after traversing pathless valleys and deep ravines, its course was checked by the forest mill; the waters rushing, and foaming, and revolving over the mill wheels, just as the thoughts of this watchful mother revolved dizzily on her sorrows at dead of night. For within that mill dwells the dreaded object on whom the eyes of Adam's parents were fixed. The forest miller's Tony had always been thought a good-hearted, excellent girl, and yet now she seemed so cruel:—what has the forest miller's daughter Tony to do with you? you have no claim on her—but on him? on Adam? The sleepless girl clenched her hands convulsively; she felt a stab in her heart, and said, in a voice of anguish, "Can he ever be faithless to me? No, he could not; but if he dared to desert me, I would not suffer it; I would go to church with my little Joseph—but no—I would not take him with me—I would go alone, and call out Adam's name. I could not endure it, and then we should see if the clergyman would marry them."

The brook once more flows tranquilly through a quiet meadow; on its banks some oaks and beeches droop their branches; but the hills are covered thickly with lofty pines; the stream rushes again over rocks into deep ravines: now it runs rapidly along. There lies the boundary stone. "Now we are at home," had Adam once said, and yet this stone is fully two miles from the Röttmannshof. In the Otterzwanger wood belonging to it, lies a peaceful nook beside the river, overshadowed by a spreading beech. The girl passes her cold hand over her feverish cheek. There, under that leafy beech, she had first been noticed by Adam. No one in the world would have believed that he could be so merry and talkative, so kind and so gentle. It was a lovely summer's day: on the previous evening there had been a violent storm; the thunder and lightning had been so tremendous, that it seemed as if no tree in the forest could escape scatheless. Just so is it here below: without in the woods, and within in the houses, noise, strife, and wrangling, till even murder seems not improbable; and yet the very next day everything is as peaceful as before. It is indeed a charming summer morning that we allude to; streams are flowing in their various channels with a merry noise, hurrying on their course, as if knowing that they have only a day to live, and are to be seen no more on the morrow. The birds are singing cheerfully, and the girl washing at the brook can't help doing the same; she must sing also, and why not? She is still quite young, and free from care. She knows a variety of songs; she learned them from her father, who was once the best and sweetest singer in the village. Some men are descending the stream, as there is now water enough to float a raft; and see, how skilfully they manage it! here is Adam, the only son of the Röttmanns, on a solitary raft, which whirls round and round with the current; but Adam knows what he is about, and stands firm and erect; and when he comes close to the girl washing her linen in the brook, he lets the raft swim away alone, and, placing the oar firmly in the bed of the stream, he raises himself into the air, and jumps on shore by one bold spring. The

girl laughs, when she sees the tall, powerful young man, with his high fisherman's boots, dangling in the air, and yet her heart quails, when he alights close beside her.

"I have long wished to tell you how much I feel obliged to you," said Adam.

"Why? for what?"

"For staying so long with my mother, and enduring so much."

"I am a servant, and receive wages, so I ought in return to bear a good deal, and your mother has her own burden to bear, for she is angry with our Heavenly Father, because your brother was killed by a falling tree. She has no love either for God or her fellow-creatures, but she only makes herself miserable."

Adam looked at her kindly; but suddenly he lifted up his oar abruptly, exclaiming, "I must be off: good bye!" He sprang into the brook, making the water splash above his head, pushing the raft, which had been stopped by a bend in the stream, vigorously forward into the centre of the current. Martina looked after him in astonishment. What is the matter with Adam? He is quickly out of sight, and is presently heard shouting at a distance, with the other bargemen, and then all is still again.

For weeks Adam never spoke one word to Martina, indeed he scarcely seemed to notice her—but in autumn—both cows and oxen pasture at that season in the meadows—Martina was passing along, and descending the hill—there being no spring close to the house on the level ground, the water for drinking must be fetched from half way down the hill—when, suddenly, she saw a bull erect its head and begin to paw the ground. It was a fine sight to see the heavy animal tossing its horns, but the herdboy called out, "Save yourself, Martina, or you will be tossed by the bull."

Martina uttered a shrill scream, and turned to run away, hiding her face, but fell down. She could hear the snorting animal close to her, when, all at once, he lay stretched on the ground, bellowing. Adam had rushed up, seized the animal by the horns, and held down his head, till some of the farm-servants came up, and helped to bind him.

Martina is saved, but Adam only said, "The next time that you go through the meadow, don't wear a scarlet handkerchief on your head."

Adam was covered with blood, and Martina asked, "For heaven's sake tell me, have you been hurt by the bull?"

"Oh, pray make no fuss, it is nothing; the bull was bleeding at the mouth, and so he sprinkled me with blood. Go now, and fetch the water;" so saying, he turned away, and went to a pond to wash off the blood.

Not till she had reached the well did Martina become fully alive to the danger she had escaped. She felt the deadly peril she had been in, and from which Adam had rescued her. As she wept, admiration mingled with her tears, and heartfelt gratitude to the bold and intrepid young man. At dinner-time she heard his mother say to Adam, "You are the most silly, good-for-nothing creature in the world, to go and risk your life, to save that of a stupid maid."

"I'll never do it again," answered Adam.

"I rather think," said his father, with a smile, "that you are not likely to do such a thing twice, as to hold down a bull by the horns and yet to escape alive; it's a pity no one saw you, for it is a feat the whole neighbourhood would have talked about."

From this period Adam always noticed Martina by a kind nod, but never spoke a single word to her. He seemed only to be pleased, that she had given him an opportunity to perform a genuine Röttmann's exploit.

Shortly after, Martina was again washing at the brook, when Adam once more stood before her: "Are you quite recovered from your fright?" said he.

"No; my limbs still tremble from the terrible fear I felt, but as long as I live I will thank you for having——"

"Pray don't talk about it. The animal was not vicious—no animal is naturally so, neither horse nor ox, if not persecuted when young by being foolishly hunted and cruelly goaded, and thus made bad-tempered—then, at last, they are so with a vengeance—but—tell me—don't you know all, and—don't you like me as much as I like you?"

He could not say much, but there was infinite tenderness in his eyes, and subdued but deep love, as he looked at Martina and laid his hand on her shoulder; and no man would have believed that the rough stalwart Adam could have been so loving and gentle.

They were standing silently under the spreading beech, and Martina gazing up at the bright rays of sunshine darting through the leaves—

"Look how beautiful this tree is!" said she.

"A very useless one," said Adam; "a vast number of branches, but a poor trunk."

"I was not thinking of that, but see how it shines and glitters all green and gold."

"You are right; it is beautiful," said Adam, and his glance was unusually mild as the rays of the sun sportively flickered on his stern embrowned features.

For the first time it seemed to occur to him, that a tree could be looked at in any other light than that of its marketable value.

And as often as Martina thought of the bright sunshine she had seen through the foliage of the beech, she felt as if these sunny rays were still shining on her, and were never to cease shining.

Adam, seizing Martina's hand, said, as if he intended a solemn asseveration:—

"This tree shall never be cut down; it shall never be felled by me till our wedding; or rather, it shall always remain where it is, and listen to the merry music of our bridal procession as it passes along. Martina, give me something; have you nothing you could give me?"

"I am poor and have nothing to give away."

"I see something I should like to have—will you give it to me?"

"Yes! what is it? whatever you like."

"I see your name embroidered on your neckerchief; tear out the piece and give it to me."

"Gladly!" she turned away, and tore out the piece of muslin where her name was marked, and gave it to him.

"I give you nothing," said he, "but look round, so far as you can see, all, all, is yours."

At this speech, proving how rich Adam was, and how poor Martina, she felt very sorrowful, but Adam still grasped her hand, so every other feeling was absorbed in love for him.

The love which had taken possession of both, was an overpowering, headlong, wild passion and quickly succeeded by grief and misery.

For the first time in his life, Adam was sent with a raft, down the Rhine, to Holland, and during his absence Martina was driven out of the house in shame and disgrace....

These were the joyous and sorrowful events of the past, that once more floated before the eyes of Martina in her garret.

She hid her face in the pillow—the cocks in the village began to crow, as it was now past midnight.

"That is the new-fashioned bird crowing, that Häspele lately bought. How hoarse and loud the long-legged creature crows! Our own home birds have a much more cheerful cry: but Häspele is an excellent man, and so kind and good to my boy;—he meant to do me a kindness when he once said to me, 'Martina, in my eyes you are a widow, and a worthy woman'—Yes, said I, but my husband is not dead; I grieve that you like me, as I cannot marry you—no! such a thought is far from my heart."

Martina could not close her eyes, but lay anxiously awaiting the dawn of day—sometimes sleep seemed about to take compassion on her, but scarcely had she closed her eyes, than she started up again—she thought she heard the voice of Adam's mother, the stormy Röttmännin, and saw her sharp sarcastic face, and Martina whispered sadly to herself:—"Oh! when will it be light!"

CHAPTER II.

A DUET INTERRUPTED, AND RESUMED.

At the very same hour that the child in the attic woke up and was so restless, two candles and a lamp were burning in the sitting-room of the parsonage, and three people were seated comfortably at a round table: these were the clergyman, his wife, and her brother, a young farmer. The room was pleasantly warm, and in the pauses of the conversation, the hissing of some apples roasting on the stove was heard, and the kettle, on the top of the stove, put in its word too, as if it wished to say that it had good material ready for a glass of hot punch. The worthy pastor, who seldom smoked, nevertheless possessed the talent of enjoying his pipe with any guest who arrived; this did not, however, make him neglect his snuff-box, and whenever he took a pinch himself, he offered one to his brother-in-law, who invariably refused it politely. The

pastor gazed with evident satisfaction at his brother-in-law; and his wife occasionally looked up from her work—a gift to her husband for the Christmas of the ensuing day—and glanced tenderly at her brother.

"A famous idea of yours," repeated the pastor, while his delicate face, his well formed lips, bright blue eyes, and lofty intellectual forehead, assumed an expression of even greater benevolence than usual—"a famous idea indeed, to get leave of absence to spend the holidays with us, but," added he, smiling and glancing at the gun leaning against the wall in a corner, "your fire-arms will not profit you much here, unless, indeed, you have the good fortune to hit the wolf, who has been lately seen prowling about in the wood."

"I have neither come to visit you solely from the wish to see you, nor with the idea of sport," answered the young farmer, in a deep and manly voice, "my chief motive is to persuade you, my dear brother-in-law, to withdraw your application for the pastorate in the Odenwald, and to delay moving until there is a vacant Cure either near the capital, or in it. My uncle Zettler, who is now Consistorial President, has promised to secure the first vacant charge for you."

"Impossible! Both Lina and I should certainly have liked to be in the vicinity of our parents, and I have often an eager thirst for good music, but I am a bad hand at the new orthodoxy of the day, and the eager discussions as to whether a sermon is according to strict church principles. Among my fellow-workers in the Church, there is an incessant feverish anxiety for the souls of their mutual parishioners, inducing them to exchange religious exhortations, which appears to me a very vainglorious system. It is with that, like education; the less teaching parents bestow on their children, the more incessantly they talk on the subject. Live a good life, and a pious one, and you can train up both your children and your parishioners, without possessing much learning, and without such endless wear and tear of care and anxiety. I know that I teach a pure faith so far as my ability goes, and moreover, I am averse to all innovations. We must grow old along with those on whom we wish to impress our doctrines. In a well organized government, a man remains in the same situation, but is gradually promoted in his office. I only applied for the vacant Cure in the Odenwald because I feel that I am becoming too old for the dissensions and strife which prevail here, and also because I have not the power to prevent a piece of cruelty at which my heart revolts—but now, let us sing."

He rose, went to the piano, and began the symphony of his favourite melody, and his wife and her young brother sang, with well taught voices, the duet from Titus—"Joy and sorrow let us share."

The two voices, blending harmoniously in this impressive melody, were like friendly hands clasped, or a cordial embrace.

While they were singing, a sound like the cracking of a whip seemed to ascend from the road before the house, but they did not pay much attention to it, mutually agreeing that it must be a delusion on their part. Now, however, that the song was at an end, the sound of a carriage and the loud cracking of a whip were distinctly heard. The pastor's wife opened the window, and putting out her head, into the dark night air, called out "Is any one there?"

"Yes, indeed," answered a gruff voice.

She closed the window quickly, for a current of biting icy air rushed in and made the singer's cheeks all in a glow. Her brother wished to look out also to see who it was, but his anxious sister held him back, as he was so heated by singing. She sent the maid down, and in the mean time, bewailed the possibility of her husband being, perhaps, obliged to go out on such a night.

The maid quickly returned, saying that a sledge had come from Röttmann's godless old wife, who desired that the clergyman should come to her immediately.

"Is Adam here, or a servant?" asked the pastor.

"A servant."

"Tell him to come in, and to take something warm till I am ready."

His wife implored him not to expose his life to danger for the sake of such a wicked old dragon: even by daylight it was dangerous at this time of year to drive to Röttmann's house, and how much worse by night!

"If a doctor must go to attend his patient, in spite of wind and weather, how much more am I bound to do so!" answered the pastor.

The servant came into the room, and the pastor gave him a glass of punch saying, "Is your mistress dangerously ill?"

"No, not so bad exactly—at least she can still scold and curse bravely."

The pastor's wife entreated him afresh, at least to wait till it was daylight, saying she would take the responsibility on herself, if the formidable Röttmännin left the world without spiritual aid; but she seemed well aware that her persuasions would be quite unavailing, for while eagerly

entreating him to remain, she was pouring some kirsch into a straw flask, and having fetched a large sheepskin cloak, she placed the flask in one of its pockets. The young farmer wished to go with his brother-in-law, but he declined, saying, as he went out, "Pray stay at home, and go to bed early: if you were to go with me you would probably become hoarse, and I hope we shall sing a great deal together while the holidays last—that beautiful melody of Mozart's will accompany me on the way."

The brother and sister, however, went together to the front of the house, where the pastor got into the sledge; his wife wrapping his feet closely in a large woollen rug, and saying reproachfully to the driver, "Why did not you bring a carriage instead of a sledge?"

"Because the snow is quite deep at our house."

"That is just like you all up there; you never think of how things are elsewhere, or whether the jolting of these frozen and rough roads may not break people's limbs. Drive slow as far as Harzeneck: be very careful, Otto: pray get out and walk up the hill at Otterzwang. But perhaps you had better sit still, for you might catch cold: may Heaven protect you!"

"Good night!" said her husband, and his voice sounded quite hollow from under all his mufflings: the horses trotted off with the sledge, which was heard jolting and rumbling all along the village. The brother and sister then went back into the house.

"I can't tell you how much good it does me to see and to hear your husband again," said the young man to his sister, when they were once more in the sitting-room. "It seems to me, that, as he becomes older, his pure and pious nature becomes more developed—or does this proceed from my being now better able to appreciate him?"

His sister smiled, and said, "You are certainly sincerely attached to my husband, but you cannot fully know his pure soul and pious heart; people may say he is not sufficiently observant of church forms and ceremonies, but he is a church in himself; piety prevails through his example; he needs do no more than simply live here, to exercise a beneficial influence; his gentle disposition, his untiring love and strict integrity, cause all those who witness his daily life to become good and pious: and his style of preaching is just the same; his soul is in every phrase; every word is sound grain; he is well treated by all, and never meets with rudeness or incivility. The painter Schwarzmann, near this, who once stayed a week with us, and saw the respectful behaviour of the rude peasantry towards him, said a good thing on the subject: 'Our Pastor seems to prevail on every man, to think in pure German in his presence, and not in patois.' Formerly it used to distress me very much, to think that such a man was destined to pass his life in this obscure place, among a set of illiterate peasants; but I have since that time learned that the highest cultivation of intellect, which is after all as simple as the Bible itself, is here in its right and fitting place."

It would not be easy to say which was the greatest—the enthusiasm with which the sister spoke, or that of the brother in listening to her; so difficult is it to determine, whether a good heart rejoices most in contemplating perfect felicity, or in possessing it. There is a kind of happiness attainable, not by one only, but by all who are capable of enjoying it, and that is the appreciation and love of a pure and pious heart.

"I know where he is now," continued the sister, fixing her eyes as if on some distant object; "he has passed the great elm, and by this time they are driving on to Harzeneck, where there is always a bitter blast. Wrap yourself well up; I believe you will convert that fierce hard woman at last; I do believe you will, for what is there you cannot do? and I believe you will yet marry Adam to Martina, and then we shall remain happily where we are."

The brother scarcely liked to interrupt his sister's reverie, but at last he asked, "Who is the fierce Röttmännin, and who are Adam and Martina?"

"Sit down here beside me, and I will tell you. I could not sleep if I were to go to bed, till I know that Otto is under shelter."

CHAPTER III.

THE FIERCE RÖTTMÄNNER.

"There is a fierce, savage race of men in these mountains, who are almost fiends. Many a strange tale is told of these wild Röttmänner."

"Let me hear them."

"They are great rough boors, and they pride themselves on the stories related for generations back of their prodigious strength, and as they are wealthy, they can do pretty much what they

please. The father of the Röttmann, whose wife Otto is gone to-night to visit, is reported to have had so powerful a voice, that once when he shouted to a forester, the man staggered back. His chief pleasure consisted in rolling up into balls, the tin plates used at dinner at different inns. The present Röttmann, when he went to a dance, was in the habit of stuffing into his long pockets a dozen of the heavy iron axes, used for splitting wood, called *Speidel* by the country people, so that every one got out of his way, and left him ample space to dance. His greatest delight was to dance for twenty-four hours without stopping; this was only amusement to him, and in the pauses between the dances, he drank quart after quart of wine unceasingly. In order to ascertain, however, how much he had drunk, and what he had to pay, he tore off a button each time, first off his red waistcoat, and then off his coat, and redeemed them at the end of the evening from the landlord. His old father, with the stentorian voice, once forbade him to remain all day at a wedding at Wenger, but, on the contrary, enjoined on him to mow down a grass meadow in the valley of Otterzwang. The Röttmänner have always enforced the strictest discipline among themselves. The obedient son followed his father's injunctions. Danced like mad all night, and in the morning, the loud voiced father, coming into the meadow, heard music, 'What is that? a man mowing, and he looks so strange?' The father comes nearer, sees his son mowing busily according to his orders, but carrying a basket on his back, and in the basket a fiddler, playing indefatigably, till the meadow was mown from end to end, and then he danced back to the Wenger wedding with the fiddler on his back. There is a proverb, that anything may be stolen, except a mill-stone and a bar of red-hot iron; but Speidel-Röttmann did once steal a mill-stone, or at least displace it. Wishing to play a trick to the forest-miller, he rolled the mill-stone one night half-way up the hill. Speidel-Röttmann had two sons, Vincent and Adam; the eldest, Vincent, was not particularly strong, but as sharp and spiteful as a lynx; a quality he inherited from his mother, for the Röttmanns, though untamed and fierce, are not malicious. It seems that Vincent tormented the wood-cutters like a slave-driver. One day he was killed by the falling of a tree. It was said, and the former clergyman always declared it was so, that the wood-cutters had killed him on purpose. Since that day the mother, who never, was of a kindly nature, has become a perfect dragon, and would gladly poison every one. She is the only person who cordially hates my husband, for she wished him to question closely every dying peasant to whom he might be summoned, whether he had anything to confess with regard to Vincent's murder. The tree that caused Vincent's death lay long untouched in the wood, but one day the Röttmännin gave orders that its branches should be lopped off. She hid herself, unperceived by the wood cutters, in order to watch them, and to listen to all they said, but she got no information. Speidel-Röttmann, as the trunk was the finest tree in the forest, wished to send it floating down the Rhine, for he said,—'a tree is a tree, and money is money; why should the tree be left to rot on the ground, because it chanced to cause Vincent's death?' His wife, however, was of a different opinion. She collected the branches into a great heap, to which she set fire, and burned the clothes of the dead man in it, shouting out, 'May those who murdered my Vincent, burn hereafter like these clothes in this bonfire!' Six horses and ten oxen tried to drag the tree into the courtyard of the house, but they could only move it a little way, for the roads are not good enough to admit of so huge a tree being dragged up hill. It was, therefore, sawn into three pieces, and these three monstrous logs are still lying in the court, close to the door. The Röttmännin always declares that the tree is waiting till a gallows and a funeral pile are required, to hang and to burn the murderer of her Vincent. She often sits at the window, muttering to the logs of wood, as if telling them some secret; and when she sees any stranger tumble over them, she laughs with delight. She also caused a group of figures to be erected, in memory of the murdered man, close to the footpath which leads down from Hohlzobel to the forest mill, though this is a custom peculiar to Catholics alone in our neighbourhood. Yonder, deep in the centre of the wood, Vincent met his death. The only son left is Adam, and she uses him worse than a step-child; it is said, that she beats him as if he were still a child, and he makes no resistance, though he has already proved that he is a genuine Röttmann, and won a singular title, for he is known in the whole country as *The Horse*. He went once to get his horse shod by the smith, whom he found bargaining with a Briesgau peasant about the exchange of a horse: the horse was harnessed to a large two-wheeled waggon, laden with sacks of peas. The Briesgau peasant said: 'There is not such a horse in the world, he is drawing a load that would require three common horses to draw.'

"'Oh! ho!' exclaimed Adam, who was standing by, in so loud and gruff a voice that the Briesgauer tumbled right over his load, but luckily fell against his horse. 'Oh! ho! I will make you a bet that I carry the waggon and the peas in three loads to the Crown inn yonder. Will you conclude the bargain, if I succeed in doing this?'

"'I will—done!' said the peasant.

"The horse was taken out of the waggon, Adam filled a large counterpane with the peas and carried them to the inn, and then, seizing the framework of the cart, he carried it in the same way to its destination; and, finally, took the two great wheels on his shoulders, and deposited them in the inn-yard: 'Which is the strongest, your horse or I?' asked he of the peasant; and this is why he is called *The Horse*.

"The manner in which Speidel-Röttmann made known his son's extraordinary feat of strength shows his vainglorious, boasting disposition: he is far from being a bad man, only a swaggerer of the first class. The day after Adam's bet there was a fair in the town, and the smith from our village met Speidel-Röttmann at an inn, and related the circumstances I have told you. Speidel-Röttmann said, 'I will give you a bottle of the best wine in this cellar, if you will go down to the street, and shout to me up at the window the story you have just told me;' and so he did. Speidel-

Röttmann leant at his ease on the window-cushion, and all the people listened in amazement to the story the smith was shouting out. Speidel-Röttmann is very fond of his son, and very proud of him, but he dare not venture to show this before his wife, more especially for the last seven years.

"Yonder, above the ford—we can see the cottage from our window—lives a Schilder, or wood-turner, nicknamed Schilder-David. He is a worthy man, though one of the poorest in the village, but he would rather starve than accept of assistance from any one. Moreover, he is a great searcher of Holy Writ. Light is seen later in his cottage than in any other house in the village, and that is very significant for so poor a man. He has a Bible, that he has read through sixteen times, from the first syllable to the last, both of the Old and the New Testament. I saw the Bible once, and the leaves looked very much crumpled and worn, for David always reads with four fingers on the page. On the first leaf of the Bible he regularly marks down the date when he begins to read it afresh, and the day when he has read it through. The longest period is rather more than two years; three times, however, he read it from beginning to end within the year; that was when his three daughters emigrated; another time, when his hand was so severely injured, that it was thought it must be amputated; and, last of all, the year in which his grandson Joseph was born. In his youth, he is said to have been very jovial and merry, and he knew every kind of song, and once, by his singing, he got a stock of firewood. On one occasion, he came to the father of Speidel-Röttmann to buy wood: Old Röttmann, being in good humour, said, 'David, for every song you sing me I will give you a Klaft or bundle of wood, and I will send it to your house for you—so, that's a bargain.' David sung so many songs, that he sung two cartloads of wood into his house; therefore, he is called Klaffer-David—but he does not like to be reminded of that name now-a-days.

"The wife of Schilder-David is one of those persons whose nature it is to sleep away the greater part of their lives; who walk about and regularly finish their work, but not a single word is ever said about them, either for good or evil. We have here an unusual number of such persons. Moreover, the wife of Schilder-David has been for some years almost stone-deaf. They had five daughters, all straight, tall girls, and even when they were children, stout and active. Schilder-David always said, 'they are for the sea,' which meant emigrating to America; and, indeed, four of his daughters are gone to America, two with their husbands, and two unmarried, but they married there soon after their arrival; one, died lately, but the other is well to do in the world, and yet Schilder-David is constantly longing to see his children, and often says—"That America is a new species of dragon that robs us of our children.' The best thing he could do, would be to emigrate himself, for his lot here is hard enough, but formerly he could not make up his mind, and now it is impossible for him to go.

"His youngest daughter, Martina, was the especial pride of her father, for she was always at the head of the school. You have no idea what a character that gives a child in a village; a girl, especially, acquires a certain degree of pride in consequence, and is respected by others, and looked up to, even when her school years are over. She was a good, clever child. When she came here to be prepared for her confirmation, she always rubbed her shoes carefully on the mat, and persuaded the other children to do the same, in order not to soil the stairs or the rooms, and she and her companions insisted on sweeping out the church themselves, before the day of Confirmation. When she stood before the altar, she looked much older than her years; I never saw a prettier creature, and piety encircled her head like a halo. She often came to the parsonage to see us. My husband was particularly fond of the child, and he told me that on the day after the confirmation he met Martina in the fields, and she said that she felt now as if she had left her home; and indeed, shortly afterwards she was sent away from her parents' house. She was just sixteen when she entered into the service of the Röttmanns. They give good wages, and must do so, because no one can stay more than a year with that ill-tempered, fierce woman. Martina, however, remained with them for two years,—"

The pastor's wife was interrupted in her narrative by a strange echo of tinkling of bells in the village.

"What is that?" asked Edward.

"It is the troop of donkeys from the forest mill. The public road to the mill is very broad, but the donkeys are conveying corn and flour along the narrow footpaths, up and down the hills. I should like to have sent a message to Tony by the miller's man, but now it is too late."

Not till after repeated entreaties on the part of her brother, did his sister recommence her story.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTINA'S RETURN HOME.

"On the Saturday afternoon of a midsummer's day a woman was crouching behind a rock, overhanging that part of the stream where there is a black whirlpool. The sempstress Leegart chanced to be passing by on her way home from the forest mill, wishing to see the spot where she once lost her way.

"Leegart is full of superstition, though no one says more against it than she does. When on that Saturday she arrived at the rock and saw the figure cowering down behind it, she gave a loud scream. 'What can that be crouching in the bright light like a spectre? It is Martina!' She rose, and looking piteously at Leegart, told her that she had intended to drown herself, but that she must live for her child's sake; but when it was born she resolved to die. Leegart quickly promised to be godmother, for the belief hereabouts is, that a child for whom a godmother is promised before its birth, comes happily into the world, and even if it dies it is sure to be happy. Leegart never ceased talking to Martina, and striving to console her, till at last she persuaded her to go with her to the village.

"This took place in the afternoon; I was sitting with my husband in the garden, when suddenly we heard from the opposite side of the river, a shrill scream of agony that seemed to pierce our ears; and scarcely had we hurried out of the arbour than Leegart rushed up to us as pale as death, and said: 'Herr Pastor, for God's sake lose not a moment in going to Schilder-David's, for he will murder Martina, I fear.'

"I wished to go with my husband, but he told me to stay where I was, and went himself as quickly as possible. Leegart nearly swooned away, but luckily there was still a cup of coffee to spare, and when it had revived her she told me that Martina had come home in shame and disgrace. When David, who was cutting wood before his door, saw her, and heard the sad truth, he raised his axe with the intention of splitting his daughter's skull. The neighbours, however, rushed up to him in time to snatch the axe from him, but he was still standing on the threshold of his door, threatening to strangle Martina if she attempted to come under his roof. Martina fell down on the doorstep; some women carried her into the house, and when she revived and saw her confirmation certificate hanging on the wall of the room framed under glass, she uttered such a loud, piercing scream, that we had heard it even at this distance; and she again relapsed into a dead faint. At last she was restored, but David called out, 'Don't bring her to life again, for out she shall go as soon as she can move. Oh Lord, strike me blind! accursed be my eyes! America deprived me of my other children, and now! now!' ... He made a rush at Martina; the neighbours, however, held him back, and Leegart hurried away to call my husband. We waited long before my husband came back. He brought David with him, supporting him on his arm, for David was groping like a blind man; he had pressed down his hat over his eyes, and kept saying, 'Herr Pastor, shut me up—do! for I am no longer master of myself—my child, my best, my only child. She was a crown to me, as her confirmation said, and now—Oh, Heavenly Father, why is it Thy will thus to try me? It was not to be. I was not to reach the grave without this severe burden. Oh, Herr Pastor, to see a child even enjoy its food seems more pleasant than to do so yourself. Oh! how long do we tend our little child, and care for it, and rejoice in its health and strength, and hearing it say good and pleasant words; and glad when it comes from school and has learnt something useful; glad when it gathers wood, and sings and is merry—and then comes a man, and lays waste all this happiness! My other children live, but they are emigrants, and are no good to me; my Martina stayed at home, she is still before my eyes, but is worse than dead. When a child is virtuous we are doubly happy, but a wicked child can make a father not only doubly, but a thousandfold miserable. I keep racking my brain and I cannot, cannot find out where my fault has been, and yet I must be to blame, and now my good name—'Here he saw me, and almost sinking down he exclaimed with a burst of convulsive sobs, 'Frau Pastorin, you always loved her well; she has given me my death blow—I feel it.'

"He could evidently scarcely sustain himself, we brought him into the house, and there he remained nearly unconscious for more than an hour; he covered his face with his hands, and large tears were seen trickling down through his fingers.

"At last he rose, and standing erect by a strong effort, he said:

"May God reward you, Herr Pastor. Here is my hand; may I die an evil death if I harm my Martina—'here he was interrupted by his tears, which flowed afresh at this name—'if my Martina suffers through me either by word or deed. God has punished me through her; I must, indeed, be a miserable sinner. I was too proud of my children, and more especially of her, and she is now wretched enough; I will sin against fatherly love no more.'

"My husband wished to go home with him, but he firmly declined this.

"I must learn to pass along the street alone with this stain of shame. I have been too proud. My head is bowed down till the hour when I descend into the grave. A thousand thanks, Herr Pastor. May God reward you!'

"The man whose gait had been hitherto so proud and erect, now crept home a miserable object. When he was gone my husband related to me the frightful scene he had witnessed. Those present, however, told me afterwards that my husband had shown the most unexampled patience and gentleness towards David, who was in a state of raging fury, exclaiming frantically: 'I am like Job. Oh God! strike me dumb, in order that I may no longer curse myself and the whole world—but there is no justice, none in heaven, and none on earth.'

"My husband at length succeeded in pacifying him, but when David was at last gone, I never saw my husband so worn out and exhausted as on that occasion.

"Leegart kept her promise, and was godmother to little Joseph; and his father, Adam Röttmann, was also present at his baptism.

"Adam had a fine life of it at home, for daring to go to the village, and from that time he was watched, and imprisoned like a malefactor, the old Röttmännin having complaisant spies every where in her pay, for she does not grudge money for her own purposes.

"Schilder-David had always been a regular church goer, but after the unwished for birth of his grandson he was two months without going to church; when he heard the bells ringing for divine service, he never failed to lament afresh over his dishonour, which prevented him being able to go to church; but when no one was looking, he liked to carry his grandchild about the room. The boy seemed to have won all his love; he had the child constantly in his arms, and watched over him like a mother. On Sundays and holidays he was to be seen for hours beside the garden hedge yonder; grandfather and grandson passing into the fields, and standing watching the waterfall; indeed the old man gave up smoking to please the child, whereas formerly he never moved without a pipe in his mouth; and when the boy could run alone, he was his constant companion, and used to lead him by the hand. If the boy is playing with other children and sees his grandfather, he runs away from all his games, and cannot be prevailed on to leave his grandfather's side. Indeed, if a child could be so easily spoiled, David would have ruined his grandson by his vanity, for his only pleasure in life is hearing praise of the boy; he is constantly repeating all the wise sayings of little Joseph, and boasting of how cleverly the boy can talk. Although David is very conscientious, still he is not at all aware how many things he invents for the child which he never uttered, and then he usually winds up by saying, 'Wait till the boy is twenty years older, and then the whole country will talk of my Joseph, and all he knows.'

"I lately heard an instance of the strange ideas of this singular boy. On the same day, a child died in this neighbourhood, and one was born; and little Joseph said: 'Grandfather, isn't it true that when we are born, we fall asleep in Heaven, and awake on earth; and when we die, we fall asleep on earth, and awake in Heaven?'

"Little Joseph is also generally present when his grandfather is talking with his neighbours, so in this way he hears of all the various events and quarrels in the village, and knows all its secret history."

"Why do you say nothing of Martina?" interrupted Edward.

"There is very little to relate about her; she lives a quiet but busy life; ready to lend her aid to any family in sorrow or in need; she talks very little, and is devoted with the most tender love to her father, and he repays her by the love he shows towards little Joseph."

"And the father of the boy, Adam? what of him?"

"He also lives very retired, and, as I told you, he is almost kept a prisoner at home by his parents. He makes no resistance, and seems to think he has made all the reparation in his power, by uniformly declaring that, if he is not allowed to marry Martina, he will never marry at all. The parents anxiously strive to induce Martina to give him up. Very tempting offers have been made to her, and very respectable wooers have come forward, whom old Röttmann has offered to provide with a good sum of money, but she will not for a moment listen to such proposals, and her invariable answer is, 'I could easily get a good husband, but my Joseph can get no other father than Adam, even if he wished it.' A cousin of Martina's, a shoemaker, who is very well off, and a bachelor, appears resolved not to marry until he is quite sure that Martina will not have him. He is called in the village Häspele, and indeed I do not know his real name. On festival nights he helps the girls to wind off the yarn that they have spun, on hasps, and therefore he has got the nickname of Häspele. He is a goodnatured creature, and every year consecutively, plays the part of the carnival Merryandrew. Wherever he goes, the whole year through, people expect him to play the buffoon, which he is quite willing to do; his appearance and manners are so droll, that it is scarcely possible to know when he is in jest, or when in earnest; particularly as he has a very red nose, which looks just as if it was painted. He is sincerely attached to Martina, who has also a great regard for him, but only the kind of liking that all the other girls in the village have; she will never marry him; indeed, no one thinks that any one would marry Häspele.—God be praised!" said the Pastorin, breaking off her story, "my husband must be by this time under shelter of the Röttmanns' roof, if no accident has occurred—and God forbid there should! It would be the most precious Christmas boon to me, the most cheering commemoration of this holy season, if my husband could soften the Röttmännin's hard heart; her husband, Speidel-Röttmann, would soon come round then: in that case I think there is little doubt, that we should remain here, and gladly too. For it was the sad story of Martina and Adam which at last turned the scale, and made my husband resolve to quit this parish. These hard hearted Röttmänner are never at rest, and have at last contrived that everything should be prepared tomorrow for the betrothal of Adam with Tony, the daughter of the Forest Miller. She lately had a young stepmother placed over her, and is resolved to leave home, no matter whither. She is the only girl of respectable family who would accept Adam. The Forest Miller and Röttmann, these two families are the most highly respected; or what is the same thing nearly, the richest, in the whole district. I must say that, for my part, I could not bear to see Adam go to church with the Forest Miller's Tony. It is

hard on my husband to stand in his pulpit, and to pour out his inmost heart before his congregation, and to preach faith, and piety, and goodness, and to know, that there are people sitting even in the best pews in the church, whom he can't help seeing, and to whom all he says appears but empty words.

"Listen! the watchman is calling twelve. Otto is certainly arrived by this time, and I feel sure he will do good. Come, let us go to rest also."

CHAPTER V.

A DAY OF TROUBLE.

The whole night through, Martina continued as restless as if she knew by intuition that, at this very time, a kind and honest heart had revived the sad story of her life. She was full of impatience, and felt as if she must rush out into the world, in order suddenly to change the whole course of her life—as if it were in her power to accomplish this! The cocks crowed more loudly, and occasionally a cow was heard lowing, and a dog barking. Surely day would soon dawn now.

Martina rose, and lighted the stove, and made a good fire on the hearth besides. She was anxious that the soup for breakfast should be particularly good today, for the sempstress, Leegart, was to arrive early, as little Joseph was to get a new green jacket of Manchester cloth. A slate was lying on the table, on which little Joseph had on the previous evening drawn a gigantic figure of a man, formidable to be seen, and yet the child had said "Look! that is my father." Martina could not help thinking this strange, as she rubbed out the figure. She wished she could as easily efface from the child's memory what she had told him the night before when he was going to sleep, about his father, and that he was to come this very day; that was probably why the child during the night had called out three times, "Is it morning yet?" Martina gazed long at the blazing fire, and half unconsciously sung:—

Faithful love my bosom fills,—
Can true love ever fade?
Oh! what a smile that heart must wear
That never was betrayed!

I cannot brook the heedless gaze
Of them that haunt the busy mart;
And tears come welling to my eyes,
Up from the fountains of my heart.

When Martina, with the pitcher in her hand, opened the door, a strong blast of bitter cold wind rushed in; so she wrapped herself more closely: in the red shawl, with which she had covered her head and her throat, and went along to the well. The day was biting cold, and the water pipes all frozen; indeed there was no water left unfrozen, except in the deep well close to the church. A crowd of women and girls were standing round the well, and when the pitchers were too full, so that the water ran over, there was a great outcry, for the water froze so quickly that it made the ground like slippery ice. The early sun peeped forth for a minute into the valley, but apparently the sight did not please him, for he quickly disappeared again behind the clouds. The fields and meadows were glittering brightly with morning hoarfrost, a chilling sight; for everything freezes quickly when without a sheltering cover of snow. A thick surface of snow, however, lay on the hills.

"God be praised; you will see that these clouds will bring honest snow at last, today!"

"A blessing for the fields, for it is a sorrow to see them so yellow."

"We have always hitherto had snow at Christmas, and sledging at the New Year—" this was the kind of talk round the well. The words of the speakers issued like vapoury clouds from their lips.

"Is it true?" said an elderly woman to Martina when she joined them, "Is it true that our pastor was called to your mother-in-law's last night?"

"I think," said another, "that Röttmann would have no objection to saw up the tree that killed Vincent, and to make a coffin of it for his tigress."

"A very good thing if she were to take herself off, and then you would get your Adam."

"And then we should have a quiet Röttmännin instead of a fierce one."

"If I were you, I would pray the old woman to death. The tailor of Knuslingen knows a prayer,

by which you can pray a person to death."

"No, no; you must curse them to death."

This was the discursive talk that went round. Martina, who had filled her pitcher with water, and lifted it on her head, only replied, "Don't speak in so godless a way, remember that tonight is Christmas Eve."

She went slowly homewards, as if the words, that still sounded in her ears, made her linger behind, and she shivered when it occurred to her that perhaps little Joseph had a presentiment of what was going on so far from him, and that this had made him so restless. She had inwardly reproached Adam with not suffering as she did, and at that very hour, he was perhaps enduring the most severe trial that can befall any human being—that of seeing the person you love best on earth draw their last breath with bitter hatred in their soul.

The group of women standing round the well seemed to be in no hurry, for some were leaning on their full pitchers, and some had placed them on their heads, but all were talking of Martina.

"Martina would gladly go to the parsonage today."

"She is a strange creature. Old Röttmann offered her two thousand guilders if she would give up all claims for her boy on his father, but she refused at once."

"And old Schilder-David refuses also."

"Good morning, Häspele," said some one hastily; "what are your hens doing? are they all safe and sound?"

"Is it true that you have a long-legged bird that crows in Spanish? Can you understand him?"

This was the mode of greeting to the only man who came to the well with a pitcher. It was Häspele. He wore a grey knitted jacket, and had a coloured nightcap on his head, from underneath which a jovial, merry face was seen, full of fun and good humour.

"Martina was here a few minutes ago; she is sure to come back soon," said one of the women, as she went away.

Häspele smiled his thanks, but was obliged to wait till all the women had filled their pitchers, which he did willingly, and was even goodnatured enough to help the others. Just as he had finished drawing water for himself, Martina returned, on which they mutually assisted each other, and walked a considerable way together, for Häspele was obliged to pass Martina's house, in order to reach his own. So, as they went along, Martina informed her companion that the Pastor had been summoned on the preceding night to the Röttmännin, and was not yet come home. She could not resist expressing her hope, that the Pastor might possibly succeed in softening the old woman's hard heart; but Häspele said, "Oh, do not think so. Sooner would the wolf now prowling about our woods come to my room and allow me to chain him up, as I do my goat, than the fierce Röttmännin give way. I told you already all that occurred, when I took home a new pair of boots eight days ago to Adam, and I gave you a message, that he would certainly come to see you today. I myself believe the report, which is, that you intend to set him free." Martina made no answer, but she suddenly stopped before the door of her house, and said, "Look, here comes our Pastor home."

On the opposite side of the river, for Martina's house was on this side of the ferry, a sledge was slowly driven along the high road. A man was seated beside the driver, closely wrapped in a fur cloak, and a fur cap drawn very forward over his face. The driver was comfortably smoking, and made a friendly sign with his whip to Martina, as they passed. It was one of Röttmann's farm-servants whom she knew. She returned the greeting by waving her hand, and went into the house, while Häspele also went homewards.

Just as Martina was about to shut the door, a female voice exclaimed, "Leave it open, for I want to come in too."

"Good morning, Leegart; it is so good of you to come so early," said Martina; and the sempstress, who, in spite of its being winter, wore slippers with high heels, helped to put aside the water cans, for which service Martina thanked her cordially. Leegart would not have done this for most people; any one whom she assisted in any matter unconnected with her work, might well be very proud; she considered it indeed, quite an especial favour to come at all the very day before Christmas, for she was much in request among all the women in the neighbourhood, and wherever she went to work, she was held in high respect. This feeling was evident now, from the manner in which Martina threw open the house door as wide as possible, for her to enter; she received, however, but a cool welcome within doors, for little Joseph exclaimed: "Woe's me, Leegart!"

CHAPTER VI.

HOW A VILLAGE PASTOR WAS SUMMONED TO COURT.

The Pastor's wife had been standing a long time at the window, looking earnestly through the panes of glass; the road was only to be seen from a corner window, the view from the others being intercepted by the sharp gables of a projecting barn, which a peasant, from the wish to annoy a former pastor, had built on the spot; adding an unusually high roof, to block out all view from the Parsonage. Now that there was a clergyman whom they all liked, the barn unluckily could not be removed. The Pastor's wife was not able to see very far even from the unobstructed window, for this was one of those days, when twilight seems to prevail from one night to another; the sun shone dimly, like a watery yellow ball, through the thick clouds which now overspread the whole landscape. When the Pastorin saw the sledge close to the house she nodded, but did not open the window, standing still as if fixed to the spot. She would gladly have run down to welcome her husband, but she knew that he disliked any public display of emotion or excitement; he was of a shy and simple nature, and shrunk from all eager welcomes or agitated leave takings.

She sent the maid down however instantly, who quickly pressing the latch opened the house door. In order to do something, the Pastorin once more arranged the cups and the bread, though all was in perfect readiness; she took up her husband's well warmed slippers, lying beside the stove, and turned them the reverse way; she took the kettle with boiling water off the stove, and poured in fresh water. A pleasant warmth was diffused through the room, for people who live on the mountains understand this art.

"Good morning, Lina," said the Pastor, as he at last entered the room, "God be praised, indeed, that I have got home again!" He unfastened his fur cloak, and, as it was heavy, his wife assisted him.

"Is Edward still asleep?"

"No; he is gone out shooting. I sent him to meet you. Did you not see him?"

"No."

The atmosphere of the room seemed too stifling for the Pastor, for he opened the window, stood beside it for a few minutes, and then said: "It was lucky that you did not know about the wolf, prowling about in the wood, that all the people are in search of; perhaps you might have imagined that the monster would swallow me up."

"Come, sit down and warm yourself," answered his wife, pouring him out a cup of hot coffee. "I will hold the cup for you; I see that your fingers are so stiff from cold, that you can't take it yourself. Swallow only a couple of mouthfuls at first. What was the cause of your being sent for, in the middle of the night, to that fierce old woman, the Röttmännin? No, no; first drink your coffee, and you can answer me at your leisure. I can wait."

"Lina," said the Pastor, a singular smile stealing over his face, "Lina, you may well be proud. I must be one of the most agreeable companions in the world. Ah! this coffee is capital. Only think, Lina! it was just one o'clock, for I heard it strike on the Wenger clock when I arrived at Röttmannshof. My reception there was rather noisy, for I was greeted by such an uproarious welcome, that I could really scarcely get out of the sledge. The good people had unchained all the watch-dogs during the night, saying it was not at all necessary to tie them up when the Pastor was coming; the worthy souls really entertaining the strange superstition, that the word of God is a sure defence against vicious dogs, even in the dark. It was some time, therefore, before I could make my way into the house, as all the dogs were first obliged to be shut up in their kennels. Give me another cup of coffee, Lina, it is so good—"

"Well, and what then?" said his wife.

The Pastor looked at her with a smile, and continued—

"The snow in that country comes up to the knees, but it has at least one good property; that of being clean, though it does wet one to the skin in the most remarkable manner. I luckily did not stumble over the huge logs in the yard, hidden in the snow, and the puddles were so obliging as to be frozen over. 'Where is your master?' said I. 'He is in bed.' 'Is he dangerously ill also?' 'No, he is asleep.' 'Really! I am summoned to his dying wife, and the husband is comfortably sleeping:' a very easy going, pleasant world this is, thought I: well, I went straight to the sick woman's room—'God be praised! Herr Pastor, that you are come at last.' What! that is not surely the voice of a woman at the point of death? I asked why I had been summoned in the middle of the night. 'Oh! my good Herr Pastor,' said the Röttmännin, 'you are so kind, so very kind, and have the art of conversing and instructing so delightfully, that the very sight of you is reviving, and makes me entirely forget my dangerous state. Here have I been lying for seven nights, scarcely able to close my eyes, and I can't tell you how bored and tired I am. I thought the time would never pass, so I just sent for you. You are so good natured, Herr Pastor, I thought you would sit and talk to me for a while and amuse me—my husband must on no account hear that I sent for you, I am not at all in his good graces at present; he goes from home as often as he can, and even when he stays with

me, he scarcely says one word; I believe he would have been very glad if I had died long ago, and as for my only child, Adam, he seems scarcely to know that I am in the world. Oh! Herr Pastor! any one obliged as I am to lie here day and night, in this solitary house, unable to do anything, would feel, like me, every day that passes to be an eternity, and every night even worse. If my Vincent were still alive he would have watched by me day and night; he would have nursed me in a way in which no other human being ever can. So my good kind Pastor, sit down here and talk to me. Would you like a glass of good Wachhold brandy? it will warm you, you must take it, and shall positively not refuse. Käty, take down that long-necked green bottle from the shelf, the one farthest back, and give a glass of brandy to the Pastor.' What do you think were my feelings, Lina, when I heard the woman so coolly pouring forth all these fluent speeches?"

"I should have had great difficulty in refraining from very hard words to such a bold evil creature. Quite too bad! To drag you out of your own house, on a cold December night, over snowy mountains."

"And a wolf wandering about, too," said the Pastor, indignantly.

"Don't talk about a wolf," rejoined Lina hastily, "this Röttmännin is the most ferocious wolf of all. I hope you gave her your opinion."

"Assuredly I did—may I be a little vain between ourselves? I must say then, that never in my life was I better pleased with myself. I own I could scarcely help laughing at her cool impertinence, and her childish want of consideration, for children are just so; they only think of themselves, and not of the sacrifices they exact from others. Say what you will, there is a certain degree of simplicity in the selfishness of the Röttmännin; she thinks only of herself and never of others. Of course I did not fail to tell her that it was rather an arbitrary proceeding, so coolly to dispose of a person's night's rest, and that I did not even feel flattered by her esteeming my conversation so highly, and sending a court equipage for me, commanding me to appear at court. Still, as I was actually there and had lost my night's sleep, I conversed with her, and tried to amuse her, so far as my powers permitted, and she took her share in the conversation, relating to me various anecdotes of good and evil; but she evidently preferred the latter, her chief delight being in detailing all sorts of bad actions, to prove the wickedness of the world, and she always wound up by saying:—'Before I die, there is one favour I ask of God; which is to give me some sign as to Vincent's murderers, that they may be all hanged and burned, even supposing half the village were included.' You know that when she begins on this subject, she is full of vindictive projects; and yet I have pretty good proof that she had no great love for Vincent while he was alive. Now, however, she speaks of him with the most enthusiastic fondness, and as if all her love were buried in his grave, for no heart is so entirely evil that it does not seek some valid reason for such bitterness; striving to prove that it had been devoted to some particular object, for whose sake all else is to be disregarded. I tried to appeal to her conscience by saying, that it was certainly permitted to love the dead, but that nothing more could be done to benefit them, whereas a great deal might be done for the living; and that she ought, at last, to yield about the affair of Adam and Martina, I depicted to her the delight she would take in her grandson; I tried to persuade her, that in reality she had sent for me on this very account, but felt a certain reluctance to own this honestly to me, but—I do believe a wolf must be lurking very near there—the Röttmännin broke out into a loud howl, that she could only have learned from a wolf; it really made me shudder with horror, and I thought to myself, she will die on the spot, for sure am I that her rage will choke her; she clutched the wall in her fury, and scratched it with her nails, and at last sank back; however she very soon started up again, and exclaimed: 'I thank God that I am still alive, and I trust He will spare my life for many a year to come, that, even if I cannot leave my bed, I may still have strength to cry out and to protest, and with my last breath I will cry out and protest, that never, never shall that miserable beggar's daughter, who herself led my Adam astray, become the mistress of this house. Why, in these days, are there no longer men to be found, to send out of the world such a wretched creature, and her child into the bargain? Pretty clergymen we have now! all lazy, good-for-nothing black coats; they have no longer the fear of God before their eyes, for here is a Pastor who actually recommends a reward for sin and wickedness. Martina ought rather to stand at the church door, with a wreath of straw on her head, to do public penance. But here she shall never come; no! not if a thousand such—such hypocritical parsons were to pretend they had a message from Heaven; and if they were to wring my neck for it, my last cry would be, she shan't come here—she shan't come here: I will not suffer it, and this very day I will take care to settle that point.'

"The father and son having been startled out of their sleep by the savage scream of the Röttmännin, now hurried into the room, and the old man spoke to me just as if I had intruded myself of my own accord into his house, and begged me distinctly to understand that he would not allow his wife to be tormented, let Schilder-David send whom he would. Adam stood with clasped hands and looked beseechingly at me. I had no idea that the young man could look so gentle and anxious. I felt as if I were one of those doomed men who, in legends, are summoned by demons to do them a service. What a world this is! Are these the very men to whom, for ten long years past, I have been anxiously preaching the Gospel? Every word that I would fain have said seemed to freeze on my lips. I only desired that the sledge might be instantly got ready to take me home, but they paid no attention to me. At last Adam said, 'I will drive you home myself, Herr Pastor. Pray forgive all that has occurred.'

"'No!' exclaimed his mother, violently, 'he shan't go with you. Christopher, hold him fast; he is quite capable of marrying his good-for-nothing mistress on the spot.'—The father desired Adam to

stay at home, and he made a vow to his wife—laying his hand on the Bible that I had left open—it made me shudder to see the man make such a vow on this holy book—as a token that he would faithfully perform it—that this very day he would see Adam's betrothal completed with the Forest Miller's Tony.

"I scarcely remember how I got out of the house; I called the servant who had fetched me and told him that I would walk on, and that he was to follow me as soon as possible with the sledge. Morning was just beginning to dawn as I went down the hill and through the forest, and I felt as if I were flying from a cavern where demons dwelt. I don't think that I lost my way, but the wolf met me; the animal stood still for a moment, looked at me as if uncertain what to do, and then trotted off quietly into the wood. I cannot deny that I was trembling from head to foot, and never in my life did I feel so paralyzed from terror as at that instant; besides it was frightfully cold, and I was very foolish to walk on alone. There was no sign of the servant and the sledge. I thought it very possible that those hard hearted creatures would prevent his coming at all, and make me go home on foot; I retraced my steps a short way, and anger and bitterness made me feel actually quite warm—not far from the farm I met the servant, driving along in no hurry, and luckily I found the flask of Kirsch in my pocket, that you made me take with me. I cannot tell you all the thoughts that passed through my mind during the hour when I was driving home, in a half-waking state. Both King Solomon and Sirach have described a wicked woman very impressively; I could furnish them with very lively additions to their delineation—but, my precious Lina, of what value would be either goodness, or the love of a fellow creature, without being tested by wicked men? Still I cannot but rejoice that I have decided on leaving this district. I shall soon enter my fiftieth year, so I require less severe work; I have had hard enough toil in the days of my youth, and even if I lose my present and my future Cure also, by persisting in my resolution, I am quite determined never to marry Adam to any one but Martina."

Drawing a deep breath, and dashing away the tears in her eyes, the Pastorin said:—

"Yes, I do indeed think it will be a very good thing that we should go to another country where men are more civilized, and will also do more justice to your merits."

"Do not forget, however," said the Pastor, "that, although we have often much boorishness to contend against, still we have many very worthy persons here also. In our new destination we shall be sure to find both good and bad, and work enough—but now I must say I am dreadfully tired—I can see no one till eleven o'clock—I must go to rest, so try to keep all as quiet as possible. Good night, or rather good morning! When I rise, I shall feel as if a whole year had elapsed, since the nocturnal visit to the Röttmanns."

The Pastor went to his bedroom, which was cleverly heated, by the parlour stove being placed in the wall between the rooms. Soon all was as still in the house as if it were midnight.

Lina glided about on tip-toe, and she hung a green cloth over the bird-cage, to silence the bird; and, for the second time to day, she gave a liberal breakfast to those unfortunate beggars, waiting outside, the sparrows and goldfinches. The wind speedily dispersed the crumbs she scattered on the window-sill—the hungry little creatures seemed however to find plenty of food, and at last flew away as quietly as if they had known that the Pastor's sleep was not to be disturbed. The Pastorin sat at the window with her work in her hand, and made anxious signs to any one approaching the house to be quiet; presently she saw the most pleasing of all sights in the country—the letter-carrier coming up to the house, and ran down quickly to meet him at the door to prevent his ringing, receiving from him several packets of letters from relatives and friends in the capital. She would not open any of the letters, for she wished that her husband should be with her when she read them, and that they should enjoy all the pleasant news together. None of the letters were however directed to her, and one bore the seal of the Consistorial President.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOME OF SCHILDER-DAVID.

"Woe's me, Leegart!" had been the exclamation of little Joseph as that good woman entered, for which want of civility his grandfather gave him a hearty box on the ear. The boy began to cry and his grandfather to scold, and Martina both to scold and to cry; for David would not even allow her to soothe the boy by a single kind word. And Leegart said, in a sensible tone of voice, though certainly with rather a nasal twang—"It is really too bad to meet with such a welcome! I ought to go away again immediately: it is enough to make one superstitious; but whatever we do, let us at all events avoid superstition! Nothing in the world is so dreadful; for people plague themselves perpetually about things they do not see, and I am sure we have all plague enough with the things we do see; so I shall stay where I am. Good morning, Joseph! Say 'good morning' to me, prettily. There—now shake hands!"

"The boy slept very badly last night, and does not know what he is saying," said Martina, in order to excuse the child.

"Make no apology to me, and let us say no more about it," said Leegart, placing on the table, in formidable array, a solid pincushion, consisting of a heavy brick covered with cloth, a pair of scissors with a large and a small handle, and a smaller pair, a stock of pins and needles, and a tiny wax taper. She thereby took possession of the house for the day, and regulated it accordingly from her throne; for she never rose again from her seat till she went away late at night. Before, however, she settled in her place for the day, she went into the next room, and returned shorn of her upper petticoat, for she was never seen in the street without being very neatly dressed; but she was anxious not to spoil her best gown by sitting on it. When she came into the room again, she pushed the table into a comfortable corner, seated herself, and Martina placed a footstool under her feet; and now Leegart gave her orders in few and distinct words, and commenced by saying, "Martina, get breakfast."

Martina brought in the oatmeal porridge, and placed it on the table. Joseph said grace; and out of his stock of prayers, he selected on this occasion the shortest—"May God give food to all poor children on earth. Amen." Joseph had dried his tears, and was seated between his grandfather and grandmother; and, after grace was said, all were as quiet as possible at table—each helped himself with his own spoon out of the dish, and there were no disputes as to precedence.

The room was perfectly clean and tidy, though small and poor. Above the stove, just over the substantial old easy chair, there was a large nail, with a brass head, stuck in the wall, on which once upon a time, Martina's certificate of confirmation had hung—but nothing hung from it now. Martina always avoided looking at it, and David had given strict orders that the nail was not to be removed.

The head of the house, Schilder-David, was a man advanced in years, but it was difficult to know his exact age. His hair was thick, closely cropped, and snow white; but his face, encircled by a snowy beard, had rather a youthful appearance, especially his deep blue eyes and dark eyebrows, which appeared not to harmonize with the rest of his features. His wife was tall and slender, but very little of her face was visible, for she invariably wrapped her head in thick handkerchiefs, and when she did speak, the sounds she uttered were apparently brought forth with such difficulty, that it was evident she did not hear even her own voice. The sempstress Leegart was a delicate, pale, rather superior-looking person, somewhat advanced in life, but still preserving traces of extreme beauty: moreover, her manner was always gentle and polite. Her black cloth jacket was only fastened at the throat, and open down to the waist, so that a white kerchief and still whiter skin were visible. Those who did not know the fact could scarcely perceive that she occasionally took a sly pinch, for she never showed her snuff-box, and took a pinch so neatly and quickly that it was almost imperceptible. It was difficult to believe that little Joseph was only just six years old, for he might easily be supposed three years older at least: his limbs were strong and finely formed—what the country-people here call a well grown lad; his hair was fair and curly, to which his marked eyebrows and dark eyes—his mother's eyes—formed a singular contrast. Little Joseph was in fact, the central point of the family, and this was evident by the extreme confusion his strange welcome to Leegart had caused.

There was little said during the meal, but Leegart mentioned that the Pastor had been sent for on the preceding night to the Röttmännin.

"We never speak of such a person here," said Schilder-David, giving a significant glance at Leegart and then at Joseph.

They all rose from table. Joseph's measure was taken for his jacket, and then the outlines drawn with white chalk on the green cloth, and Leegart's huge shears cut out the cloth on the table with a strange snapping sound.

"Stay at home to-day—the mill-stream is frozen over," said David to Joseph, and went into his work-shop, which was partitioned off a loft above the saw-mill. There was here a turning lathe with a strap attached to a cylinder, and this was fastened to the spring-wheel of the mill below; and the water power that impelled the large machine turned also the smaller one, at which David constructed his wooden watch dials and clock cases.

Little Joseph was standing apart, as if in disgrace, when his grandfather, contrary to his usual custom, went out alone. Usually he took Joseph with him; and the boy supplied his furnace with chips, and brought him rough pieces of wood for his work, taking away those that were finished and arranging them in good order. His mother took the boy with her into the kitchen, and there she asked him, "Joseph, what ails you to-day? Why did you exclaim so uncivilly, 'Woe's me, Leegart!?' she is so kind to you, and your godmother besides, and is making you a pretty new jacket."

Not a word from Joseph.

A child can scarcely remember what he said a few minutes previously, and can never recall the train of his ideas, and consequently cannot explain them. The words of children are like the songs of birds, devoid of rhythm, and yet emanating from a hidden life within.

After a pause, Joseph began of his own accord to say, "Mother, is not my father to be here to-day? You told me so."

"Yes, he will be here. He is sure to come, I think," answered Martina, with a deep sigh. Now she understood why Joseph had been so disappointed on seeing Leegart. No doubt, when she threw open the door, Joseph expected to see his father; so he had called out, "Woe's me, Leegart!" simply because it was another person, and not his father. Joseph went on talking, and saying he knew his father would take him on his horse, and probably give him one of his own.

Martina anxiously endeavoured to divert the child's thoughts from his father, but she could not succeed. In the depression of her heart, she had too often made Adam a topic of conversation, and had frequently spoken her inmost thoughts to the boy, whose dawning intellect and thoughts were entirely concentrated on his father. He had formed the most singular ideas about him, and was perpetually asking why his grandmother persisted in plaguing his father, and preventing his coming home to them.

"Which way will my father come to-day?" asked Joseph.

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do know, and you must tell me," said little Joseph, beginning to whimper; and his mother, drawing him closer to her, said, "Hush, hush! no one must overhear us. If you are quite good and quiet, I will tell you presently."

The boy checked his sobs, and his mother began to tell him what pretty presents he was to get at Christmas, and asked him if there was anything he particularly wished for. The boy cared for nothing but a horse: people had told him that his father had fourteen horses in his stable. All attempts to distract his attention were vain; his thoughts were entirely concentrated on his father; and he repeated, "Tell me, which way will he come to day?"

The mother said in a subdued tone, "You must not tell a living creature one syllable about your father coming here to-day. Give me your hand on it; not one word to any human being."

The boy gave his mother his hand, and stared at her, his large eyes still swimming in tears. Martina said no more, for she thought she had pacified the child. But presently, with the most obstinate pertinacity, he began again, "Which way will he come? tell me!"

"There are several roads, but I think he will come through the valley and the wood. But now not another word; you are not to plague me any more. Go and fetch some fir chips from the workshop."

The boy went out to fetch the wood, and the mother thought, with quiet satisfaction, "He will one day be a true man: when he wants a thing he will never rest till he gets it."

She then went with the boy into the sitting-room, but Leegart said, "Send away Joseph, for we can't talk before the child."

"Joseph, go to Häspele, and look at the new boots he is making for you," said the mother.

Joseph did not want to go, but his mother persisted in sending him out of the house. The boy stood outside, looking very indignant, and muttering, "When my father comes I will tell him all about it. I am not to stay anywhere; neither with my grandfather nor at home." Nevertheless he did go to see Häspele, and was as merry and good humoured as possible, for Häspele loved the boy, and when he was tired of playing with his toys, he could always amuse him by talking to him.

For a year past he had repeatedly promised to give Joseph a dog, and the boy was now very speculative as to what the animal was to be like, and what tricks it was to be taught. Häspele had one capital pretext for delay, which was that he would have to search some time before he could find a dog exactly answering Joseph's description; for it was sometimes large, and sometimes small; at one time it had four white paws, at another all brown; at one moment it was to be a wolf dog, and the next a Spitz.

In the meanwhile Leegart was talking to Martina, and could not comprehend why Martina was not more eager to ascertain whether her deadly foe had not at length quitted the world. She urged her to go to the Parsonage to inquire what state the Röttmännin was in.

"You know very well," said Martina, "that formerly our Pastor was always glad to see me in his house, but not now. I can't go there without some pretext when he is at home."

"Very well; in that case, go to my house; and on the chest of drawers with the mirror above it you will find a china soup tureen, and in it three nightcaps, which I have just made for the Pastor's wife. Take them to her from me, and then you will hear how matters stand."

Martina did as she told her.

CHAPTER VIII.

WARM AND SNUG IN THE PARSONAGE.

Can there be such a thing as a holy feast for a woman like the Röttmännin? Can there exist a human being doomed one day to leave this world, without ever having felt the joyful sensation of being happy, or of having contributed to the happiness of others? That there are such persons, cannot fail to cast a dark shadow on the earth, and must prevent anyone feeling unalloyed gladness of heart.

These were the reflections floating in the mind of the Pastorin, as she sat at the window. Soon, however, she chased away all such shadows, and her soul became as bright as the morning of this joyous and holy festival, which is a ray emanating from eternity.

She arose and went through the house, like a gentle hushed spirit. The approaching feast day, and also the thought that her brother was with her, shed such lustre and gladness on her whole being, that everything seemed to smile on her; and while she prepared a good breakfast for her brother, who was sure to return very hungry from shooting, she looked at the ham, the butter, and eggs, with considerable complacency, as if grateful to them for possessing the excellent property of nourishing and strengthening man.

These articles of food could not speak, or make any observations in return; but the maid being pretty well aware that her mistress liked to talk of her brother, said, "What a handsome, grand gentleman your brother is, ma'am. When he arrived yesterday evening I really thought he was the Prince who drove through here last winter, on his way to shoot;" and the maid gave her own face a good rub with her apron, to make it look as well as possible. "I was so glad we happened to have killed a goose," added she, giving an affectionate look at the slaughtered victim, hanging outside the kitchen window.

Brother Edward returned home about ten o'clock. The Pastorin warned him that her husband was still asleep, and he placed his gun as gently in the corner as if it had been made of cotton. Her brother's good appetite pleased the Pastorin, who seated herself with her embroidery beside Edward, and told him the Pastor's adventures. He, in return, said he had shot nothing, for he felt quite sure he had got on the track of the wolf; but he lost all traces of the animal in a ravine, as he was afraid of venturing to descend into it alone. He had gone as far as the forest mill, and described with much enthusiasm the grand and striking aspect of the landscape, the waterfalls all frozen, and the rocks glittering like finely cut crystal. The more awe inspiring and imposing the young man delineated the scene without, the more snug and comfortable did the room appear within. And the brother and sister talked to each other with the same quiet ease with which the heat diffused itself through the room: the pendulum of the clock and the crackling of the wood in the stove were more audible than their voices. Gentle flakes of snow were falling slowly and quietly outside, fluttering in the air as if in play, making the room within seem even more comfortable than usual.

"I have still an adventure to relate to you," recommenced Edward.

"Won't you wait till my husband is awake, so that you may not have to tell it twice over?"

"No; I wish you alone to hear it, and you must promise me secrecy. I was standing behind a bush, not far from the forest mill, on the watch, for I thought the wolf would be sure to appear again, when I saw two girls coming along the path. They stood still not far from my hiding-place, and one girl said, 'I will say good bye to you here; thank you for your kindness, my mother in Heaven will reward you for it. But it is all over; I cannot help myself. Oh! why are those days gone by, when a wicked woman could transform you into a raven? I wish I were that raven in the sky above our heads; then I could fly far away, then my misery would be over. See! the snow is melting where my tears fall on it; but nothing can melt a hard heart, and my father is entirely changed.' Her tears prevented her saying more, and her companion left her. The weeping girl turned back towards the mill; I could not resist advancing to meet her, but I almost regretted it when I saw such sorrow overclouding the young, fresh, blooming face. I would gladly have tried to console her, but I really did not know what to say; so I simply wished her good day. She looked at me, startled, and stood still for a moment in surprise, and then went on her way."

"That must have been the Forest Miller's Tony," said the Pastorin; "a good-hearted girl, as ever lived. She is to be betrothed to Adam, I hear."

"That would be too shameful!" exclaimed Edward, indignantly.

"I quite agree with you. Tony is the Forest Miller's only child. Her mother was an excellent woman: so long as she lived, the forest mill was the most highly respected house in the whole community, and the resort and refuge of all the poor. Little Tony went daily for four years to school, three or four miles off, and in winter she came on a donkey. A child like that, going daily alone for years through a valley, encircled by rocks and by the forest, cannot fail to become thoughtful and observant, if naturally of a quick and lively disposition; for there is much to see and hear of animal life in the forest, unknown to the world. Little Tony was a very quick child,

and she was often to be heard telling her thoughts aloud, and singing songs in the forest. She has a most lovely voice. Two years ago her mother died, and the guardian appointed by her father is the innkeeper at Wenger, whose sister shortly after married the Forest Miller. From that hour the girl had never another happy moment; and her guardian being unluckily the brother of her stepmother, it comes to pass that Tony will be forced to marry Adam Röttmann."

Suddenly the Pastorin interrupted herself, saying, "I must surely have left the house door open, for I hear some one on the stairs."

"Hush! be quiet!" said she softly, opening the door. "Oh! it is you, Martina; come in, but tread softly, for the Herr Pastor is asleep. What message have you for me?"

"Leegart sent me here, to bring you these nightcaps."

"Why did she not come herself?"

"She is in our house, busy making a new jacket for my Joseph."

"You dress Joseph too smartly; you will spoil him," said the Pastorin.

"Leegart takes no payment from me," said Martina timidly, and, turning away suddenly, the red shawl in which she had wrapped her head fell back. The young man gazed earnestly at her pretty oval face, and large dark brown eyes. Martina felt that he was looking at her, and casting down her eyes blushed deeply, groping for the handle of the door in going out, as if she had been in the dark.

The Pastorin, however, followed her into the passage, and said, "You would like to know about the Röttmännin? The state of her health is as bad as that of her heart. She sent for the Herr Pastor last night, but she is not dangerously ill; far from it."

"God is my witness that I do not wish for her death," said Martina earnestly, laying both hands on her heart.

"I believe you. My husband had a severe struggle with her, but he persists in his determination never to marry Adam to any one but yourself. But I will tell you all about it another time," said the Pastorin, turning to re-enter the room.

But Martina said uneasily, "Oh! dear Madam, I cannot make out what is the matter with my Joseph for some days past; he speaks and thinks of nothing but his father. He insists on my talking of him till he goes to sleep, and in the morning his first words are always about his father. He has refused positively to go back to school any more, for they call him *The Foal* there, because his father's nickname in the village is *The Horse*."

The Pastorin could not help smiling, but she said, "I cannot stay with you at present: that was my youngest brother who has come to visit me. Pray be very strict with Joseph: the whole village spoils that child. Come to see me again during the holidays, and shut the outer door very gently."

Martina went homewards with slow and heavy steps, singing in a melancholy tone the lines that seemed to haunt her memory:

"Faithful love my bosom fills,—
Can true love ever fade?
Oh! what a smile that heart must wear
That never was betrayed."

In the mean time the Pastorin returned into the sitting-room, when her brother Edward proved that he had a quick eye, not only for fine scenery, but also for pretty people, by expressing his sincere regret, that so lovely a creature should be doomed to pass her days in poverty and sorrow.

"But though she looks ill even now," said the Pastorin, "if you had seen her a year after her disgrace, she was so changed that it was scarcely possible to recognise her, she looked so deadly pale, and just like a dying person. It is said that a speech of Leegart's made her strive to bear her calamity with more courage. 'Don't go on grieving in that way,' said she, 'or people will say that Adam is quite right to forsake such a faded, emaciated creature.' This advice, and love for her boy, inspired Martina with new life."

While the Pastorin was talking to her brother, and listening to him, she was also listening to sounds in the adjacent room, for she suspected that the Pastor was now dressing; and, while doing so, he was humming the air that she had sung with Edward the evening before; so she quickly sat down at the piano, and sung once more, with her brother, Mozart's melody, "Joys and sorrows let us share."

The Pastor entered the room, smiling kindly. He must, however, have heard a good deal, even in his sleep, for in a few moments he said, "Lina, Martina has just been here, I do beg that my orders may be attended to, that she is not to be in the habit of coming here."

"You are generally so indulgent," ventured Edward to remark.

"Perhaps so; but that is quite compatible with sternness, when it is requisite. Those who have sinned may reform and repent, but the privilege of being at home in the Parsonage is one they ought no longer to enjoy. It would be destructive to all morality if sin were allowed, from false ideas of humanity, to remain unpunished."

The usually benevolent features of the Pastor assumed a stern, uncompromising air while uttering these words. But he quickly added, "Edward, give me one of your cigars."

The three once more sat pleasantly together.

CHAPTER IX.

BETROTHAL AND PLIGHT.

Mozart's harmonies were entirely ignored at the Röttmann's residence; indeed, for seven years past, ever since Martina had been in their service, no songs had ever been heard in that house. In all other respects, however, the good living went on as before: there was an everlasting roasting, boiling, and stewing; and the moment you approached the house such a rich greasy odour was perceptible that all who came from Röttmanshof seemed impregnated with lard and suet. It was said that the cause of this greasy smell, was the old lady pouring whole cansfull of spoiled lard on the road every year. She preferred its being thrown away to giving it to any poor person. There was very little stir of labour about the place, for a wood merchant has the advantage of his possessions growing while he is sleeping, and without any exertion on his part.

The house looked very singular in the midst of the snowy landscape. In order to protect it from the weather, it was covered with shingles on every side, painted bright red. To live in such a dwelling was like living in a furnace.

There was a great uproar this morning at Röttmannshof, and nothing is more repulsive than when a morning commences by incessant noise. What kind of people must they be who on rising from sleep, in the early freshness of morning, break out into angry discord and noisy strife, and persevere in them, as if there was no such thing on earth as sleep or quiet self-forgetfulness for man, enabling him to begin life afresh each morning?

If the old Röttmännin, even formerly, when she could still sleep, was in the habit of rising at early dawn, as if preparing each day a war of extermination, how much more unendurable now were her impatience and restlessness, when she could no longer sleep at all! From her sick bed she regulated everything with twofold severity, and it seemed quite inconceivable how she could continue to live on amid this perpetual irritation, and restless state of exasperation.

"I am quite well; I am resolved to go with you myself," said she. "I don't care if I die by the way, so that I only complete this affair. Go away, men; I am going to rise and dress properly. Now, this very morning, the matter shall be finally settled with the Forest Miller's Tony. What do you mean by standing so stupidly there, Adam? You ought to be thankful that I manage matters for you—I mean your father and I together; for in all your life you could do nothing for yourself, and you will remain a poor creature to the end of your days. If no one will undertake this Schilder-David and his family, I will show them their proper place."

She insisted on her husband and son dressing in their Sunday clothes, and they looked very imposing in their long coats without collars, and high, boots drawn up above the knees. These high boots are the uncontested right of the upper class of farmers: the peasants and day labourers, even to this day, wear shoes and short leather breeches, or long ones of coarse canvass. The Röttmännin, who had not left the house for a whole year, was all at once as active as a young girl. The sledge was brought to the door, feather beds were placed in it, and the parents drove with their son to the Forest Mill. A messenger preceded them to announce their arrival. The amazement was unbounded at the Forest Mill at the appearance of the Röttmännin herself. The miller's wife was especially gracious, and the daughter could not avoid being also polite, though her eyes were red from crying; in other respects she looked neat and pretty, and any man who sought her hand from affection, might well be proud of such a bride. Adam followed his parents mechanically into the room, as if without any will of his own; and at the same moment, when the flakes of snow were gently falling in the valley before the Pastor's house, pledges were finally exchanged, and Adam was betrothed to Tony.

It scarcely seemed as if a living hand were stretched out to receive a living one, when Adam clasped that of his bride, but he endeavoured to make the best of it, and swallowed long draughts of the good red wine that the Forest Miller placed on the table. They sat together feasting till the evening. Speidel Röttmann had the power of incessantly drinking, and as incessantly eating; and he continued throwing large morsels of meat, right and left, into the jaws of his huge mastiffs; and the snapping, and growling, and gobbling was wonderful to hear, every single bone being

crunched up. To be able to drink wine, and more wine, and wine without end, is an advantage that men possess over animals. While Speidel Röttmann was placing glass after glass to his lips, he kept stroking the head of one of his great dogs, as if to say, drinking is my privilege, and not yours. They insisted on Adam remaining in the kitchen with his bride, who was preparing some hot mulled wine; and the two fathers drank merrily together, while their wives gossiped in a low tone.

When the fathers agreed that the affair with Martina would now be easily broken off, the Forest Miller laughed, and said, "Young people are become very prudish now-a-days."

"They have no sense whatever," rejoined Speidel Röttmann. "It is nearly seven years now that Adam has been plaguing both himself and us, on account of that stupid affair of his. In our youth, much we should have cared for any such matter." And the two old men clinked their glasses together.

The mulled wine came, and they drank each other's health, and emptied the tall glasses to the dregs, and refilled them, and laughed, and narrated all their youthful pranks and exploits; and the burden of their song was always, that the youth of the present day were good for nothing, and totally devoid of all life and spirit.

Adam was standing beside his betrothed bride in the kitchen. For a long time he did not speak, and at last he said, "I say, why did you agree to have me? don't you know how I am situated?"

Tony answered smiling, "I suppose since the world began, no one ever asked his betrothed such a question. But do you know, Adam, I am rather glad you have done so, for it is honest on your part, and a good beginning, if it be the will of God that we should live together, and it appears we must. You see, Adam, there is no hope of your getting Martina, and I am miserable, far more miserable than you can have the least idea of. So I thought to myself, we are both miserable, so perhaps we may lighten each other's burdens; and I am quite resolved to leave my stepmother, for I am always in her way; and you can't think what a person feels on seeing a stranger come to your own house and home, abusing everything she sees, no matter how good and handsome it may be. It vexes me to death to see her extravagance in the house, and my father gets no good from it; and even the cup that belonged to my mother, and was kept sacred, she actually gave to the farm servant, and she only did so because she knew that it would annoy me. I shall become cross and spiteful myself if I remain with her. My tongue is full of gall, and words come to my lips, and thoughts into my head, that are downright wicked. I often wish I were lying six feet under ground, and I would have done so long ago, had it not been for the good, kind Pastorin."

"I pity you," said Adam; "but as for me, though I still have my own mother, she is more bitter towards me than any stepmother. I do not like to say it, but I must. My Martina alone induced me to submit to such usage, and not to run away from it into the wide world. And now I am become an illtempered fellow; formerly I was only gruff and thoughtless. I would far rather that you were harsh, and bitter, and irritable, so that I could feel no compassion for you; in that case I would have behaved in such a way that you would have been forced to give me up. But now I don't know what to do; I pity you—yes, I pity you from the bottom of my heart; but don't forget how I am situated myself."

It was far from an agreeable conversation that the two held together, and no fond or kindly words passed between them, as the bride was preparing the mulled wine. She carried the jug into the next room, having previously poured out a glass for Adam. When she returned he drank her health, and when she gave him some more, and, taking some herself, made her glass ring against his, he said, "Upon my word, you are much prettier than I thought. After all, I ought not to complain at being forced to marry you: if it were not for one thing—one thing alone—I should be quite happy. If I had only seen you seven years ago, as I see you now, I might have been the most fortunate fellow in the world. But what am I saying? I feel a stab, as if a knife had pierced my heart. Have patience with me; I can say no more."

Adam sat down, and covered his eyes with his hands, and then muttered, "This is my idea, do you see? I wish to tell you something; but not a word of it to your parents or mine. Give me your hand, as a token that you will keep my secret."

The bride gave her hand to Adam, who clasped it warmly, and continued, "I had sent a message to my Martina, that on this very day I would come to see her. For nearly two years past I have been obliged to go to church in another village, for spies were always watching me, and for a whole year I have never been able to speak to my Martina and—my Joseph; so now I must keep my promise; and yet I would like to give you a parting kiss; but—I won't, I won't! no! it would be wrong until I am once more a free man."

"You are honest, and can speak to the purpose," said the bride, smiling; "and yet people say you are so sulky."

"Very few know anything about me. No one really understands me except my Martina. She sees me as I really am, and yet I said very little to her, or she to me, and yet we knew each other thoroughly: she was quick, and she saw that though I was one of the richest men in the country, yet I was the poorest in reality. But she shall tell you about it, for she can talk far better than I

can. You don't know how clever she is, and so good hearted, and so cheerful, and so loveable, and —and" —

Adam suddenly checked himself. To whom was he saying all this? to his betrothed bride! and she was looking at him, as if trying to remind him where they were and what they were. Nothing was heard but the clinking of the old men's glasses in the next room, and the whispering of the two mothers. At last Adam said, "So I have your promise that you won't say a word to any one. And now I must leave you to go to my Martina—to Martina—and—to my—boy, in the village. I shall be back by the time the Christmas tree is lighted up, and then it will either be—or—. God bless you!"

Tony, rather astonished, watched Adam wrapping himself in his grey cloak, and putting on his fur cap; then seizing his thick knotted stick with its long sharp point, he swung it in the air. He looked very handsome, but a formidable fellow. He left the room hurriedly, and the bride remained quietly seated by the fire. After a time Speidel Röttmann came into the kitchen, and said, "What is going on here? The dogs are so restless, and are whining beside us. Where is Adam?"

"He is gone."

"Where?"

"I don't mean to tell you; but he is soon coming back."

"Really? I know well enough where he is gone. But not a word to my wife of this, nor to your father. Has he been long gone?"

"Only a few minutes."

"Slip into the next room, and fetch me my hat; but take care that nobody sees you, and on no account let the dogs out. But no—yes; go get my hat. Adam is a fool, and you are the best girl in the world."

The bride, glad to get away from Speidel Röttmann's hints, went and fetched his hat and stick; and the old man enjoined on her to say that he meant to return immediately. So away he went, placing his stick firmly on the ground each step he took, as he strode along. He takes good care of himself.

CHAPTER X.

A FATHER IN SEARCH OF HIS SON.

When Adam got into the open air, he felt as if he had suddenly awoke. "What has happened? Unless I choose, nothing has happened." He shivered, and the hand which had clasped Tony's was now so cold that he tried to warm it on the head of his pipe. There was no possibility of missing the way to the village, but attention was necessary; for there was a steep precipice overhanging the valley below, close to the road; the snow was rapidly falling in thick flakes, and Adam had not gone twenty paces when he looked like a moving snow man. He was obliged to keep a sharp look out, for he could see no path before him; but he was so well acquainted with every tree, and every rock hereabouts, that he had no difficulty in finding them out even in the snow. When he reached the rising ground whence the descent into the valley commences, and looking back, saw the lights shining so cheerily in the Forest Mill, he felt a strong inclination to go back there.

"She is a very pretty creature, and hundreds have done the same, and yet have lived gaily and happily with their wives:—turn back!"

But, in spite of these tempting thoughts, he went straight on down the hill, so the lights in the mill soon disappeared from his view; and now his heart felt lighter, and in the thickly falling snow he lifted his hand to Heaven and vowed—"I will go home no more. I would rather be a poor labourer, and earn my daily bread, than desert my Martina, and my child, my Joseph; it is two years since I have heard his voice—he must be very much grown, and able now to say 'Father, father!'"

Suddenly Adam stood still—a child's voice was calling "Father, father!" through the wood, and once more, quite distinctly, "Father!" "Oh! I must be mistaken. How could it be? That mulled wine has confused my senses."

Adam relit his pipe, which had gone out, and by its flash he saw that there were irregular traces of dog's paws in the snow. "What is it? A dog no doubt has lost his master, and is searching for him," But there were no marks of a man's foot to be seen. "What need I care? I want to get

on."

Hush! what again? a man's voice shouts from the top of the hill—"Adam! Adam!"—"Am I dreaming? or is the world bewitched tonight?"

Adam grasped his huge stick more firmly in his hand. "Let them come, the whole array of sorcerers, or demons, if they like. I am not afraid, for my life is not less wicked than theirs; because, like a lazy, foolish fellow, I have yielded to others for so many years; and God forgive me for my folly in thinking that my mother might yield at last;—for supposing that an iron horseshoe could be softened;—and now I have submitted to be made a Christmas mummer, and allowed myself to be betrothed; but I will never marry Tony, never; and, in spite of the whole world, I am resolved to do as I choose. I will have my Martina and Joseph for my own. Come on there, demons and evil spirits! What is that? It is the dog whose traces I saw just now. Come here, dog, come along. He won't come. Good Heavens! it is the wolf we have been searching for. He barks hoarsely—he is coming nearer."

For an instant Adam's hair stood on end, then boldly rushing forwards, he shouted—"I'll soon do for you—there, and there!"

The wolf now discovered what fierce strokes a man can give who has been forced into a betrothal, especially when that man is Adam Röttmann. The wolf received the strokes due to the wicked world in general, on which Adam would gladly have hammered away for an hour, and even after the animal lay prostrate, Adam scarcely believed he was dead; for wolves are vastly cunning, and he continued his blows, till at last he cautiously turned the animal over with the spike of his staff, and saw his four feet sticking up in the air. As the wolf no longer showed the smallest signs of life, Adam said, with infinite composure—"There, you are pretty well done for!" Perspiration was streaming down his forehead; he had lost his pipe, which had fallen out of his mouth, and it was probably the sparks he had shook out that had frightened the wolf. Adam sought in every direction for his pipe, but it was nowhere to be seen; at last he gave it up, and seizing the wolf by the nape of the neck, he dragged it behind him the whole way. When he saw the lights in the village, he laughed, and thought—"How astonished all in the village will be, when I bring them the wolf beat to death by my cudgel, and what will my Joseph say? Yes, little fellow! you must respect your father for his strength." Adam had in reality heard his name called behind him; for his father had followed him, and shouted out "Adam!" Who knows whether in the blinding snow the old man has not lost his way? Was Adam right also, in thinking that he heard a child's voice in the wood calling out "Father"?

It was not long before the inhabitants of the Forest Mill discovered that both father and son had mysteriously gone away, and the Röttmännin knew well where they had gone to.

She raged most, however, against her husband, who, without saying a word to her, had gone in pursuit of his foolish son; he was sure to do something stupid, when he did not come to her for advice. Adam too was by no means spared, and she called him many names far from flattering, and not at all in accordance with bridal festivities. The miller's wife, however, was sharp enough to interpose, saying that the Röttmännin was only in jest, because she knew that in truth no honourable titles were more than they deserved; and both women looked up in surprise when the bride said—"All that I heard Adam say, while he was sitting here with me, was kind, and sensible, and judicious." The two women burst out laughing with one accord, and said she was quite right; the Röttmännin, patting the bride's shoulder, said that was the only true way to get round a man, for they ought to be under petticoat government; that men were good-for-nothing creatures, and that they were utterly useless till they had a good wife. She, however, said she made an exception in the case of her dear relative, the Forest Miller, who did not apparently appreciate this compliment; for he could only stammer when he tried to speak, and then coughed so violently that he nearly choked. The Forest Miller had committed a rash action in drinking fair with Speidel Röttmann, a competition no one had ever yet attempted without being punished for it.

His wife was very much concerned about him, and prevailed on him to go to bed; she then came back to the room, and said—"Heaven be praised! he is sleeping quietly; he ought to know that no one is a match for Röttmann in drinking."

Flattered by this compliment, the Röttmännin said—"Take care that with such a cough, he does not delay making his will."

"People say—God forgive me for repeating their malice!" said the miller's wife, "that the Röttmännin is a malicious woman. Can any one be kinder than she is, in thus taking charge of a lone widow?" and then, as if this misfortune had already occurred, she looked quite disconsolate, and began to rub her eyes; as this was, however, of no use, she clasped her hands, and, looking admiringly at the Röttmännin, continued—"And she thinks of my interests, and does not want her own precious son to inherit every thing."

The Röttmännin said she was obliged to her; but she was quite mistaken, for she had never meant anything of the kind. She admitted that her son deserved very little, but still she was not quite such a fool, as to wish to see money and land heaped on strangers, when it ought by right to come into her family.

The Röttmännin now urged very sharply, that a messenger should be sent after her husband

and son. The head farmservant was summoned, but he declared that he would not go, and that, moreover, he knew none of the other servants would leave the house in such weather, and indeed he could not blame them for refusing; and, moreover, there was no need to fetch them back, for when these hardy Röttmanns once got into the wood they would only return of their own accord. The Röttmännin was very indignant, and begged that at least her sledge might be brought to the door, that she might be driven home; she would show both her husband and Adam who was master, when she was once in her own house again. But no one in the mill would drive her, and both the miller's wife, with the most civil speeches, and the bride with the most kind cordiality, pressed her to stay all night at the mill; saying that everything would look very different by daylight next morning, and Adam had promised to return before the Christmas tree was lighted. She added that the children of the servants at the mill had been waiting anxiously for some time to see the tree lit up, and to receive their presents. The Röttmännin and the miller's wife thought this a very good idea, and the former praised the bride exceedingly for her good nature, and insinuated that she had probably arranged some agreeable surprize with Adam.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH DESERTED.

"When a friend comes to visit me," said the Pastor, "I feel so happy; and do you know why? In the first place, I enjoy myself more; people may say what they will of the iniquity of the human heart, but the pleasant feeling caused by entertaining a friend, is deeply imprinted in every heart."

"And secondly?" asked Edward.

"In the second place," answered the Pastor, "when I have a guest, it is an excuse to myself not to go out. The world is come to me, I travel along the whole road with my visitor, so I earn the right to stay at home."

It was with an indescribable feeling of satisfaction that the Pastor said these words, after dinner, to his brother-in-law. The afternoon was not far advanced, and yet twilight was fast approaching. If the brother-in-law felt great reverence for the Pastor, that worthy man was extremely pleased with the cheerful, sanguine, yet prudent character of the young man. There are such youths still in the world; the miseries of ennui and discontent, and the feeling of being constantly bored, have not yet penetrated into every circle. Fresh youth once more blooms in the world—different from what we once were, but with the germs of a prosperous future. These were the Pastor's thoughts, while listening with satisfaction to the young man's conversation; the pleasure he experienced in looking at the handsome youth who had formerly been under his care, and more especially his ingenuous nature and good sentiments, produced in his heart the fondness of a father in the highest sense. "You must marry some one who can sing with you," said he to Edward; "it would be a pity to have a wife who could not make melody along with you."

They continued to converse on various subjects, and Edward remarked, that many young men formed an entirely false idea of the life of a farmer, and therefore were ruined, both in mind and body. Being the son of a councillor in a high position, he had himself suffered considerably from the consequences of false representations, till he learned from experience the necessity of taking a personal interest in agriculture: he was now steward on the property of a nobleman, but had just given up his situation, with a view to rent a farm, or to purchase a small property.

In the midst of this conversation, they heard some persons knocking off the snow from their shoes, at the house door. Three men were standing below, who presently came up: they were the churchwardens.

"Edward, come into the next room," said his sister, adding, "This is my brother, and this is Schilder-David, Herzbauer, and Wagner."

"Glad to see you, sir," said Schilder-David, shaking hands with Edward, "but we beg you will stay where you are, Frau Pastorin; we should like you and your brother too to hear what we have to say."

"Sit down," said the Pastor.

"Many thanks, but it is not necessary," said Schilder-David, who was evidently spokesman. "Herr Pastor, we wish to say in few words what we have heard in the village; who first brought the report, we don't know; but you have often, Herr Pastor, impressed on us the propriety, on hearing anything of a man that you would rather not believe, to go straight to him, and to put the question direct to himself; so, no offence, Herr Pastor, but is it true that you wish to leave us?"

"Yes."

For a time there was perfect stillness in the room, and at last Schilder-David began again.

"Well: now I believe it, Herr Pastor. Before you came we had a Pastor who disliked us, and whom we equally disliked—can anything be more dreadful? How can Christian love, faith, and piety flourish, when he who preaches the word of God, and he who hears it, have no mutually kind feeling? It would be sad indeed if this were to be once more the case; we know that there are some in the parish who vex the good heart of our Pastor; but Herr Pastor, the gracious Lord would have spared Sodom if even two just men had been found there, and you, Herr Pastor, persist in leaving us because there are two or three wicked men among us." Here Schilder-David paused, but as the Pastor made no reply, he continued:—

"Herr Pastor, it is no use our telling you how you have grown into all our hearts. If it is better for you to go elsewhere, we can but wish you happy wherever you may be; but every man, woman, and child, in this village, who ever met their Herr Pastor, feel as if they must give him some proof of gratitude and love; as if they could not let him pass with a simple good morning, or good evening: we heartily wish, Herr Pastor, that there may be the same kindly feeling towards you in the new place you are going to, and also that, if you persist in leaving us, you will at least endeavour to provide us with—I don't say such a man as yourself, for that we cannot hope for—but at all events with a good man."

"Thank you, thank you," said the Pastor, "I will do what lies in my power."

"No, no," said Herzbauer, "David has by no means said all we wanted: our greatest wish is that the Herr Pastor should stay among us, and not leave our village church deserted."

"I could not recall my application for another Cure, even if I wished to do so."

"Then we hope the Herr Pastor will excuse us for having troubled him," said Wagner, with a certain feeling of pride, that he also had made a little speech, and one by no means the least to the point.

The men left the room; the Pastorin however went down stairs with them, and comforted them by saying, that their persuasions might perhaps not be quite unavailing, and that she had nothing to do with her husband's resolution, which she thought he now regretted; perhaps to-morrow what they said might be more effectual, for he was very weary to day, having been summoned to Röttmanshof during the night, for nothing, and less than nothing.

"I did hear," said Schilder-David, "that they are all assembled at the Forest Mill this very day to betroth Adam to Tony. I was unwilling to believe it, but I do now, every word of it; the betrothal however they shall find of no use, for we are resolved never to give up our just claim."

The Pastorin returned into the room, where she found her husband and her brother still sitting together in silence: none of them spoke a single word. The evening bells rung out clear; indeed all the three bells, for the Holy Festival was being rung in, and there was a singular vibration too in the hearts of these three persons, though inaudible to any human ear. At length the Pastorin said: "I shall grieve when the time comes that I no longer hear these bells; what a multiplicity of events they have rung forth for us!"

The Pastor still sat in silence at the window, and at last said, as if speaking to himself: "The most trying thing is to resolve to leave what we are accustomed to; as I have at last made up my mind to do so, both in my own thoughts, and also to the knowledge of others, it would not do for me now to retract my determination: I will see you again shortly Edward."

So saying, the Pastor went into his study.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE IS JOSEPH?

"Where is Joseph?" asked Schilder-David when he came home.

"He is not here."

"I sent him home however, when I went to speak to our Pastor."

"He is not come home."

"I daresay he is gone to see Häspele again; I will go and fetch him," said Martina rising from her chair.

"Don't fail to give him a good box on the ear, for running about alone in such an independent way," said David to his daughter as she was leaving the house.

Martina soon came back and said, "Joseph is neither at Häspele's nor in the workshop."

"Where on earth can that tiresome boy be? I will go and look for him myself."

The grandfather went out, and enquired for Joseph from house to house; no one knew anything of him; Schilder-David went home again, thinking that no doubt he should find the boy arrived before him.

"But where is Joseph?" said Martina to her father, when he entered the room on the ground floor, that served as a kitchen.

"He is sure to be here very soon," said the grandfather; going however through the whole house, and searching every corner of it; he called up to his workshop in the loft the name of Joseph, and felt quite startled by the hollow echo; he shoved aside presses, behind which neither man nor boy could have been hidden, and he even opened the cover of the watercourse, behind the house, forgetting that it was frozen over, and nobody could possibly fall into it. Just as he returned to the house he met Häspele, bringing home Joseph's new boots: he told him privately that he was looking for the boy, and that he was in great trouble lest something should have happened to the child; he did not know what, but he felt very uneasy about him.

"Did you look for him at the old Bugler's? I heard him blowing away, and beautifully too; at this moment, depend upon it, Joseph is with him; here are his boots, I will go and fetch the boy."

The worthy Häspele ran quickly down the village, to a stocking weaver's who was seated in his room, practising some new tunes on the French horn. It sounded very pretty through the stillness of the night, when a man's own footsteps were inaudible in the thick snow.

It was very natural that Joseph should prefer being with the old horn player, to sitting at home; but he was not there either. On his way, Häspele mentioned to his neighbours that he was in search of Joseph; no one had seen him, and nowhere was he to be found! Häspele returned to David with this distressing intelligence, and the latter said, "Keep quiet, and not a word before the women, or there will be a fine howling; stay here for a little, he has very probably hid himself, and perhaps intends to come here with the Three Holy Kings—I mean the masks, who go about on this evening—I daresay he thinks it would be fine fun; but I'll show him another sort of fun when I catch him."

David sat down again, and with apparent composure, whistled, and kept waving his hand in the air, as if in anticipation of the strokes of the birch rod he fully intended to administer to the little culprit.

"I will stay quietly where I am," said he, as if addressing himself; so he filled his pipe and went on smoking, muttering occasionally, what a good-for-nothing little scamp Joseph was, but he would take care he should be well punished for all the anxiety he had caused. David took up his Bible, and continued to read on from the place where he had stopped the day before; it was in the 2nd book of Samuel, 12th chapter, where King David mourns for his sick child. This did not contribute to tranquillize the reader, so he got up and went out and in, listening anxiously. The bells were all merrily ringing in the Festival—surely he must come soon now—but no one came. There was no longer a possibility of secrecy; David went to every house in the village to the right, and Häspele the same to the left. They both met again at David's house. The procession of the Three Holy Kings passed along; Joseph was not with them; concealment was now out of the question.

"Martina, our Joseph has disappeared," said the grandfather, and Martina uttered a loud cry of grief, exclaiming:—

"This was why he woke me three times last night and asked; 'Mother, is it not yet light?' Joseph! Joseph! Joseph! where are you?" shouted she through the whole house, up the hill, and all along the village, in the garden, and among the fields.

"Oh! if he is lost, I shall die," said David; "I shall never hear the New Year rung in, and the tree I bought to make clock cases of, may be sawed up for my coffin, and I laid in it."

But Martina did not hear her father's lamentations, for she had rushed out of the house long since; David's neckcloth felt too tight, and he snatched it off, his face looking quite distorted, for he wished to suppress his tears, and yet could not. Suddenly he thought to himself, "Joseph must be in the church!" he hurried to the church, the door of which was open, as they were preparing it for midnight service. The schoolmaster was walking about alone, with a single candle, and placing quantities of lights on the altar.

"Joseph! Joseph! are you here?" cried David, on the threshold of the church; the sound vibrated loudly. The candle fell out of the schoolmaster's hand, and he answered, trembling, "There is no one here but myself—what is the matter?"

"You allowed the children to give him the nickname of 'The Foal,' so it is your fault that he is gone off, and is nowhere to be found," cried David, and hurried away. The schoolmaster was as much in the dark about this reproach, as he now was in the church, where, after much groping about, he at last found the wax taper.

The whole village collected together, and even the stocking weaver came with his French

horn, which, however, he quickly put under his old military cloak, to prevent its getting wet. "I will blow the horn all through the village," said he, "and then he will come."

"No!" said one. "The old Röttmännin has no doubt caused him to be stolen, hoping to force you, Martina, to give up Adam, for this very afternoon he was betrothed to the Forest Miller's Tony; one of the miller's men was here, and told us all about it."

"Don't drive me out of my senses," cried Martina. "Joseph! Joseph! come! oh, come! your mother is calling you!"

While they were still standing clustered together, a strange looking little man was seen coming up the valley, hung all round and round with huge bundles protruding on every side. It was the hatter from the next town, bringing for the holidays, a collection of newly dressed three-cornered hats into the village.

"What is going on here?" asked the little man.

"We are looking for a child—Joseph—he has disappeared."

"How old is the child?"

"Six years old."

"I met a fine boy with a rosy face, and fair curly hair."

"Yes, yes, that must have been Joseph; for God's sake tell me where he is," said Martina, rushing up to the man so eagerly, that all his hats tumbled down into the snow.

"Gently, gently! I have not got him in my bundles. Below there, in the wood, I all at once met a boy; I asked him: 'What are you doing here alone, and night beginning to fall? where are you going to?' 'To meet my father, who is coming up this road; did you not see him?' 'What is your father like?' 'Big and strong.' 'I have not seen him—come home with me, child.' 'No, I am coming home with my father.' I took hold of the child, and tried to bring him with me by force, but he being wild and obstinate, gave me the slip, and darted off like a deer, and I heard him still calling, far into the wood, 'Father! father!'"

"That was certainly Joseph; for God's sake let us go after him."

"We will all go—all!"

"Stop!" said Schilder-David, coming forward; "hatter, will you go with us?"

"I cannot, for I am so weary, I can scarcely set one foot before the other; besides, it would be of no use, for it is more than an hour since I saw the child; I stopped for some time at the Meierhof; and who knows where the child may be now; I can tell you exactly where I met him—in the Otterswald Wood, close to the river, where the large spreading beech stands. It is the only very large tree there, and you all know it."

"Very well," said Schilder-David, striving to be composed; "I shall take good care to break a branch off that tree, to make Joseph remember it."

"No! no, you are not to beat him!" exclaimed Martina—she did not like to say, that this was the very same beech tree, where Adam had spoken to her for the first time; and perhaps her child might at that very moment be lying under it—frozen to death.

"It is night, and we can see nothing, and the snow is falling faster than ever," cried Häspele; "fetch torches, ring the alarm bell; we must ask the Pastor to let us do so; come straight to the Parsonage."

Martina, however, was taken home, and when she saw the boots on the table, she sobbed more than ever, saying: "Alas! how proud he was of them, and now his dear little feet are frozen—cold—dead!"

The women round Martina tried to comfort her, and one of them said, with the kindest intentions, that to be frozen to death was the easiest of all deaths; it was simply falling asleep, and never awaking.

"He would fall asleep on earth, to awake in Heaven," said the poor mother, weeping bitterly. "My Joseph prophesied it himself; he was too wise, too good, and went to meet his father. No, I will not die! when Adam goes to church with his bride, he shall hear my Joseph cry out from above, 'No!' and—he called 'father! father!' his father did not answer him; he did not know his voice—but day and night he will know it now. So long as he lives it will sound in his ears, that his child was frozen to death in his own wood; he need not go out and try to wrap him up now—too late—too late! his heart must be as hard as a stone! and there is the wooden horse my boy played with; it looks pitifully at me, though only wood; but the father is of wood too, he has no pity, he has killed his child. How often have I seen him holding out bread to his wooden horse! Oh! he had such a kind heart! oh! Joseph, Joseph!"

One of the women whispered to the other: "It would be a happy thing if he were only frozen to death, for a huge wolf is prowling about in the wood, and who knows if it has not torn the child to pieces." Though this was said in so low a voice, the ears of those who grieve are wonderfully acute; in the midst of her loud lamentations, Martina caught the words, and suddenly screamed out "The wolf, the wolf!" she clenched her hands and said, convulsively, "Oh! that I could strangle it with my own hands!" and looking at Leegart, she said, sobbing, "Oh! Leegart! Leegart! why do you sit sewing there at the darling's jacket, when the child is dead?"

"I did not hear a syllable; don't blame me; I heard nothing; you would not say a word; I asked three times, and no one answered. You know I have no superstition—nothing is so silly as to be superstitious; still there is no doubt of the fact, that so long as you go on either sewing or spinning for any one, that person cannot die. There was once a king—" and in the midst of all the distress and confusion, Leegart coolly related the story of Penelope and Ulysses, with some singular additions of her own; saying that Penelope had worked indefatigably at her web, but undid at night what she had done by day, and thus saved the life of her husband, who was in America.

Leegart was afraid, and not without cause, that in the agitation of the moment, her tale was not very distinctly heard; she acted, therefore, prudently, in proceeding with her story without pausing, or even looking up. When she was once seated, it was well known that she never left her chair till her time was up, and when she once began to tell a story, she went on steadily to the very end; indeed, if the house had taken fire, it was very doubtful whether she would have moved. We must hope, therefore, that the fire will be kind enough to wait till Leegart's hour for departure is come.

While Martina was lamenting with the women in the house, the whole troop of men, had arrived at the Parsonage, and Häspele offered to be spokesman. The children, too, begged hard to be allowed to go with the rest to look for Joseph, but their mothers began to cry and to hold them back, while the fathers shook them off impatiently, and scolded them soundly into the bargain. The decrepit old men, who had crept forth from their snug corners beside the stove, took the women and children home with them.

It looked like the vanguard of an army advancing on the foe—but where was the foe? There were some, however, who declared that it was utterly absurd to seek a child in the forest, in such a storm and in such blinding snow; it would be exactly like looking for a needle in a haystack. Häspele, however, called out, "Those who don't like to go with us can stay behind, there is no need to coax any one to go." Not one person left them. Häspele went up stairs and entreated the Pastor to allow the alarm bell to be rung. The Pastor was much distressed on hearing about Joseph, but said, he could not permit the alarm bell to be sounded, for it would terrify the neighbouring parishes without sufficient cause, and make them reluctant perhaps to give their assistance on some future occasion.

"It is good of you to go in such numbers to seek Joseph; I am glad to see it," said he in conclusion.

"There is not a single young healthy man in the village staying behind," said Häspele.

"I, however, am obliged to remain here," said the Pastor with a smile; "the Röttmännin occupied all my time last night, and I must be ready for midnight service in the church—but we will all pray for those who are in the forest."

"I will go instead of you," said his brother-in-law. "Who is your leader?"

"We have none; will you be so good as to be our conductor, Herr brother-in-law?"

All laughed, for Häspele, not knowing the young farmer's name, designated him simply as the Pastor's brother-in-law.

"My name is Brand," said Edward; "I know the path, for I was there to-day."

"The Pastorin's brother is going with us," was soon whispered into the street, and everyone was pleased. Häspele was right; with the exception of the sick and decrepit, every man in the village was present—they were all standing at the door with torches, iron spikes, ladders, axes, and long ropes.

"Is there any one here who can make a signal?" asked Edward. The stocking weaver drew his horn from under his cloak. The instrument did not shine brighter in the torchlight than the face of the stocking weaver, who had suddenly become so important a personage.

"Good! keep close to me. According to my ideas this is the best plan: the bugler is to go with me to the Reitersberg, where we will light a fire, and then let all disperse two and two; not one alone. Whoever finds Joseph, must either bring him to us on the Reitersberg, or at least any tidings of him. Three loud long blasts of the horn will be heard at intervals, so long as Joseph is not found; but as soon as we find him, three short notes will be sounded, and continued till we are all reassembled. But what would be still better; I have my gun with me, are there any others in the village?"

"Certainly there are."

"Then go and fetch several, and when Joseph is found, we will fire three consecutive shots. If we were not to do that, very possibly some of your good people might still be running about in the snow and cold, long after Joseph was found."

"He is right—a capital notion! Just like the brother of our Frau Pastorin."

The young farmer smiled, and continued: "One thing more: we have coverlets and mattresses with us. Is there any dog in the village that knows Joseph?"

"They all know him, and love him. You know Joseph, don't you, Blitz?" said Häspele to a large dog at his heels.

The huge yellow dog answered by a loud bark, and a wag of his tail.

"Very well," exclaimed Edward, "let loose the dogs then."

"And we will hang lanterns round their necks, and round our own the bells of the cows, and those of our teams."

Every one had a fresh suggestion to make, so it was fortunate that the various opinions were concentrated into one by their leader.

"Now give us once more the signal, that we may all know it thoroughly," said Edward; and the stocking weaver blew his horn with all his might.

Scarcely had the sound died away, when Martina came running up and exclaimed: "Here are his clothes."

"Let the dogs smell the clothes," said Edward.

Martina would have been almost knocked down by the dogs who surrounded her, if Häspele had not had the sense to take the bundle from her.

"Call to the dogs,—'Seek Joseph!'" commanded Edward; "and now forward! march! Joseph is our battle cry."

"Halt!" shouted a deep powerful voice from the opposite side, "what is the matter?"

"Adam," cried Martina, rushing up to him, "what have you there? have you found our Joseph?"

"Our Joseph! what do you mean? This is the wolf that I killed with my cudgel."

"The wolf that tore our child to pieces," cried Martina, clenching her hands in agony, and staring down at the dead animal. Häspele, very properly, told Adam in few words what had occurred. Adam was still holding the animal by the neck, and now he shook the dead creature violently, and hurled it with superhuman strength far away over the ditch into the field. Then he said:—

"I make a solemn vow here, before you all, that whether our child is found or not, my Martina is mine for life or death. May God forgive me for having been so long a weak undecided, good-for-nothing fellow! but listen to me, men all. Each of you may strike me in the face if I do not take my Martina to my own house, even if father, mother, and the whole world are against it."

"For heaven's sake, don't talk of this just now," said Martina, hiding her face on Adam's breast, and bursting for the first time into tears; Adam laid his hand fondly on her head, his breast heaving with the thick sobs which closely followed each other. Never did any one see Adam weep but that once.

The whole assemblage, at a silent signal from Edward, had gone forward with their bells, dogs, and torches; Häspele alone stayed behind with the unhappy parents, and when Adam looked up, large tears were glittering in his eyes in the light of the torch. Adam, however, stood erect, and said energetically: "Come, Martina, we shall certainly find him. I cannot think that he is dead; I heard him calling in the wood; I could not believe that it was really a human voice, and yet it was the voice of my child."

"And how often he called you during the night, and you could not hear him!"

"If he is still alive, I will cherish henceforth every word of his."

"God grant it! Amen," said Häspele in a low voice, and went on before them with his torch; and the two followed him close together.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TROOP OF HOBGOBLINS.

"Let me carry the clothes; give me his clothes," said Adam, as they went along.

"No, I cannot part with them, they are all I now have belonging to him, and I have the new boots in the bundle, that he never wore, and in my hurry I brought his little wooden horse, too."

"Does he like horses? then he will like me also."

"Oh! do not speak so lightly; remember that he may be dead."

"The child may have lost himself in the wood, and yet not be dead; and who knows whether he may not be at home at this moment, having gone of his own accord, or some one have brought him home."

As a token of gratitude for these consoling words, Martina placed the bundle of clothes on Adam's arm, saying, "Carry them for me." When they passed by a weeping willow close to the road, which looked very singular, its drooping branches all hung with snow and glittering in the torchlight, Martina continued: "Do you see that tree? When our Joseph was not quite three years old, I was walking here with him, and on seeing the leaves hanging down, he said, 'Mother! that tree is raining leaves.' He often spoke such strange things, that it was quite puzzling to know whether one was on earth or in heaven, and what one could do, or ought to do with him; and he is grown so strong, so very strong; I was obliged to use all my strength when I wished to hold him—and now to die such a death! it is too dreadful. Joseph! Joseph! my darling Joseph! Oh! where are you now? I am here, your mother and your father too. Joseph! Joseph! oh come! Call him, Adam, can't you shout out his name?"

"Joseph! Joseph!" called Adam with his powerful voice, "My child! come to me; Joseph! Joseph!" and Adam, who once trembled to pronounce the child's name even secretly, now shouted it loudly in the wood. Soon, however, he desisted, and said, "It is no use, Martina; try to be quiet, or you will make yourself ill."

"If my Joseph is dead, I don't care to live either; I care for nothing more in this world."

"I cannot believe that, Martina; surely you have some love for me still."

"Oh heavens! don't wrangle with me just now," said Martina sorrowfully. For a long time neither spoke a word. Häspele proved a good mediator, for he came up to Martina and begged her to take a mouthful of the Kirschwasser that he had most thoughtfully brought for Joseph.

"No, no, I need nothing. I cannot take what the child may require."

"Do take a single mouthful," entreated Adam, as tenderly as his rough voice could be modulated. "Remember, our Joseph cannot drink it all if we find him."

"If we find him? Why do you say that? You know something, and are keeping it from me; I feel sure that you know he is dead."

"I know nothing whatever—as little as you do yourself. I do beg you will take one mouthful of the Kirschwasser."

"Ah! if my Joseph had it, it might restore him to life. I need nothing—leave me in peace." But Adam persisted till Martina took some, and this was a good opportunity for him to get hold of her hand again, and then they pursued their way hand in hand.

Martina spoke very low, and told Adam what a singularly reserved boy Joseph was; and that he had often whispered things to her, that he might have quite well said loud out before everybody; but his peculiarity was, to prefer saying things secretly; and no doubt he had something secret to tell his father, and then he would have been able to discern how it made you creep, when Joseph with his warm breath said something close to your ear. "His warm breath is now frozen," added she, wringing her hands.

Soon she suddenly seized Adam's arm, saying passionately, "Look! there is the very rock, where once on a time I wished to die along with him, when Leegart found me. If we had died together then, before he came into the world, it might have been better for both of us. Oh! where is he now? perhaps he is lying two steps from us, and yet we cannot see him, and he cannot hear us. I will go from hill to hill, to the top of every rock, and down into every valley, to seek my boy."

"Try to be more composed," said Adam, kindly; but Martina's excitement every instant increased, and she turned hastily to him saying:—

"You are to blame! a father can deny his child, and pass him by as if he were nothing to him in this world—but a mother—never! You did this!"

"Why do you reproach me at such a moment as this?"

"I do not reproach you. Why are you so cruel?"

"I am neither unkind nor cruel—only do try to command your feelings; from this day forth all your sorrows shall cease. Come closer to me, my Martina!"

"No, no, I cannot rest!" cried Martina, suddenly, after having leant on Adam for a few minutes—"I cannot—Oh, gracious Father! do with me what thou wilt, only do not deprive me of my child, my Joseph; he is innocent; I alone am guilty—this man and I."

She went some steps from Adam, as if she could not bear his vicinity; she no longer shed tears, but she sobbed convulsively with dry eyes, as if her heart would break.

The scene in the wood was like the procession of the "Wild Huntsman;" the men with torches and lanterns, and their eager shouts and cries, and cracking of whips, and ringing of bells; and the dogs, too, carrying lanterns round their necks, and rushing along the ravines barking, and then galloping up the hills, still barking and pressing forwards, till recalled by the voice of their masters. It was fortunate that such good order was maintained. No one could recognise his neighbour, for each man was a moving mass of snow, and the hills and rocks looked down by the torchlight in amazement, at the men who had come there to shout out, and seek a young child.

"See, how all the village loved him!" said Martina to Adam, relating to him how the boy had wakened her on the previous night, three times, to ask which way his father would come; and she reproached herself severely for having listened to Leegart, and sent him out of the house alone; she might have known that something dreadful was sure to occur on this day.

Adam was sadly perplexed, and did not know what to say; and he was more sad than ever when he thought of the Forest Mill, where they were all sitting waiting for him, and remembered the treachery towards Martina he had been persuaded to commit this very day.

Suddenly a cry of joy was heard—"What is it? what is it?" "God be praised, they have found him!" "Where? where?" The smith came up, out of breath, to Adam and Martina. "Here is his cap; we shall find him now, sure enough."

Martina seized the dripping cap, and shed scalding tears over it. "Heavens! he is now without a cap, and the snow is lying on his head, if he is still in life."

Martina passed her hand over her face, and stared at the smith, who certainly looked a strange monster. He had not taken time to wash his sooty face, and now the snow had drawn all sorts of strange figures on it, and his red beard was hanging full of icicles.

"You must remain on the straight road, that we may be able to find you immediately," said the smith, and turning to go away, he added, "I think this night we have earned from you the right to be well supplied with good liquor at your wedding."

It must certainly be a set of hobgoblins dispersed in the forest; and there was a man in the wood who saw them, as large as life. Speidel-Röttmann, who had followed his son, had made a false step, and rolled down the precipice. When he reached the bottom he became sober all at once. He had received no injury whatever. He went on a long way on the frozen stream, and the rocks and trees towered above him like gigantic monsters. Fresh snow fell thickly on him every instant, and at last he became so confused, that he did not know whether he was going up or down the stream. He tried to break the ice with a stone, to find out in what direction the current of the stream was flowing, so that he might know which way to proceed, but he could not loosen one of the stones. The whole world seemed iron-bound, and no help near. Well! here at last is an opening, here is a path in the forest. He climbs up, often slipping backwards, and almost entirely hidden by masses of snow; but he does not lose heart. Speidel-Röttmann's strength is now to be put to the proof. He succeeds in getting to the top of the rising ground—he is right: here is a path. As he grasps the ground for the last time, he stumbles over something; it is a pipe—it is Adam's pipe. So he must have gone this way; now he will come up with him—which way is he gone? right, or left? The traces of his footsteps have been already effaced by the falling snow. Speidel-Röttmann takes the path to the right; then it suddenly seems to him that the left must certainly be the best way, so he turns back; and then goes forward again, up and down, as if a will-o'-the-wisp were leading him hither and thither. Hark! a sound of horns, and whips, and barking of dogs;—what can it be? Heavenly powers! it is the Wild Huntsman! It is himself, on his gallant grey, with his spectre followers, shouting, and yelling, and blowing the horn; and in the midst of the hubbub there are screams as if from thousands of little children; and if any unlucky being were to look up at him as he dashes past, he would cut his head as clean off as if it were a turnip. All the terrors of the infernal regions assail Speidel-Röttmann. He had, indeed, often boasted that the talk about witches, and spectres, and hobgoblins, was only lies and nonsense; but now every hair on his head stands on end; he remembers that in bygone days men were quite as wise as at present, and they believed it all. "Here he comes! Forgive me for not believing a word of it till now. I will—" Speidel-Röttmann rushes along the path into the wood, and throws himself down on the ground on his face, that the Wild Huntsman may gallop over him without throttling him. So he lies still and hears the fiends rush past. He clutches the snowy moss with his hand, and the moss does not give way. It is a comfort that something in the world still holds

fast. Hold on! hold on! or you may be in a moment lifted up in the air, and placed on the top of a tree, or who knows where? and your face twisted entirely round, and you must go about with it in that fashion as long as you live. And he feels as if he were mocked, and some one said to him, "Is not this wood your own property? but in spite of all your foresters, and all your keepers, you cannot prevent the Wild Huntsman galloping through it. Do you hear a child's voice? do you know that voice?"

Speidel-Röttmann has entirely lost his head—the snow in which he had buried his face melts from the warmth of his breath, but something melts also in his hard heart; and face to face with death, he calls out from the snowy moss, "Joseph!" as if that word had the power to save him. "I solemnly vow I will," he goes on muttering to himself. It has suddenly flashed across his thoughts, that there lived a child on earth to whom he had been guilty of great injustice, and that it is for this he hears such groans and cries in the air. He wishes to call back his son, who is in turn striving to recall his son. This is like a chain attached to another chain, and so the links go on.

"I yield! set me free! keep the child!" With these words he at last ventured to raise his head a little. The noise and shouts and cries sounded now further away.

"Who are you? who are you?" cries suddenly a figure, seizing him roughly, not like a man, but like an evil spirit, or the claws of a wild beast, so savage is the grasp.

"I am a miserable sinner! I am the Röttmann—let me go; be merciful!"

"So, I have got hold of you at last!" exclaimed the figure, and knelt down on his breast. "You shall die, for you have killed my grandson, and disowned him, and left him to want and misery."

"How? what? is it you, David?"

"Yes, you shall know first who is going to split your head with this axe—it is I, Schilder-David. Yes, accursed Goliah, I have got you down on the ground, and you shall die."

Speidel Röttmann's strength and courage revived, after a very short deliberation. "Oh, ho! not much fear of him!" and his hand speedily followed his thoughts. He seized with one hand the man who was kneeling on him, and with the other drew forth the sharp knife he always carried on him, and cried out, "Let go, David! let go: or I'll stab you to the heart!"

"Your evil deeds are come to an end," cried David, snatching the knife out of his hand; but Röttmann succeeded in getting on his feet, and David quickly lay under him on the ground.

"Now, do you see!" exclaimed Röttmann, triumphantly, "I can give you the finishing stroke."

"Do so, root out the whole family—you have killed my Joseph, kill me too."

"Stand up! I will do you no harm," answered Röttmann; "I don't know whether it is you that are bewitched, or myself, or the whole world. What on earth brings you here?—who are those in the forest?"

David, breathing hard all the time, told what had occurred; but adding, "I have no business to talk to you at all; both you and your son deserve to die. I will not say another word to you; one of us shall remain on this spot; stab me if you like, I shall be glad to leave this wicked world for I have nothing left to care for now in it." With these words Schilder-David rushed on Speidel-Röttmann, but the latter seized the old man's arms with such a powerful grasp, that they were as immovable as if fastened into a vice.

"I pity you," said Röttmann.

"I don't want your pity; you are not worthy to be spoken to by an honest man, you hard-hearted villain! you carry your head high enough; and why not? for the door into Hell is so high, that you need not stoop to get through it."

"Abuse me as much as you please, I am stronger than you; but now listen to what I am about to say. You see that no one can force me to do a thing; no man in the world can do that; but I wish to tell you this. I need not stick to what I said, for no mortal man heard me, and as for the Wild Huntsman and the hobgoblins, it is all nonsense and superstition, and if I don't choose, I shall be none the worse. It is no one's business but my own, and you have no right to know why, and how, and where, I made the promise. This is my wood, and I am master here, and if I find you here at night with your axe I can seize you, or shoot you down if you try to escape—just as I think fit; but—this is not what I wished to say; only once more remember that no one can force my will, but I give in of my own accord, so that is settled; and here is my hand on it; if the child is still alive, if we find him indeed at all, either living or dead, you have my hand on it, I have nothing to say against it."

"Against what!"

"You have my consent. When I reflect on the matter, I never was so opposed to it; I was obliged to agree with my wife. I was wandering here in the wood for I don't know how long, and when I fell down the ravine, I thought the rocks covered with snow would fall on me to crush me,

and all at once I seemed to hear a child's voice calling 'Father! father!' Now I know what it was, and I can't tell you how that voice went to my heart, and I said to myself, if ever I can, I will; my Adam shall marry his Martina. I promise faithfully he shall."

"It is too late to shut the stable door when the horse is stolen. There is no more happiness or luck in the world. If you had but known the child! he was an angel from Heaven! but alas! he is dead by this time, and who knows where he is? There was a time when I thought I could not bear to look any one in the face on account of the child, and now I wish to leave this world because the boy is no longer in it. If I was not worthy of such a grandson, you are far less so. I will have no peace between us, you or I must die. Kill me on the spot I say, for then I shall see my Joseph again in the next world."

David once more rushed on Röttmann, who, however, again held his arms in such a fierce gripe that he could not stir. It seemed as if a miracle must have occurred to soften Speidel-Röttmann's heart, for he contrived at last to persuade David to go along with him to look for Joseph.

"Joseph! your grandfather calls!" shouted David. Speidel-Röttmann echoed the cry, and David looked round in astonishment several times to see if it was really true that Speidel-Röttmann was calling to his grandchild. David was the only person, who, contrary to orders, had gone alone; now he had found a companion, and such a strange one!

The horn sounded from the hill, the torches and lanterns wandered in all directions, the dogs barked, and rushed up and down the hill, the herd bells rung, and the two grandfathers both went along, as if they had walked all their lives together in peace and amity; at last they saw a light shining at a distance; the light did not move, it must be in some house; so they directed their steps towards it.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOST IN THE FOREST.

In the meanwhile Schilder-David's house seemed to be no longer a small house, belonging to a small family. Every one went in and out, and many left the door standing open, which Schilder-David's wife invariably gently closed without saying one word; indeed she did not even object to the neighbours for forgetting to knock off the snow from their feet, and the floor of the room was like a small lake; she only placed fresh cloths on the place and wrung them out into a pail, which she emptied at the door.

Leegart drew the footstool, on which she placed her feet, closer to her, to prevent any of the women seated round the table having any share of it; for Leegart was not at all accustomed to sit in a damp room, more especially in such a thoroughfare as Schilder-David's room was turned into on this particular day.

David's wife always kept a fierce fire in the stove—the heat was positively stifling; but Leegart had the art of keeping a whole audience awake, and herself into the bargain.

While all the community were rushing about in the night and in the snow, on rocks and in ravines, and the whole village in a state of excitement, there were only two objects that remained steady and stationary and kept time together—these were the clock on the church tower, and Leegart beside her huge pincushion.

Martina had left the room along with the men, but several women remained there. They complained loudly that their husbands were so rash as to expose their lives to danger, for the sake of one single child, perhaps only to cause their own children to suffer want and misery. Leegart, however, while waxing her thread, said, "Indeed it is very dreadful to lose your way in the forest. I can well tell you about it, for it happened to me once in my life, but I found that once quite enough. For God's sake, never, never be tempted to take a near cut through the wood, unless you are thoroughly acquainted with every corner of it. A short cut is the Devil's cut. Am I right or not? It takes a very short cut to go to the Devil. I remember it as if it were only yesterday; and who knows whether poor Joseph may not have done the very same thing. I went through that very forest, and the hatter met the boy at the large beech tree, which I also passed. God forbid that the child should have to go as far as I did, before I found my way back! It was on the Sunday after All Saints—no, it was on a Monday; at all events it was a holiday, St. Peters and St. Paul's. We don't keep it holy, but the Catholics do. I left home on a fine bright day, carrying nothing with me but a velvet cap in a handkerchief for Holderstein's daughter, in Wenger. You know who I mean. She is now a widow: they say she is going to marry a very young man, who lives near Neustädtele; for she went there two Sundays following, and he walked back with her both times: it is not very wise in her to marry such a boy. At the time I speak of, she was betrothed to her first husband, a nephew of the Forest Miller—I mean of the old miller. So I set

out and went first along the valley. It was a very fine season; it is long since we have had one like it—just the quantity of rain and sunshine that we required. In the wood I met the beadle's children—the boy and Maidli. The boy became a soldier, and was shot by the Freischärfer. Maidli lives in Elsass, where they say she is happily married. They were herding an old and a young goat, beside the hedge where there are so many hazel nuts. So I asked the children—I don't know why—if there was not a nearer path to Wenger. 'Yes, indeed,' said the children. 'I must not keep on the beaten track; but when I came to the group of juniper trees, turn to the left through the wood.' I wanted one of the children to show me the way, that I might be quite sure of the right road. I can't tell the reason, but I somehow anticipated evil; but the children were so stupid, that they would neither go alone nor together with me. So I walked on, and when I arrived at the wood, where the Rössleswirth has now his field—at the time it was still part of the wood—I called out to the children below to know if I was on the right path, and they shouted 'Yes;' at least I imagined I heard them say so. So I went on, and it was very cool and pleasant in the forest I thought it so fortunate that I was now in the shade of the wood, for the heat was so great outside. It was about ten o'clock, and here it was quite a cool fresh morning still. Such a walk is very beneficial to any one obliged to be constantly sitting and working; and at that time I was quite young, and I could run and jump about like a foal. I saw a quantity of strawberries beside the hornbeam hedge; I gathered a few, but did not stop long, and soon went forward. I climbed, and climbed I don't know how long, and could see nothing; and the path went sometimes up hill and sometimes down. What could be the reason? Had I got into a labyrinth? The proverb says of those who are on a wrong path, that they have got into a labyrinth, and indeed this was one, for it seemed to lead nowhere. I did not know this when I entered it, but I soon found it out, and to my cost too. Oh, nonsense! thought I, the time only seems long to you, because you are so accustomed to sit still, that any walk appears too much for you. I felt so tired, however, that I sat down. Then I heard a slight rustling and something moving, and a dry branch fell from the tree. And look, look! a squirrel, I declare. He hangs on the trunk of the tree and peeps down at me with his quick bright eyes and sharp muzzle. I watch him as he creeps up the tree; and now there are two, and they frolic about and snap at each other. Whish! quick as lightning!—now up, now down! I must say I have a particular love for these little creatures; and I have my mother to thank for that. She said to us a hundred times—'Children, look at all you see attentively, for then you will be aroused wherever you go, and it costs nothing; and you never can tell what use it may be of to you some day, to observe closely what goes on round you.' But no one ought to allow themselves to be detained on the way by anything, for it only tends to perplex you still more. I went on and arrived at a fir-plantation: the trees are so thick that it is quite dark there, but charmingly cool. There is something lying on the ground—it is a stag asleep. I gave a scream of terror, and the animal started up and fixed his great eyes on me, as if to say—'You stupid thing, why do you come and disturb my noonday's sleep?'

"I ran away as fast as I could; I fancied the stag was following me, and then I fancied what I should do if he took me on his horns, and threw me down the hill; and if a branch fell from a tree, I was so terrified that I shook in every limb. God be praised! at last the wood came to an end, and so many hundred butterflies I never saw in all my life as there, and the meadow was quite red with flowers. I stood still to enjoy the sight. A falcon was soaring high in the sky, screeching, and I watched the bird as it flew along. A pretty sight, I must say; he looked as if he were only swimming in the air—but now away! I must not stop again; and surely it is all right at last, for I saw a small footpath. Now, thought I, you are safe—now you can go on boldly, for this must lead to where men are. I saw a bone button lying on the path, I picked it up, and put it into my pocket; and it was lucky I did so, for I had quite forgotten that I had still a piece of bread there. I thought I never tasted anything better—no, not even at a wedding feast. In an intricate wood like this, it seems as if you could no longer imagine that men ever sow grain, and reap, and thresh, and grind, and bake. The path was so narrow, that I was obliged to thrust aside the branches before I could get through. And now I saw that the path went straight down, as steep as the side of a house. Good heavens! what if some wicked man were to come at this moment, and rob me, and throw me down yonder; no one would ever find me again. No, no! was I resolved to say to him; here, here is all I have; here is my silver thimble, and fifteen kreuzers. You have it all now, so let me go, and I will swear an oath never to betray you. Should I be forced to keep such an oath? I think, for the sake of other people, I ought to tell what has happened, that others may not be robbed as I have been. In my terror I began to sing, but search in my head as I would, I could think of no pious song except 'The grave is deep and still,' and that was really too dismal. I therefore sang all sorts of gay, frolicsome songs, although my heart was beating with fear. Thank Heaven! at last I got to the top, and then a spacious, pretty level meadow lay before me; but by this time I was much heated, so overheated that I did not know what to do. My cheeks were burning, and if I had been dragged through water I could not have been worse. I could not venture to sit down to rest, and I could scarcely recover my breath sufficiently to proceed; and in the meadow I heard the humming and buzzing of thousands and thousands of bees. Gracious powers! suppose I were to put my foot on a bee's nest, and they were all to fly out and settle on me, and I to become dizzy. My mother told me how that is—you become quite dizzy, and the only thing that can save you is to jump into the water; and there is no water here. I wish there was some water, for I am frightfully thirsty. What is the meaning of this? Does the path end here? And there is a precipice; and there are the great wild rocks. Am I actually on the rocks of the Rockenthal, where since the creation of the world no human foot has ever trod? Here lie the forest trees decaying, and no man can fetch them away. The birds alone know how things look up there. No, surely I cannot have got so far as that, and yet my way home cannot lie down in that direction. I called out—'Heavenly powers! where am I?' And never did I hear an echo so distinct and beautiful as then, calling out after me—'Where am I? where am I? where am I?' It sounded at

least seven times following, and just as if some one were dwelling on the tones in the sky, loud and long; it proceeded from the rocky precipices and the clefts like lovely music, as if something were singing the words, but taking a longer breath than a man could do. I shouted out the names of all those whom I loved, and all those who loved me. I shouted, and shouted—I seemed to love all mankind. In such an extremity as mine, all discord and strife are at an end. I called, and called, but no one heard me—not a living soul. It is no good, I must go on. I search about everywhere—famous! There is another path that goes through the wood; but after pursuing it for a little way I found that it again turned to the left. I thought, however, well! I will go forward, and so I did; but once more I came to a wall of rock, with no path whatever, so I crossed the meadow, and suddenly came on the edge of a precipice going straight down into a fearful abyss. I started back as far as I could, my head began to turn, and I felt as if the precipice were dragging me thither to dash me over the rock. Then I stood still, and thanked God that I was still on solid ground. A yellowhammer sat on a tree above my head, singing so prettily, and when I looked up at him he flew away to the opposite hill—yellowhammers when they fly, raise their backs like a cat, and fly higher than the spot on which they wish to alight, and then let themselves gently down. A bird like that is very well off; he does not care either for hill or valley. Oh! if I could only fly like him! I turned to the right. God be thanked! I could see fields beyond the hills, and the valley looked like a tray, or a flat pan. But, good heavens! am I on the famed Todten Hof? I saw a lilac bush, and that is a proof that men either are, or were here. Yes! the lilac in the ground, and the swallow in the air, show that the dwellings of man are not far away. But no house is to be seen, and all around there is a mysterious dim light, like that on the day of the great eclipse; it is not day, and yet it is not night, and the trees and hills seem trembling with fear. Alas, alas! I am actually in the Todten Hof. Hundreds and hundreds of years ago a rich farmer lived here, so rich and so godless that he and his wife and children bathed every day in milk, and never gave a single drop to the poor—they were even more wicked than the Röttmännin. But in those days our Lord thought fit to punish their sin, and one Sunday, when they were playing at football in the meadow with cheeses, the earth suddenly opened, and swallowed up the whole farm, men, and cattle. There is a particular time, however, when they all wake up again, and show themselves for, one single hour. It is not right to tell children such histories, it only makes them superstitious. I am not at all superstitious, besides it was still daylight; but there was no sun to be seen in the sky, nothing but black clouds, and my hair really stood on end. What terrified me most, was not the dread of the dead men waking up again, but the dogs starting up out of the ground, and beginning suddenly to bark—that would be very horrible. 'There's not a word of truth in it,' I exclaimed, in a loud voice, far into the valley, and this rather revived my courage. I thought, however, that my best plan was to retrace my steps, and not to attempt to go to Wenger that day; still going back was such a long journey, and I knew my way back just as little as my way forward. I would have been quite ashamed to show my face, if I had been obliged to go back, and say that I had lost my way. I said to myself—'No, on I must go. If I do not reach Wenger, at least I am sure to arrive at a house. Don't give way to superstition, and it is still daylight, and tonight there is a full moon; then you can go home when you have rested for a time, or you may remain at Wenger. No one is expecting you.' Unluckily I live quite alone; and it was a sad thought to me at that moment, that I was so solitary and uncared-for. No one would inquire for me, or weep for me, if I were lost I must say I could scarcely help crying; but no! said I to myself, there are people who feel an interest in me, and how frightened they will be, and yet how pleased, when I can relate to them my adventures. Surely they will soon end now. I have quite enough to tell them already, indeed more than enough; and tired, terribly tired I was. Suddenly I heard a boy *jodeln*, on the hill above. In my fright I never thought of *jodeln*, but I can *jodeln*, and right well too. In my youth I could utter this peculiar cry louder than anyone. I could be heard two miles off."

Leegart laid her hand on her cheek, and uttered a shrill, sharp cry, rising like the sharp point of a mountain, and descending again into the valley in scattered fragments. She could uplift her voice in the most marvellous way for her years.

David's wife, who had not hitherto heard one word of the whole story, started up from the bench beside the stove, and asked—"For Heaven's sake! what is the matter?" The women present, and Leegart, had great difficulty in pacifying her, and explaining why Leegart had uttered so loud a cry. The old woman again sunk down on the bench, muttering—"I am well rested now. I wish I could lend poor Martina my feet."

The women entreated Leegart to continue her story. She waxed her thread afresh, and sewed the collar on over and over to the jacket, which had in fact been finished for some time past; but she was resolved not to leave off sewing, for nothing is more sure and certain, than that no mortal man or child can die so long as any one is sewing for their benefit. Moreover, Leegart's story kept them all awake, and they did not wish to sleep till their husbands returned home, when they intended all to go together to the midnight service in church.

After Leegart had quietly blown her nose, she resumed—"So I began to *jodeln*, and the boy answered me, as if we were doing it for pleasure. I called out—'Which is the right road?' but his only answer was to *jodeln* again. 'Go to the deuce with your *jodeln*,' said I. I felt afraid when I had said this, but I cannot deny that I did say it. Come, I see a fresh path leading through the wood. I truly hope and trust it is not a labyrinth this time; it is wet enough, but among these thick trees it probably is never dry all the year round. Here is a clear spring. If I could only be able to drink some water; but all I contrive to get is wet feet. I followed the path into the wood, and soon it was as soft as a bed underfoot, and the moss so deep, that since the beginning of the world I felt sure

no single handful of it had ever been plucked; indeed, who was likely to mount up here to get it? The path is no longer wet, and down the hill it seems dry enough; but all trace of a path has disappeared. In a fir wood you cannot see the traces of footsteps, and my shoes were as slippery as if they had been polished. Then I caught on a prickly thorn, and tore my feet till they bled. No matter. God be thanked! here I saw a piece of brick lying on the ground. I lifted it up, and found it really was a brick. So far well, for it was a proof that human beings must have been here; bricks don't grow of their own accord. The finest diamond could not have been more welcome to me than this brick. I went on my way quite tranquillized, and I did not even start on seeing an adder lying coiled up in the sun; I threw my brick at him, and he slipped away in a hurry. Oh! what a lot of strawberries here!—no one gathers them; for no one is likely to be here who has not lost their way, and as for me, stupid, silly creature, I dare not venture to pluck some to quench my thirst, because I have an idea that the adder has poisoned all the strawberries. Good! I saw a dry channel on the face of the bank where the trees, when felled, are slid down to the valley beneath. It surely must go down to the river, and I suddenly thought I heard the rushing of a stream; no doubt it is our river, but perhaps it may only be the tops of the trees rustling in the wind. When you have lost your way your hearing is not acute.

"Be it what it may, I resolved to run down the dry channel into the valley. I lifted up my gown, still holding fast the handkerchief with the cap in it. That packet had given me no end of trouble. When you are forced to go perpetually up and down hill, carrying something in your hand, even though it may not be very heavy, you feel as if one hand was tied fast, and quite useless. Hush! I thought I heard a carriage in the valley, so there must be a good road there; probably a one horse chaise from Bern, or perhaps with two horses, it trots along so rapidly. Soon it turned the corner, and then I no longer heard it at all.

"Gracious goodness! I had again allowed myself to be misled: it was only the leaves rustling in the forest that I had heard, and now the sound was far above me. I resolved not to listen to any other sounds, but to do my best for myself. I tried to climb up again, but the way was so steep that I found it impossible to get any footing on the bank. The ground, too was so hard, from the trees being shoved down it, that I could no longer dig my heels into the ground to get a firmer footing, and so I tore a pair of shoes that had cost me two gulden. I was not to get half of that for making the velvet cap. What matter! if I only get home safe, without damage to life or limb! I only fell once. No one should trust to anything they grasp, unless they have first proved its strength. Broom has a good hold, it stands very fast in the soil: once I seized hold of the roots of a tree, but the roots came away in my hand, and I slipped back a long way. I closed my eyes: now I must die, it is all over with me! I was brought up, however, by a rock, in the middle of a large anthill. I managed to get away from it at last. I went close to the dry channel on the side of the hill, and kept it in view, and jumped from tree to tree; but it could scarcely be called jumping, it was as if I had been cast forwards; my progress was just like sparrows flying and clapping their wings, and then tumbling topsy turvy in the air. I felt almost inclined to laugh when this thought struck me, but it was no laughing matter. I thought to myself, this will be a story for you to tell all your life long; and then it occurred to me again—if you could talk about it, you would by that time be well out of the scrape. I plucked up courage, and hoped it would soon be all right, and that there was no fear of dying; only I must get on. And so by dint of first seizing one branch, and then another, I got forward by degrees, and only slipped back once more, but I had no more tumbles. Fragments of rock rolled down beside me, jumping into the air, and rebounding as they went, till at last I seemed to hear them splash into the river. And I thought to myself that if I fell, I should fall, just like them, to the bottom and into the river. I stuck my nails into the earth, and crept on and on, and then sideways into the underwood, close to the dry channel, where a footing was to be found. Slowly, slowly, I crawled along. But stop! one step further and I must have been killed! A rock as steep and high as a house, as if cut out with a knife, overhung the river. I stopped short, and could have seized the tops of the larches with my hands, but there was no path. I went back two steps, and leant on a tree, and now my mind was easier. I saw running water. God be praised and blessed for all His mercies! this is the valley, and to have reached the valley is to have reached home. How pleasant was the rushing of water to my ears—so calm, so peaceful, so homelike! even seeing and hearing it quenched my thirst. I now accomplished the greatest feat of the whole, when, after a long round, I at last contrived, after much scrambling, to land in the valley. And when I actually found myself there, then, and not till then, I thought myself safe.

"Big drops of heat were running down my cheeks. I seated myself on a large log of wood, lying on the ground, close to the very beech tree where the hatter met Joseph. I was so overheated that I would gladly have got rid of some of my wraps; but there was a very cool breeze in the valley. The sun was just sinking behind the hills, and it was not yet noon when I left home. I saw swallows flying about. Oh! what a pleasant sight that was to me! And then I heard a cock crow. No nightingale's song could sound half so sweet as the crowing of a cock to a person who has lost his way. Well! I felt that I was now in the world again. I heard a hen cackling: wherever an egg is laid, there is sure to be a woman near. I heard a dog barking: where a dog barks a man is not far off. I am once more among my fellow-creatures. Presently I heard the rushing of a mill. Where am I, then?

"So long as I was wandering about and lost, even in my anguish, I never shed a tear; but now, when I was safe, I for the first time became fully aware of the dangers I had undergone, and I began to cry so dreadfully that I thought I must dissolve away, and yet I could not stop myself. Then, luckily, I saw a woodcutter coming along. I asked him where I was. 'Röttmannshof is close by up there,' said the man, passing on. I called after him to ask what o'clock it was. 'Past five.' So

I had actually been running about for seven hours. I could scarcely believe it—seven mortal hours! If I had been superstitious, I should have certainly believed that some wood demon had purposely led me astray, for after seven o'clock has struck their delight is to mislead people, and there are day spirits as well as night spirits. By following the river I was sure to reach the Forest Mill; so I set off towards it. Scarcely, however, had I gone two hundred paces when I discovered that I had left my small parcel lying on the trunk of the tree; and it had caused me so much trouble, and I had taken such care of it! Gracious me! this too! Perhaps the woodcutter stole it, and I shall be obliged to pay for the velvet cap, instead of receiving a sum for making it. I ran back. Men are very good and honest, especially when they don't know the value of a thing. My parcel had slipped down behind the tree, and there I found it. The Forest Miller's wife was an excellent woman, and her daughter Tony takes after her. The good creature gave me dry clothes, and took as much care of me as if I had been her sister. But for three days I felt as if all my limbs had been dislocated. I started for home at last.

"When any one has been lost in a wood, it is scarcely possible to realise that they have a home of their own—a place where your bed stands, your looking-glass, your table, your chest of drawers, your Psalm Book. Oh! what good old friends these all seem, and how you love them all when you come home, and would gladly thank the tables and chairs for having stood steadily in the same place, and quietly waited for your return. And do you know the worst part of losing your way?—that you are so laughed at when you tell the story afterwards. But I wish no one—not even the Röttmännin herself—to have such a thing happen to them.

"It was a lovely summer's day, the Sunday after All Saints—no, not Sunday, the Monday of Peter and Paul. Oh! what must it be to wander about in the snow at night, and such a child, too! what could it do but lie down and die! Oh heavens! I see the child before me, fast in the snow, or in the cleft of a rock, its hands struggling, and its feet frozen, so that it cannot move; and crying out, 'Mother!' and listening, and hoping that some one will come, and no one answers but the raven on the tree. And a hare runs past him—whish!—over the snow. It is afraid of the child, and the child looks after the hare, and forgets his misery for the moment. 'Mother! mother!' he goes on calling, and it is a blessing that he falls asleep at last, never to wake again. Good heavens! what an unhappy creature I am to have such thoughts pass through my mind; and come they will, I can't help it; but it runs in our family, and my mother was right in saying, that she knew more than that two and two made four. And you know what happened to the poor child that lies buried up yonder in Wenger. He was found in the wood on the third day, quite covered with snow, and only close to his heart was the snow melted. All those who saw it could not help sobbing their very hearts out; and the mother became an idiot. The Herr Pastor wrote a beautiful epitaph on the tombstone: I knew it once by heart, but I could not repeat it now. And what happened to the hatter, who was carrying a bundle of newly dyed hats on New Year's Day to Knusling? He arrived at the Schröckenhalde, the very precipice where I was when I lost myself, and went on through the meadow; and there was such a fog that you could not see your hand before you. He went round and round the village at least seven times, and could never find his way in. The bells were ringing, but they always seemed to him to come from the other side, and so he never got there. At last he heard geese cackling, so he followed the cry, and soon got safe to the village. But if you could but have seen him! he looked just as if he had been buried, and dug up again. But one thing I forgot to tell you, which was that the Forest Miller"—

Here Leegart was interrupted by loud cries in front of the house.

CHAPTER XV.

A CHILD SEEKING HIS FATHER.

Leegart was absolute mistress of Schilder-David's house, on the days when she came in the morning to stay till night; and therefore it was but natural that she should dismiss little Joseph at noon; for in his presence, it was not possible to discuss the many points that were absolutely necessary to be discussed.

The news that the Pastor intended to leave the village came first to Leegart; and now she proved that she richly merited the name she had earned of *The Privy Councillor*. She sent instantly for two of the churchwardens, and dispatched them, along with Schilder-David, to the Pastor, in order to persuade him, by their united eloquence, to give up his intention.

A servant from the Forest Mill had gone to fetch wine from the Rössleswirth, and sugar and all sorts of spices from the grocer. This occurrence was, of course, very soon known in the village, and speedily found its way to the house of Schilder-David, whom it naturally concerned most, and to Leegart, who was there, and who always contrived to have the earliest intelligence about everything. Every one in the village took a pride in bringing her news, and they considered it only their simple duty to tell her all reports, being well paid for it beforehand.

There was now a perfect strife as to who should concoct the mulled wine, preparing for the

betrothal of Adam and the Forest Miller's Tony. Leegart added her share of spice mentally, but very different from that you buy at the grocer's. She kept wishing that she could drop poison into it, and that all who drank it should die. Her only difficulty was whether to wish most for the death of the Röttmännin or that of the Forest Miller, who was about to sacrifice his child in such a criminal manner, in order to save her marriage portion.

Martina, however, was vexed that Joseph should be sent out of the house on this particular day. Still it was quite right that he should not hear what they were going to talk about; and though she did not join in Leegart's denunciations, she could not help crying and lamenting. She sent Joseph back to Häspele, but Joseph had talked enough already of the dog he seemed doomed never to get. He went along the village, and a woman who met him said in a compassionate tone, "Ah! poor child! this is an evil day for you," Joseph thought so too, as he had been pushed out of the house. Presently another, by way of cloaking the bad news adroitly, said, "Joseph, what is your father doing? Is it long since you saw him?" The boy perceived that something was going on in the village, and that it concerned him; he, however, kept his promise to his mother, and told no one that his father was to come this very day.

It never ceased snowing, and Joseph, being quite alone on the ice, kept sliding backwards and forwards on the ground, and constantly looking at the path where his father was likely to come. But he found himself at last so solitary, that he went to his grandfather's. He remained standing outside the door of the workshop, for he heard two men talking there. He knew their voices: they were the two churchwardens Wagner and Harzbauer. They were saying that the cook at the Parsonage had let out that the Pastor intended to leave the village, and that she believed Röttmann and the Forest Miller were the chief cause of this; and then they abused Adam, saying that he well deserved his nickname of *The Horse*, for he allowed himself to be bridled and driven about, just as other people chose.

The men now came out, along with Schilder-David, who said, "So you are there, Joseph? Go home, and I will soon come to you."

His grandfather did not take him by the hand, as usual, but went with his two friends to the Parsonage. Joseph stood still. But suddenly, as if some one had whistled to him, he turned round, and ran off through the village into the fields, to meet his father. "He will be so glad to see me! and he will put me before him on his horse." Away ran the boy, jumping merrily along through the fields, and into the wood. Every now and then he wiped off the snow from his face and breast with his hands, and making small snowballs, he threw them at particular trees that he fixed upon, and never failed to hit them. He went more slowly when he was once fairly in the wood, and often looked round. Two bullfinches were perched on a mountain ash close to the path, twittering incessantly, but as if half asleep, and every now and then picking the red berries; but many more than they ate, were scattered on the ground. "You are silly, greedy fellows, and destroy more than you eat," said Joseph, and, despising the simple creatures, went on his way. Below in the valley a bird was singing charmingly, and with infinite tenderness: it sounded something like the notes of a thrush. What could it be? And the bird went on singing and flying—on and on, further and further! Deep snow was lying where the path takes a sharp turn. At the very first step Joseph sunk up to his knees. He was, however, quick enough to clamber up an overhanging bank, and then to get down again into the path beyond the snowdrift. It was lucky that this steep declivity was planted with mountain ash, to show the way.

"Do the mountain ash berries belong to my father, too, I wonder?" said Joseph aloud. The trees could not answer him, and there was no human being near to give him any information. A fox appeared on the path in the thicket, and stared at the boy. No doubt he was puzzled to make out what such a singular apparition could be: he stood for some moments immovable, watching the boy, till the latter cried out, "Get along!" And off trotted the fox, but in no hurry, and little Joseph again exclaimed, "Yes, grandfather, it is just as you said, for now I saw it myself,—the fox drags his tail after him on the ground, to brush away the marks of his paws, that no one may know which way he is gone. How clever of him!" Magpies chattered from the tops of the trees, and a crossbill was perched on a projecting bit of rock, just above the valley; and the boy nodded to it, and the bird nodded too: he did not say a word, but he only opened and shut his beak, as if he wished to say, "I am hungry." "There's something for you!" cried little Joseph, flinging down the ravine the only bit of bread he had left. The bird, no doubt, supposed that it was a stone thrown at him, for he flew away timidly, and the piece of bread was buried in the snow, so no one got a share of it.

Joseph went on quietly, resting sometimes under a tree, and sometimes under a projecting rock, amusing himself by watching how the snow fell in such thick showers, and yet so softly, covering everything more and more. "My father must take me a drive in a sledge tomorrow," thought Joseph; and, thinking of his father, he wandered further and further.

Twilight was beginning to fall, and the boy felt rather frightened, but he still went straight on; and it was lucky for him that Schilder-David had guarded him from all the prevalent superstitions of the country. Still Häspele had told him that the souls of the dead danced in churchyards at night, in the shape of lights, and often in the wood besides; and the rider on the gallant grey, who rides through the air, can crack his whip famously, for he has a fir tree as tall as the church steeple for a whip. There is the stone cross at the side of the road, where once a peasant with his cart and horse fell down the hill; and there sits a raven on the cross. "You are nothing but a raven," said Joseph, throwing a snowball at the bird, who flew away with a croak.

Joseph went on till he came to a group of wooden figures, the faces almost covered with snow, and the figures, in summer attire, peeping out of the hollow in which the group was placed. Joseph broke off a fir branch, and rubbed off all the snow from the wooden faces, that seemed to stare at him so strangely. They consisted of five men, in the hollow, under green trees: they all wore white shirts, green breeches, and short yellow leather gaiters. They stood in a row, each with an axe in his hand. In front, however, of the others stood one man alone, with uplifted axe, and beside him lay a man on the ground, bleeding and crushed, close to a felled tree. Joseph read the inscription: it was, "Vincent Röttmann was crushed by this tree on the 17th of August, and died, after great suffering, on the 23rd of August. May God grant him everlasting rest, and punish the guilty!"

Joseph shuddered. The figures kept staring at him as if he were guilty. And what Röttmann could this be?

As a sign that he was innocent, Joseph placed the green fir branch on the group, and went on his way, not quite easy in his mind, because the figures stared after him so oddly.

What does he see coming, along the path? Is it a man?—he has at least a hundred protuberances! He must be a spectre! He comes nearer and nearer. Joseph goes up to him boldly, and says—"Good evening!" The man with the hundred protuberances—it was the hatter with his bundles of three-cornered hats hanging round him—tried to persuade Joseph, first kindly and then by force, to go back with him; but he slipped through his hands, and running on, cried loudly through the wood, "Father! father!" and on he went. "He will soon come—he is sure to hear me." Night now set in, and Joseph walked further and further, calling out his father's name; and his cheeks were in such a glow that the snow melted as it fell on his face. He knelt down and said his usual night prayer at least thirty times over—"God, bless my father and mother!" He always said this with peculiar piety; and again started up, thinking that he heard something crackling and moving in the ravine. But no—all was again still. "But where is the path?—there is now no path at all." The boy began to cry bitterly as he ran along, stumbling first against one tree and then against another. "Father! mother! father!—good Lord, help me!" And God heard his cry. Three angels are coming hither with lights: they have white garments and gold crowns on their heads, and are singing such a strange song.

"Awake ye, awake ye,
Come hither to me;
For this is the home
Of the brave and the free."

They come nearer and nearer, and now they are close to Joseph, who accosts them courageously, saying—"Good angels! take me with you to my own home, and to my father and mother."

"Gracious powers!—a spirit!—the Holy Child!" cry out the three angels, and scurry off with their torches at such a pace! but they have wings, and can run or fly as quickly as they choose.

Joseph did not try to follow them: he stumbled and fell, but soon got up again, when all had vanished, and he was once more alone. A little way off he saw the glimmering of a torch. How to get near it! Joseph had lost his cap, but he did not observe it; and, running as hard as ever he could, he shouted, "Stay, stay! I am little Joseph!" But the angels declined stopping, and were no longer to be seen. Their footsteps, however, were distinct enough in the snow, and Joseph followed the marks on, and on; and at last up a hill—Heaven be praised!—a light at last, indeed many lights, and brightness all round. The comforting feeling, that men are under shelter of a roof close by, inspired fresh courage in the little wanderer; and, with renewed strength, he ran down the hill to the lights, and reached the Forest Mill below at the very moment when the three angels were ascending the outside stair singing:

"Three Kaisers sang on high—the Heavenly Hosts among;
And glorious the melody, and glorious the song.

Awake ye, awake ye,
Come hither to me;
For this is the home
Of the brave and the free."

Joseph slipped quietly in behind the singers, scarcely daring to breathe, far less to call out—above all not to call out, or the angels would be sure to fly away again. He went with them into the room, and the three angels sung the song of the "Three Holy Kings" to the end. They were quietly listened to, and got plenty to eat and drink, and presents into the bargain; and the angels ate, and drank, and spoke their thanks very properly. Joseph soon found out that these were not angels at all, but three boys dressed up as the Three Holy Kings. They went away, and Joseph remained alone; and now, for the first time, he was remarked by those present.

"Who are you?—where do you come from?—what are you doing here?" These were the

questions that quickly assailed him from the Röttmännin, and the miller's wife, and Tony.

"Eat something first to warm yourself; you are quite wet, and have no cap," said Tony, kindly. "There, my boy, eat and drink, and we will talk to you afterwards. Come, I will take off your jacket and hang it near the stove. Don't sit so close to the stove—it is not good for you."

"A handsome boy," said the miller's wife, while Joseph was drinking some mulled wine.

"The angels guided me famously. This is what they drink in Heaven, I suppose," said Joseph.

There was a strange flash in the eyes of the Röttmännin when she heard these words and that voice. She pushed aside the large jug, and stared at the boy very much as the fox had done in the wood.

"Where are you from?" asked the bride.

"From Waldhausen."

"Who is your father?"

"He does not live with us."

"What's your mother's name?"

"Martina, and my grandfather is Schilder-David."

"So, I have got you at last!" cried the fierce old Röttmännin. "Good Lord! this is Adam's son." So saying, she started up and grasped the child with eagle's talons.

"Yes, my father's name is Adam. Do you know him?"

"Come along with me; I will take you to my room and put you to bed," said the Röttmännin.

"No, I won't go with you," said Joseph. "You will stew me in a kettle, like the witches. Let me go, or I'll bite."

"Oh! I'll show you what stewing and boiling mean," cried the old woman with a fierce laugh. "It is a blessing from Heaven direct, that the child should have come here of his own accord. We will keep him hid, and not give him up. Now we can force both Adam and the others to dance to our piping."

"But I won't give you up the child," said the bride, coming forward. "Don't be afraid, my boy—don't be afraid; come and sit in my lap. But wait; I will first take off your shoes, and you shall put on mine, and you will soon be quite warm. Now tell me, does your mother know that you left home? and why did you come so far alone in such a night?"

"I went to meet my father, for they all abuse him in the village; and they say my grandmother is the very devil, and I wanted to tell him all this."

"I will be-devil you," cried the savage old Röttmännin, furiously struggling with the bride to get the child from her, who, however, used all her strength to defend the boy; and at the moment when the women were contending with each other, the two grandfathers came in.

"Oh! here is my grandfather," said little Joseph in ecstasy, running up to him.

"Is that the lost grandchild?" asked Speidel-Röttmann. "Come here, my boy. You have got another grandfather now. What a fine fellow he is! It would have been a pity——"

"And I say, no! and no again! and a thousand times over, no, no, no!" raged the Röttmännin; "and I would rather let my tongue be cut out and thrown to the dogs, than ever say yes, as long as I live."

"Quite right! Say no, if you like; but it's no use now. Is it not an actual miracle from Heaven, that a child should be lost in such a way and found again? In the wood yonder, all the people in the village are running about in search of the child. We may well be proud of such a grandson, and it is quite a privilege and an honour to have a child belonging to us, who is such a favourite that the neighbours are risking their lives for his sake. The good Lord has performed a miracle, and I hope He will perform one on you also, wife. Be kind, and give in. It is no sin to yield up your own will. Do you consent to it, Tony?"

"So far as I am concerned, I would on no account deprive the child of his father."

"But I say no, no! and with my last breath I will say no! and we shall see whether you can get the better of this *no* of mine."

During this discussion Schilder-David had remained perfectly silent: he was holding Joseph in his arms, passing his hand over his face and his limbs, as if to make sure that he really had him safe again. And now he slipped out at the door along with the boy: he could not exactly tell why: he wanted to be once more alone with Joseph at home; but when he got outside the house he, for

the first time, perceived that his knees failed him—he was forced to sit down on the steps. Within the house he heard a commotion, a window was opened and a pungent smell of smoke was perceptible, for the lights on the Christmas tree were all blown out.

So sat Schilder-David. Who comes this way? Who can it be? It is Häspele. He shouted with joy on seeing Joseph, who was, however, shivering so much that Schilder-David was quite uneasy about him.

"Go back quickly into the wood and say that he is here, and prevent them all running about in search of him," said David, his teeth chattering.

Häspele hurried away, shouting out the good news. "He is found! he is found!" cried he up the hill till he was hoarse.

A female figure now came out to David and said—

"Give me the child."

"No; I'll give him to no one here. What do you want with him?"

"I wish to carry him to my room, and to put him to bed. Come with us."

"Oh! you must be Tony, surely? Your mother was a good woman."

"And I hope I am, too. Come, quick; make haste!"

"I can't go up the steps; I find out now what I have gone through."

"Come into the stable, then; for you will be warmer there, at all events."

Tony took the old man straight into the stable, where she prepared a comfortable bed of dry hay, and laid the child on it, and covered him up warmly.

Schilder-David placed his hand on the child's forehead, who soon fell sound asleep; and his grandfather watched by him, scarcely daring to breathe. Not till they were both quietly sleeping did Tony glide softly out of the stable.

CHAPTER XVI.

ASLEEP AND AWAKE AGAIN IN THE FOREST MILL.

Häspele had been sent by the anxious parents to the eminence where they had observed a light, to see what was going on there. Martina would not believe what Adam said:—"Who knows but they may have found our Joseph in the mill?" and yet she wanted to go there instantly herself; but Adam persuaded her to wait, at all events till Häspele came back.

At last he came; he ran as fast as he could to the spot where he had left them, but they were no longer there. "Is the whole world entirely bewitched this blessed night?" said Häspele. Adam and Martina however, at that moment, were engaged in laying hold of the three angels. Adam shouted to them in his powerful voice to stop, as they came near: the angels, however, seemed to feel such desperate alarm at any of the Röttmann family, that they fairly took to their heels.

"You will see that our Joseph is gone with the Christmas singers," said Martina, in a hopeful tone.

Adam pursued the angels, and was lucky enough to catch hold of one by the wing, but it came off in his hand; he followed them; and the flying angels were not quick enough to escape a man like Adam. He clutched one of the angels tight, and asked him about Joseph; then he brought him to Martina, who was waiting above; but the boy was in such mortal terror, that they could not get a word out of him; above all he refused to say who his companions were, and when he was asked if he had not met a fine tall boy, seven years old, in the wood, the angel first said yes, and then no; it was impossible to make sense of what he said. In the midst of this judicial examination, Häspele appeared: "He is there! he is there!"

"Who is there?"

"Joseph," said Häspele, quite hoarse.

"Where? where? where?" cried Martina, rushing up to him. "Where is he? for God's sake tell me! dead or living?"

"He is sitting in the mill below, drinking mulled wine."

"My child! my child!" cried Martina, in so shrill a tone that it vibrated through the valley, and running down the hill, as fast ever she could; Adam could scarcely keep up with her; she rushed up the steps and dashed open the door, crying out, "Joseph! Joseph! where is my Joseph?"

"You and your Joseph may go the devil," answered a voice: well did she know it; it was the voice of the Röttmännin. Neither fear, nor anxiety, nor peril of death, nor intense happiness could have overcome Martina, but this voice had such an overwhelming effect on her, that, with a loud scream, she sank to the ground in a swoon; even Adam, who was standing close behind her, was so terrified, that he let her fall, without trying to support her. "Mother! mother!" said he: he could not utter another syllable.

"Do not call her mother," said Tony; "go away, Adam; leave us; I will raise Martina myself: but first give me that warm mulled wine, and sprinkle some drops of snow water from your cloak on her face. So, so! she breathes!"

"Capital!" said the old Röttmännin, with a harsh laugh, "if the whole world go crazy, I won't. If they all fall down dead around me, like so many cockchafers, I will still say *no!*"

Speidel-Röttmann, however, instead of replying to his wife, went up to Martina, saying, "Come, Martina, try to be composed and to command your feelings—there, I have lifted you up, sit down here."

"My Joseph! where is my Joseph?"

"In the warm stable below, sound asleep," said Tony; "let him sleep on quietly, your father is with him; we laid him in warm, dry hay; and I'll tell you what we will do—we will carry him upstairs immediately, and lay him in my bed, in the next room. You can go down to fetch him: Adam, you need not be afraid about your Martina; go at once, and I will stay with her."

"And I!" said Speidel-Röttmann. Adam went down to the stable, and carried the child upstairs to bed, but Schilder-David was sleeping so soundly that he did not choose to wake him. The child, too, continued fast asleep, even when he took him in his arms. The father stroked the child's head fondly, and then his hand once more hung down by his side. Martina was now brought gently into the room; she bent over Joseph quietly, and listened to his breathing.

"Lie down beside the child, on my bed," said the Forest Miller's Tony to Martina, who looked at the girl in surprise, while Tony added, "You may be very glad that matters have taken this turn. Your Adam and I were forced into a betrothal; he disliked it quite as much as I did, and your Adam is good and true; he never spoke one word to me except about you; and though we were bride and bridegroom, yet we never kissed each other once."

"Then I will give you a kiss," said Martina, starting up and embracing Tony.

"I wish I had my cheeks between the two," said Häspele to Adam; and then addressing the two women, "You are both very nice girls, I must say! Come, Tony, your best plan is to take me: will you have me? I see you won't, but I'll give you a wedding present whoever you marry, all the same."

"Where is my father?" interrupted Martina.

"Still sleeping in the hay."

"Good Heavens! when he awakes, and no longer finds the child by his side, he will go out of his senses."

"Don't be uneasy, I will go to the stable and stay there with him till he awakes," answered Tony; but Häspele detained her by asking for something to drink, before he set out as quick as he could for the Reitersberg, where the men were still keeping watch. Tony quickly poured him out a glass of hot wine. The betrothal wine had been tasted by strange guests to-day.

All was again quiet in the mill. Joseph was asleep, and Adam and Martina watching by his bedside; Schilder-David was asleep stretched on the hay, and Tony seated near him; and in the room above the Forest Miller was asleep. The Röttmännin tried to wake him, for she wanted the help of a man, but the Forest Miller made no sound, and the Röttmännin cursed the "flour sack" lying there motionless, while the whole house was in an uproar. Just as the Röttmännin returned into the room, she cried out "What's the matter? is the world come to an end to day?" for the hills echoed with the report of guns, and every valley and rock resounded with joyful cries, so that little Joseph himself was awakened by the noise, and starting up in bed, called out "Father!"

"I am here," answered Adam.

The shots were repeated, and now the whole party drew near, amid the sound of horns, the ringing of bells, the cracking of whips, and the barking of dogs.

"You called on the devil to come—do you hear? he is coming. Give your consent, while it is yet time," said Speidel-Röttmann, in the hope of softening his wife's heart.

"If the devil comes, I shall be very happy to see him; I should rather like to have a talk with

him," answered the Röttmännin; "you are all fools. If you choose to truckle to others, do so; but a woman of spirit never gives in—nor will I—never—I would rather die!"

The hobgoblin troop came nearer and nearer, and at last drew up at the mill. They did not come in, however, for in the stable was heard a woman's cry for help, and the wild groans and lamentations of a man's voice. Schilder-David had woken up, and could not find the child, and now he was rummaging among the hay seeking for him, and loudly lamenting; refusing to listen to Tony; indeed, threatening to strangle her on the spot if she did not instantly restore the child.

Edward hurried into the stable, and Tony ran up to him, calling out "Help, help!" Schilder-David looked somewhat formidable by the light of the lantern, when he turned round, after plunging into the hay, which had adhered in quantities to his hair, covering his face and clothes.

"David, 'he is all right and safe,'" said the young farmer Edward, in his pleasing voice. Schilder-David sank back into the hay.

"Who is that stranger?" said Tony to Häspele.

"The brother of our Pastorin."

"Sir—sir," began Tony, "do tell David that his grandson is in my room, and Adam and Martina beside him. Pray say this to him, for he won't attend to me, he won't listen to a word I tell him. For God's sake help me; you are the brother of our Pastorin, and no doubt you are a good man, and I thought so when I saw you once before to day. Help the old man to rise."

Schilder-David, who was now sitting in the hay, stretched out his hand to Tony, saying; "You are right, forgive me, and help me up." Tony and Edward each gave him a hand, and when Schilder-David was once more on his feet, he said, "You are two excellent people." Edward supported David on his left arm, and offered his right hand to Tony, he scarcely knew why,—and she gave him her hand, she scarcely knew why,—but they clasped each other's hands close. "I think I can now quite well walk alone," said Schilder-David, and the other two freed him from all the hay clinging to his clothes, and went with him upstairs.

Martina gave up Joseph to his grandfather, but the meeting with her father was cut short by their all going to the next room together, where Häspele was heard laughing merrily. He proposed to play the part of an evil spirit, and in that way to convert the Röttmännin. He thought this would be the best way to manage her.

When Joseph came into the room holding his grandfather's hand, Tony said, "You had better not be here just now," and she took him back into the room, on the other side of the entrance.

"This is the brother of our Pastorin," said she to the Röttmännin, as she was leaving the room, presenting Edward to her.

The latter now spoke in a very urgent manner to the Röttmännin, who gave him no answer, but fixed her bright staring eyes on him.

"It is time to go to church now," said Röttmann, and the whole of those present left the room. As they all assembled in front of the house, a voice was heard in the room above shouting, "Long live the Röttmännin, she has given her consent."

It was Häspele's voice, who ran triumphantly down stairs, all shouting "*Vivat!*" again and again; and the horn sounded merrily, and the bells rung, and the dogs barked. A voice screamed something vociferously from the window, but not a word was heard.

Amid singing and sounds of horns, they all went through the wood to the village. Tony walked beside Martina. On the top of the hill, she said, "I must now go back; I should like to go to church with you, and to stay with you; but, though I don't know why, I feel a kind of nervous uneasiness, because my father never woke up during all the commotion in the house. I have not been so dutiful as I ought, in not having gone to see about him. Good night, Joseph," said she, shaking hands with him kindly. "Good night to all." She passed Edward, without giving him her hand before all the people, though they both would fain have shook hands again. "Good night," said Edward in a whisper; and she answered, in a low tone, "Good night." Häspele shouted a loud "*Vivat!*" in her honour, as she left them to go to the mill, and all present joined in it.

Adam was carrying Joseph in his arms, who was dressed in his new clothes and his new boots; but at last the father was obliged to let him walk along beside David, who insisted on having him. On the hill, above the village, Häspele called out, with the last effort of his hoarse voice, "Stop! Stop!"

Here still lay the wolf, in the field into which Adam had flung him. Adam took the child close to the dead animal, and said, "Look; I killed this wolf with my cudgel." No scolding, however, nor persuasions would induce Joseph to touch the wolf; he was so frightened. "It's lucky for you that you are now to be under the rule of a father," said Adam, "or you would not have proved a true Röttmann." He led his son by the righthand and dragged the wolf after him with his left; and thus they all went along together, till they arrived at Schilder-David's house.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GREAT EVENT IN A SMALL HOUSE.

"Yes! I quite forgot to tell you that the Forest Miller"—had Leegart said, when she was interrupted by loud cries from the house—

"He is found; Joseph is close by."

The women ran out, and asked, "Is any one hurt?"

"Not one—all safe," was the answer.

Leegart remained immoveable in her chair, only placing her feet more firmly on her footstool, which seemed seized with a sudden trembling. She took a secret pinch of snuff, to tranquillize her nerves, and looked at the jacket with a glance signifying, "I have done with you at last."

"Joseph is here," called out Häspele, who had ran forward before the rest; "and my jacket is finished," answered Leegart, in the firm conviction that by her incessant sewing she had preserved Joseph's life; but as Häspele, in his ignorance, made no remark on this point, she asked "Where was he found?"

"In the Forest Mill."

"In fact, I need not have asked," rejoined Leegart, glancing round, with a self satisfied air, "I knew where he was; I pointed out exactly the way he was sure to take. At the very minute when the cry of his being found was first heard I was in the act of uttering the words: 'The Forest Miller'—all these women know that this is true."

The most important point for Leegart, was to prove that she was clever enough to know precisely what was going on, even when she was not there herself. When they all came into the room, Martina pressed Leegart's hand warmly—thereby causing her to scatter on the floor a private pinch of snuff. Leegart said again, "I knew it; I said it. I told them he was in the Forest Mill: at the very moment that Häspele arrived, I said the words, 'Forest Miller;' and I prophesy now for you, Martina, that you will get your Adam at last."

"It is so! it is so! here he is!" exclaimed Martina.

Leegart cast down her eyes modestly; she wished to vindicate her prophetic gifts, and to shew that she knew it all beforehand. She nodded emphatically to all who came into the room, as if to say: "I knew that you would all come here—I knew it long before—I foresaw it all, and particularly that Adam would come in, holding Joseph by the hand. I knew all about the wolf too. I only met an adder in the forest, but the one animal is quite as dangerous as the other. All that has occurred could not fail to come to pass." Leegart was surprised at nothing. The expression of her face said, "Nothing is hidden from me;" and she took a stolen pinch with entire complacency.

"I have three fathers now," exclaimed Joseph; "Leegart, here are my three fathers."

"Good," said David, "but go to bed now. Martina, take him away. God be praised, we are all come safe back," shouted he into his wife's ear. The grandmother nodded, with a pleased face. "Has it been snowing hay?" asked she, taking some stalks of hay out of her husband's hair. All laughed, and the deaf grandmother laughed too, and looked earnestly at each person, guessing, from the motion of their lips, what she could not hear. She stretched out her hand to Speidel-Röttmann, saying, "Pray sit down, pray sit down."

Adam went up and shook hands with her of his own accord, bawling into her ear in his stentorian voice, "God bless you! mother-in-law."

The old woman stepped back suddenly, as if she had received a blow. "I hear you well enough, I am not so deaf as all that," said she, retreating to the bench beside the stove, and looking nervously at the great men and the great dogs.

Schilder-David's house was not made for the Röttmanns. The father and son almost touched the ceiling when they stood upright.

Little Joseph remained for a time sitting on the knee of Speidel-Röttmann. David was jealous, and felt almost angry with the child for taking so quickly to other people.

"Give me your large wolf-dog," said Joseph to grandfather Röttmann, who said—

"He is yours."

"You are mine; my own;" said Joseph to the dog, but he was obliged to leave him with his grandfather for the present, as the animal would not go with him.

"Some one take Joseph to bed instantly," repeated David, in a voice of authority. His wife understood, by the movement of his lips, what her husband was saying, so she took Joseph by the hand, and went with him up to the attic. Scarcely had the door closed behind the grandmother and grandson, when Leegart stepped forwards with a degree of confidence and self-assurance that amazed every one, saying deliberately,

"And now, Martina, go and put on your wedding dress. I will assist you, for you know I always promised that I would. All you men, if you are true men, take care that Adam and Martina are married this very night. You can, if you will, and if you insist upon it. The Röttmanns have a famous opportunity of showing their courage. Speidel can now split asunder a hard log, and you, Adam, 'The Horse,' may drag it home. What are you all staring at me for? I say, go straight to our Pastor, and I tell you the thing will be done. I tell you so, and I always know pretty well what I say. Come, Martina, that I may dress you. You shall not hide your face any longer; you have groaned and grieved, and felt shame long enough. Come along."

She took Martina with her to her room, while every one walked after her in surprise, but no one spoke a word. Martina soon returned into the room, prettily dressed. Adam went up to her, and, unseen by the others, showed her something wrapped up and fastened by a riband into his purse. He then turned to the others, saying, "Father, and father-in-law, it is far the best plan. Come with us to our Pastor. He must make us one this very day."

"He will never do it."

"Let us at least try."

"Don't let us forget the chief point of all," said Schilder-David, suddenly stopping, "When any one goes to be married they must know their Catechism, and particularly the Ten Commandments. Can you repeat them to me, Adam? You say nothing. Here is Joseph's Catechism for you, go into the next room and look it over quickly."

"I will help you," said Martina, going with Adam into the next room.

This, however, was far from being an easy piece of work. Adam plodded, and became as hot as fire, but he could not manage to get the Ten Commandments into his head, especially the order in which they followed each other; in his agitation of heart, he evidently had no chance of impressing these Eternal Laws on his memory.

"Does our Joseph know the Ten Commandments by heart?" said Adam to Martina.

"Yes, indeed, word for word."

Leegart rescued the despairing Adam by coming into the room, and saying, "Don't delay at present. You are not like other people. The Pastor will probably ask you no questions on the subject, and, if he does, you can promise to learn the Commandments afterwards."

"A capital idea," said Adam, in a tone of relief; and closing the book at once, he felt as if a heavier load was taken off his shoulders, than on that memorable day when he had carried the cart and the sacks.

He returned with Martina into the sitting-room. The two fathers, and the bride and bridegroom, wished to leave the house together. Adam tried to make his mother-in-law aware of what was going on, but she shrunk from him, putting both hands to her ears; but when David spoke to her, she nodded. "Shall I stay at home," asked she, "and take care of Joseph? I will do it if you choose; but you have all done so much, while I have been sitting at home; and I must say I should like to be present at my Martina's wedding."

"Leegart will be so kind as to stay with Joseph."

"No! I will not be so kind. I have vowed to be present at Martina's marriage, and I could not possibly stay away even if I wished it."

Luckily Häspele, the refuge of the destitute, arrived at this moment, and though he had dressed himself very smartly, and was very proud of his personal appearance, and especially overjoyed that the wedding was to take place that very day, naturally expecting to have a conspicuous place at it, still he was at last persuaded to stay with Joseph by Martina saying to him:—"Häspele, all your life long you have been most kind both to the child and to me; be so good as to stay with the child today."

"Yes, yes, I'll do so of course, not another word," said Häspele, and, gulping down his disappointment as he best could, he went up to the attic and sat down by Joseph's bedside.

The two fathers, the mother, and the bridal pair went to the Parsonage, and a few paces behind followed Leegart alone, looking round at the houses on every side, where she saw a light, as she went along, and thinking how little they knew what an unexpected event was about to take

place that night. Leegart heard the sounds of music—it must be bridal music sounding in the air. To be sure she is the only one who hears the melody, but she both knows and hears more than most people.

When the wedding party entered the sitting-room of the Parsonage, Leegart stayed below with the maid in the kitchen; she soon, however, dispatched her upstairs, that she might throw open the little window of the kitchen for air, she was in such a state of excitement.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILD.

Night had followed morning, and morning turned into night, on this day like the previous one. The worthy Pastor required to exercise all his quiet self command, not to give way to the most feverish feelings of distress and anxiety; but just in the same way that he had resisted allowing the alarm bell to be rung except in the greatest extremity, so he now restrained his own feelings. He stood long looking out of the window. In the dead of night the ticking of the pendulum of the church clock was distinctly heard, and the heart of the anxious Pastor vibrated in unison with the swinging pendulum. He had learned the difficult art, in the midst of all the heartfelt sorrow and uneasiness he so keenly felt, to maintain the most perfect outward composure, and to subdue every symptom of passion: even the noblest of all—that of sympathy for others.

While all those who had remained behind in the village forced themselves to go to work, or sought to divert their thoughts by conversing with each other, and keeping themselves awake by sharing their uneasiness, the Pastor sat alone in his room, looking out of the window, apparently without emotion or noticing any object—and yet his inward agitation and excitement were great. The villagers, well acquainted with this habit of his, declared that at such moments the Pastor preached a silent sermon to himself; the Pastorin, however, had confided to her father, and to no one else in the world, that on these occasions the Pastor was composing poems, so tender and so aërial that solid words were too substantial for them, and he was content to breathe out his words and thoughts, though he neither wished nor tried to preserve them, by writing down his conceptions. Thus, when the poor child was found frozen to death, in the neighbouring village of Wenger, he had repeated, almost unconsciously, aloud, the words that are now inscribed on his tomb, and they had no little difficulty in persuading him to allow them to be written down, and sent to his brother clergyman at Wenger. Often, however, it was a poem, a deep thought from the kindred soul of another, or a melody of his favourite master, Mozart, that the Pastor repeated to himself at such hours, with all sorts of imaginary variations; and when he had held this silent intercourse with himself—the Pastorin called this his supernatural existence—he then went forth into the world, with a kind and consoling word for every one who needed it, and a degree of holiness an faith, strength and power, visible to all men. Thus he sat on this evening absorbed in a reverie.

The strokes of the clock were heard striking slowly from the church tower, proclaiming on hour after another; they go on striking, by day and by night, in joy or in sorrow—they sound on, and on, and loudly say: "Another space of time gone for ever—lost in Eternity!"

"We have found him," was the cry he suddenly heard in the streets, as the sound of a horn rung through the silent night, and the Pastor went out to welcome back his brother-in-law.

When they were again in the sitting-room, Edward told how Joseph had been found in the Forest Mill, with Adam's betrothed bride, Tony. He did not stop to describe minutely the fierce rage of the ungovernable Röttmännin, he spoke with enthusiasm of the kind honest sympathy shown by all the villagers:—

"These men," said he, "possess nothing but their lives, and their sound limbs, to enable them to struggle on through life, and yet with the utmost decision and confidence, as if it could not be otherwise, they, every one, exposed themselves to danger in order to save a lost child; this proved to me, dear brother, that your heart lived in all these men—you were at home, and yet they all came with us. I cannot but think that it must be a severe trial to you to leave such people."

The Pastor answered nothing; neither in assent or dissent, and the Pastorin asked:—

"So the Forest Miller's Tony has given up Adam? Heaven be praised for that! She has a pure and true heart, and is sure to do well in the world. Why did you not bring her with you to the village? I wish you had brought her here to me, Edward. She stands in great need of some one to interpose between her and her stepmother, and also the fierce old Röttmännin."

Edward did not say a syllable, but he breathed hard; in the mean time the Paster rejoined:—

"Don't be uneasy about Tony, she is wood of a fine and solid grain, and we cannot avert from

others the consequences of their own actions, either for good or evil. They who have courage enough to do a deed, have also courage enough to endure its consequences, and ought to have it."

Edward looked up more cheerfully, but his cheeks glowed, and his sister, on seeing this, said:—"You are quite feverish—do go and lie down, and I will bring you a cup of tea when you are in bed."

Edward was very reluctant to follow this advice, and yet he felt quite dizzy; he had gone through more than he cared at this moment to confess. There was a knock at the door:—

"Come in," cried the Pastorin, but as there was an evident hesitation in doing so, she opened the door herself, and in came Speidel-Röttmann, Schilder-David and his wife, and, behind them, Adam and Martina.

"Herr Pastor," said Schilder-David, stepping forward, "God has helped us wonderfully; we hope you will give us further aid, and speedily too, that all things may be done in order."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"Speak yourself;" and David drew back, jogging Speidel-Röttmann's arm.

"What I want," began the latter, repeatedly stroking his closely cropped head with his hand, as if wishing to give a token of respect by pulling off an imaginary hat—"What I want, and I have not a word to say against it, is that the Herr Pastor should marry Adam to Martina this afternoon."

"Oh! that is delightful!" exclaimed the Pastorin, while Adam came forward, holding Martina's hand, and said—

"Yes, Herr Pastor, we earnestly beg you will."

"Yes, we humbly beg it," repeated Martina, in a low voice.

"Gently, gently," said the Pastor, in an authoritative tone, "you two young people, follow me to my room."

He went first, and the two followed him.

"Sit down," said the Pastor, when they were in his study—then he continued: "Adam, probably because you are the richest man in all the country, and can help yourself out of a full purse, without even thinking. What will it cost? you may imagine that whatever you choose can be done at once; you are proud of your strength, because you can knock down a horse, or kill a wolf with your stick: do you suppose that you are, therefore, entitled to imagine that where you are concerned, there are no laws or sacred injunctions, that cannot be abrogated when you wish it?"—

The Pastor paused, and Adam began—

"Herr Pastor! no one in the world knows me as I really am—neither my father, nor my mother—no one but my Martina. You, Herr Pastor, do know something of me; but not everything. What you have just said is very true; I have been a wild fellow; always ready to hit every man—a word and a blow; and I fear it is true, that I had not, hitherto, entirely subdued this wild fellow within me; but, Herr Pastor, he is now down for ever, and you and my Martina ... only give me some penance to perform; I will submit cheerfully, for I deserve it. Desire me to hack off my fingers, that I may become as weak as a child, and I will not shrink from it."

Adam's emotion was so great that he could not say another word, and the Pastor resumed—

"The law is, that you must be proclaimed three Sundays following."

"Is it not enough that the perils of my child made my blood run cold in my veins? Tell me what to do, Herr Pastor, and I will do it."

"Oh! Herr Pastor," entreated Martina; "have we not been punished severely enough? Have we not repented long enough?"

"No! you conducted yourself very properly during your long trial, but your sin was no light one. It shall never be said that those who once set the law at defiance, shall do the same now."

"If we cannot help ourselves, we must submit, I suppose," said Adam. Martina could not speak for tears. The Pastor let her remain for a time quiet, and then said:—

"Come with me to the next room."

"Is it all arranged?" asked the Pastorin.

Adam and Martina shook their heads, and Speidel-Röttmann came forward and said, "Herr Pastor, is it on account of the banns?"

"Yes, yes," answered Adam.

"If that is all," said Speidel-Röttmann with an air of importance, "Herr Pastor, I am willing to pay the fine it will cost."

"Truly, if rich farmers could smooth all obstacles with their money, there would be little difficulty for them in this world; but, Master Röttmann, there are some things which even your ten horses could not move from the spot. Has your wife given her consent?"

"Häspele declares she has," interrupted Edward. "He will be here presently."

Adam hurried away and brought Häspele back with him; he came in a great fright, and when the Pastor appealed to his conscience to say whether the Röttmännin had really given her consent, he said at length, after biting his lips till the blood came, "No, she did not."

"Very well then," said the Pastor; "I will on my own responsibility undertake to marry you, even without the Röttmännin's consent; but now I have something to say to you. Neither your pride, Adam, nor your humility—and I believe in your sincerity, and hope I shall have reason to do so henceforth—nor your swaggering, Speidel-Röttmann, as to paying the fine, but——"

"For the sake of little Joseph," the Pastorin could not help saying: "you give in on account of the boy. He is a precocious child. What would he think, if he heard that the banns of his parents were only published now? What battles he would have with his companions, and who knows what poisonous drops might fall into his heart, and what evil might be produced by them hereafter?"

"Exactly so," said the Pastor; "the child is now asleep, and utterly unconscious of all the perplexities and disorders of this wicked world; he has been in danger of death, and miraculously saved in search of his father, who proved himself a weak person, in spite of his strength; and his grandfather, who hitherto believed that everything could be purchased with money. So for little Joseph's sake I will marry you this night."

Martina rushed up to the Pastor, and knelt down and kissed his hand; Adam would evidently have gladly done the same, but in spite of his humility he could not quite bring himself to kneel yet; he only laid his hand on Martina's head, as if to testify that she was kneeling for him also.

All was still in the room, and the Pastor ended by saying, "We shall see each other again in church," and then went into his study. The Parsonage soon resumed its usual quiet aspect, but even before the wedding party left it, the news ran like wildfire from house to house in the village. "Adam and Martina are to be married to-night. Leegart said they would beforehand."

CHAPTER XIX.

A VOICE AT MIDNIGHT.

The bells were ringing out into the cold night air; a bright ray of light from the open church door streamed out on the graves, which were covered with snow. The whole community were assembled in the church, and each had a light beside them; the organ was pealing forth, and the congregation uplifted their voices in a hymn.

The sounds of the organ died away, the voices were silent, and the Pastor stood up in the pulpit and commenced thus:—"St. Matthew, 25th chapter, 40th verse. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' These are words from a distant land, but they are verified this day, here in our woods; in this forest, where at that time no human foot followed the track of wild animals, either here or elsewhere." He then went on to describe that men cannot serve themselves better than by doing good to others; "and never," continued he, "never is the human face more bright than at the moment of doing a good action; a sacred halo overspreads such a man, and makes him soar above the sorrows of life." He then began to explain the signification of having service in the church at midnight. "You are all voluntarily assembled here, and have broken in on your sleep; break in also on the sleep of your souls, and close not your eyes. How often have anxiety and sorrow kept you awake in the night, and you tossed about, no longer able to return to repose, and it was well for you if it was only anxiety, or care creeping intangibly in the darkness about your bed! Sad indeed would it have been for you, had it been the remembrance of an evil deed that made you wakeful! In one house a child keeps its mother waking; the father is far away, and she stands beside his sick bed, and says, 'Would to God it were morning!' and asks, 'Is it not yet morning?'"

As the Pastor spake these words, Martina clung close to Adam, who was seated beside her on the foremost bench, and whispered:—

"That was the cry of our child during the past night."

And the Pastor continued. "She felt that if it were only day, if she could only see the light of the sun in the sky, she could better bear her burden—but still a bright star shone out in the night." The Pastor inculcated on his people, how good it was sometimes voluntarily to sacrifice a few hours of sleep, to watch the stars in the night sky; he then returned to the words of his text, and invoked a blessing on the heads of all those, who had this day made a good deed the porch through which they came to church.

Not a breath was heard; no coughing, no whispering was heard on this occasion—which at evening service is but too common, as if to protest against thus reversing the usual order of life. Every one seemed to hold their breath, and, when the singing recommenced, the old walls rung with the sounds of the hymn.

The Pastor then in few and simple words, performed the marriage ceremony between Adam and Martina, and the congregation quietly dispersed, amid the renewed ringing of bells. Some lads had loaded their guns, intending to fire them off after the wedding, but they were prevented doing so by those who were leaving church. All felt so solemnized in spirit, that they shrunk from any noisy demonstrations; the pious feelings which the Pastor had inspired in his congregation, rendered them averse to all clamour; and when the moon rose at one o'clock in the morning, dispersing the cold snowy fog, it shone down on a calm, sleeping village, where all slumbering hearts were at rest, and happy.

CHAPTER XX.

DAYLIGHT.

It was a happy waking hour to all next morning, every eye shone brightly, and each saluted his neighbour gaily, saying, "Good morning! beautiful weather!" while in truth the most beautiful atmosphere was within their own hearts. The sun above was certainly most brilliant, and the snow covered hills and trees glittered in the rays of the morning light; but the best of all was, that there was something to gladden all hearts of a less changeable nature than the weather: a child had been saved, and parents and grandparents made happy; a delightful wedding had taken place, though there had been neither baking nor roasting, nor clattering of plates and dishes. And how admirably and faithfully did the Pastor expound the truth! What a sad thing it was that he persisted in leaving them, when they would gladly have kept him for ever!

In the attic in Schilder-David's house, Adam and Martina were standing by the bed of little Joseph, who was still fast asleep, though a bright streak of sunshine, as wide as the little garret window could admit, shone right on the face of the boy. There was an expression of saucy petulance on the features of the child; his head was thrown back, his lips curled and half opened, and his clenched fist lay close to his rosy cheek.

"I will wake him; it is time," said Martina.

"Do let him sleep on, to oblige me. I am just the same when I have undergone any great excitement, I could sleep on for three days and nights without stirring. How pretty a child looks asleep! I never saw him asleep before." Thus talked Adam and Martina, and looked fondly at their child.

Adam felt as if there was not room for him in the attic. He sat down on Martina's trunk, and, in such a gentle voice that it appeared to proceed from some one else, begged her to stand out of the light, that he might see Joseph, distinctly.

"I will remain here till he wakes," said he; and Martina told him again and again, how Joseph on the preceding night had called out "Is it not yet morning?" At the sound of these words the boy turned and moved restlessly, but continued sleeping.

His mother now, however, bent over him, and called out to him in a clear, ringing voice, "Mother, is it not yet light? The light is come, Joseph! wake up. Your father is here."

Joseph now looked up with a face of surprise and curiosity, but he began to cry bitterly from terror, when the gigantic form of his father stood upright in the small attic; he probably appeared to the child like some monstrous apparition in a dream, and when the large figure interposed like a gloomy cloud, between the bed and the sunlight, the attic seemed almost as dark as night. Martina had no little trouble in pacifying the boy. Adam was obliged to leave the room till Joseph was dressed, and during the few minutes that he was standing outside the attic, while the mother was soothing the child, feelings of remorse for his past transgression again smote him—but only for a moment; he was Adam Röttmann still, who could and would be master of all; he was angry with the boy, who did not seem to care for him, nor to clasp him round the neck as he expected; he was resolved to teach him by stern discipline, and that this very day, he must love and honour him as his father.

When Joseph came out of the room he ran down stairs quickly, past Adam.

"The boy must be taught differently; this is not proper conduct towards his father," said Adam to Martina, indignantly.

She, however, begged him to think how much the boy must love him, to go in search of him through the snow, and at night, so fearlessly; as yet, however, the child was naturally shy, and his father still a stranger to him. Adam must try to win the love of his boy by gentleness and kindness, and not suppose he could do this by force.

"You are right, quite right," said Adam, and he went down the narrow stairs with such a heavy tread that the small house shook. Joseph was in the room below, seated on Schilder-David's knee, and Adam called to the boy, "You are to get a present from me to-day; what would you like? Tell me."

The boy did not come, but knit his brows, and looked at his father with a shy glance. He left his grandfather, but did not go to his father; he was staring with astonishment at the nail on the wall over the stove, for there hung a written document framed. Long before daylight, Schilder-David had replaced there Martina's Confirmation Certificate. A bright gleam of sunshine lighted up the text, which was: Revelations 3rd chapter, 11th verse. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

In another house in the village, however, there was weeping and wailing, and that too in the best of all. In the Parsonage the maid sat in the kitchen, crying bitterly: "The fine fat goose, which was to have been roasted this very day, and it was the very thing for such a welcome guest: such a lovely bird, and so well frozen by hanging outside the window! and now in all the confusion last night, it has been stolen. I am sure it ought to choke those who were so wicked as to steal from the Pastor; and how like an angel he spoke to them, and thanked them for what they had done—and now they play him such a trick as this! He ought to bring it into his sermon today, and preach to them on an appropriate text; and the first man that coughs, has stolen the goose, I will go through the whole village, to spy out who has got my goose. I will find out whether the fox, the wolf, a dog, a weasel, or a raven has stolen it; but more likely far some wicked wretch, intending to roast it. I am resolved to get it back; we have really nothing for dinner to-day." These, and many other lamentations were poured forth amid bitter tears, and scolding, and execrations, by the maid in the kitchen, till at last the Pastor came into the kitchen, saying, "What is going on here?" The fact was duly detailed to him, and, as a proof of her assertion, the maid pointed out the empty hook on which the goose had hung outside the window.

"The hook is still there, but the goose is gone," said the girl, sobbing, and laying hold of the hook, as if she thought it the very thing to hang the thief upon. Brother Edward also came in, and the maid begged him to oblige her by looking at the hook. The Pastor turning to his brother-in-law, said, "It is often thus; just the very last delicate morsel, carefully cherished, falls on the floor, when it is actually stuck on your fork."

"And you are positively making a jest of it!" said the Pastorin to her husband; "you men never seem to have any idea of the great difficulty of preparing a good dinner in the country, and how pleasant it is when all is prepared; and it seemed quite a happy chance that my mother sent me some chesnuts."

"I am not making a jest of it; on the contrary, it is very annoying to me."

"The greatest annoyance to you is, assuredly, that any person here is capable of being a thief. They cannot, however, enjoy the fruits of their theft, I feel sure," interrupted Edward.

"By no means: I am so material in my nature, that I should have liked excessively to have myself enjoyed a fine, well browned, crisp, roast goose;—and as for the thief? If the goose had been stolen from any one else, the man would have equally been a thief, but it would vex me less than now, when I have lost my own goose and the giblets too."

"We have still got the giblets," said the maid, in a soothing tone. They all laughed, and at that moment the letter carrier came up the stair. He brought the country newspaper. The Pastor hastily looked over the clerical intelligence, and there, sure enough, he saw that the living in Odenwald, for which he had applied, had been given away to another clergyman, a much younger man, and one of the new fashioned stiff necked species.

"You see here is another empty hook," said the Pastor, giving the newspaper to his wife, and pointing out the paragraph to her.

Along with the newspaper was a letter from their uncle, the President, announcing the appointment of another to the living, but that there was great anxiety to induce our Pastor to take a charge in the Capital.

"I shall refuse, and remain here," said the Pastor, abruptly.

The cook of the Parsonage, who went to the inn in order to buy some meat to replace the missing goose, had two pieces of news to spread abroad which had no great connexion certainly, but which she mixed up together in the most singular manner: the stolen goose, and the Pastor

staying in the village.

The bells rung out in soft melodious peals in the bright light; this ringing on Christmas-day is appropriately termed a "lullaby." When the Pastor again entered the church he found the villagers assembled, and crowded together from the door of the Parsonage all the way to the church, and they all saluted their Pastor kindly, in token of their gratitude and joy, that he was now to remain till the day of his death in this parish.

While the organ sounded in the church, a figure, closely muffled in a cloak, glided past the kitchen of the Vicarage, and unexpectedly a fat goose was once more suspended by its legs on the hook outside the window. Was it the stolen one or another? was it the thief restoring what he had taken, or some good hearted person replacing it by another? This could never be ascertained. The cook declared that she knew how to shut her eyes, that she had neither recognized the person, nor did she wish to do so. She was, however, so overjoyed, that she hurried to the vestry, to tell the Pastor that there was no occasion for him to preach about the stolen goose, for it was come back. She did not venture to go into the vestry, and went home again. "He is too sensible a man," said she, "to preach about a goose," and there she was perfectly right.

Little Joseph went to church with his parents, holding a hand of each; he looked curiously at the people he met, but said nothing, only clinging close to his father. At the church door the parents dismissed Joseph to join his schoolfellows, and themselves separated—one joining the women, and the other the men—in their different parts of the church; but the two were now united, the same building containing them, and their voices harmonizing together. The singing was not so perfect as usual, for the best singer was wanting, who had often with his deep bass notes helped the schoolmaster out of a difficulty. Häspele failed the choir, for he was so hoarse that he could not speak a word, far less sing.

When little Joseph joined his comrades, some of them asked him—"Do you know what you are called now?"

"Joseph Röttmann, just as I always was."

"No, Joseph in the Snow, that's your new name," and they persevere in calling him by that name to this day.

In the course of the afternoon many healths were drunk in the inn to the worthy Pastor, and also to "Joseph in the Snow," and each had much to tell of all that had occurred during the night. The terror would have been a hundredfold increased, had they known all the steepness of the rocks and precipices. It seemed a much greater wonder that no one had been injured, than even little Joseph having made his way straight to the Forest Mill through so many perils. Schilder-David was at home, dressed in his Sunday clothes, seated before his large Bible, carefully reading its precious words—running his finger along the lines as a guide—from where he had left off two evenings before. Schilder-David lived out his life in his usual quiet fashion, constantly reading his Bible from beginning to end. There had been a wonderful combination of mercies for him, and all had turned out for the best.

At noon a messenger came into the village, and declared that there was a corpse lying in the Forest Mill.

"The Röttmännin!" exclaimed all.

"No! the Forest Miller himself; it seems he must have died last night, but it was only discovered to-day. There is no doubt that he killed himself by trying to drink as hard as Speidel-Röttmann, and I hear nothing could be more horrible than to hear the Röttmännin, who tried to wake him at night to come to her aid, scolding and cursing. It was a dead man she was raging at."

All shuddered, and certainly the death of the Forest Miller was much deplored, but he ought to have died at some other time, for now people spoke less of Joseph's rescue, and more of the Forest Miller's sudden death.

No one was more horrorstruck by this sudden death than Leegart; it showed that she did know more than other people: she can by her wishes, wish the death of a man. She had incautiously wished that there should be poison in all the spices he bought from the grocer, and in all the wine from Rössler's Inn. A shudder of pleasure and awe crept through her veins, that she should be endowed with such miraculous gifts. She dared not venture to leave the house; every one must be well aware of what she had done, and she sincerely regretted it; she had not really intended the man's death. I will take good care, vowed she to herself, never to do anything of the kind again; I wish nothing but good to the whole world, and even to the Röttmännin herself. At last she ventured to go to Martina, and said privately to her in the attic: "I beg you will, in a quiet way, take care that none of the women to whom I was talking yesterday repeat what I wished with regard to the Forest Miller. Men are apt to be vastly superstitious, and might at last actually believe, that I knew more than other people; but I don't wish to have this reputation." Leegart was only half pleased, when Martina assured her that no one thought about the matter, and that the world was not so silly as to believe in such things. Leegart thought to herself: "Martina is

very stupid, but I am thankful if I alone have the gift of knowing what is to come to pass in the world." She shrunk from every evil thought, that had ever hitherto passed through her mind with regard to others, or was yet to pass. It was a dreadful responsibility to possess such a gift, and to be able to influence the fate of others just as she chose. Whenever the women came to pay her a visit Leegart never failed to repeat: "I mean well to the whole world; no one can have better intentions than I have. I wish every one, without a single exception, all that is good."

No one understood what Leegart meant, but all agreed in saying—

"Yes, indeed, you were always kind to everybody."

"And do you know what I am going to say?" exclaimed Leegart, with sparkling eyes, "I say nothing but this: the Parsonage, and Tony of the Forest Mill. Remember that I said it—I say no more."

Soon after the news came of the miller's death, the Pastor and his wife, escorted by Edward, drove to the Forest Mill; and it was fortunate they did so, for they found Tony in a perfect agony of grief and remorse, for she had gone through so much that was dreadful since yesterday, and she continually blamed herself, that in studying the welfare of others she had forgotten her father.

Tony welcomed the Pastorin as a guardian angel, and she became more composed when she promised to stay with her. Edward begged she would give him something to do for her; Tony looked at him intently, and drew close to the Pastorin.

The newly made widow at the mill howled and lamented horribly, and when the Pastor addressed her she scarcely listened to him, but stared incessantly at Tony, as if she would have poisoned her by her glances. The martyr was now free, and her tormentor was forced to quit the house a beggar.

Let people contend against it as they will: Leegart must positively have known something!

Tony went to the Parsonage at the new year, and continued to reside there during her year of mourning. By degrees she revived from her deep sorrow, and looked quite as pretty as she did before, only her beauty had become far more refined.

At midsummer large additions were made to the Forest Mill, and Edward often came to visit his sister, and he never was at the Parsonage without going to the Forest Mill, and seeing that all the arrangements, and instructions were properly carried out.

Leegart often went to the Parsonage to work there, and might have told a great deal about the harmony and good feeling that prevailed between the Pastorin and Tony; the latter being most thankful to be instructed by the Pastorin in all matters. But Leegart had made a firm resolution to speak very little in future; it was only at Röttmannshof, where the young Röttmännin now lived, that she poured forth her heart. Nowhere was Leegart more at home, than at Röttmannshof, and she often said: "Nothing can be more delightful than to see that great strong Adam, carrying his little daughter about in his arms, and playing with her; no one could have believed that he was so handy and clever."

When Leegart had made the first short frock for the little girl, and a very pretty bright pink one it was, Adam, when he had the child in his arms, was not a little proud of having taught her, when any one asked, "Where is your pretty frock?" to lift up the frock to shew her finery.

Leegart was in a state of never ending awe and wonder at Adam's gentle ways, and Martina could not resist saying, "He often says that he had no enjoyment of little Joseph's infant years, so he is resolved to make up for it now. Nothing makes him happier."

The fierce old Röttmännin had long since passed away. She would not allow it, but the horrible manner in which she had raged at and cursed the dead miller, constantly recurred to her thoughts. She sent for a lawyer, and desired him to prepare a document, to be laid before the Consistorial Court, declaring the marriage of Martina and Adam to be null and void; she, however, never saw the end of this lawsuit, for she died before the snow was fully melted, through which Joseph had gone to meet his father.

When the Pastor now stands in the pulpit he sees beneath him, in the front row, two fine looking young men, who are the best of friends—Adam Röttmann and the young Forest Miller, Edward, who has married Tony.

"Joseph in the Snow" lives in winter in the village with Schilder-David, in order that he may be near school; he is a fine well informed lad.

Häspele always maintains that a boy who ran such risks, and was the means of effecting such a happy and strange revolution, cannot fail to become a remarkable man.

Leegart, however, invariably adds, "Whatever you do, pray don't prophesy; it is such a frightful responsibility." She knows the future fate of "Joseph in the Snow," but she wisely keeps it to herself.

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