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Portrait of Paul Heyse.

THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

**BY
PAUL HEYSE**

**"The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the
children of light."**

**NEW YORK
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THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

A few years ago, in the Dorotheen-strasse, in the midst of the Latin Quarter of Berlin, whose quiet, student-like appearance threatens to become effaced by the growing elegance of the capital, a small, narrow, unpretending two-story house, stood humbly, as if intimidated, between its broad-shouldered neighbors, though every year it received a washing of a delicate pink hue, and recently had even had a new lightning-rod affixed to its ancient gable roof. The owner, an honest master shoemaker, had in the course of time accumulated money enough to have comfortably established himself in a new and far more elegant dwelling, but he had experienced beneath this sharply sloping roof, all the blessings of his life and though a man by no means given to sentimental weaknesses, he would have thought it base ingratitude to turn his back, without good reason, upon the old witnesses and protectors of his happiness. He had, at one time or another, laid his head in almost every corner, from the little attic chamber, where, as a poor dunce of an apprentice, he had, many a night, been unable to close his eyes on account of the pattering raindrops, to the best room on the first story, where stood his nuptial couch, when, after a long and faithful apprenticeship, he brought home, as head journeyman, the daughter of his dead master. But he was far too economical to permit himself to occupy these aristocratic quarters longer than six months, preferring to live in the second story, unassuming as it was--the little house having a front of but three windows--and there, two children had grown up about him. These first-floor apartments were rented to a childless old couple, to whom the owner would not have given notice to quit on any account; for in the white-haired old man he honored a once famous tenor, whom in his youth, he had heard and admired; while the little withered old woman, his wife, had, in her time, been a no less celebrated actress. They had already been pensioned twelve years, and, without song or noise of any kind, spent their quiet days in their tiny rooms, adorned with faded laurel-wreaths and pictures of their famous colleagues. These celebrities, according to the ideas of the proprietor, gave to his little house a certain artistic reputation, and if there were customers in the shop at noon when the old couple returned from their walk, he never failed to direct attention to them and with boastful assurance to revive the fame of the two forgotten and very shrivelled great personages.

On the ground floor was the shop, over which a black sign bore the inscription in gilt letters: "Boot & Shoe Making Done by Gottfried Feyertag." The shoemaker had ordered the large brown boot and red slipper, which had originally been painted on the right and left side, to be effaced, because it annoyed him to see them, when they no longer represented the fashion. He kept up with the times in his trade, and could not possibly alter his sign at every change of style. The shop, he generally left to the management of his wife he himself spending most of the day in the workroom, where he kept a sharp eye on his four or five journeymen. A narrow entry led past the shop into a small, well-kept courtyard, in whose centre stood a tall acacia-tree, three quarters of which had died for want of air and sunlight, so that only its topmost branches were still adorned with a few pale green, consumptive-looking leaves, which every autumn turned yellow some weeks before any other foliage. Here, in one corner, beside the pump, an arbor had been erected by the head journeyman, for the daughter of the house, when a school-girl; it consisted of a few small poles roughly nailed together, and now overgrown with bean-vines, which bloomed most dutifully every summer, but in the best years never produced more than a handful of stunted pods. A little bed along the so-called sunny side of the house contained all sorts of plants that seek the shade, and thrive luxuriantly around cisterns and cellars; and in midsummer, when the

sun actually sent a few rays into the courtyard at noonday, the little spot really looked quite gay, especially if the fair-haired Reginchen, now a young girl of seventeen, were seated there reading--if it chanced to be a Sunday--some tale of robbers from a book obtained at a circulating library.

A grey, neglected back building, only united to the front house by the bare adjoining walls, had also two stories, with three windows looking out upon this courtyard; and a steep, ruinous staircase, which creaked and groaned at every step, led past the ground floor, where the workshop and journeymen's sleeping-rooms were situated, to the rooms above. On the night when our story begins, this place was suffocatingly hot. It was one of those evenings late in summer, when not a breath of air was stirring no dew was falling, and when only the dust, which had risen during the day, floated down in light invisible clouds, oppressing with mountainous weight every breathing creature. A slender young man, in a straw hat and grey summer clothes, softly opened the door of the house, walked along the narrow entry on tip-toe, and then crossed the stones with which the courtyard was paved. He could not help seizing the pump-handle and cooling his burning face and hands with the water, which to be sure was none of the freshest. But the noise did not disturb any one; at least nothing stirred below or above. He stood still a few moments and allowed the air to dry the moisture, gazing meantime at the windows of the upper story, which reflected the bright moonlight. Only one was open, and a large white cat lay on the sill, apparently asleep. The windows in the first story were all open, and a faint light stole out and illumined part of the trunk of the acacia with a pale red glow.

There was nothing remarkable in all this. Moreover, the thoughts of the lonely watcher beside the pump seemed to be far away from the narrow, oppressive courtyard, in some fairy garden, for, with a happy smile he sat down on a little stool in the bean arbor, and pulled to pieces a withered leaf, upon which he had first pressed his lips. From the open windows of the workshop in front of him he heard the loud snoring of one of the journeymen, who had found the room in the rear too close, and another seemed to be talking in his sleep. A smell of fresh leather, cobbler's thread, and varnish, penetrated to his retreat, and these odors, in connection with those coarse natural sounds, would have disgusted any one else with this Midsummer Night's Dream. But the youth in the straw hat could not seem to make up his mind to exchange the hard seat under the scanty foliage for his usual bed. He had removed his hat and leaned back against the wall, whose damp surface was pleasant to his burning head. He gazed through the roof of poles at the small patch of sky visible between the walls, and began to count the stars. The topmost branches of the acacia gleamed in the moonlight, as if coated with silver, and the opposite wall, as far as it was touched by the pale light, glittered as if covered with thin ice or hoarfrost. "Ah!" said the lonely man in the arbor, "life is still worth the trouble! True, its brightest gift, fair as yonder stars, is as unattainable as they--but what does that matter? Does not what we are permitted to admire, what we can not forget, belong to us as much, nay more, than if we had it in a chest and had lost the key?" The striking of a clock in a neighboring steeple roused him from this half-conscious, dreamy soliloquy. "One!" he said to himself. "It is time to think of going to sleep. If Balder should have kept awake to watch for me, though I expressly forbade it--"

He rose hastily and entered the house. When he had groped his way cautiously up the rickety stairs and reached the landing on the first story, he perceived to his astonishment that the door which led into the rooms stood half open. A small dark ante-chamber led into a larger apartment, lighted by a sleepy little lamp. On the sofa behind the table lay a female figure, still completely dressed, absorbed in a book. The light fell upon a sharply cut, sullen face, past its first youth, with very dark hair and heavy brows, to which an expression of power and defiance lent a certain charm. The reader's thick locks had become unbound, and she wore a plain summer dress of calico, which left her shoulders and arms bare. Not the slightest change of countenance betrayed that she had heard the sound of the loiterer's footsteps, and when he paused a moment in the entry and looked through the door, she did not even raise her eyes from her book, or push back the hair which had fallen over her forehead.

"Are you still up, Fräulein Christiane?" he said at last, advancing to the threshold of the ante-room.

"As you see, Herr Doctor," she replied in a deep voice, without being in the least disturbed. "The heat--and perhaps also this book--will not permit me to sleep. I was so absorbed that I did not even hear you come in. Besides, it is quite time to go to sleep. Good night."

"May I be permitted to ask, Fräulein, what book it is that will not let you sleep?" he said, still in the dark entry.

"Why not?" was the reply, after some little hesitation. "Besides, you have a special right to do so, for it is your book. The proprietor of the house, Meister Feyertag, borrowed it of you several weeks ago, and yesterday told me so much about it, that I begged it of him for a day. Now I can not leave it."

He laughed, and stepped within the room. "So the wicked rat-catcher, to whose pipe all the men and women now dance, even though they often declare his tunes horrible, has seized upon you also. You have certainly just read the chapter on women, whose most striking portions our worthy host daily quotes to his wife; and though it makes you angry, you can not drive it out of your mind. The old sinner knows how to begin: he hasn't read Göthe for nothing.

"Doch wem gar nichts dran gelegen
Scheinet ob er reizt und rührt,
Der beleidigt, der verführt!"

"You are mistaken," she replied, now sitting erect, so that her face was shaded by the green screen on the lamp. "True, I have read the chapter, but it made no *special* impression upon me, either favorable or otherwise. It is a caricature, very like, and yet utterly false. He seems to have known only the portion of our sex called 'females': 'tell me with whom you associate,' etc. Well, we are used to that. But where I have become inspired with a great respect for him, is from the chapter entitled 'The Sorrows of the World.' I could, at almost every sentence, make a note or quote an example from what I have myself experienced or witnessed in others. And I also know why, notwithstanding this, we like to read it; because he relates it without a murmur, so calmly and in such a matter-of-course manner, that we see it would be foolish to complain of it, or to hope for anything better for our poor miserable selves, than is bestowed upon a whole world. You must lend me his other books."

"My dear Fräulein," he replied, "we will discuss the question further some other time. You must not suppose that I am one of the professors of philosophy who wish to silence this singular man. It is a pity that he is not still alive to be asked the various and numerous questions, from which he carefully retired to his sybarite seclusion in the Swan, at Frankfort-on-the-Main. But be that as it may, it is too warm to-night to philosophize. Throw Schopenhauer aside, Fräulein, and play something for me,--the Moonlight Sonata, or any sweet, pensive harmony. I should like to cleanse my ears from the ballet-music to which I have been compelled to listen."

"You! listen to ballet-music?"

"Yes; it sounds ridiculous, but nevertheless it is true. How did it come about? You know, at least by sight, our tyrant, the so-called medical counsellor, my university friend and physician in ordinary. He comes up to our hen-roost every day. Well, I have overworked myself a little this summer, finishing a prize essay,--a haste that was most unnecessary, since with my heresies I am safe from academical honors. However, I gained the *second* premium,--a heavy head, with such rebellious nerves that my state almost borders on a disordered brain, or one of the mild forms of lunacy. A journey, or a few weeks on the Rhigi, would be the best cure. But our physician in ordinary, for excellent reasons, prescribed no such luxurious remedy. It would be much cheaper, he thought, to let the manufactory of thought rest for a while. He proposed to me to play cards, make a collection of beetles, train a poodle, or fall in love. Unfortunately I had neither inclination nor talent for any of these very simple and undoubtedly efficacious remedies. So, early this morning, he brought me a ticket to the opera-house: he always has acquaintances before and behind the scenes. A new ballet was to be performed, to hear and see which would repay even an old habitué, let alone a whimsical fellow like myself, who had not entered a theatre for ten years. Well, I could not escape the experiment. He who has a doctor for a friend must occasionally submit to try new remedies, and a ballet is better than a silver tube in one's stomach."

He smiled,--a half-satisfied, half-mysterious smile.

"Play me the Moonlight Sonata," he asked again. "Life is beautiful, Fräulein Christiane, in spite of all the sorrows of the world. What lovely roses you have in that vase! Permit me--"

He took a small bouquet, which was standing on the table, and pressed it against his face. The full-blown flowers suddenly fell apart, and the leaves covered the book.

"Oh! dear," said he, coloring with embarrassment, "I have done a fine thing now. Will you forgive me, dear Fräulein?"

"Certainly, Herr Doctor, if you will be reasonable now, and go up stairs to sleep off your intoxication. For you are in a condition--You must know how it happened."

"I? I did not know--"

"Any better than to ask me to play for you at half-past two o'clock in the morning! We shall wake the people in the house, and others can see us,--me from the opposite windows. And besides--"

She had risen, and now repressed the rest of the words that were on her lips. After pacing several times up and down the heated room, which contained little furniture except her bed, her piano, and a bookcase, she pushed back her hair from her brow and shoulders, and folding her bare arms across her chest, stood quietly at the window. A sigh heaved the breast which had learned to keep a strict guard over its thoughts and feelings. In this attitude she waited, with apparent calmness, for him to take his leave.

"I must really seem a very singular person," he said, in a frank, honest tone. "We have lived in the same house for months, and the only use I have made of this vicinity, was by my first and only visit, when I begged you not to play during certain hours, which I had selected for study. Now I enter your room in the middle of the night, and take the liberties of an old acquaintance. Forgive me, on account of my disordered brain, dear Fräulein, and--may you have a good night's rest."

He bent his head slightly, and left the room.

As soon as she heard him go up stairs, she hurried into the little ante-chamber, closed the outer door, bolted it, and then stood still a short time, listening, with her trembling body pressed close against the door, and her hands clenched on the latch. He walked slowly up a few steps, and then paused again, as if he had suddenly become absorbed in some dreamy thought. She shuddered, sighed heavily, and tottered back into the sitting-room. Her dress seemed too tight for her, for she slipped out of it like a butterfly from its chrysalis, and then in the airiest night costume, sat down at the open piano. It was an old, much-worn instrument, of very poor tone, and as she ran her slender fingers lightly over the keys, it sounded in the entry outside like the distant music of a harp.

The young man had just reached the topmost stair when he heard it.

"There! she is playing the sonata, after all," he said to himself. "A strange, obstinate person. What can she have suffered from fate? To-morrow I will take more notice of her. It's a pity she is so ugly, and yet--what does it matter? There is a charm in her finger-tips. What wonderful music!"

He stood still a moment listening to the familiar tones, which seemed to express all the familiar thoughts that had been wandering in a confused chaos through his mind. Suddenly he heard a voice from within.

"Is that you, Edwin?"

"Of course it is I," he replied.

The next instant he had opened the door and entered the room which was brightly lighted by the moonbeams.

CHAPTER II.

This room, termed by its occupants' friends "the tun," was a large three-windowed apartment, with walls painted light grey, a floor scoured snow white, and over the windows instead of curtains, three narrow green calico lambrequins of the simplest pattern. A desk stood at the right-hand window, a small turning-lathe at the left, and in the spaces between the casements two tall bookcases; there were two beds placed against the wall, several cane chairs and small chests made of white wood, and finally, a low, smoky ceiling, which here and there showed large cracks, and threatened to fall. But the room, spite of its simplicity, had an aristocratic air from the presence of two copperplate engravings of Raphael's paintings, framed in plain brown wood, that hung over the beds, and two antique busts on the bookcases,--one a head of Aristotle, the other the gloomy-eyed, stern-browed Demosthenes. Even the low stove was adorned with a piece of sculpture at which no one is ever weary of gazing--the mask of Michael Angelo's young prisoner, who, with closed lids, lets his beautiful head sink on his shoulder as if weary of torture and longing for sleep. Here, however, the moonlight did not reach: it merely fell obliquely across the bed placed against the wall.

On this bed, with his eyes fixed upon the door, lay a young man, whose pale features, almost feminine in their delicacy, were framed in a wreath of thick, fair locks. It was difficult to guess his age from his countenance, since the boyish expression of mirth that dwelt about his mouth contrasted strangely with the mature beauties of the finely cut features. He was wrapped in a light quilt, and a book lay open on the chair beside him. When Edwin entered, he slowly rose and held out a white delicately formed hand.

"Well," said he, "was it very fine? Has it done you good?"

"Good evening, Balder," replied Edwin, "or rather, good morning! You see I do everything thoroughly, even rioting at night. But I see I must not leave you alone again, child. I really believe you have been reading by moonlight."

A deep flush crimsoned the face of the recumbent youth. "Don't be angry," said he in a clear, musical voice. "I could not sleep; and, as the lamp had burned out and the room was so bright,--but now tell me About it. Has the remedy already produced an effect?"

"To-morrow you shall hear as much as you wish, but not a syllable now, to punish you for your carelessness in spoiling your eyes and heating your head. Do you know that your forehead is burning again?" And he passed his hand tenderly over the soft hair. "I will complain of you to the physician in ordinary. And you don't seem to have touched your supper; there is the plate with

your bread and butter."

"I wasn't hungry," replied the youth, letting his head fall gently back on the pillow. "Besides, I thought if you came home late, and, after the unusual excitement, might perhaps feel inclined to eat something."

Edwin brought the plate to the bed. "If you don't want me to be seriously angry, you artful fellow," said he, "you will have the goodness to repair the omission at once. But to make it easier for you, I'll take half myself. Heavens! what is to be done with such a disobedient child? So divide fairly, or I'll complain of you to-morrow to Jungfrau Reginchen, who will soon bring you to reason."

Again a vivid blush crimsoned the young man's face, but Edwin pretended not to notice it. He had sat down on the bed, and was beginning to eat, from time to time pushing a piece into his brother's mouth, who submitted with a half smile. "The bread is good," said Edwin; "the butter might be better. But that is Reginchen's weak point. Now a drink as fresh as our cellar affords."

He poured out a glass of water, and swallowed it at a single gulp. "Balder," said he, "I am returning to truth and nature, after having incurred the danger of being enervated by luxury. Just think, I had some ice-cream at the theatre. It could not be helped; others eat it, and a philosopher must become familiar with everything. Besides, it wasn't worth the five groschen, for I learned nothing new, and only regretted that *you* could not have it. Once, and no more, good night."

While undressing, he said to himself, "This shameless moon! As soon as we have any extra money, we must get curtains, so that we can be able to close our eyes on such nights. However, the illumination is very moderate, compared to that of an opera-house. It took me so by surprise as I entered the box, that I would gladly have retreated and seen the whole spectacle from the corridor outside. Believe me, child, the doorkeepers have the real and best enjoyment. To walk up and down in the cooler passages over soft carpets, with the faint buzzing and sighing of the orchestra in one's ears, interrupted at times by a louder passage with the drums and trumpets, which, smothered by the walls, sounds like a melodious thunder-storm, and often, when some belated great lady rustles in, to obtain a glimpse through the door of the Paradise of painted hours in tights, and the wonderful sunrises and sunsets,—it is really an enviable situation, compared with that of the poor mortals in the purgatory within, who, in return for their money, are cooped up in plush, and must atone for the sins of the Messrs. Taglioni, while feeling as if all their fine senses were being hammered upon at once. A time will come when people will read of these barbarities with a shudder, and envy us because we have nerves to endure them."

"And yet you remained to the end."

"I? Why yes; in the first place I had a very comfortable seat; the box to which my ticket admitted me is like a little parlor, and happened to be almost empty. And then—but I will close the window. The air is beginning to grow cool,—don't you feel it? Besides, your friend Friezica has crept away."

Balder made no reply; but though his eyes were apparently closed, steadily watched Edwin, who, in a fit of absence of mind had thrown himself upon the bed only half undressed, and turned his face toward the wall. A half hour elapsed without any movement from either. Suddenly Edwin turned, and his eyes met his brother's quiet, anxious gaze.

"I see it won't do, child," said he. "For the first time in our lives, we are playing a farce with each other; at least I am, in trying to keep something from you. It is very foolish. What is the use of a man having a brother, especially one to whom he might be called married, except to share everything with him, not only the bread and butter, and whatever else he eats, but also what is gnawing at *him*. I will confess what has happened, though it is really nothing remarkable; a great many people have already experienced it; but when we feel it for the first time in our own persons, all our 'philosophy, Horatio,' will not permit us to dream what a singularly delightful, uncomfortable, troublesome, melancholy,—in a word, insane condition it is."

He had sprung from his bed and was now crouching on the foot of Balder's, half sitting, half leaning back, so that he was in shadow, and looked past his brother at the opposite wall.

"Prepare yourself to hear something very unexpected," he said, still in a tone which showed that he was making an effort to speak at all. "Or do you already know all I wish to tell you, young clairvoyant? So much the better. Then my confession will weary you, and at least one of us will be able to sleep. In short, my dear fellow, it is very ridiculous to say, but I believe it is only too true: I am in the condition which our physician in ordinary desired, in order to cast out the devil by Beelzebub; that is, I am in love, and as hopelessly, absurdly, and senselessly, as any young moth that ever flew into a candle. Pray, child," he continued, starting to his feet again and beginning to pace up and down the room, "first hear how it came about, that you may realize the full extent of my madness. You know that I am twenty-nine years old, and hitherto have been spared this childish disease. It is not necessary for everybody to catch the scarlet fever. As for the natural and healthy attractions of the 'fair sex,' I was old enough when our dear mother died, to feel that a woman like her would hardly appear on earth a second time. For the daily necessities of living and loving—which every human heart needs to retain its requisite warmth—I was abundantly supplied in our brotherly affection, to say nothing of the miserable, unamiable, and yet love-

needing human race. And then, ought a man to have for his profession the science of pure reason, and, like any other thoughtless mortal, make a fool of himself over the first woman's face he sees, without any cause except that the lightning has struck him. Heaven knows why? It seems incredible, but I fear I have accomplished the impossible."

He sat down on the bed again, but this time so that his face was turned toward Balder. "I will allow you to study me thoroughly, without any mercy," he said, smiling. "This is the way a man looks, who suddenly becomes the sport of the elements,--whose reflection, wisdom, pride, and whatever else the trash may be called, are of no avail. I always shuddered when I read the story of the magnetic mountain. When I was a boy, I thought, defiantly, if I had only been on the ship, I would have set so many sails, sent so many men to work the oars, and steered in such a way, that the spell would not have reached me. And so I thought this evening, daring the whole of the first hour. But--

'Tales of magic e'er so strange,
Woman's wiles to truth can change.'

The helm is broken, the oars refuse their service, and the very portion of my nature that was steel and iron, most resistlessly obeys the attraction of the magnet, and really assists in making keel and deck spring asunder."

He leaned back again, and passed his hand over his brow. The hand trembled, and a cold perspiration stood on his forehead.

"There is only one thing I don't understand," said Balder, moving aside to make room for his brother; "why must all this be hopeless?"

"Just listen, my boy, and you will understand all, even the incomprehensible part, over which I am still puzzling my brains. For I am no artist, and can only give you a poor, shadowy outline of a certain face. I entered the box, which was perfectly empty, and I hoped it would remain so. Clad in my fourteen-thaler summer-suit and without gloves, I did not seem to myself exactly fit for society, and the person who opened the box looked at me as if he wanted to say, 'You ought to be up in the gallery, my friend, instead of in this holy of holies, to which I usually admit only people belonging to the great or *demi monde*.' I also did not like to sit down, simple as the matter might seem to be, on a chair that was better dressed than I. However, the mischief was done; I determined to assume a very elegant deportment, such as I had noticed at private colleges in young diplomatists, and hitherto had always considered mere buffoonery. So I leaned back in my chair like an Englishman, and glanced now at the stage, now at the parquet. As I have already said, there was such a buzzing and fluttering down below, the poor creatures in white gauze glittering with gold and huge wreaths of flowers tossed their arms and legs about so wildly, and the violins quavered so madly, that I already began to think: 'if this goes on long, *you* will go too.' Suddenly the door of the box was thrown wide open; while I had squeezed through a narrow chink, a young lady rustled in, a diminutive servant in livery and high shirt-collar, which almost sawed off the youngster's huge red ears, removed a blue silk cloak, the doorkeeper casting a contemptuous glance at me, rushed forward, drew up a chair, and officiously put a play-bill on the balustrade. The lady said a few words to the boy in an undertone, then chose the corner seat nearest the stage, raised a tiny opera-glass, and, without taking the slightest notice of me, instantly became absorbed in her enjoyment of art.

"I ought now to describe her to you; but description has its difficulties. Do you remember the pastille picture from the Dresden gallery, painted by a Frenchman,--I have forgotten his name,--stay, I think it was Liotard; we saw a photograph of it in the medical counsellor's book of beauty?--*la belle Chocoladière* was written underneath. Well, the profile before me was something like that, and yet very very different, far more delicate, pure, and childlike, without any of the pretentious, cold-hearted expression of the shop-girl, whose numerous admirers and constant practice in breaking hearts had gradually transformed her face into a mere alabaster mask. But the shape of the nose, the long lashes, the proud little mouth,--enough, your imagination will supply the rest.

"Well, the first quarter of an hour passed very tolerably. From the first moment I saw no one except my neighbor, who showed me only a quarter of her face, charming as the tiny sickle of the moon; but to make amends for that, I studied her dark brown hair, which without any special ornament, was drawn in smooth bands over her white forehead, and simply fastened at the back with two coral pins of Italian form. A few short curls fell on the white neck, and seemed to me to have a very enviable position, though they remained in the shade. As to her dress, I am unable to say whether it was in the latest fashion, and according to French taste, for I have not the necessary technical knowledge; but a certain instinct told me that nothing could be more elegant, more aristocratic in its simplicity; there was not the smallest article of jewelry about her person, she did not even wear ear-rings; her high-necked dress was fastened at the throat with a little velvet bow, without a brooch. The hands which held the opera-glass--tiny little hands--were cased in light grey gloves, so I could not see whether she wore rings.

"I had noticed that there was a universal movement when she entered the box. Hundreds of lorgnettes were instantly directed toward her, and even the *première danseuse*, who was just

making her highest leap, momentarily lost her exclusive dominion over her admirers. But my beauty seemed to be very indifferent to this homage. She did not turn her eyes from the stage, at which she gazed with an earnestness, a devotion, that was both touching and ludicrous. When the first act was over, and a storm of applause burst forth, it was charming to see how she hastily laid aside the opera-glass to clap her hands too, more like a child when it wants another biscuit and says 'please, please,' than an aristocratic patroness of the fine arts, who occasionally condescends to join in the applause of the populace.

"She had dropped her handkerchief, a snowy, lace-trimmed bit of cobweb, which could easily have been put away in a nutshell. I hastily raised and handed it to her, muttering a few not particularly brilliant words. She looked at me without the slightest change of expression, and graciously bowed her thanks like a princess. Not a word was vouchsafed me. Then she again raised her lorgnette, and, during the entire intermission, apparently devoted herself to an eager study of the various toilettes; at least her glass remained a long time turned toward the opposite box, which was full of ladies.

"I would have given much to have heard her voice, in order to discover whether she was a foreigner; but no matter how I racked my brain, I could think of nothing to say. Besides, she looked as if at the first liberty I might take, she would rise with an annihilating glance, and leave me alone.

"I was just working hard to concoct some polite remark about ballets in general and this one in particular, when the intermission ended and she was again entirely absorbed in the spectacle below.

"A thought flashed through my mind, which, as you will acknowledge, did me great credit, but unfortunately met with no success. I left the box, ate the ice-cream already mentioned, and while wiping my beard, strolled up and down the corridor several times as if weary of the performance, and carelessly asked the doorkeeper if he knew the lady who was sitting in the stranger's box. But he replied that this was the first time he had ever seen her; the opera-house had been reopened to-night with the new ballet. So, with my purpose unaccomplished, I retired, and went back to my post.



As she glided past me, I felt an electric shock to the very tips of my toes.

"Meantime my seat had been occupied; a very much over-dressed foreign couple, American or English nabobs blazing with jewels, had planted themselves in the best seats beside the beauty. At first I was inclined to assert my rights, but I really liked to stand in the dark corner and seeing and hearing nothing of the elegant tastelessness around, gaze only at the charming shape of the head, the fair neck with its floating curls, slender shoulders, and a small portion of the sweet face. I heard the gentleman address her in broken French. She replied without embarrassment, in the best Parisian accent. Now I knew what I wanted to learn. She was a natural enemy, in every sense of the word!

"If I tell you, brother, that during the next two hours I stood like a statue, thinking of nothing except how one can live to be twenty-nine years old, before understanding the meaning of the old legend of the serpent in Paradise,-you will fancy me half mad. You wrong me, my dear fellow, I was *wholly* mad--a frightful example of the perishableness of all manly virtues. I beg Father

Wieland's pardon a hundred times, for having reviled him as a pitiful coxcomb, because he allows his Greek sages, with all their strength of mind and stoical dignity, to come to disgrace for the smile of a Lais or Musarion. Here there was not even a smile, no seductive arts were used, and yet a poor private tutor of philosophy lays down his arms and surrenders at discretion, because a saucy little nose, some black eyelashes, and ditto curls, did not take the slightest notice of him.

"But you ought to go to sleep, child; I'll cut my story short. Besides, it must be tiresome enough to a third person. Five minutes before the curtain fell for the last time she rose; some one had knocked softly at the door of the box. As she glided past me, I felt an electric shock to the very tips of my toes. This was a great piece of good luck, or I should hardly have been able to shake off my stupor quickly enough to follow her. Outside stood the gnome with the high shirt-collar and tow-colored head, gazing at her respectfully with wide open eyes. The little blue cloak was on his arm. She hastily threw on the light wrap, almost without his assistance, though he stood on tip-toe, drew the hood over her head, and hurried toward the stairs, the lad and my insignificant self following her. Every one she passed started and looked after her in astonishment.

"At the entrance below stood an elegant carriage. The dwarf opened the door, made an unsuccessful attempt to lift his mistress in, then swung himself up behind, and away dashed the equipage before I had sense enough to jump into a droschky and follow it.

"'Perhaps it is better so,' I thought, when I was once more left alone. Of what use would it be to follow her? And now I endeavored to become a philosopher again in the most audacious sense of the word, namely, a private tutor of logic and metaphysics, an individual most graciously endowed by the government with permission to starve, *sub specie acterni*,--from whom if he becomes infatuated with princesses, the *veina legendi* ought to be withdrawn, since it is a proof that he has not understood even the first elements of worldly wisdom.

"There! you have now the whole story. I hoped to have been able to spare you the recital, trusting that the vision would vanish at last, if I could cool my excited blood by rambling about a few hours in the night air. But unfortunately I did not succeed. The Lindens were swarming with lovers, the music still sounded in my ears, shooting stars darted across the sky, and, above all, the sentimental witching light of the moon, altering the aspect of everything which it touched,--yes, my last hope is sleep, which has often heretofore cooled the fever of my nerves. Look, the moon is just sinking behind yonder roof; our night-lamp has gone out; let us try whether we can at last obtain some rest."

He rose slowly from his brother's bed, like a person who finds it difficult to move his limbs, passed his hand caressingly over the cheek of the silent youth, and said: "I can't help it, child; I really ought to have kept it to myself, for I know you always take my troubles to heart far more than I do. It is this confounded habit of sharing everything with you! Well, it is no great misfortune after all. We shall be perfectly sensible--entirely cured of our folly--to-morrow, and if anything should still be out of order, for what purpose has Father Kant written the admirable treatise on 'the power the mind possesses to rule the sickly emotions of the heart by the mere exercise of will?'"

He stooped, pressed his lips lightly upon the pale forehead of the youth, and then threw himself upon his bed. A few notes of the piano still echoed on the air, but these too now died away, and in fifteen minutes Balder perceived by Edwin's calm, regular breathing, that he had really fallen asleep. He himself still lay with his eyes wide open, gazing quietly at the mask of the prisoner on the stove, absorbed in thoughts, which, for the present, may remain his secret.

CHAPTER III.

We have now to relate the little that is to be told of the two brothers' former life.

About thirty years before, their father, during a holiday excursion, had made their mother's acquaintance; he was then a young law-student from Silesia, and she the beautiful daughter of the owner of a small estate in Holstein, who had other views for his favorite child than to give her to the first embryo Prussian lawyer, who had enjoyed a few days' hospitality at his house. And yet no objections were made. All, who knew the young girl, declared that it had always been impossible to oppose her quietly expressed wishes; she had possessed so much power over all minds, both by her great beauty and the gentle nobleness of her nature, which in everything she did and said always seemed to hit the right mark, with that almost prophetic insight into the confused affairs of the world, which is said to have been peculiar to German seeresses. What particular attractions she found in the unassuming stranger, that she wanted him and no one else

for her husband, was not easy to discover. Yet to her last hour she had no occasion to repent, that, with firm resolution, beneath which perhaps passionate emotions were concealed, she had aided in removing all the obstacles that stood in the way of a speedy marriage. As she herself brought little dowry, except her wealth of golden hair, which when unbound must have reached nearly to her knees, and as the young lawyer had still a long time of probation before him ere he could establish a home of his own, they would have had little happiness if both or either had considered themselves too good for a subordinate position. The post of bookkeeper in one of the largest institutions in Berlin had just become vacant. When the young jurist applied for it, he was forced to hear from all quarters that he was doing far from wisely in resigning his profession and giving up all chance of rising to higher offices and dignities, merely for the sake of an early and certain maintenance. He declared that he knew what he was doing, and, as he had the best testimonials, drove his competitors from the field, and, after a betrothal of a few months, installed his beautiful young wife in the comfortable lodgings assigned to the accountant.

Ambition is only one phase of the universal human longing for happiness. He who has his life's happiness embodied in a beloved form at his side, can easily forget the formless dreams of his aspiring youth, especially if, as was the case here, the joy which appears so trifling to the eyes of the proud world nevertheless excites the envy of those close at hand, and the narrow limits of the household horizon do not bind down the soul. This, however, was chiefly owing to the fair-haired wife. She had what is called a tinge of romance, a dissatisfaction with the dry, bare reality of things around her, a longing to gild the grey light of every-day existence with the treasures of her own heart and a lively imagination, and amid the oppressive uniformity of her household cares, retained a play of fancy, that with all her toil and weariness kept her young and gay. She herself said people ought to follow the example of the birds, who, while building their nests, did not sweat as if working for daily wages, but as they flew to and fro sang, eat a berry, or perhaps soared so high into the air, that one might suppose they would never return to their lowly bush. As this arose from a necessity of her nature, and she never boasted of it, though she never denied it, her poetic taste built a brighter world above this dreary, prosaic one, and was a source of constant rejuvenation to her more practical husband. He never emerged from the state of transfiguration that surrounds the honeymoon, and even after he had been married many years, felt when sitting in his office over his account-books, as much impatience to rejoin his beloved wife, as he had ever experienced as an enthusiastic young lawyer, in the earliest days of his love.

In his circumstances there was no outward improvement; his sons grew up, and no promotion or increase of salary could be thought of. But nevertheless their happiness increased, and their stock of youth, love, and romance seemed to grow greater as the children grew. The mother, who bore the beautiful name of Nanna, would not hear of calling her first-born Fritz or Carl, but gave him the name of Edwin. But the boy himself made no preparations to accommodate himself to the lyrically adorned idyl of his parents. His outward appearance was insignificant and remained so; a tall lad with awkward limbs, which were all the more unmanageable because their master in the upper story was thinking of very different matters than how he ought to move his arms and legs; besides, the boy's mind was fixed upon other things than the fairy tales his mother told him, or any of the elegancies with which she surrounded her child. A thoughtful, analytic mind developed in him at an early age; his mother, for the first time in her life was seriously angry with her dear husband, declaring that the father's horrible calculating of figures had gone to the child's head and entered his blood. She tormented herself a long time in trying to efface this instinctive taste, but was at last forced to relinquish her efforts when the boy went to school and brought home the most brilliant testimonials of his progress; yet a secret vexation still gnawed at her heart, all the more unbanishable as for nine years he remained the only child. At last she gave birth to a second, a boy, who promised to make ample amends for the disappointment caused by the apparently sober, prosaic nature of her oldest son. This child was in every respect the exact image of his mother; beautiful as the day, with rich golden curls; he liked nothing better than to be lulled to sleep with fairy tales, cultivate flowers, and learn little stories by heart. The mother seemed to grow young again in her radiant delight in the possession of this innocent creature, to whom the name of Balder, the God of Spring, appeared to her exactly suited. Any one who had seen her at that time, would scarcely have believed her to be the mother of her older son, the long-legged schoolboy with the grave, prematurely old face; so young and smiling, so untried by life, did she look, that her fair head seemed bathed in perpetual sunlight. But it was only a short spring-time of joy. Balder had not yet commenced to distinguish between poetry and reality, when his mother was suddenly attacked by a violent nervous fever, and after a few days' illness, during which she recognized neither husband nor children, she left them forever.

It was a blow which brought her husband to a state of despair which bordered upon madness. But upon the older boy the event had a strange effect. There was, at first, an outburst of wild, passionate grief, such as, from his steady, quiet temperament, no one would have expected. Now it was evident how passionately he had loved his mother, with a fervor for which he had never found words. Up to the time of the funeral it was impossible to induce him to eat; he pushed away his favorite dishes with loathing, and only a little milk crossed his lips just before he went to bed. When he returned with his father from the churchyard, and, himself like a corpse, saw in his father's face every sign of breaking down under the misery of a happiness so cruelly destroyed, while little Balder gazed in perplexity at him with his dead mother's eyes, a great transformation seemed to take place in the older brother's soul. His convulsed face grew suddenly calm, he pushed from his forehead his thin straight hair, and, going up to his father, said: "We must now see how we can get along without mother. You shall never be dissatisfied with me again." Then he sat down on the floor beside the child, and began to play with him as his mother used to do; a

thing to which, hitherto, with all his love for the little one, he had never condescended. Balder stretched out his hands to him, and laughingly prattled on in his merry way. The father seemed to take no notice of anything that was passing around him. Weeks and months elapsed before he even outwardly returned to his old habits.

But even then there was not much gained. The portion of him which had been a calculating-machine faultlessly continued its work, but the human affections were totally destroyed. Had not Edwin, with a prudence wonderful in one so young, managed the affairs of the little household when the old maid servant could not get along alone, everything would have been in confusion. When, during the year after his mother's death, the child had a fall which injured his knee so severely that he remained delicate ever after, the last hope which Edwin had of seeing the father take a firm hold of life vanished. He now showed that he had only existed in the reflected lustre left behind by his beautiful wife in the bright-eyed boy. When those eyes grew dim, he could no longer bear the light of day. Without any special illness, he took to his bed and never rose from it again.

The orphaned children were received by one of their father's relatives, a well-to-do official in Breslau, who had a number of children of his own, and could therefore only give his foster sons a moderate share of care and support. They were sent to board in a teacher's family, and fared no worse than hundreds of other parentless boys. Balder felt the disaster least. He had a charm that everywhere won hearts, and his delicate helplessness did the rest. People did not find it so easy to get along with Edwin. A taciturnity and cool reserve, together with the early superiority of his judgment, made him uncomfortable, and, as it always gave him the appearance of not desiring love, people did not see why they should force it upon him. Besides, among all to whom he owed gratitude, there was not a single person to whom he desired to be bound by any closer ties. Thus his little brother remained the sole object of his affectionate anxiety, and it was touching to see how closely, during his play hours, he kept him by his side, spending his scanty stock of pocket-money solely for his pleasure, and shortening his hours of sleep that he might devote his entire afternoon to the sickly child.

Years elapsed. When Edwin went to the university, for despite his poverty and the burning desire for independence, he could not make up his mind to begin any practical business, Balder was about eight years old. He had been unable to go to school on account of his feeble health, as his knee required constant care, and he could not have borne to sit on the school-room benches. But notwithstanding this, he was far in advance of most boys of his age, for he had had Edwin for a teacher, who, by a far more rapid method than that of the schools, had always pointed out the essential part of every lesson, and encouraged him above all to develop his own powers. He succeeded in doing so most wonderfully, without brushing from the boy's soul the bloom of the enthusiasm inherited from their mother. His nature was utterly unlike his brother's; instead of the keen dialectics with which Edwin broke a path into the world of ideas, as a colonist uproots the primeval forest with his axe, Balder's spirit rose aloft as if on wings, and soaring above all intervening tree-tops, he found himself unwearied on the very spot his brother had pointed out in the distance. It was the same in everything connected with school wisdom, as in the mysteries life gave him to solve in regard to men and circumstances. The sure, instantaneous perception, the prophetic power we have described in his mother, seemed born anew in him, and gave the beautiful face, framed in his thick fair hair, and showing few traces of pain, a peculiar and irresistibly winning expression. Besides, he was so kind-hearted, so self-sacrificing, traits doubly rare in chronic invalids, in whom anxiety about themselves becomes at last the sole interest, and almost a sort of sacred duty. He was never heard to complain, and it really did not seem to be a victory of resignation or heroism which he obtained over himself, but rather a natural faculty of his soul to look upon his sufferings and deprivations as a possession from which the greatest gain must be derived, the only innocent speculation, and one for which he had cultivated a masterly aptitude.

At the time we have made the brothers' acquaintance, they had lived together in the shoemaker's back building, the so-called "tun," about five years. Edwin had first gone to Berlin alone, in order to devote himself exclusively to the study of philosophy and physical science, for which he had little opportunity in Breslau. He had been unable to resolve to enter into any money-making business, and his study of law was a mere pretence. So when he found himself acting in direct opposition to his benefactor's wishes, he thought it dishonorable to continue to eat the bread of one with whose opinions he could not coincide. Balder meantime remained in his old home, but as soon as Edwin could support both, was to follow him to Berlin.

This was not accomplished as speedily as the latter had at first hoped. Months elapsed before he could fit himself for a tutor, as the private lessons he had undertaken robbed him of both time and patience. Then followed anxieties about his first lectures, which, with great difficulty, he obtained an opportunity to deliver, and which brought in nothing. During all this time, his only intercourse with his brother was by means of frequent letters, until at last he could bear the separation no longer, and one Whitsuntide went to Breslau, to ask the beloved youth if he felt strong enough to share his poverty. Balder flushed to the roots of his hair with joyful agitation at this question, which fulfilled the most secret wish of his heart. He had only been withheld from making the proposal long before, by the fear of becoming a burden to his brother. Now he confessed that he had quietly made arrangements not to be entirely dependent on Edwin, though he would have submitted to be supported by him more willingly than by any one else. He had found an opportunity to learn turning, from a neighbor, and in the space of a year the young

apprentice had made so much progress, that any master workman would gladly have engaged him for a journeyman. With shamefaced consciousness, he showed Edwin a number of pretty household utensils which he had made for his foster-mother and the family of the teacher with whom he boarded. "I see," said Edwin, smiling, "that I probably pursue the least lucrative of all professions, and shall be doing a very good thing in forming a partnership with my skillful brother. But wait, my lad, I won't fail to add my contribution to the capital with which we begin. The next fee I receive--I am coaching the weak-minded son of a count for his examination--we will devote to the purchase of the best turning-lathe that is to be found in all Berlin."

CHAPTER IV.

Day had long since dawned over the great city, and the little house in the Dorotheen-strasse prided itself upon remaining no whit behind its more aristocratic neighbors in this respect. The occupants of the "tun" were usually no late sleepers, and Balder in particular never failed to hear the general alarm-clock of the house, the old pump-handle, which sang a well-meant but monotonous morning song, when at six o'clock in summer and seven in winter, Reginchen set it in motion to get her father his glass of water for breakfast. At the same time the windows in the workshop were opened, and the grumbling of the head journeyman, who took advantage of the half hour before the master appeared, to make the apprentices feel his importance, became audible. But as soon as the master of the house, in his loose jacket and slippers, crossed the courtyard, everything below was perfectly still. Indeed, though the brothers had been unable to procure a watch, they had no occasion to be at a loss to know the time, even during the day. Exactly one hour after the first music of the pump, Reginchen appeared in the "tun" with the well-beaten clothes and the breakfast. Punctually at nine o'clock a window was opened in the second story, a yellow old face in a night-cap, the once famous actress, stretched out a wrinkled little nose to find out which way the wind was blowing, as her husband, the tenor, though he no longer had occasion to spare his high C, could not give up the habit of staying in the house when there was an East wind. Precisely one hour after, the little man himself appeared at another window which opened upon the courtyard, not lighted by the sun, to shave with great deliberation and apply before the little mirror the necessary cosmetics, which an old celebrity of the stage considers an indispensable, nay, an incontestable proof of the dignity of his calling. When eleven o'clock struck, the piano in the room below, occupied by Fräulein Christiane, with whom we formed a passing acquaintance in the first chapter, was opened, and a practised hand struck a few notes by way of prelude to a singing-lesson, which, from consideration for Edwin had been deferred to this time, when he usually went to his lecture. Various pupils came to take lessons; of late, twice a week a merry soubrette, belonging to one of the theatres in the suburbs, appeared, who desired to practise her little parts in new operettas, and drove her grave teacher to despair by a number of blunders, musical and otherwise. As a loud conversation could be heard through the open windows, almost word for word, Balder often became an ear-witness to the most singular scenes, which afforded him a glimpse of an utterly unknown world. Punctually at twelve o'clock the dinner-bell rang, and was usually hailed by the pupil with a merrily whistled street song, as the grateful feeling of release could be expressed in no better way.

The household clock performed its duty to-day as well as ever, but the occupants of the upper story in the back building seemed deaf to its sounds. The pump's morning song died away unheard. No "come in" answered the low knock an hour later, and, after a short delay and a shake, of the head, the slender household sprite, hanging the clothes on the banister of the stairs, glided down again with the breakfast. Miezi, the white cat, which at the same time appeared at the window to be fed by Balder, remained on the broad sill that ran from gutter to gutter, staring into the room, where no living creature was yet stirring. Not until the yellow top of the acacia-tree was gilded by the rising sun--it must have been ten minutes past ten for the old tenor was just beginning to powder himself--did Balder open his eyes, astonished at the bright light that filled the room. He looked toward Edwin; the latter gave no sign that the sunlight was too dazzling for him to continue his dreams.

Softly the youth rose and limped to the turning-lathe in the corner, where he noiselessly arranged a variety of tools, bits of wood, and little bottles. He did not, however, begin to work, but taking a book, became for a time absorbed in its contents. Suddenly the thoughts which had kept him awake so long during the night, seemed to return. He laid the book aside, opened a window, and leaned out into the already heated air.

Ere long a low knock at the door roused him from his reverie. He glided on tip-toe past the sleeper, and slipped through the half-opened door into the dusky entry.

Reginchen stood without; her round face, whose eyes and mouth were ever ready to bubble

over with mirth, was turned toward him with a sort of curious anxiety.

"Good morning, Reginchen," he whispered. "I can't let you in, he is still asleep. He did not go to rest until long after midnight; I am glad the sun does not wake him. You have already been to the door once--I overslept myself too, contrary to my custom--we talked so long last night. I am sorry we have made you so much trouble, Reginchen. Give me the waiter, I will carry the breakfast in."

"It is no trouble," replied the young girl, who when talking to the brothers always tried to correct her Berlin dialect as much as possible, but without precisely solving the mystery of the dative and accusative. "But you will be completely starved. Sha'n't I get you some coffee? Cold milk on an empty stomach--"

"Thank you, Reginchen. I am used to it. You are always so kind. Why have you dressed so early to-day, Reginchen?"

The young girl blushed as she smoothed her little black silk apron and the folds of a light muslin that had been freshly washed and ironed.

"This is my birthday, Herr Walter," (she could not accustom herself to the name of "Balder.") "My mother gave me the apron, and the old gentleman on the second floor, the garnet breastpin. I am going to visit my aunt at Schöneberg after dinner, and so I wanted to ask if I might bring your dinner up very early to-day. My brother will come for me punctually at one o'clock."

"Your birthday, Reginchen! And I have forgotten it! Are you angry with me? My brother's sickness has given me so much to think of lately. You know, Reginchen, I wish you all possible good fortune and happiness, though my congratulations are late; but you are used to seeing me limp."

"How can you talk so, Herr Walter?" she replied, quietly allowing the firm little hand he had so cordially grasped to rest in his. "It makes no difference whether a stupid thing like me, without education or culture, is seventeen or eighteen. Father says women remain great children all their lives; so whether they become older or not can be of little consequence."

"He is only joking, Reginchen. What would your father do without you, to say nothing of the rest of us in the house? So you are really eighteen years old to-day? I wish I knew of something that would give you pleasure; I should like to make you a birthday present."

"I don't want any present," she replied, hastily turning away and putting her foot on the upper stair. "I have already had so many gifts from you at Christmas and such times, and my mother always scolds and says I am too large to receive presents from strange gentlemen. Hark! she is calling me; I must go, Herr Walter."

She darted down the steep staircase, like an arrow, and Balder, who remained at the top, heard her singing a song in a clear, childish voice, as she skipped across the pavement of the courtyard in her little slippers. As he took the waiter from the low attic stairs where she had placed it, and limped softly back into the room, he involuntarily sighed.

Going up to his sleeping brother he gazed at him with affectionate anxiety. Edwin seemed to be slumbering quietly. His high, beautifully arched brow was unwrinkled, a smile played around his lips, and his delicate nostrils quivered slightly, as they always did when he made a witty speech. His shirt was open at the throat, and a small gold locket attached to a silk cord and containing a tress of his mother's golden hair, was plainly visible. Balder wore one like it.

He was about to retire to the window corner again, when a hasty step was heard on the stairs, and ere Balder could reach the door to stop the new comer, an eager knock announced a visitor who knew himself to be welcome at any hour.

"Come in!" said Edwin, as he slowly rose from his pillow, still half asleep. "That must be Marquard. Good heavens, it is broad daylight!"

"To be sure!" laughed the new arrival. "It requires the presence of a despicable empiric like myself, to make the Herr Philosopher aware that the sun is several hours high in the heavens. Well, how are you, patient? Has the prescription wrought its work? I am almost inclined to believe that the dose was too strong."

Nodding kindly to Balder, he hastily approached the bed and touched Edwin's brow and temples before feeling his pulse. The keen, light gray eyes gazed through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles at a heavy gold watch, and the youthfully round and regular, though somewhat pale face, which on entering the door had worn an expression of the gayest unconcern, now assumed a quiet, watchful air, while the elegant figure, which was of about the medium height, leaned lightly on a chair beside the bed.

"My dear Herr Medicinalrath," said Edwin, "your master work has been performed on me. Mother Nature, who may well fear you since you irreverently pry into her most sacred secrets and scan all her little weaknesses as through a microscope, seems, at your command, to have once more taken pity upon me, and granted me sleep. All else will follow as a matter of course; at

least I already feel a truly wolfish appetite. If you'll allow me. Doctor, I'll only put on the most necessary articles of clothing, and go to breakfast at once, to relieve Balder, who I see has again waited for me."

"*Probatum est*," laughed the doctor, pocketing his watch. "I was perfectly well aware, that for brains like yours, there is no better narcotic than the mixture of folly, noise, and tights, we men of the world swallow to excite us. I find your symptoms to-day far more encouraging than yesterday, and, within a few days, I think I shall repeat the dose. Hunger is a good symptom. But I don't see the breakfast."

"It is standing on the table yonder," said Balder, quietly.

The doctor stepped to the little table, which, covered with a green cloth, stood in the middle of the room, and gazed, with an indescribable look of pity and horror, at the white pitcher, which stood between two stoneware cups, while a tin plate beside it contained two small rolls.

"Pardon me," said he, "my science does not extend so far as to enable me to determine, by its mere appearance, the name of the strong broth which awaits you here as your first meal."

"It is pure, unadulterated milk, in which we dip the flower of wheat," said Edwin, who, having in the meantime hastily clothed himself, now approached the table and filled both cups. "You are doubtless aware, my dear fellow, that milk contains all the elements of nourishment which--"

"Which a child in swaddling clothes needs till it cuts its teeth! Sacred Reason, what is the world coming to, when your ablest votaries, the philosophers, confess themselves addicted to the most preposterous habits and customs. Are you not startled, my lad, by the frightful contradiction involved by your endeavor, amidst our exhaustive, enervating civilization, which constitutes such a drain upon the blood and marrow, to sustain yourself on the nourishment of stupid pastoral tribes? In Berlin, too, where as you know, all the cows are infected with the pallor of the Hegel philosophy, and where the watery fluid they give is still further diluted at every pump. No, my dear fellow, either I give you up as incurable, or you must decide at once upon a radical change of habit, wash your face with this innocent fluid--an admirable preventive of premature wrinkles--and moisten your inner man at this time with a glass of port wine, to be followed by the consumption of half a pound of roast meat. I'll wager that in a short time there will be a change in your organism which will make itself perceptibly felt if you visit the Berlin ballet too frequently. What are you laughing at? I am perfectly serious."

"That is just why I laughed," said Edwin, as, standing by the table, he quietly broke his roll into the thin blue milk. "You forget, my dear fellow, that I can only make use of prescriptions which are put up at the pharmacy 'for lucky beggars.' Or do you happen to have it in your pocket?"

"What?"

"My professorship, or Balder's diploma as turner to the court. With your practice in such circles, you can not fail, if you are in earnest, to help us to a brilliant career. But until then I deeply regret that I can give you no prospect of a change of diet."

Marquard looked around the room, and shook his head angrily, as he said: "But it is suicidal folly, absurd nonsense, to live as you do! Balder, too, will never fare any better, so long as you squat here like two old women, and fast till you are livid for lack of blood. Professorship? Nonsense! With your views, you'll never get one to the end of your days in our Christian German government. If you had only learned some commonplace thing, so that you might be made useful somewhere. However, you know something of arithmetic, don't you?"

"The first four formulæ, and the rule of three."

"No joking. You are a thorough mathematician. I will get you a position in a life insurance company, where they need some one for their estimates of probabilities. Five hundred thalers at first. You need say but one word."

"Rather *three*, my faithful Eckhart: Thank you, kindly. I can not endure the atmosphere of an office. But seriously, my dear preserver of mankind, don't give yourself any trouble about me. I am incorrigible. Every German must have a whim. Mine is to belong exclusively to myself, shake as many nuts from the tree of life as I like, and waste as much time as I can spare in cracking them and getting at the kernels. To make a career is an occupation that robs one of a great deal of time, and it is the same with the effort to become a millionaire in a respectable way. Both, therefore, I must renounce, and since I have for either as little talent as inclination, and can get along for a time in this way, why should I fly into a passion because the Berlin cows have deteriorated as much in the fabrication of milk as Prussian political philosophy has deteriorated since the days of Father Kant? Except on occasions when, by an Epicurean like yourself, unnatural desires are created in us, we want for nothing in our 'tun,' and, moreover, have something put aside for a rainy day; have we not, Balder?"

The doctor was about to make some reply, but controlled himself, and seized his hat. "Adieu!" he growled, and went toward the door, but paused on the threshold.

"You will allow me," he said harshly, "as I still have charge of you, to send you some medicine from my own pharmacy. I received a gift of some excellent Bordeaux from a wine-dealer, on whom I performed a very surprising cure, I will send you some on trial, and if you don't drink half a bottle every noon--Balder may content himself with a glass--I--"

"Will show me no farther friendship? Better not say that. It would be a pity: for your sake, because without our society you would sink completely into empiricism and gluttony; and for ours, because we should be compelled to deny ourselves the luxury of consulting a physician. No, old fellow, I thank you very kindly for your philanthropic design, but it is wiser for us to continue to cut our coats according to our cloth."

"And these people wish to be elevated above ordinary prejudices!" exclaimed the doctor fiercely, putting on his hat. "If you really were so elevated, you would not be too proud to accept a few pitiful drops of wine from an old college friend! Go, you are perfect fools with your idealism!"

"And you are on the way to become as famous a doctor as old Heim. At least you already have the needful roughness!" laughed Edwin.

The doctor heard him no longer; he had slammed the door and was noisily descending the stairs. Balder looked at his brother.

"You ought not to have refused," said he. "He means kindly, and he is undoubtedly right: our diet is not fit for you."

"So you, too, are beginning to scold," said Edwin, drinking the remainder of his milk as if it were the most exquisite nectar. "But the trump of doom would not disturb the serenity of my soul to-day. I am in exactly the phlegmatic, abstract frame of mind, to which the most difficult problems seem like child's play. It is a pity I have nothing harder to elucidate than how it comes to pass that a crazy man can say such clever things in his dreams, and yet on awaking be just as mad as before."

"What do you mean?"

"I have been most dutifully dreaming of the acquaintance I made yesterday; you remember, child, *la belle Chocoladière*. I discovered, God knows how, that she was the daughter of a Polish countess and a French *valet de chambre*; a thoroughly ignorant, vain, and not over-virtuous creature. As she made merry over my defective French, I quietly began to explain how grateful she ought to be that a sensible man conversed with her at all. Then I talked long and very impressively about the dignity of man in general and philosophers in particular; something after the style of Wieland's sages, and she, after at first looking as if she were grieving over her weaknesses and sins, suddenly began to laugh loudly, danced around the room--in the style of the rope-dancers we saw yesterday--hummed French songs of by no means the most decorous nature, and altogether conducted herself in such a manner that I grew more and more angry, and at last told her to her face that I should consider myself the most contemptible fool and weakling on earth, if I allowed her little nose and black eyelashes to turn my head an instant longer. She now became very haughty, I still colder and more bitter, she more bacchanalian, and I was just in the act of jumping out of a low window into a beautiful and spacious garden, when she coaxingly passed her hands over my face, and tried to smooth the angry frown from my brow; then I awoke, and quickly perceived that notwithstanding all the wisdom I had possessed in my dream, I had not become one whit the wiser than I was when I went to bed.

"But don't take the matter so much to heart, child," he continued, as Balder remained silent. "I can assure you that a hopeless passion is no such terrible misfortune. I am perfectly positive that I shall never see her again, but how long it will be before I think of something else, I can't say. Yet it is one of the most delightful experiences--this gentle consuming fire, this sacred defencelessness, this introspection, joined to the consciousness of external impressions; it is the true, immanent, and transcendent contradiction, which is the veritable secret of all life, and of which man, with his accustomed eminently respectable but imperfect knowledge of our being, is seldom so keenly conscious. Some day, child, you too will experience it, and then for the first time you will fully understand what I mean. The head does not appear to work at all; the mill of ideas is stopped; it has no more grist to grind. Very different nerve-centres appear to have assumed control, and when I have overcome the first sense of strangeness, it will be a very interesting psychological task--"

Here the door was thrown open, and a new visitor interrupted our philosopher's attempt to make a virtue of necessity, and at least to render useful to the cause of science, the sorrows of his heart.

CHAPTER V.

The new comer was a tall and very broad-shouldered young man, who carried a travelling-satchel and a shawl thrown over his shoulder; unceremoniously tossing a faded brown felt hat on Balder's bed, he nodded, and smiling called out a "good morning" to the brothers. The first impression made by the ash-colored face, furrowed by several scars, and the somewhat crooked mouth, was not particularly favorable. An expression of bitterness or malice dwelt about the strongly cut lips, and the teeth, which, in speaking, were fully revealed, increased the fierce, unamiable look. But when the countenance was in repose, the melancholy expression of the eyes predominated over the more ignoble features, and the brow beneath the short bristling hair seemed to have been developed by grave mental labor. His movements were restless and impetuous, and his whole attire was that of a man who thought little of his personal appearance, though his stately figure was well worthy to command attention, had but a little care been bestowed upon it.

"Why, Mohr! Heinrich Mohr! What wind has blown you to us again?" cried Edwin, advancing to meet him and cordially shaking hands.

"The same thoughtless whirlwind, I suppose, that tosses all the sweepings of humanity into confusion," replied the other. "It is only those individuals, who possess a certain specific weight, that do not change their places without special cause. You, for instance, I find in the same old house where I left you three years ago. And, if I must be honest, the only sensible reason I can give for venturing out of my dull little birthplace back to this huge, clever, mad Berlin, was the desire to see you again. After all, you have the most friendly faces, and that you really seem to feel a sort of pleasure in being troubled with me again, proves that you are still the same as of old."

"And you, too, seem to have altered little; less, perhaps, than would have been advisable," said Edwin, laughing.

Mohr's only answer was a shrug of the shoulders. He threw down his satchel and went to the turning-lathe, beside which Balder was leaning.

"Still as conscientious as ever; trying to kill himself," he muttered, taking up some of the little articles which were waiting for the last touches. "But I can't blame you, Balder. You at least accomplish something every day, and only hurt your chest by bending and stooping. Other people would be fairly beside themselves with impatience, if they had to sit doubled up all day long turning their stock in trade. Besides, it seems to me you have made considerable progress. You are an enviable fellow, Balder."

The youth looked at him with a smile.

"Would that you could only convince Edwin of it!" he said; "he is always trying to persuade me to give up my trade. He won't believe that to sit perfectly idle, and see everybody else work would kill me much sooner."

"Idle! As if you ever could be idle!" cried Edwin indignantly. "As if it were not the most insane obstinacy to refuse to accept from his own and only brother, that which even he has means sufficient to procure--a pitiful mouthful of bread! But we will let it pass, though it is the only real annoyance of my life, and this hard heart might so easily spare it me,--Basta! I will *not* be vexed to-day. So begin your confession, my friend! To-day, at least, you are secure from any moralizing on my part."

Mohr having seated himself in a chair beside the open window, had begun to twist a cigarette, the materials for which he took from a tin box.

"There is absolutely nothing new to tell," he replied with great apparent indifference. "The old apothegm that no one can add one inch to his stature, has been once more ratified, that's all. I left Berlin, as you will remember, because I thought that the noise and bustle alone prevented me from becoming a great man. 'Talent develops in a quiet life.' Well, I've lived quietly enough with my old mother, but nothing has developed. So, thinks I to myself, as no talent develops let us try character--'character is formed in the current of the world'--and so back I have come again, and have already selected a character to which I intend to adapt myself. A match, Edwin!"

He puffed huge clouds of very strong Turkish tobacco out of the window.

"So nothing came of the editing of the newspaper, from which you expected so much?"

"It was a miserable sheet, children, a commonplace, provincial, gossiping little paper, in which appeared, twice a week, bad novels, stolen from various quarters, or 'original contributions' by the bürgermeister's daughter or chief customhouse officer's son, and lastly charades and rebuses. However, all the citizens swore by it, and not a syllable was lost. The right kind of fellow might have made something of it, or at least in time have smuggled in something better, and, in so doing, might himself have found room to grow. But there is the point. After first turning up my

nose at this narrowmindedness, I at last discovered that I really could not do much better myself. You know I always believed that if I could once form a correct appreciation of my own powers, a thing not to be accomplished in the intellectual ant-hill of Berlin, the world would be astonished. Well, I have really arrived at this just appreciation, and for a long time have been unable to endure myself! God be thanked, that my good taste yet remains to save me from that."

"Still the same old Mohr, whose favorite pastime it is to blacken his character instead of washing himself white."

"Let me go on, and don't suppose that I am making myself out bad in order that you may praise me the more. Besides, I don't *wish* to make myself out 'bad'; I am really quite a passable fellow, neither stupid nor tedious, with fair acquirements, and powers of judgment by no means ordinary, *nota bene*, for what *others* do. If I were a rascal, I might by means of them, accomplish something, open a booth for criticism, for instance, and sell myself as dearly as possible. But the misfortune is that I have, or at least had, the ambition to accomplish something myself, and what is worse, desired to possess all sorts of talents. I have a most decided capacity for becoming a mediocre poet or musician, and in political articles, which appear to mean something and really say nothing, I have yet to find my superior. You will say there are many such wights. Certainly. But not many who have in addition such an honest, devout envy of the real men who can accomplish something genuine, such a loathing of all botching, such disgust when they have caught themselves at it. It was this that drove me away from you. I could not endure to see you all, each in his own field of labor, busy tilling and planting and at last reaping,--real grain, whether much or little--and stand by with my cockle-weed. I felt like spitting in my own face from chagrin at my mediocrity in everything that is worthy to be called work, achievement, getting on in the world, while in talking I was a very hero. Now, however, I have discovered *that that is my destiny*. A sorry creature, created by Nature through some malicious whim, and condemned always to stick halfway at everything. But I will spoil her jest; I will at least do something completely and well, and in one point, at all events, I will reach virtuosoship."

"I don't understand why this idea did not occur to you long ago," replied Edwin. "You were born for a critic, and as such can have as much influence on the world and society, as if you were a poet."

"I should be a fool!" exclaimed the other, tossing his cigarette into the courtyard, as he started up and clasped his hands behind his head. "Attempt to improve the world, tell it plain truths in black and white, which of course every one will apply to his worthy neighbor, try to educate artists who fancy that thinking paralyses the imagination, or tell truths to authors, who upon perusing them fail more signally to comprehend themselves than when they penned their thoughts,--no, my dear fellow, *vestigia terrent*. A certain Lessing tried all that a hundred years ago, and broke his teeth on the hard wood. All these philanthropic sacrifices make the world no happier, and only render the individual wretched. The only pure and noble calling left for such a superfluous mortal as myself to choose, is *pure envy*. In that I have hitherto made considerable progress, and, as I said before, I expect to attain in it a tolerable degree of eminence."

"Upon my word," laughed Edwin, "this is a novel way of attaining happiness."

"Don't laugh, wiseacre," sighed Mohr, impressively. "You see, my child, everybody in this miserable world, which all about us is so unfinished and incomplete, is endeavoring to the best of his ability, at least to perfect his own perishable self. The really gifted individuals have a surplus, from which they impart a portion to others, and thereby help them to patch up their poverty, and perhaps even scantily to complete themselves. I, for my part, can only obtain repose when I fervently envy every thing that is great, entire, exuberant. Through this envy I shall become, in a certain sense, allied to it; for if I appreciated, tasted, felt, and deserved to possess no portion, how could I envy it? Only those things that are somewhat homogenous attract each other. And when I have sat during an entire morning, thoroughly permeated with the sense of my own insignificance, sincerely envying a Shakespeare, a Goethe, or a Mozart, have I not fulfilled the purpose of my life better than if I had spent the same time in composing a poor tragedy, some wretched love-songs, or a mediocre sonata?"

He went to the window and gazed at the top of the acacia-tree.

"You are right," said Balder's clear voice. "Only you ought not to give the name of envy to what is really love, reverence, and the most beautiful and unselfish enthusiasm."

"Balder has hit the nail on the head, as usual," said Edwin.

Mohr turned. The brothers noticed that he was winking rapidly, as if desiring to make way with a suspicious moisture.

"It would be beautiful, if it were true," said he. "But this is only the bright side of my virtuosoship; it has its shadows too, and they grow broader than I like. I can see nothing that is complete and in harmony with itself, without envy; no self-satisfied stupidity, no broad-mouthed falsehood, no snobbish faces. And as if these worthies had really no right to be happy, the demon of envy induces me to say something cutting, merely to show them their own pitifulness. Thus in a short time I had all my worthy fellow-citizens about my ears, and wherever I went was decried, avoided, and warned off like a mad dog. It makes all the blood in my body boil, when I see how

everywhere the scamps get on in the world, and how the honest fellows, who don't use their elbows, remain behind. You, for instance, if I had my way, should be driving in a handsome coach with servants at your command, as beseems the aristocracy of the human race. Instead of that, that insignificant fellow, Marquard, whom I met below, has his equipage, and graciously nods as he drives by, after reconnoitering me from top to toe through his gold spectacles. Death and perdition, who can see such things and not go wild--"

"Don't abuse our medical counsellor," said Edwin. "In spite of all you have said he is a good fellow, and his carriage would suit my trade and Balder's as little as my slow-stepping scientific methods would suit his empirical gallop. Besides--"

At this moment they heard from the windows below, the first bars of the overture to Glück's "Orpheus."

Mohr approached the window again, and listened attentively.

"Who is playing?" he asked after a time, in an undertone.

"One of the inmates of the house, a young lady of whom we know little more than that she gives music-lessons. Last night--I have not yet told you of it, Balder--I found her absorbed in Schopenhauer's Parerga. She spoke enthusiastically about the chapter on 'the sorrows of the world.'

"Her music bears witness that in those sorrows she had had experience," said Mohr. "Women only play as she does when their hearts have been once broken and then pieced together again. It is with them as it is with old violins, which must be shattered several times before they have the right resonance. But hush, it is growing still more beautiful."

He sat down on the window-sill, and, gazing without, became completely absorbed in listening. Balder worked noiselessly at his little boxes, while Edwin had taken a book though his gaze became fixed upon one page. It was so quiet in the room, that during the pauses in the music, they could hear the stealthy footsteps of the cat, which had just previously leaped into the chamber, and eaten the remnants of the breakfast.

CHAPTER VI.

About the same time that these things were occurring in the back building, the master of the house was in the shop talking with a customer, who had just brought to be mended a pair of embroidered slippers, carefully wrapped in an old newspaper.

It was somewhat unusual for the shoemaker to be absent from the workroom at this time of day. But it was also, as the reader will remember, an unusual occasion, Reginchin's birthday, and her mother, who generally attended to the management of everything in the shop, was obliged to give up the charge to her husband, in order to go into the kitchen and mix the dough herself, for the usual birthday cake. She would not relinquish this task, though there was a confectioner's shop at the very next corner. For ever since Reginchin was four years old, she had been very fond of a certain kind of home-made plumb-cake, and, though she could rarely do anything exactly to her mother's mind, and was continually subject to her criticism, the young girl was, as she very well knew, the apple of her mother's eye, and, for her the good woman would have gone through fire. So, hot as the day was, Madame Feyertag stood without a murmur beside the servant at the fire, allowing herself to be troubled but little by the principal anxiety which usually rendered her unwilling to have her husband in the shop: the jealous fear that some female customers might come in, and that the shoemaker might find other feet, whose measure he would be obliged to take, prettier than those adorned with the legitimate slippers of his wife.

To be sure the worthy man, though he might have been a sly fellow in his bachelor days, had given very little cause for such a suspicion during twenty-three years of extremely peaceful married life. But within a few months a change had taken place which attracted the attention of his clever wife; a change not much apparent in his actions and conduct, since he quietly continued his regular mode of life and did not even oppose the before-mentioned slippers, but noticeable in his language. She was already accustomed to hear him talk much of progress, and inveigh against all tyranny, especially domestic slavery, giving utterance to very forcible expressions, and this harmless amusement she willingly countenanced, since all affairs of state and family pursued, as before, their even course. But during the last three months his revolutionary table-talk had changed its tone, and had been steadily pointed against "women," of whom he repeated the most malicious things, usually in strange, outlandish words. Perhaps he

had merely picked up these contemptuous epithets at the liberal trades-union, to which he owed all his progressive ideas; and if so, it was something to be thankful for. But except on certain festive occasions, women were excluded from these meetings, and at the entertainments a very decorous tone always prevailed, to say nothing of the obligatory toast to the fair sex. So, when all at once in speaking of "women," he used the word "females," and talked of the "sex" with a shade of contempt, for which Madame Feyertag's person and conduct did not give the slightest cause, nothing was more probable than that the shoemaker had obtained his new knowledge of feminine nature in other circles, and, perhaps led astray by some acquaintances formed in the shop, had approached nearer to the light-minded portion of the sex than could be at all desirable for the peace of the household. Since that time, Madame Feyertag had kept a sharp eye on the secret sinner, no longer permitting his presence in the shop, and had emphatically forbidden the utterance of his offensive remarks, at least in Reginchen's presence. For this restraint the worthy man indemnified himself by talking all the more freely to others, and on this very morning, when, contrary to his usual custom, we find him in the shop, he was in the act of giving vent to the pent-up emotions of his heart. Compelled to keep silence, his companion with some little surprise, patiently submitted to the torrent of his eloquence. He was a little old-fashioned gentleman, with a timid but lively manner, whose delicate regular features bore an expression of such winning kindness that the most casual observer could not fail to notice it; his was one of those faces, which, in consequence of the delicacy of the skin, become prematurely withered, and yet never grow old. A small grey moustache endeavored in vain to give a martial air to the innocent childish face, and the forehead, which, through baldness, seemed to reach to the crown of his head, failed just as signally to cast upon its owner the air of a deep thinker. Yet when any important subject was under discussion, the mild eyes could sparkle with a strange fire, and the whole face become transfigured with interest and excitement.

This little man wore a neatly brushed but rather threadbare coat, cut in a fashion that had prevailed ten years before, and a large white cravat, fastened with a pin containing a woman's picture. He had placed upon the counter an old-fashioned grey hat, with a piece of crape twisted around it, and, with both hands resting on his cane, he sat opposite the shoemaker, who had just examined the slippers, and said that they could be mended so as to look very well, only that a part of the embroidery would be lost.

"Spare as much of it as you can," pleaded the little gentleman. "They were my dead wife's last birthday gift; she worked them herself. I have worn them constantly for five years; but I step so lightly that I don't wear out many shoes. I suppose I am your worst customer," he added, with an apologetic smile.

"That is of no consequence, Herr König," replied the shoemaker; "it is always an honor as well as a pleasure to work for you and your family, not only on account of the high instep which you all have, but because you are an artist and have an eye for shape. As for the durability of the shoes, that is not your fault, but the fault of the leather. But wait till your daughter goes to balls. Good work is of no avail then, Herr König; dancing shoes which are not as delicate and as easily broken as poppy-leaves, do the shoemaker no credit."

The little gentleman shook his head thoughtfully.

"My daughter, I fear, will give you little opportunity to earn money in that article," said he, "She has no desire for any of the seemingly amusements which I would willingly grant her; her mind is filled with her work and her father; she can't be induced to attend to anything else."

"Well, well," said the shoemaker, drawing from his jacket a little silver snuff-box, which he offered the artist, "those things will come as a matter of course. Young ladies always have some peculiarities, you know; they do not forget the mother; but women are women, Herr König, and there is no virtue in youth. True, you yourself still wear crape around your hat; in your case constancy may be in the blood. But wait a while. The will, Herr König, is master; the perception weak; of how weak it is, we have sometimes little idea."

"You are mistaken," replied the other, fixing his eyes which wore a quiet, thoughtful expression upon the floor. "She has become perfectly cheerful again, and I also, though every day I still miss my dead wife. God does not like to see discontented faces, He has made the world too beautiful for that. The crape--yes, I have kept it on my hat. Why should I take it off, and when? It would seem very strange to me, to say to myself on a certain day: From this time things shall no longer be as they were yesterday; I will now remove this token of remembrance. Should I thereby blot out the memory too? But even if her mother were still alive, I do not think the child would be any different. She has a very peculiar character."

"Be kind enough to permit me to differ from you," said the shoemaker with great positiveness, despite the courteous language he studiously adopted. "Women--true women--have generally no character of their own, but one that belongs in common to all the sex. For the sole object for which they are in the world, is, to use Salvenia's words, only to continue the species, or, as we term it, for propagation. A woman who desires anything else, has something wrong about her; I say this without intending to cast any reflections upon your daughter."

The artist opened his little eyes to their widest extent. "My dear Feyertag, why do you say such strange things?" he said, naïvely. "Is not a woman as much a creature of the dear God as we ourselves? formed in his image, and endowed with soul and mind?"

The shoemaker laughed, as if fully conscious of his own superiority.

"Don't take it amiss, Herr König," he said, "but that is an exploded opinion. Have you never heard of the great philosopher, Schopenhauer? He will make you understand it thoroughly; he will prove as plainly as that twice two make four, of what account is the so-called emancipation of women."

"I don't have much time to read," replied the little artist. "But the little you have told me does not render me anxious to become familiar with an author who has thought so slightly of the noblest and most lovable portion of humanity. I prefer to say with my beloved Schiller, 'Honor to women!'"

"They spin and weave," replied, the shoemaker. "Yes, and they can do it very skillfully, and it is an extremely useful occupation. But in other things, in the employments of men--this low-statured, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged sex, as Herr Schopenhauer expresses it--no, Herr König, men must not allow them to become too strong. Propagation, nothing more. But *propaganda*, you see, for the liberal and progressive, is our affair. For instance, there is my wife; the best woman in the world! But if I did not now and then show her that I am master, where should I be? I admit that during the last few years, out of pure indolence, I have allowed her to do and say more than was well. But Schopenhauer has brought me to myself. Now, when she mistakes her social position, and wants to emancipate herself too much, I say: 'Hush, Guste. You, too, were once an explosive effect of Nature; but now the noise has died away, and the effect remains.' Then she scolds about my worthless way of talking, as she calls it, but no longer ventures to say anything, because she has not the least suspicion what I really mean by it, and that it is in Schopenhauer. Ha! ha! ha!"

He chuckled with delight, and rubbed his broad hands.

"How did you chance upon this mischievous book?" asked the artist.

"Very naturally. In my back building lives a very learned gentleman, a philosopher by profession, and soon to become professor of philosophy. One day, when he was not at home, the bookbinder's boy came and left in my shop a whole package of freshly bound books, which I was to keep for the Herr Doctor. It was after dinner, when I usually take a little nap. So, half asleep, I aimlessly took the uppermost book in my hand, and began to read at the place where it opened. Zounds, how my eyes flew open! 'Upon females' was the heading of the chapter. I could not stop till I had read the last lines. I tell you, Herr König, old King Solomon, much as he knew about women, and propagation, and the conception of species, might have gone to school to him."

"Is Schopenhauer the author's name? And do you call him a philosopher, because he revives the old commonplaces about the other sex?"

The little artist's eyes flashed as he uttered these words, and he seized his hat as if he were in a hurry to leave the shop.

"He is a philosopher, for the Herr Doctor himself says so; but not merely because of what he has written about women; the Herr Doctor showed me another thick book. He said it treated of will and perception; however, it was too heavy for me. If you would like to read it, he will cheerfully lend it to you."

"Thank you, I have not the slightest desire to make the acquaintance of a gentleman who holds and desires to spread such opinions."

"The Herr Doctor? There you are very much mistaken, Herr König. He won't listen to a word about the essay on women, and says there is just as much falsehood as truth in it. He is a bachelor, Herr König, and what does a bachelor know about the conception of species? Besides, he never associates with women, but devotes himself entirely to his invalid brother. They might as well be in a monastery, Herr König; my wife often says that if we were to advertise in the newspapers and offer a reward of a hundred thalers, we could not find such another couple of well-behaved young men in all Berlin."

"Indeed? And learned too, you say?"

"Only the older one, the Herr Doctor. He has not much money, because he is at the university, and you are probably aware the minister of public worship and instruction wants to starve out the whole university, and then fill all the vacant places with pastors; there is but one opinion about it in the trades union. But our Herr Doctor gives private lessons, and his brother sells some of the little articles he turns; they live on the proceeds always paying punctually the rent, and the household bills for cooking and washing. Two young men, Herr König, to whom immorality is something utterly unknown."

The artist had laid down his hat again, and seemed to be struggling with some resolution.

"My dear Herr Feyertag," he said at last, "Do you know, I think I should like after all to make the acquaintance of your Herr Doctor. If what you say is true, he is the very man for whom I have been looking a long time. My daughter complains that she cannot continue her studies alone. What she knows she learned from her mother. But since the latter died, I have found her services

indispensable at home, and I thought her so clever that she could get on by herself if I only bought her books. But it seems that she cannot dispense with regular instruction, and now she is too old and too sensible to content herself with the first instructor that offers, and recently, when she met a certain young lady, a teacher who has given lessons in very aristocratic families, she conversed with her so cleverly that the young woman declared she could teach her nothing. So if your Herr Doctor is really such a phoenix, and a true man besides--"

"If by 'phoenix' you mean insurance against fire, one can never be certain of that in young people, but I'll stake my life on his goodness; everything else you must find out for yourself in case you are really serious about giving your daughter--but that is none of my business. My Regine can read and write, and that is enough to enable her to get along with everything that does not concern propagation. However, everybody has a right to his own opinion. If that is yours, Herr König, you will probably find the Herr Doctor at home now. It is vacation, and most of his private pupils are traveling."

"I suppose," said the artist timidly, as he put on his hat and followed the shoemaker into the entry, "the price for the lessons will not be exorbitant."

"You need have no anxiety on that score," replied the shoemaker, shutting the door of the shop. "If he were paid as he deserves, he wouldn't need to climb my old back stairs, but could buy the handsomest house on Unter der Linden. Turn to the left here, and then cross the courtyard, Herr König, if you please."

CHAPTER VII.

Meantime the brothers had again been left alone.

As soon as the music below ceased, Mohr took his hat. "To envy this happiness is one of my favorite occupations," he growled, twisting his under lip awry. "I pity you for being able to listen to such a thing quietly, without becoming filled with fiendish joy or rage, I tried to express this mood in a somewhat rattling, but I think not wholly meritless composition, which I call my *sinfonia ironica*. When I have a lodging and a tin pan, I'll play it to you, and then read you my new comedy: 'I am I, and rely on myself.'"

"A great many pleasures at once, Heinz," said Edwin.

"You need not fear the length of this *concert spirituel*. Only two bars of the symphony and an act and a half of the comedy are finished. A man who is but half a man, never brings any work to completion."

"Fortunately, as you know, the half is more than the whole,"

"You shall give me a lecture on that subject very shortly, Philosopher. Adieu."

He went out to search for lodgings in the neighborhood. His mother, a widow in easy circumstances, seemed to have provided him with sufficient means to live for some time without work. At the pianist's door he paused, and read on the little porcelain plate: "Christiane Falk, music teacher." Within everything was still. He would gladly have found some pretext to ring and to make her acquaintance; however, none occurred to him, so he deferred it until a more favorable opportunity.

Balder had returned to his work again. He seemed in great haste to complete a dainty little box of olive-wood, which contained all sorts of implements for sewing.

In the meantime Edwin was dressing.

This was usually accomplished in the following manner: first he hung a small mirror, scarcely the width of his hand, on a nail in one of the book shelves, just under Kant's critique of pure reason and Fichte's religion of science, and then while passing a comb minus numerous teeth through his hair and beard, gazed less into the little glass than across at Balder. To-day, however, he did something more; he shortened the hair on his temples and chin with a pair of scissors, and moreover looked somewhat carefully to see whether it was cut evenly on both sides. "I find," said he, "that familiarity with the ballet has demoralized me. I am already beginning to be vain, and have discovered all sorts of defects in my honest face, with which I have hitherto been perfectly satisfied. We should have divided our good mother's beauty between us more equally. But perhaps after all, it is better that the inheritance has remained intact, rather than squandered upon two. Come, give your artistic opinion, my boy, has not the plantation been very much improved by mowing?"

"I should have spared the beard," said Balder. "It was very becoming to you."

"You don't understand, child. It has been much too long for some time, even for a philosopher, and although, as in the times of Julius Cæsar, no one must wander about on working days 'without some sign of his occupation,' it is now vacation with me and I want to go out to-day as an ordinary mortal, not as an object to startle women and children. Come, make up your mind to accompany me. We will take a droschky, stop at the confectioner's, where you must be treated to ice-cream to-day as I treated myself yesterday, and afterwards--"

"To-day, Edwin? To-day--excuse me--I don't feel exactly well--it will be better to choose some other time--"

He bent his glowing face over his work.

Just at this moment some one knocked, and the round, good-natured face of the owner of the house appeared in the doorway, for the little artist had insisted upon his going first. In the half jocose, half respectful manner, which he always adopted toward the brothers, he introduced Herr König to them as a cultivated artist, and the father of a daughter already highly educated, but who desired to pursue her education still further. Immediately upon entering, the little gentleman had become absorbed in looking at the copperplate engravings and busts, and, seemingly, had forgotten the cause of his visit. But when the shoemaker paused, and Edwin glanced smilingly at Balder, he recollected himself and modestly told his errand.

"My dear sir," replied Edwin, "I really feel very much honored, but I do not yet know whether I am the man you seek, for I am not a particularly good teacher, since I have not a particle of ambition to become a pedagogue. For a thorough teacher is indifferent to the calibre of his pupil's mind; the more idle, stupid, and destitute of talent the scholar, the more eager should the teacher be to make something out of him. I, on the contrary, still have too much to do for myself, to be able to help others who have not at least the ability to help themselves. I can indeed show the way, but the scholar must perform the work. And as for young ladies, with all due respect for your daughter, Herr König, how are these poor creatures, even if the roads are smoothed before them and the goal pointed out, to journey forward on their own feet, when from their earliest childhood, every natural, firm, and steady step has been prohibited as unwomanly! They trip and dance and glide and hover and soar, with variegated wings over the green meadows of youth, but when they at last reach the highway of sober life, they lean on a husband's arm, and expect to be supported and carried forward by him. Excuse this uncourteous language, I have experienced these things, and I do not see why I should not speak openly. However, as I am now at leisure, if you will venture to try me upon the recommendation of our landlord and foster father, I will make an attempt to ascertain whether you are not deceived in me."

He took his straw hat, and said in an undertone to Balder: "Don't wait meals for me again to-day, my boy, I may wander out somewhere into the green fields, after I have made the acquaintance of this king's daughter,^[1] who is so eager for education."

He passed his hand gently over the youth's hair by way of parting, and accompanied the two men down stairs.

When he was alone in the hot street with the little artist, the latter said: "You have not far to go, Herr Doctor, I live on the Schiffbauerdamm, and we can walk in the shade all the way. But, that you may understand my daughter's peculiar course of education, allow me to tell you something of my domestic affairs. Your landlord has made you acquainted with my name. You have probably never heard it mentioned before. My pictures are not remarkable performances, and for several years past I have turned my attention more to wood engraving. A trade, Herr Doctor, takes root in a firmer soil than art, though it may not always be a soil so golden, and it becomes a father of a family, even if the family consists of but two persons--however, I have never wholly relinquished painting, adhering always to my own very modest style, which in art circles, has even earned me a nickname. Just as there is a cat-Raphael, and a velvet-and-hell Breughel, so I am called, owing to my predilection for introducing old fences into my landscapes, the zaun-könig.^[2] Predilection?" he smiled as he continued, "that is not exactly the right word either. God knows I would rather paint beautiful woodlands, like Ruysdell, or clear, bright atmospheres like Claude Lorraine, if my talent were but sufficient. But I always succeed best in small, insignificant objects. So a bit of ground with stones, weeds, and brambles, a clod of earth on which mother nature has developed her productive powers as freely as if it were a world in itself, in short what we call a 'foreground,' has always given me so much to do--especially as I am somewhat near-sighted--that I have never arrived at real landscapes. Well, everybody must cut his garment according to his cloth. And when we reflect aright, do not God's power and glory make themselves manifest in just as wonderful a guise behind a low hedge or a garden fence, as in the romance of the primeval forest, or the surpassing grandeur of the Swiss Alps? So what I do, I do because I cannot help it; in short I work for my own edification, and try to represent a small portion, a little corner or bit of creation, with so much care and love, that in looking upon my work people may see that, even this despised spot, God's breath has touched."

Edwin had given but partial attention to these remarks, which would usually have interested him far more deeply. His thoughts were wandering in vague, distant realms. But in order to say something, he remarked: "And do you find purchasers for your pictures?"

The little gentleman smiled, in a half-embarrassed, half-conscious manner.

"Well," said he, "I can't complain. I always dispose of at least every fourth or fifth picture; for, is it not strange! now-a-days everybody must have his specialty; a work may be ever so worthless, but it will possess some value, because its producer has had the courage not to flinch or retreat from the path he has appointed for himself even if the critics assail him with their deadly weapons. Yes, yes, it is indeed surprizing to me, myself, but patrons of the fine arts have come hither from Holland and from England, who wanted a real zaun-könig and nothing better. So it is, that in the great economy of our creator, every creature finds its appointed place, the mite as well as the elephant.

"But I was going to tell you something about my domestic affairs," continued the little man. "You see, Herr Doctor, I have now been a widower five years and seven months, but I cannot yet speak of my dear wife without feeling, a perhaps unmanly or unchristian, but nevertheless unconquerable grief. Therefore I will speak no further of her, except that during the fifteen years I lived with her, there was not an hour which I could wish effaced from my memory. She was a Jewess, and I am a good evangelical Christian, but even that did not cause a single moment of bitterness, for the God in whom we both believed, was one and the same. As for our daughter, the mother agreed that she should be educated as a Christian, and though she herself did not wish to be baptised, she never tried to perplex the child. She was buried in the Jewish churchyard, but that has never troubled me. The spot to which this noble creature was carried for her eternal rest, is *holy*, no matter whether it was consecrated by Christian minister or Jewish Rabbi. Since she died, I can see that I have not been so pious as when she was alive. The memory of her blends with all my thoughts of heaven; I can no longer, as before, be alone in the presence of my God. Ah well. He will not impute that to me as a sin."

The artist paused a moment. His voice seemed to fail him, but after a moment he continued:

"She has left me a daughter, who in many respects is very like her; in others not at all. She has far more independence, and often we do not understand each other, and that never happened with her mother. The child is nineteen years old, and--I will not praise her--but no one could have a better heart, to say nothing of such a talent for drawing and painting, that I only wonder how she came by it. In many things, flower-pieces for instance, I am a bungler to her. I ought, long ago, to have discountenanced her close application to it, that she might have had more time for other things, I mean for intellectual culture. But it gave her pleasure to think that she could earn something while yet so young, and besides I was vain of her progress. Now, however, the punishment has come. For some time she has been melancholy, because she fancied that she was ignorant, or as she expressed it, that she had no clear ideas. Now to me she seems clever and learned enough, and our old friend, the widow of Professor Valentin, cannot understand what fault she can find in herself, except perhaps, her somewhat singular opinions on religious subjects. But I see that it is secretly destroying her peace of mind, and, as I cannot help her myself, I have had recourse to you, Herr Doctor, and, just because you are no pedantic schoolmaster, I think you will soon discover what is the matter with the dear child."

Meantime they had walked down Friedrichstrasse to the Spree, and now turned the corner to the right. "My house is only a few hundred paces farther," said the artist. "It would be very difficult for me to make up my mind to live in any other part of the city. People are always speaking so contemptuously of our good Spree, and, to be sure, it is by no means the proudest of our German rivers, nor the poorest just here, in the midst of Berlin. But, to an artist's eye--apart from the impression it makes in the open country, and especially in a romantic spot like the Spreewald--can there be anything more charming than this view of the canal, bridges, places of lading, water steps, and the honest old Spree boats, lying so sleepily in the noonday sun, like great fat crocodiles on the banks of the Nile? Look; the sailors have already eaten their dinners; only here and there a thin blue column of smoke, circles upward from some cabin chimney; the husband is lying on deck, under a piece of sail near his cargo of coal, and his wife sits beside him holding the baby in her lap, and brushing away the water-flies. Notice how the brown wood is relieved against the pale surface of the water, and behind it all, the bright sunlight effect. See, too, the white Pomeranian, standing on the cabin stairs barking at the little grey cat in the other boat? Here, in the midst of our elegant capital, you have a fragment of Holland, as complete as you could desire."

"You have been in Holland?"

"No; I have never gone so far. But when one has seen their pictures and the excellent photographs that we have now--but stop a moment if you please, I must show you something else."

They had just passed some high houses and reached a place, where a narrow, ditch-like canal, bridged where the street crossed it, emptied into the Spree. On one side stood the blank wall of a three-story factory. Opposite was a low hut, very narrow in front, but extending along the canal to a considerable depth. It seemed to have formerly opened upon the quay, by a door beside its single window, but the door was now walled up, and the window covered on the inner side by a dark cloth. This decaying little house was connected by means of an iron railing with its massive neighbor.

The artist leaned over the railing and gazed up the canal, whose dirty brown water flowed so

sluggishly, that it seemed stagnant and gave forth a mouldering exhalation.

"Of what does this remind you?" he asked, turning to Edwin.

"What do you mean by 'this'?"

"Why, the canal, and yonder little bridge that connects the two banks, the post to which the clothes-line is fastened, and the atmospheric effect and coloring of the stones, which we artists call *tone*."

"It bears a distant, but by no means flattering resemblance, to Venice and the Bridge of Sighs."

"Right!" cried the little man, who in his earnestness, failed to hear the tinge of sarcasm in Edwin's remark. "True, I have not been in Venice myself. But friends of mine, who have visited Italy, have likewise been compelled to confess that this view was completely Venetian, at least as the city is represented in Canaletto's pictures, which, however, are doubtless somewhat cooler in tone, than the reality. However, we are in Berlin, and it is only a harmless jest when I talk of my lagune."

"Your lagune?"

"Certainly. I live here."

"In this--"

"Yes, in this hut: you need not swallow the word. To be sure it is not a doge's palace, this place where I have lived these twenty years, but I would not exchange it for all the splendor of the old *sposo del mare*, as the Venetians called their ruler. Besides, it is pleasanter within than its exterior would lead one to expect. The door which is now walled up, was formerly the entrance to a sailor's tavern, a wretched, dirty wine-shop, and behind it were a few miserable rooms, and a hole of a kitchen. Then came the stable and the wood-dealer's shed, whose timber-yard, as you see, adjoins our little house. I had just been married, and with all my treasures of hope and happiness, was but a poor devil, when the host of this inn was arrested by the police for concealing stolen goods and for other bad practices. The lumber merchant would not have another dram-seller on his premises, and the place was not exactly suitable for any one else. So I got it at a very low price, had the door walled up to admit the light into my studio from above, and though it has cost both toil and money to efface the traces of the dirty inn--you shall judge for yourself if we have not at last succeeded."

Taking the lead, he conducted Edwin through a large gate across the spacious timber-yard. A narrow lane led between the huge piles of odorous pine and beech wood, directly to the "hut," whose side view was no more aristocratic than the front.

"These six windows belong to me," said the artist with modest pride. Then he opened the low door and invited Edwin to enter.

The interior of the old barrack, apart from a certain gloom and dampness, really did look more comfortable than one would have thought possible from its exterior. An entry, painted in some light color, was hung with etchings in plain wooden frames. A door, opposite, appeared to open upon the canal.

"Turn to the right, if you please," said the artist, "the apartments on the left are our sitting-room, my daughter's little room, a kitchen, and a bed-chamber. Everything on the right belongs to art--according to my modest style, for I sleep in my studio, and even in my dreams I remain only the zaun-könig, and never fancy myself a Canaletto because I live beside a lagune."

As he concluded he opened the door of his studio.

Certainly the low room no longer showed any trace of having previously sheltered drunken sailors, but to have painted Claude Lorraine atmospheres there on gloomy days would have been a difficult matter. Two windows opened upon the canal and the dark chimney of the next house interposed itself between them and every ray of sunlight. At one of these windows stood a low table, covered with the various tools of a wood-engraver; at the other, a desk-like stand, before which sat a young girl, absorbed in her work. Just in front of her a bouquet of fresh flowers stood in a little vase, and she was evidently employed in copying into the wreath which she was painting on a porcelain plate, leaves and flowers from nature. On the walls hung all sorts of sketches, interspersed with finished pictures which, even at a distance, could not fail to be recognized as "genuine zaun-königs," while on an easel not far from the first window, stood a new half-finished landscape, over which the artist instantly spread a cloth.

"You must not see me too much in *négligé*," he said blushing. "I usually begin very awkwardly, and make a great many strokes on my little piece of canvas, before any clear outlines appear. But here is my daughter, Leah. She bears her mother's name. What are you going to say, my child? You will be pleased with me, for I have brought you something that you have long been wishing for."

At her father's first words the young girl had arisen, but, on perceiving the stranger she bowed modestly without moving from her place.

"I was not conscious, dear father, of having particularly desired anything," she now said, gazing in surprise at the merry, mysterious face of the little man, who seemed to be revelling in her perplexity.

"Not a teacher, child?' this very learned Herr Doctor will not get to the end of his Latin as quickly as the good young lady. But he wishes to ascertain how far advanced you are, before saying whether he will give you lessons. Come, come, you need not be frightened. The examination won't kill you, even if you should be obliged to rack your brains a little now and then. Am I not right, Herr Doctor?"

The young girl, whose complexion was usually pale, crimsoned, and remained silent, as if uncertain whether to take the matter in jest or earnest. Edwin had time to observe her closely. She was taller than her father, with a firm, slender figure, and seemed to resemble him in nothing except the remarkably small size of her hands and feet. In the beautiful, but perhaps rather high forehead, or in the large, dark eyes which recalled her mother's race, there was no expression of cheerfulness; but with the exception of the eyes there was nothing Jewish in the face; the nose was perfectly straight, and the mouth possessed a certain sensual fullness, which softened the sternness of the other features. She had woven her thick black hair in braids, which she wore in a singular fashion, crossed under her chin, so that the pale oval face seemed set in a dark frame. A simple brown dress, worn, despite the prevailing fashion, without crinoline, completed the unusually grave appearance of the youthful figure.

At the first glance Edwin perceived that he had reason to congratulate himself on the prospect of having such a scholar.

"Your father was but jesting," he said smiling. "Of course there is no necessity for a thorough examination. On the contrary, if you can assure me, Fräulein, that you think yourself very ignorant, you shall be spared any further questions."

"Well, *I* will confess that!" laughed her father. "But you won't find fault with the little knowledge she has acquired from school-books."

"Not at all," replied Edwin, as he approached the young girl and looked at her work. "You see, Fräulein, I once had to teach a young lady, who, during the very first lesson, overwhelmed me with such a quantity of learning, had so much to say about cuneated letters, Egyptian mythology, besides relating various narratives about art and literature, that, beside her, I seemed to myself like a child just beginning its A, B, C. To be sure her wise little head was like a lumber-room, where articles for the most varied and opposite uses are stowed side by side without order or connection. But in her innocence she had no suspicion of the existence of anything like clearness and coherence, or cause and effect, in subjects and ideas. So I paid her and her mother the compliment of saying that I found it impossible to improve the young lady's education, and withdrew as speedily as possible."

The father and daughter were silent. Edwin, as if thinking of entirely different matters, walked about the room examining the sketches and studies.

"Well, my child?" the little artist spoke inquiringly; he was growing restless, for he did not exactly understand the state of affairs.

"You will not complain of me for a similar cause," the young girl now said, her voice trembling with suppressed excitement, while her eyes sparkled with a strange light. "My case is exactly the reverse of that young lady's. So long as my mother taught me, all study was a pleasure. She did not make it easy; I was compelled to study out everything by myself, and I never dared to repeat anything by rote, for she chided me when she discovered it. Perhaps I did not learn much, or a great variety; but everything made a strong impression upon me, and I have not forgotten a word. But she died when I was yet very young, and afterwards when I tried to get on by myself with the aid of books everything seemed uninteresting, and I no longer took any pleasure in study. And besides all this I must hasten to confess, Herr Doctor, that, after all, you may not expect too much, that I have an actual aversion to history and geography, and no ability to remember them. On the contrary--but you are smiling. I expected as much; you did not suppose it was so bad."

"And for what have you a taste, Fräulein? What is it you desire to learn? Do not take offence at my smile. It only meant, that, at your age, I was not very unlike you."

She made no reply but cast a timid glance at her father. The little man seemed to understand it. He went to the other window, and busied himself with his bits of wood.

"I should like," she now said in an undertone, fixing her dark eyes on the flowers in the vase, "I should like to have a clear idea of many things which are now dark to my mind. Often when I am sitting quietly at work, thoughts come that frighten me. Then they vanish again, because I cannot detain and think them out. It is like being at night in a strange neighborhood during a thunder-storm; for an instant a flash of lightning reveals streets and alleys, and then, suddenly, all is dark again. Or perhaps I read a passage in a book, over which I am constantly compelled to reflect,

longing to ask the author what he meant, but no answer comes. I feel," she added in a still lower tone, "that in many things I am unlike my dear father and a friend of ours, the Fran Professorin Valentin, who is half a theologian, while I--well it is not for lack of good will if I am not like her. But what I do not understand has no existence for me, at least to contemplate it makes me unhappy rather than happy, and yet when they say that the final secrets of the world, and the divine thoughts, cannot be comprehended by the human mind, I am obliged to concede the point. Only I can have no rest until I learn whether we can know *anything*, and if so how much, or if one, who unfortunately is unable to believe what she cannot understand, must renounce all truth."

She stopped suddenly, as her father made a movement as if to rejoin them, and with a hasty beseeching glance at Edwin, seemed to entreat him not to violate the secret of the confessional.

He smiled again and turned toward the innocent little man, who approached. "My dear Herr König," said he, "your daughter has passed the preliminary examination with great credit. I only hope that the pupil may be as well satisfied with her teacher, as he expects to be with her. So if it suits your convenience, we will begin to-morrow, and I will come to you every other day at any hour in the afternoon which you yourselves may select."

The father looked at his daughter. "I thank you sincerely, dear Herr Doctor," said he. "See how the child's eyes are sparkling with pleasure. Now in regard to your other conditions--"

"I shall make but one, my dear sir: that no one shall be present during the lessons. When I give private instruction, I always insist upon this point. Either a public class-room, or entire privacy."

"Unless you prefer some other place, Leah, you might receive the Herr Doctor in your sitting-room on the other side of the entry, where your writing-table stands; but I think we had better show our friend the whole house, that he may himself choose the best auditory."

When Edwin took his leave a half hour later, he had seen every nook and corner in the little house; the niche in the sitting-room where the bust of Leah's mother stood, the green sofa before it, the ivy at the window, the steps leading to the lagune, where a pleasant-looking old maid-servant was busy with her washing; glancing toward her young mistress, she gazed curiously at the guest, who seemed to be illustrating Jean Paul's pun about the *Lehrmeister*, who might become a *Mehrleister*, Edwin himself would never have dreamed of such a thing. He was very gay, and talked brilliantly as if among old acquaintances. Later, when he had taken his leave, and found himself in the street, he again paused a moment by the railing which ran alongside of the canal; he no longer thought it incomprehensible that the occupants of this insignificant "hut" would not have exchanged it for a palace.

CHAPTER VIII.

But he had not strolled far from the quay, when these newly made friends vanished from his memory as suddenly as we blow out a candle, and in their place appeared in most vivid hues, the vision of the Unknown he had seen at the opera-house. The change was so sudden, that he fairly started and stood still a moment to calm the beating of his heart. If he had met her, bodily, on the lonely street, he could not have been more astonished.

"A bad prospect for amendment," he said to himself, with a half compassionate, half satisfied smile. He removed his hat and leaned over the railing. Beneath him, the river flowed noiselessly on. A dead, half-plucked bird floated past him, near a half-eaten apple. "Poor thing," said Edwin, "you have endured to the end, and if not to be is better than to be, you might be congratulated that never more will bright-hued dainties tempt you, or hunger gnaw at your vitals when you have naught else with which to satisfy its claims. Yet the sun is so beautiful, and apples sweet to the taste, and I doubt not that your worst nest was more comfortable than the filthy nothingness that bears you away."

He listened. Few persons and no carriages passed this spot, but in the distance he heard the hum and roar of the streets, through which rolled the principal stream of traffic. It was pleasant to lose his own identity in the vague sense of a manifold life, and yet at the same time to bask in solitude. But, after a time, his enjoyment began to pall. He turned back into the shade and walked slowly along the river toward the neighborhood, where by passing through a few short side streets, the zoölogical gardens may be reached. Here, too, it was lonely at this noonday hour, and his old habit of strolling here and there while thinking out a problem, had taught him all the paths in which there was the least danger of meeting any one. But to-day he had no desire to philosophize. On reaching his favorite spot, the peninsula--not far from the marble statue of

the king and the Louise island, where a few weeks before he had developed his best thoughts for the prize essay, he threw himself upon the grass in the dense shade of the huge beeches and closed his eyes, that undisturbed he might devote himself to his hopeless love dream.

Despite his twenty-nine years, his feelings were precisely similar to those which fall to the lot of every one when attacked by his first schoolboy love: the sensation of yielding to violence, of quite forgetting self, and of being borne away on a flood-tide of passion, is so strong and so delightful, that it swallows up all other emotions and impulses, and the thought of possession, or even the desire for a responsive feeling, can scarcely arise,—or, if at all, not in the first stages, and in such a virgin soul as that of our philosopher. The very unexpectedness, aimlessness, and unreasonableness of this event, was to him, o'erwearied with arduous toil over abstruse thoughts, like bathing in a shoreless sea, where, floating, he suffered the waves to buoy him above the fathomless depths.

A hoarse hand-organ close by, which suddenly began to play the "Prince of Arcadia," roused him rudely from the reverie in which time and place were both forgotten. He sprang to his feet, and sought some escape from the intrusive, soulless sounds. In a modest restaurant, where only a few plain citizens were drinking coffee, he hurriedly ate his dinner, and then as the seats were beginning to fill with afternoon guests, he hastily departed, whither he did not himself know; he was only vaguely conscious of a repugnance to appearing in broad daylight, in so helpless a condition, before the brother to whom the preceding night he had frankly confessed his state of mind.

So glancing about him, he walked diagonally through the shrubbery, without any definite purpose, until he entered a broader avenue, when he suddenly stood still, and with a cry of joyful astonishment gazed at some distant object. It was at nothing more remarkable than a red and white striped summer waistcoat, which, as the sun was shining full upon it, was plainly visible. But it contained a little figure that he readily recognized; a boy about fourteen years old, who wore a high collar, a stiff cravat, a leather-colored livery jacket, and knee-breeches of the same material. The youngster was sitting on a bench in a droll old-fashioned attitude; he had placed his shining oil-skin hat beside him, and was engaged in smoothing his light hair with a little brush, glancing from time to time into a small hand-glass.

Edwin would have recognized this boy among a crowd of miniature lackeys, but he had not time to look at him long. Just as he took a few paces forward, fully determined to question him concerning his mistress, a slender figure in a light summer dress and broad Florentine straw hat rose from the next bench, which was concealed by a drooping branch, glanced over her shoulder at the boy, and then holding in one hand the book she had been reading, and carrying a parasol lightly over her shoulder, she walked rapidly toward the main avenue which runs from the Brandebourg gate directly through the Zoölogical Garden.

Her motions were so rapid that the little fellow in the large gaiters found it difficult to overtake her, and even Edwin was compelled to take long strides. As he passed the bench where she had been sitting, he saw a ribbon lying on the ground, which, in her hasty departure, she seemed to have lost. He picked it up; it was a white satin book-mark, the ends trimmed with gold fringe, and somewhat clumsily embroidered in blue and black beads with the well-known symbols of faith, hope, and charity. This discovery detained him a moment. Meantime its owner had already reached an elegant carriage, which had been waiting for her outside, the little page had opened the door, the lady entered without his assistance, the horses started, and the light equipage rolled toward the city at a rapid pace.

But today Edwin had not only better fortune than on the day previous, but also the presence of mind necessary to seize his opportunity. An empty droschky was moving lazily down the road; he threw himself into it and promised the driver a double fare, if he would overtake the carriage and not lose sight of it.

They drove through the gate, down Unter den Linden, turned to the right into Friedrichstrasse, and then to the left into the Jägerstrasse, where the equipage stopped before a pretty new house. The little servant climbed down from the box like a monkey, opened the door, and followed the lady, who had sprung lightly out, into the house, the carriage driving off at once.

Edwin dismissed his droschky at the corner of the street, and now with a throbbing heart walked past the house several times on the opposite side of the street, gazing at the open windows to see whether the charming face would not appear at one of them. But there was nothing to be seen, except in one of the rooms on the second story a flower-stand containing magnificent palms and other broad-leaved plants, and at the window near by a large bird-cage with glittering gilded wires. Here, then, was where she lived. He had in his pocket the best possible excuse for introducing himself, and yet for a long time he could not summon up courage to enter the house and mount the stairs.

When he at last nerved himself to this, he lingered a few moments at the door, trying to recall his somewhat rusty French, in case she really should not understand German. Then he felt ashamed of his boyish timidity and pulled the bell so vigorously, that it pealed loudly through the silent house.

The door was instantly opened, the striped waistcoat appeared, and its owner stared at the

noisy visitor, with a disapproving expression in his round, watery blue eyes.

"Be kind enough, my little fellow," said Edwin, "to inform your mistress that some one desires to speak to her, and to return something she has lost."

"Whom have I the honor--?" asked the well-trained dwarf.

"The name is of no consequence. Do as I have told you."

The boy disappeared, but returned in a short time, during which Edwin heard no French spoken, and said: "The young lady begs you to walk in here a moment."

As he spoke he opened the door of a small ante-room, furnished only with a few elegant cane chairs and a dainty marble table, on which lay a book and fan.

"What is your name, my boy?" Edwin asked the little fellow, as he seated himself with much apparent self-possession.

"My real name is Hans Jacob, but my mistress calls me Jean."

"Isn't this your first place, little Jean Jacques? You seem to be a precocious genius."

"My first service was with a baron; then I learned to ride, and I had the reins to hold when he got out of the cabriolet, for he drove, himself. Here there is only a hired coachman."

"And how long have you lived with this young lady?"

"Just a fortnight. It's a very easy place, I have every Sunday to myself; there is a chambermaid too."

"Can you speak French, Jean Jacques?"

The boy blushed. Edwin seemed to have wounded his pride.

"The young lady speaks German," he replied. "But there is her bell. I must go."

Edwin mechanically took up the book that lay upon the little table. "Balzac!" said he. "'Père Goriot.' After all, she is probably a wandering Pole or Russian; they speak all languages, and drink in Balzac, with their mother's milk."

He rose and glanced into the adjoining room. The little *salon*, into which the light struggled, through heavy crimson curtains, was rendered still darker by the wide spreading leaves of the palms. Before the mirror a parrot was swinging in a ring, without uttering a sound. The walls were dark, the ceiling wainscoted with brown wood, and on the black marble mantelpiece stood a heavy *verde antique* clock. The brightness and spaciousness of the next apartment, into which he could obtain but a partial glimpse through the open door, seemed greatly enhanced in comparison with this. Tent-like hangings with gilded rods, a portion of a dainty buffet with glittering silverware, and directly opposite to the door a little table covered with dishes, but, so far as he could see, furnished with but one plate. Besides these things, he noticed the constant chirping and fluttering of the birds in the great cage.

Edwin had had ample opportunity, while teaching the young members of noble families, to compare the furnishing of the "tun" with the luxurious arrangements of city houses. Hitherto the contrast had never been painful to him. To-day, for the first time, he seemed to himself as he chanced to glance into the mirror, like the shepherd in the fairy tale, who wandered into a magic castle. Any attempt to improve his costume he gave up as hopeless, but he was about to draw from his coat pocket the gloves which he usually carried there, when the opposite door of the little ante-room unclosed, and the beautiful, bewitching creature entered, followed by the dwarf.

She paused upon the threshold with an air of indignant surprise, then turning to the boy she seemed to give utterance to some reproof, from which he defended himself in a whisper. Thus Edwin had time to look at her, and to recover from his own embarrassment.

Her beauty was really so remarkable, that she might have unsettled the brains of a far more discerning admirer of womankind than our philosopher. He had described her tolerably well to his brother the preceding night, but here in the broad light of day, she seemed to him to have assumed an entirely different appearance; her complexion was more brilliant, her eyes wore a more dreamy expression, and she seemed to possess a quiet, careless indifference, such as we see in children who, loving nothing and hating nothing, are troubled at nought. Moreover the light dress that enwrapped her like a cloud was particularly becoming, and her hair, with the familiar little curls on the neck, seemed darker from the contrast.

She greeted the stranger with a scarcely perceptible bend of the head. "Herr--?" she began, and looked at him inquiringly.

"Pardon me, Fräulein," he replied in an unconstrained manner, which he feigned with very tolerable skill, "I have been unable to deny myself the pleasure of taking advantage of a lucky chance, and of presenting myself in person as the honest finder of your property. Besides, I

hoped I might not be entirely unknown to you."

"You? To me?"

"I had the pleasure last evening of sitting next you in a box at the opera-house during the first act of the ballet."

A hasty glance from her wondering eyes scanned his face. "I do not remember it," she said curtly.

"Well, I must endure the mortification," he replied smiling. He was really glad that she treated him so coldly. His pride, which had been intimidated by her beauty, suddenly awoke and aided him to recover his equanimity.

"You have something to return to me?" she now said in a somewhat impatient tone. "I have not missed anything, but may I ask you, sir, to tell me--"

He drew the white satin ribbon from his pocket, and held it out to her. A sudden change took place in her cold bearing. She approached him, and her eyes sparkled with childish delight. "Ah! that," she exclaimed, "yes, indeed, that does belong to me. I must have dropped it scarcely an hour ago, and so have had no time to miss it. Thanks--a thousand thanks. It is a keepsake."

She took it from his hand, and in so doing vouchsafed him her first friendly glance, then with a bow which resembled a sign of dismissal, she moved a step backward toward the door. But he remained motionless in the same spot.

"You know, Fräulein," said he, "that an honest finder is entitled to a suitable reward. Would you think me presumptuous, if I asked you to answer a question?"

"What is it?"

"Whether you embroidered the bookmark yourself?"

"Why do you wish to know that?"

"From a certainly very indiscreet curiosity; because I should draw from it all sorts of inferences about the character of the fair owner. You know, Fräulein, the style reveals the individual, and we must judge those who do not write books by some piece of handiwork."

She looked at him quietly, as if she considered it beneath her dignity even to let him perceive that his jesting tone annoyed her.

"This is not my work," she replied; "under other circumstances, I should have been very indifferent to its loss, for it is not even pretty. But it is a present from my youngest sister, who put it in my hymn-book the day I was confirmed."

"Strange!" he said, as if to himself.

"What is strange?"

"That book-marks, as well as books, have their destinies. From a hymn-book to Balzac!"

"Balzac? How do you know--"

"I beg your pardon, Fräulein; while I was waiting for you, I opened yonder book. Do you read French works from preference?"

Her eyes again rested on him with an expression of astonishment. This stranger, who was evidently only seeking some pretext to question or intrude himself upon her, was making her uncomfortable. But while meeting his calm gaze, she could find no words to dismiss him abruptly.

"Certainly," she replied. "My father accustomed me to French literature; he was a German it is true, but he lived a long time in Paris. His books recalled old memories."

"And do you like them? 'Père Goriot,' for instance?"

"He at least interests me. The French is so pure, and--the style is so good. To be sure, many things make me angry. Those heartless daughters, who so quietly permit their old father to ruin himself for them--it is horrible."

"Thank you, Fräulein," he eagerly replied. "I am glad that is your opinion. Good style, but bad music. Yet it is strange what a clever author can do. If we met such people in real life, I think we should refuse to associate with them. In books we submit to the most disagreeable society."

She seemed about to make some reply, but at that moment a chambermaid entered and said a few words in a low tone.

"I will come directly," answered her young mistress, and then turned to Edwin. "Excuse me, sir, I am called away. Accept my best thanks again. Jean, show the gentleman to the door."

The lad instantly stepped forward, but Edwin did not seem to notice him.

"I should like to ask one more question," said he.

"Sir--?"

"I obtained a glimpse of your charming rooms through the open doors. Everything that the most capricious fancy can desire seems to be supplied, with the exception of what is to me a necessity of life."

"You mean--?"

"A small library. Even the copy of Balzac, I see you have ordered from a circulating library. Pardon my frankness, Fräulein, but I do not understand how such beautiful fingers can touch a book which has already been on so many tables and passed through so many hands of doubtful cleanliness."

He saw her blush and cast an almost startled glance at the book on the little marble table.

"I have not been here long," she replied, "and as yet have given no thought to procuring books."

"Then permit me to put my little stock at your disposal. True, it is not very rich in French literature, but if you have no aversion to German books--"

"I know so little about them," she replied with evident embarrassment, which lent to her features a still greater charm than their former aristocratic indifference. "There was not much conversation on literature in my parents' house. Just think, I have scarcely read anything by Goethe."

"So much the better, for great pleasures are then in store for you. If you have no objection, I will take the liberty of bringing you a few volumes to-morrow." She seemed to reflect upon the proposal. "I cannot possibly permit you to take so much trouble for a total stranger. I will send to a bookseller."

"Are you afraid that I shall again intrude upon you in person?" he asked, pausing at the door. "I promise, Fräulein, that I will only consider myself your messenger, and deliver the books at the outer door. Or have you no confidence in my discretion, because I honestly confessed my curiosity?"

She looked at him intently a moment, and then said: "very well, bring me what you please; I shall be grateful. Adieu!"

With these words, she slightly bent her head and disappeared in the adjoining room. No choice was left Edwin but to retire also.

When he reached the entrance-hall of the house and the door had closed behind him, he paused and closed his eyes, as if to collect his thoughts. Again he saw her standing before him in her beauty and with her haughty ease of manner, and a great sorrow, he knew not why, overpowered him. Little as he knew of life in the great world, or the *demi monde*, he was convinced that all was not right with this enchanted princess, since she merely dwelt like a rare bird in a gilded cage, no longer her own mistress. Then again when he thought of her calm, wondering, childish eyes, and of the little proud mouth and the full lips, which quivered slightly when she was considering an answer to one of his questions, it seemed impossible to attach a thought of guilt or depravity to this mysterious life.

His own passion at the moment was completely forgotten in his unselfish interest in her fate. And yet he did not know much more about her than he knew an hour before. Not even her name, for it was not on the door. And from whom could he inquire about her, even if he had not an instinctive aversion to all underhanded measures?

Just at that moment fortune again befriended him.

A stout middle-aged woman in a bonnet and shawl, with a little basket on her arm, slowly descended the stairs; it was with evident surprise that she saw a stranger lingering in the hall, and, with the air of one responsible for the order of the house, she asked whom he wished to see. He replied that he had only brought back an article belonging to the young lady within, which he had found, and that he was just leaving; then pausing a few steps before her, as she followed him on foot, he murmured absently: "What a pity!"

At this the woman stopped also, standing with one arm akimbo. "What is a pity?" she asked. "What do you know about my lodgers, sir, that you dare to make use of such a sympathizing expression. I beg, sir, to inform you that there is no one in my house who stands in need of pity."

"Well," he said frankly, "I meant no harm. But, judging from her surroundings, the young lady seems to belong to an aristocratic family, and yet she lives so secludedly; who knows what sad reasons--"

As he spoke he began to descend the steps; the woman, however, stood still, leaned against the banister, seemingly unable to resist the temptation to display her superior knowledge of the world.

"Aristocratic?" she said with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "Gracious me! It's all in her clothes, and Heaven knows how long the finery will last. I suppose you think the silk curtains, and the elegant furniture, and the silver all belong to her! Only hired, my dear sir! They don't even belong to me, for I have never rented furnished rooms; one can easily lose one's good name through people who don't even own their own beds. My name is Sturzmüller, and I've had this house these ten years; I'm a widow I'd have you know, and no man can breathe a word against me, and as for the aristocratic young lady up stairs, if I don't soon find out all about her, I'll ask her a price that will astonish her. I want no lodgers over whom people shake their heads and say 'it is a pity!'"

So saying she walked sturdily down stairs past Edwin, and seemed to have finished all that she had to say.

But now it was his turn to pause.

"So you, too, do not know what to make of this wonderful vision?" he asked in feigned surprise, while his heart beat violently from excitement. "Surely she has not concealed her name!"

The woman turned and looked again at her interrogator, as if to judge from his appearance if he was really as innocent as his questions would imply, or some cunning spy who wanted to draw her out. But his honest face, as well as his plain yet respectable attire, appeared to allay her suspicions.

"Her name!" she muttered. "What do I care for a name? Toinette Marchand--can't anybody call herself that and yet in reality bear a name quite unlike it? Besides, it's none of my business what my lodgers call themselves, provided I know where they come from and what they are. But this one, why, would you believe it! during all this fortnight I am not a whit the wiser as to whether she is really a respectable person, or a bit of plated ware; you understand? The truth is, I rented the rooms in the second story to Count ---, --but I must not mention his name--who had them furnished in this way, for a cousin, he said. What he meant by a 'cousin' one can easily guess, but we can't reform the world, sir, and if I were to play conscience-keeper to my lodgers, I should have enough to do. So at last everything was finished, as pretty as a doll's house; it must have cost the count a pile of money! and, after all, the cousin snapped her fingers at him and gave him the slip. It was some one belonging to the opera-house, the valet afterwards told me; a light-minded creature, who ran away one fine day with a Russian. Well, it was all the same to me. I received my rent regularly every quarter, could walk over the beautiful carpets in the empty rooms if I chose, and was not even obliged to connive at a breach of morality. But one fine morning--I was just watering the palms on the flower-stand--the count came marching in with a beautiful Frenchwoman, not the cousin, but--who? Ah, that is the question. He treated her very respectfully, but while she was looking around he told me, in a whisper, to represent that the furniture would be rented with the apartments, but to charge no more than twelve thalers a month. Well, I was ready enough to have my rent increased if she wanted to pay that amount, and besides that price is very low for five such rooms, with a kitchen and cellar. The young lady was charmed with them, took possession at once, and ordered her trunks to be brought from the railway station, I was to provide a servant to bring her meals from the restaurant, the maid and the little footman she hired herself. Well, since then though I've often asked whether I could be of any service, I have never exchanged twenty words with her. Did you ever hear of such a thing? So haughty and hardened at her age?"

"And the count?" said Edwin.

"That is the strangest part of all. Since that first day, when he went away directly, he hasn't set his foot across her threshold. I haven't even caught a glimpse of the valet, from whom I might have learned something. Heaven knows what has happened--perhaps they quarreled at the very beginning. However, it seems to trouble her very little; she certainly lacks nothing,--horses and carriages, the most elegant dresses, tickets to the theatre,--well, my good sir, you and I don't pay for it, so it's no concern of ours. But something's wrong, that's certain. Nothing times nothing is nothing, and I've never had anything of the kind happen to me. You won't believe me, but she never permits a living soul in the shape of man to cross her threshold. Not at any hour of the day or night, I tell you, for though I live on the third story, I know every cat that goes in and out, and besides her maid is by no means close-mouthed. Now I put it to you, would one so young, as handsome as a picture, and with so much money, be so much alone if there wasn't something to conceal, something for the new 'Pitaval,' you understand,--no, no, I won't have such proceedings in my house; 'everything open and above-board,' that's my motto, for what would be the use of a good character, if some fine day the police should come in upon me! But you will make no bad use of what I have said; I could not help speaking out, and my words and acts needn't shun the light. Yes, yes, dear sir, there is much to be learned from God's word."

While uttering these sentences, broken by numerous pauses, she had reached the street door; here, taking a friendly farewell of Edwin, she crossed the street to a shop.

He, too, turned away. He had not the courage to look back at the second story windows from the other side of the street; the fair occupant might think it strange that he was still hanging about the house. And yet how much he would have given, for even a fleeting glance which might dispel the dense cloud of suspicion and sorrow, which during the loquacious gossip of the landlady had fallen more and more heavily on his heart.

CHAPTER IX.

Meantime Reginchen's birthday had been celebrated in the Dorotheen-strasse.

First of all came the dinner in her parents' great sitting-room, at which, as usual, the journeymen and apprentices were present. Madame Feyertag insisted that, before coming to the table, each should wash his hands at the pump, and brush his jacket. To-day this ceremony, which frequently was somewhat hurried, was performed with a thoroughness that proved the homage each offered his master's daughter to be no mere formality, but an offering from the heart. The head journeyman had even availed himself of his superior social position, so far as to appear with a bouquet, which, with a few well-chosen words, he presented to the blushing child. Madame Feyertag pretended not to notice this. She seemed to have some suspicion that the worthy man might consider it a standing tradition in the family, that the head journeyman must marry the master's daughter, and though she herself had experienced the blessings of such a *mésalliance*, she hoped for a better match for her only daughter. The shoemaker had no such aspirations. When he reflected upon the past, he remembered very different attentions, which even without any festal occasion, he had paid the female members of his master's family. He was in a very good humor, eat three large pieces of the famous plum cake, and finally ordered two bottles of wine to be brought from the cellar, in which he drank Reginchen's health in a speech, that spite of the strange admixture of fatherly tenderness and incomprehensible allusions to Schopenhauer, was admired by all the journeymen as a pattern of oratorical art.

Yet despite all this, the solemn meal did not last more than half an hour, and it was exactly half-past twelve when the little heroine of the day, according to her usual custom, carried the brothers' dinner up to the "tun." The low price which they paid for their board did not admit of their being served with food more dainty than that with which the people in the workroom were forced to content themselves, but Madame Feyertag, who had a kind heart and felt an almost maternal solicitude for Balder on account of his beauty and delicate health, always remembered to keep some of the best pieces for her boarders before supplying her own people.

When Reginchen entered the second story room, delighted with the festivities of the day, and proud of the large piece of birthday cake that fell to the brothers' lot, she was surprised to find no one but Balder, who was sitting at his turning-lathe, and who, at her appearance, hastily concealed something in the pocket of his working blouse. She was afraid that, as had often happened, she would be obliged to carry the dinner down again to be kept warm, and her brother, the machinist, was to come for her precisely at one. But when Balder told her that Edwin would not dine at home to-day, she brightened up again, laid the table quickly and as daintily as the simple dishes would permit, and placed in the middle the plate of cake, which she had adorned with a few flowers from the head journeyman's bouquet. Then she stood before her work with an expression of mischievous delight, and called to Balder to sit down and not let the dinner grow cold.

"Dear Reginchen," said the youth, as he limped forward with an embarrassed air, "I have no beautiful flowers like George. Nothing green and blooming grows upon my bench, you know. But, I too, should like to recognize your eighteenth birthday to the best of my ability, and that not by merely eating your nice cake. Will you accept as a keepsake this little box, which I have made myself? I am sorry that you will have to fill it for yourself, for I have not had time to buy thimble, silk, needles, and all the other things it should contain."

He drew forth the dainty polished article, and handed it to her, opening it as he did so, that she might see the inside. A flush of joy crimsoned her round blooming face. But she thought it due to her good breeding, not to accept the gift at once.

"Oh! Herr Walter," she said, smoothing her fair hair with both hands,--it was a habit she had when embarrassed,--"Did I not beg you to make me no more presents? My mother will scold again, for she thinks you work too much already, and that you ought to take more care of yourself. You must have toiled for weeks over such a pretty thing as this--and I--it is too good for me--it is *too* lovely--is it really mine? If I only knew what I could do--"

"Shall I tell you, Reginchen?" he said, and his pale cheeks flushed also--"sit down opposite me

a little while; it is so dismal to eat alone, and I should like to feel merry on your birthday, else how could I enjoy the cake your kind mother has sent? If you leave me alone I dare say I shan't be able to touch a mouthful of it, out of pure sorrow for my own loneliness on such a holiday."

He had a voice that was hard to resist, and the young girl was so full of compassion for his situation and so full of childish delight in her gift, that she instantly pushed a chair up to the little table and sat down opposite him.

"I really ought not to stay here any longer than is necessary to bring up the dinner and afterward to carry down the dishes again," she said, with a roguish affectation of secrecy. "But my mother won't be on the watch to-day. She doubtless thinks I am making ready for the excursion, but Fritz won't be here before one. He has only obtained leave to be away for the afternoon, and has to come all the way from Moabit. Pray do tell me, Herr Walter, how can you bear to live as you do? But you are letting the soup get cold."

She eagerly pushed toward him the dish, for which he seemed to have no special desire, and with the most charmingly officious coquetry she put the spoon into his hand.

"To live so?" he repeated, smiling, as he ate the soup. "I don't know how a man could live any better. A dinner before me fit for a prince, while the sun shines on the green leaves before the open window, and the little hostess herself condescends to serve me--I should be a monster of ingratitude if I could desire anything better."

"Oh! nonsense," replied the young girl shaking her head. "You are only joking, you know very well what I mean. Is it not almost two years since you have been out of the house? It would kill me to stay in the same place all the time."

"Because you are a little wagtail, Reginchen. Or must I not call you that any more, now that you are eighteen years old? But I think you will retain all your life the same activity that you showed five years ago when we came here and when you carried my brother's books up-stairs one by one, to enable you to run up and down more frequently. Now jumping, you see, is not exactly my forte. But there is one peculiarity about the pleasures a man enjoys: if he can't pursue them himself, they are kind enough to come to him, and the happy hours that I have passed up here during the last five years cannot be counted."

"Because, as mother always says, you are so moderate in your wants, and so contented with everything."

"Oh! not at all, Reginchen. Your kind mother has a false opinion of me. On the contrary, I am very much spoiled, I am by no means contented with everything, and that is the very reason that I have no desire to go out among the crowd of rude, coarse people, who are nothing to me, to witness their self-torment in their endeavor to kill time, and to lose the consciousness of their miserable, paltry, joyless lives; how by means of bustle and fine dressing they try to appear to be something which they are not, and standing on a huge pile of thalers which they have scraped together Heaven knows how, attempt to pass themselves off as great men. And now compare my life with all that, Reginchen: constantly in the society of such a brother, possessing a few good friends, just enough not to forget that even the best of men are not Edwins, so well taken care of in such a pretty, comfortable house, with no anxieties, and--besides--"

He hesitated and his color heightened. "Will you pass me the plate of greens, Reginchen?" he asked, to conceal his embarrassment.

She did not seem to notice it.

"That is all very well," she said. "But, Herr Walter, are you not always sick, and do you not have to bear a great deal of pain? And health, it is said, is the greatest blessing."

He pushed back his plate and looked at her with such a light in his blue eyes, that she grew a little embarrassed in her turn, and secretly wondered whether she had said anything stupid or childish. To-day, for the first time, she felt ill at ease in this gentle, cheerful presence, confessing to herself, however, at the same time, that he was really very handsome, as her mother had always said, and as, before, she would never admit, since all sickness and repose was distasteful to her bright, active temperament.

"Dear Reginchen," he said, "you are eighteen years old to-day, and it is allowable for me to tell you, that many, nay most things, which people repeat among themselves, are the very opposite of the truth. Health, for instance, which is considered a necessary condition to happiness, affords no more and no less than any of the other gifts so commonly desired: wealth, talent, beauty, and so forth. Whether or not these blessings will make a man happy, depends mainly upon whether he knows how to use them. I was once acquainted with a man who never had even a finger ache. But he did not value the gift of health, principally because he had never been sick, regarding it as he regarded respiration as a matter of course; his health, moreover, gave him an opportunity to make life a burden to himself and every one about him, because he had never learned to restrain his rude strength. It was not until he met with an accident, and was dependent, in his pain and helplessness, upon others, did he learn anything about human love and the thousand little joys of life, which he had formerly despised. Yet, Reginchen, I don't wish to persuade you to exchange with me. It would be hard for such a wagtail to be compelled to limp about, or to sit still. But

sincerely as I hope that all your life you may keep your perfect health, yet I am sure that should it be otherwise, you would learn to understand me, and perceive--"

Here he was interrupted by a knock at the door. A servant entered, and casting a sly inquisitive glance at the young pair who seemed so absorbed in each other, dragged a basket into the room: "Dr. Marquard had sent the medicine he mentioned, and would call in a few days to see whether it had produced the proper effect."

When he departed with a roguish "Wish you joy!" Balder rose, exclaiming: "Well, Reginchen, won't you confess now, that I am one of the luckiest fellows under the sun? If I had two sound legs like Edwin, who knows where I might be wandering at this moment. But instead of that, here I am enjoying an enviable hour, celebrating your birthday with a cosy dinner in the company of the heroine of the occasion, with flowers and plum cake for dessert, and, just at the right moment, when the conversation was growing a little serious, some excellent wine arrives, with which we may drink ourselves merry again. You need not get a corkscrew. Here is an auger on my bench. Do you know, we two will do a charity in opening one of these bottles. The wine is really intended for Edwin; he is to drink it to strengthen him. But this otherwise perfect mortal is somewhat hard to manage in certain things. He would be quite capable, from pure obstinacy, of sending back the whole basket,--though it comes from an old friend,--because our finances will not usually permit us to indulge in this luxury. So I must make him believe the wine was prescribed for me as well as himself, and as we share everything, he will finally drink it with me. Come, Reginchen. You will have to content yourself with a tumbler, we have not yet reached the dignity of crystal drinking-cups. Your *health*, and may that blessing be accompanied by so many others, that you will never be able to discover how paltry a possession it is in itself alone."

He handed her a glass, and they clinked them merrily together after a little hesitation on Reginchen's part; she feared the wine would go to her head. She only sipped a little, but Balder emptied his glass at a single draught, and then stepping quickly to the open window, and before she could understand what he was about to do, he threw the empty glass down into the courtyard where it was shattered in pieces.

"Good heavens," she exclaimed, "what are you doing?"

"Celebrating your birthday, Reginchen," he answered gaily, approaching her and taking her hand. "May I not prove not only that I am very well, but that I am also rich enough to throw something away? He who has something to spare cannot be in want. And now farewell, dear Reginchen; I hear your brother's voice down stairs. When wearied with pleasure you lie down to rest to-night, remember that some one less light-footed than you, rejoices that you came into the world eighteen years ago to-day."

In spite of the warning that she must go, he held her hand so firmly that her blush grew deeper and deeper. Suddenly, with a quick turn of the wrist she broke away from him, and hastily collecting the dishes, said: "I will bring you a bouquet of cornflowers, if they are still in bloom. Good-bye, Herr Walter, and thank you again for your beautiful present. My mother is right: you are the best man in the whole world."

With these words she ran out of the door.

He listened till the sound of her quick steps died away below, then a shadow of sorrowful thought flitted over his face. He went to a drawer that was constructed in the lower part of his turning-lathe, and unlocking it, took out a portfolio containing scattered leaves which seemed to be covered with verses. Turning them over he read a little here and there for a time, then placing Reginchen's almost untasted glass of wine before him, he sat down, and occasionally taking a sip from the glass, began to write a poem.



Reginchen and Balder.

About an hour elapsed in this manner. His delicate, almost girlish features grew brighter; from time to time, with an eager gesture, he tossed back his thick fair hair, gazed out at the sun-gilded top of the acacia-tree and up at the patch of blue sky, that peered in upon him over the old roof. Happiness, repose, and a divine cheerfulness beamed, the longer he wrote, on brow and cheeks.

They say I am ill. And it well may be;
Yet I feel no sorrow, from pain am free.
The current of life flowing swiftly on
In sunlight I see,
And sit on the shore, where the flowers bloom.

Oh! murmur of waves, soft breeze that blesses,
Air, water, light,—how sweet your caresses!
Do you not beckon to me from the boat,
Child with gold tresses?
Ah! yes, she beckons—and onward will float!

If ye fade from sight,
Oh! star-like eyes,
And bereft of light,
Vain are my sighs,
Joy's radiant glow
E'en 'mid my woe
Will aye remain.

Oh! blessed sun
Of love and purity,
Glad soul, from guile so free,
How bright thy rays!
My flower of life unfolds to thee—
Thou dost not dream—how short its days!

Again, for a short time, he rested, employing his pen meanwhile by sketching a framework of flowers and vines for the verses; he had written the stanzas without a single erasure or the alteration of a rhyme. This was no art-exercise which he pursued in order to fancy himself a poet, (on the contrary, he declared that the real poet was Edwin, only that he was too proud to let his light shine); it was only a kind of soliloquy, and by writing down these improvisations, instead of merely murmuring them to himself, he simply increased and prolonged his solitary pleasure. He always carried in his own pocket the key of the drawer where he kept the papers, and even Edwin, from whom he usually had no secrets, was not permitted to touch this hidden treasure.

He now took another sheet, and wrote the following lines:--

To *this* lot assigned,
This joy once possessed,
Say, can one so blessed
On earth be sad?

To cool my heart's fire,
By answering love,
To feel the desire,
Man's brother to prove;

Firm in purity,
By beauty inspired,
Ere of life weary
By death required;

The great mystery
Vaguely believing,
Germs of truth in the
Soul's depths perceiving,

Truth-germs unfolding
In the light given,
Joyfully holding
The rain from heaven,

A spark of divine fire
Into the heart hurled,
Kindles with pure desire
A child of the world.

To *this* lot assigned,
This joy once possessed,
Say, can one so blessed
On earth be sad?

Yet hours may come when the spirit will fail,
Petty cares, like a swarm of flies, assail;
Midst the current of life, with gasping breath,
Waiting I stand, for the summons of death.

Doubting, I question if earth is to me
So grand, so blissful a reality;
Outweighing all the burdens of my life,
My aimless days of fruitless toil and strife.

Sternly denied the brightest joys of earth,
My homely toil no laurel-wreath is worth;
If, wearied of the slowly passing time,
A child should break the clock, would'st call it crime?

O death!--but hark! now a bright footstep nears,
Bright eyes are sparkling, and a glad voice cheers;
My sinking spirit, roused from inward strife,
No longer asketh--Shall I live this life?

He sat still for some time with a smile on his lips, then his face grew graver and he sighed, as if to relieve his oppressed heart and to shake off some thought that troubled him. On the paper that lay upon his knees his pencil sketched a profile, which was unmistakably Edwin's. The thoughts that occupied his mind seemed again to crave utterance in words, but just at that moment he heard some one come up stairs with a familiar, heavy tread. A slight shade of annoyance flitted across his brow, he hastily thrust the portfolio back into the drawer, carefully locked it, and then resumed his work at the turning-lathe, but the visitor who now entered with a melancholy "Good evening, Balder," beheld a friendly face, in which there was no sign of the youth's unwillingness to be disturbed in his solitary intercourse with the muses.

CHAPTER X.

The new comer was a singular-looking person of middle height, clad in coarse but neat clothes, who looked like a workman just returning from his labor. The insignificant form was surmounted by a compact head, adorned with thick shining black hair and beard, which seemed to harmonize with the body as little as the large hands and feet. Yet the homely pale face was rendered attractive by its expression of innocent, almost childlike simplicity, and if the melancholy man, which seldom happened, opened his thick red lips in a smile, fine white teeth glittered through the coal-black whiskers, and the eyes under the heavy brows could beam with a glance at once so soft and so fiery that it might well win a maiden's heart.

Such was the expression with which, when he met Balder and when no cloud darkened his honest mind, he used to gaze at the youth, for whom he cherished a really enthusiastic, almost sentimental tenderness. He never expressed it in words, of which he was usually very sparing, but even to the most superficial observer it was touching to see what power the youth's warm, sunny nature exerted over his rough, bushy-haired companion, so many years his senior. It was a real "secret love," which year by year had increased in strength and enthusiastic ardor, and which would have found no test too severe. All the grace and harmonious charms of life that had been denied to himself, he loved in this beautiful, noble young friend, and in so doing had almost become a little faithless to the other brother, who possessed older claims to his friendship.

As Edwin was carrying his portfolio to school for the first time, a slender timid little fellow, who was going the same way and belonged to the same class, joined him. He was the seventh son of a surgeon, Franzelius by name, who lived in the neighborhood; he could with difficulty support his family, and yet his principal ambition was to send them all to college. By means of free instruction, gratuitous board and stipends, this was at last accomplished, and toward it Edwin's parents had done their part, by supplying Reinhold, the youngest, their son's daily companion, with his dinner. But even Edwin's patient efforts to thaw his shy schoolmate, were not entirely successful. The wretched life which was lived in his parent's home seemed to oppress his heart more and more, when he returned from the table of kind people in easy circumstances, to a house where it was necessary to count the outgoing of every penny. At a very early age he began to reflect upon the difference in the division of worldly goods, though without bitterness, for he neither conceived nor cherished any unattainable desires. It was rather his parents' anxious fears that constantly made him ponder over the mystery; how had these great discrepancies arisen, how they might perhaps be remedied, until good-natured and unselfish as he was, he would, even as a boy, fly into the most violent passion at the bare mention of his fixed idea. When, in studying Roman history, he came upon the Agrarian laws and the times of the Gracchi, he composed an essay, in which with boyish impetuosity he defended the most revolutionary opinions, gaining for himself the nickname of "Franzelius Gracchus," which clung to him as long as he remained at school.

Then the fate that befell the brothers dissolved the school friendship, until many years after, Edwin met this half-forgotten comrade in Berlin. In outward appearance he had changed very much. The thin, shy boy, had become a sturdy, black-bearded, defiant youth, a person whom all well-bred and well-dressed people would avoid in the street, especially in winter, when a coarse red shawl, which he wore twisted around his neck, contributed not a little to the oddity of his appearance. In mind and disposition he had remained exactly the same; awkward, silent, and gentle, but as soon as his fixed idea was touched, would burst into a flood of stormy eloquence that swept all before it. Edwin had also had occasion, in student circles, to perceive how the same man, who in a small company could scarcely finish his sentences properly, and in individual debate was easily confused and silenced, would fearlessly address a crowd. He had a vehemently dogmatic mind, together with the nature of a true agitator, and he liked to utter the few cardinal principles of his belief in full, ringing tones, but he required for his encouragement, the echo of listening multitudes. Then the deeper water, in which he felt at ease, supported and bore him on, while, when out of the channel, he instantly became uncertain, and from diffidence, especially in the presence of Edwin's intellect and knowledge, he easily yielded, and ceased firing his heavy rhetorical artillery.

But it was not only Edwin's superiority that attracted him. He had become warmly attached to his old friend for a very different reason. That he should now find the latter--whom as the petted child of parents in comfortable circumstances, he had always beheld on the farther side of a wide social gulf--dependent on his own exertions, and living almost as plainly as he himself lived, secretly afforded him pleasure, much as he wished him all possible prosperity. It threw down the barriers between them and placed him on the same footing as his former schoolfellow, but he was completely melted when Balder, whom he had known and petted as a little boy, joined his brother, and with his turning-lathe took up likewise the character of a "workman" in the true sense of the word. According to his father's desire he himself had studied law and had passed his first examination very creditably. But as soon as old Franzelius closed his eyes, Reinhold with his Gracchus-like scorn, became faithless to his career, apprenticed himself to a printer, and regularly served his time. Now for the first time his heart burst its bonds. He felt himself, in affliction, the equal of his brothers "the workmen," and resolved to devote all his energies to the improvement of their lot.

While at the university he had devoted himself to the study of political economy and various similar subjects, albeit in his somewhat cursory way; so now, for the furtherance of his object, he embodied in small pamphlets or sometimes even in single sheets brief discussions on what he

considered the vital questions of the proletarian. These impetuous essays, written sometimes in a very *dilettante* style, he composed and printed himself in his leisure hours and distributed gratuitously among the working population, over which by degrees he obtained great influence. He brought the brothers also these little "fire brands," as he called them, with which he endangered the fields of the Philistines, and was delighted when Balder, in his gentle way, examined each one, though often arguing against them, while Edwin accepted the pamphlets with a good natured jest, but could rarely be drawn into a discussion.

For Edwin was sincerely attached to the worthy fellow. He could still see him sitting in the jacket that had been given him, at his beautiful mother's table, timidly taking the smallest portions from the dishes offered. But keenly alive to the nature and connection of intellectual questions, he possessed moreover, a mind as dogmatically intrenched, as the agitator's was inaccessible, and so willingly avoided useless discussions. Yet he always felt that something was amiss, if he did not see at the usual time the honest, somewhat care worn face, that always incited him to a brilliant display of fireworks in the shape of little witticisms and old school boy jokes, until the thick lips under the bushy beard parted, the white teeth glittered, and the lines between the heavy eye-brows grew smooth. Then the gloomy enthusiast could sit down at the brother's table and share their frugal supper, with as much childish pleasure as if no social questions were disturbing his soul.

But to-day an unusually dark shadow rested upon his brow which contrary to custom even Balder could not succeed in dispelling. He evidently had some trouble, which, with his usual slowness, he could not instantly put into words. Blundering around the room and wiping his broad forehead with a flowered handkerchief, he had at last fallen into a deep reverie before the table on which the plate of plum cake still stood. Balder had invited him to eat some, and related what a great occasion, Reginchen's birthday, had been celebrated by this luxurious revelry. The singular man had remained perfectly mute, seated himself at the table with a heavy sigh, and resting his head on his hands stared as persistently at the nice slices of cake as if they revealed to him the solution of the social problem, as the arcanum of the world flashed upon Jacob Böhmen from a tin dish. Balder had given up talking to him; he was accustomed to such moods and perfectly satisfied to work at his turning lathe and devote himself to his own thoughts.

Such was the state of affairs in which Edwin found them, when an hour after he returned home. At first he was vexed not to see Balder alone; he was very anxious to give vent to the feelings of his oppressed soul. He greeted his old friend somewhat curtly, then went up to Balder, passed his hand over his head, and said: "Have I been away long? I want to read over the dissertation, excuse me, Franzel."

With these words he went to his desk, took out a printed volume, and the three men in the quiet room remained at silent as the two had been before.

Who knows whether they would have found their tongues as speedily, if Mohr had not appeared again. He had found lodgings and came to get his traveling bag. He entered with a very bright face, but drew down his under lip when he perceived Franzel. After a few disagreeable quarrels they had carefully avoided each other, as their natures necessarily could not harmonise: Mohr, who with cynical frankness, confessed that he always thought only of himself, and Reinhold, the philanthropist, who never considered his own advantage and unhesitatingly sacrificed to his ideal dreams the small degree of comfort he might have procured.

"Why," said Mohr, nodding carelessly to the young printer, "is Bruin here too? Well, how fares the regeneration of mankind? I should think that since the foundation of the artificial hatching establishments, we had advanced considerably nearer to the ideal state when every one will have a chicken in his Sunday pot."

"I-I have no reply to make to such frivolous questions," muttered the other in his beard.

"Still the same quarrelsome old chanticleers," laughed Edwin, closing his book. "Do me the favor, children, not to begin to hiss at once, as fat does when it meets fire. I'll put up with these wordy battles in winter, when they may at least result in warming us. But in such beautiful weather as this----"

"Hear, hear the wiseacre!" cried Mohr. "Well, then, to do honor to the wonder that a philosopher has a clever, practical thought, I'll swear to keep a truce for this evening. Come, let us smoke a cigar of peace in one of the public gardens, for I'm worn out with hunting for lodgings. But I've found what I wanted, a quiet neat little house only ten doors from your 'tun,' kept by an old maid, who during the first hour told me the story of her three broken engagements. So the day is mine, and without neglecting any duty to humanity, I can devote it to you and my thirst. So where shall we go? After being away three years, I no longer know where to get good liquor."

"He is not yet familiar with the rules of the household," said Edwin, glancing at Balder. "You must know, Heinz, that we never go out in the evening, and remain at home still more regularly in the afternoon. The stairs leading to our hen-roost are too steep for Balder, and as when all three windows are open, we have no reason to complain of want of air----"

"Merciful Gods!" interrupted Mohr in a tone of horror, which warned by a glance from Edwin,

he instantly tried to convert into one of drollery--"have you shut yourselves up here like oysters? Well, a sedentary life has its attractions, and the air in the 'tun' does not seem to be quite so dry as formerly. At any rate the best plum cake grows here, and I see yonder a dozen red heads, with whose assistance one can hold out for a while."

"A basket of wine?" asked Edwin "In spite of my positive refusal----"

"Marquard sent it, he would take no denial," said Balder. "And," he added blushing, "as I felt a little weak toward noon, I opened a bottle."

"Weak, child?" cried Edwin, forgetting everything else, as he hastily approached him. "Was it your old pain, or some new trouble? And why do I first hear of it now?"

"It wasn't worth mentioning, Edwin. But Marquard was right, I felt better at once. The wine seems very pure and good, you ought----"

"So much the better, if it agrees with you. And you're right, I don't see why we should not drink our old friend's wine. If *we* had it, and *he* needed it, wouldn't it be a matter of course?"

Franzelius looked at him with sparkling eyes. One of his pet theories was that of possessing all property in common, a theory which he practised until he had reduced himself to the barest necessities. Meantime Mohr had again filled Balder's glass from the already opened bottle. He emptied it at a single draught, then poured out more wine and offered it to Franzelius.

"Very fair," said he. "Your health, Franzelius Gracchus. Let's drown all quarrelsome and murderous inclinations for to-day, and commence the business of making mankind happy, with ourselves."

"Thank you," replied the printer, "I shall never drink wine, so long----"

"What? No wine? Then you're no true friend of the people. They're always thirsty. But no matter! I'll forgive Marquard his carriage and patronizing bow, for the sake of his cellar. If he himself has but mediocre ability as a man and a doctor, his wine is excellent, real St. Julien.

"Where's our other glass?" said Edwin, looking around the room. "We really have another, Heinrich, and in a carouse of three tipplers----"

The flush on Balder's cheeks deepened, and he stooped as if he were searching for the missing glass on the floor.

"Of what consequence is the glass?" cried Mohr, who meantime had attacked the cake and now had his mouth full. "The liquor's the main thing, whether we drink it from the cask, the bottle, or a broken cup. My friends, let me tell you that this is the first pleasant hour, that spiteful quean, Fate, has bestowed upon me for the last three years. I'm glad to be once more among people who fare worse than they deserve. I know this is true of you and myself. As for our philanthropist, he at least shows a face that will dull the sharpest sting of envy. Upon my word, Franzel, you look as if things were going wrong. Has Delitzsch passed you to-day without lifting his hat? Did a dozen blood-thirsty millionaires spring from the earth during the last shower? Or were you called upon at the last workmen's meeting, instead of making fine speeches, to tear your breast like the pelican and let a fountain of real St. Julien gush forth, and did you fail to accomplish the trick?"

"I see I'm only in the way here," replied the printer, glancing at Mohr with an expression of indescribable contempt. "I'll not intrude any longer."

He nodded to Balder and walked hastily toward the door, but Edwin seized his hand and detained him.

"Stop!" said he. "We shall not let you go so, Mohr is incorrigible. But there's something the matter with you, Franzel, I see it in your face, and by our old friendship--"

The angry man compressed his lips still more firmly, and said after a long pause: "Why should I speak of it? Ruin takes its own course."

"Ruin?"

"Why yes, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, what does it matter? And we can only rejoice that it should proceed from this cause. It shows in the clearest manner to what our diseased form of government has come--and where it will arrive, if--supposing that--"

He paused again. The friends looked at each other inquiringly.

"If I'm one too many here," said Mohr phlegmatically, rising and seizing the bottle--"I've no objection to drinking this paltry heeltap in your courtyard."

"I have no secrets," muttered the gloomy visitor. "What has happened took place in public; the consequences which still fear the light will soon be noised abroad. A cry of indignation will resound through Germany, when it is known that even now, in the light of the nineteenth

century--"

"But, man," interrupted Edwin, "torture has certainly been discarded in the nineteenth century, and yet for the last fifteen minutes you have been applying the thumb-screws of curiosity. Out with it; *what* has happened, and *what* consequences still fear the light?"

"Then, if you must know: I was at the workingmen's educational union yesterday--" (Mohr coughed, glanced at Edwin, and then comfortably sipped his wine)--"There was to have been a lecture on the nature and value of education, but the speaker was taken sick and begged to be excused. We were just considering what was to be done, when a new-comer rose, a guest whom no one knew. He had a strange, half humble, half scornful Jesuit face. 'Would the company permit him to make a short address?' The request could not be refused, and he instantly began to speak with a boldness that surpassed everything that could have been expected from his priestly appearance. 'Education? A dangerous thing, at least as the children of the world were accustomed to understand it. The devil, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, is a highly cultivated man, not easily caught by modern enlightenment. His proverb is: Education gives liberty, and knowledge rules the world. Yes indeed, the world! So the tempter said to the Lord: "All these things will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me!"--But "*my* kingdom is not of this world"--and so on, the well known litany--*True*. education desires to know nothing of the so-called treasures of science, which morth and rust may corrupt. He who is fitting himself for heaven, provides for the one thing that is necessary, the'--well, you're doubtless willing to be spared the sermon. When it was over, the honest fellows sat bewildered and thunderstruck. The old habit, acquired in childhood, still lingered: no debate in church!--and even the president seemed to think we ought not to take issue with a guest. But the man had assailed our society in the most offensive way, and were we to be silent? So I began to speak. I was just in the mood, and besides it's a subject to which I've devoted a great deal of thought, I was glad to give the whole society a full discourse from the text: Disparage only reason and science! Well I need not waste any words on the subject among ourselves. But never has it been so clear to me, as in that hour, what a crime those persons commit, who seek to disgust men with the earth, in order to prepare them for what they call heaven. You know I am the last to favor the current talk about utility. These people make the means the end, and if they achieved their object and arranged the world according to their plan--who that did not consider it the highest aim of life to get his stomach satisfied and know the multiplication table by heart, would wish to live in it? But just because there are higher things--transcendent earthly joys, intellectual pleasures, art, poetry, and all other lofty delights--well, you know what I think, and can imagine how indignation against the foes of all earthly happiness loosened my tongue. The assailer of education and heir of heaven grew red and pale by turns. When I at last paused, and all clapped their hands and burst into a shout of assent, he attempted to reply. But the president would not permit him to utter another word, so he soon slipped quietly away.

"He has enough!" I thought, "but I was not yet satisfied. I meant to go into the next house and write a pamphlet, in which I intended to prove by referring to history, what boundless injury the belief in immortality does the world. And last night I did sit down and write a few sheets, the first outline of the essay; for I was too excited to grasp the subject properly, and one must not shake the retort when anything is going to crystallize. But it seems I'm to have plenty of leisure; for when I went home to dinner to-day, my landlord, the cabinet maker, said that some policemen had been there, had inquired very particularly about me, and had noted down the answer. The man looked as if he wanted to say 'six weeks *investigation* and then exile.' He's quite right. I know them; they've long kept an eye on me, I made them uneasy, but they could find no cause of arrest. Now the priests will take up the matter, and then good bye! So, as I have no inclination to leave my place vacant, I shall for the present not seek my usual bed, but try once more how it seems to sleep in the open air."

"With your consciousness of being a second Gracchus for a soft pillow!" exclaimed Mohr, pledging him in the glass of wine. "You must live, noble mortal, until the last millionaire is hung with the entrails of the last priest, which will probably occur about the same time as the death of the Wandering Jew."

"Your jeers do not wound me," replied the printer impetuously. "There are people who consider all the great questions that affect the welfare of mankind a mere jest, and never think seriously of anything except their own dear selves."

"And why not, you preacher in the wilderness? Charity begins at home. Until I have taken care of my own dear self, where am I to find time and courage to look after my neighbor, or provide for mankind at large? These things are too weighty, my noble fellow, to be exhausted by the first eloquent pen, and and that's why I wish you a long life, so you can at least be able to study the subject at leisure."

Franzelius cast a compassionate glance at him. "So in all ages selfishness has intrenched itself behind a hypocritical modesty," he grumbled. "If no one wished for or did better things, before he knew the *best*, we should still be in the condition of the lake-dwellers. And must an idea for which hitherto only our holier instincts speak, I mean which cannot yet be mathematically proved--and with which the world after all would be--for when the smallest thought concerns all mankind--Edwin will know what I mean."

"God understands you, and that's enough; see Sancho Panza at the right place," jeered Mohr.

"What do you intend to do now, Franzel?" interrupted Edwin, who during the whole conversation had been sitting on the window sill, stroking Balder's cat.

"That's a secondary consideration. Tell me instead whether you approve of what I have done?"

"Will that undo it?"

"As if I would recall it! But you know I value the thought, that we three at least--even if others have a different opinion--"

He paused and looked at Edwin almost timidly.

"What I *think*," replied the latter, "is no secret to you. But I am firmly persuaded of many truths, and yet should hesitate a long time before demonstrating them to a crowd of strangers. However, why should we discuss the matter? You will do what you cannot leave undone, and as you have very enthusiastic ideas about the equality of men, even in their powers of thought--"

"He who does not work for all, works for none, or at least only for himself."

"Pardon me, my dear fellow. That's a false conclusion. You yourself will not deny that the division of labor is a useful arrangement. Well then, one begins from below, another from above. If I convince ten of the best minds, give them even a little light in regard to the hardest problems, does not my work in time aid others also? Mens' gifts are as different as their ambitions."

Franzelius was about to make some reply, but restrained himself with evident effort, and only said:

"And you, Balder? Are you too of the opinion, that only a mad ambition urges me to let the little light that is in me shine before the multitude?"

"You misunderstood Edwin," replied the youth, limping up to him and gently unclasping his hand from the door latch. "We all know that you forget yourself in the cause. But he thinks it would be better for the *cause*, if you were more patient. All fruits do not ripen at the same time. Come, don't let us part so."

"But you, you--could you have kept silence under such provocation?"

"Hush!" Mohr suddenly exclaimed. "Don't you hear her?"--Then as if speaking to himself, he added in a scarcely audible tone: "it's enough to tame wild beasts and socialistic democrats. Eternal Gods! how that woman plays."

The four men in the upper room actually kept so quiet that not a note of the improvisation below was lost. Franzelius had thrown himself into the chair beside the bed, on which Balder sat with his lame leg crossed over the other. Edwin was still seated on the window sill, and Mohr leaned over his glass, with his head resting on his hands, and fairly groaned with delight.

When the music ceased, he rose. "My friends," said he, "I think it is our duty to offer this lady some attention. I will go down and invite her to drink a glass of wine with us to her health."

"Are you mad, Mohr?" laughed Edwin. "She's a respectable person, and will think you have already more glasses of wine in your head than is good for your senses."

Mohr looked at him with an air of comical dignity, and twisted his crooked under lip still more awry. "She's an artist," said he, "no common-place, pedant of a woman. Here are four friends of art--I generously include you, Franzel, as you at least kept quiet while she was playing, though you were probably thinking of your social discords. I'll wager it will be an honor and pleasure to her--give me a decent hat--or no, I'll go bare-headed, like an inmate of the house. It will be less formal."

"You've impudence enough for it. Well then, ask her to bring a glass for the festal banquet."

"She shall drink out of mine," replied Mohr, who was already at the door. "I'll run the risk of her guessing my thoughts."

They heard him go down stairs and ring the bell.

"He's really going to do it," cried Balder, hastily rising from his seat. "What will she think of us?"

Franzelius rose too. "I'll go," said he. "I have not sufficient self-control to endure Mohr's jokes and witticisms in the presence of a lady. Will he be here often now? In that case, I prefer to take my leave until--until you too are tired of a man, who never takes anything seriously."

"You wrong him," replied Edwin. "Fire and water are two equally stern elements, although one accomplishes by heat what the other does by cold--destroys and vivifies like every power."

"Hm! If you don't freeze meantime--Farewell."

"And where are you going to spend the night?" asked Balder.

"There are plenty of benches in the Thiergarten."

"I wouldn't let you go, Franzel," whispered Balder, as he reached the threshold. "You have already camped here many a night. But--Edwin sleeps so badly now. The least thing disturbs his nerves."

"Thank you, Balder. Don't be anxious about me. Good night!"

They heard him go down stairs, and directly after Mohr came slowly up. He entered the room with a face deeply flushed, but apparently calm.

"Our philanthropist has gone," said he. "I believe I drove him away. I'm sorry; he thinks I don't like him and he's very much mistaken. On the contrary, I do him the honor to envy him."

"For what?"

"Because he's possessed, not only with his mania about persecution, which makes a man just as happy as if he believes himself an unappreciated genius, but because he has a demon that drives him about, speaks from his lips, hides within him, and keeps him warm--while I, a mere husk without kernel or substance--foh!"

"And our artist?" asked Edwin after a pause. "Did she not wish to enjoy either the honor or the pleasure?"

"It's late," replied Mohr, looking at his watch, "too late to open a second bottle, I'll seek my virgin couch."

"He evades us," laughed Edwin, turning to Balder. "She has disappointed his expectations. Ah! Heinz, I could have told you that before; this muse is not a beauty. Her fingers promise more than her features give."

"Talk about what you understand. Philosopher," replied Mohr, seizing his hat. "Let her be what she likes and look as she chooses: she's a whole hearted woman."

"Did you receive satisfactory proofs of that in three minutes?"

"Probably. At least it's a fresh proof that I can accomplish nothing whole, and even in a stupid prank don't go beyond the most pitiful half-way measures. It's actually crushing. I wish you a good nights' rest----"

When he had gone and the brothers were at last alone, Edwin confessed his day's adventures. Balder too might have had many things to tell, but not a word in relation to the birthday festival crossed his lips. And yet he was secretly reproaching himself for having a secret from his brother.

This night they fell asleep earlier, though Balder did not close his eyes until the shutting of a well known little window in the front buildings told him that Reginchen had returned from her excursion in safety.

Several of the verses he had written in the afternoon again passed through his mind, and softly repeating them he lulled himself to sleep with his own melodies.

CHAPTER XI.

When Marquard paid his usual visit to the "tun" the following morning, he found everything in the household exactly the same as usual. In spite of the late hour at which Reginchen returned from the country, she had been at the pump at six o'clock, and an hour after carried the brothers their blue milk and cleared up the room, but without talking much; for kindly as Edwin treated her, she felt a great awe of him and became terribly embarrassed at his most innocent jest.

The brothers also, according to old habit, had begun their day very silently. When the doctor entered, Balder was sitting at his turning lathe, making a set of ivory chess-men. Marquard talked to him for some time with apparent unconcern, asked about one thing and another and felt his pulse, but gave no prescription, except that he must drink the wine regularly.

But on the stairs, when Edwin was accompanying him down, he suddenly turned and said in a low tone: "You must not let the lad go on so. This stooping and keeping shut up in the house

won't do, he will weaken his chest over that confounded turning lathe. If I were in your place, I should assert my authority."

"In my place," sighed Edwin, shrugging his shoulders. "My dear fellow, if you were in my place, that is, not a physician, but a philosopher, you would know that there is no authority which can transform a man's nature. Have I not tried every stratagem to get him out? When I attacked him on his weakest, or rather his strongest side, his brotherly love, and represented how dull it was for me to go out without him, you ought to have seen the efforts he made to be a gay companion, in order to cheer my walks and rides. But I know him too well. I saw how he suffered from the noise and bustle of the streets, and even when we once drove to Tegel, he was only comfortable while we were alone. When we arrived, we found a crowd of school girls playing graces, various mothers and aunts knitting, several pairs of lovers, in short the usual Berlin pleasure seekers. As soon as possible he urged me to return. You must know that it annoys him when people stare at him, and he is exposed to this more frequently than any one else; he attracts attention everywhere by his beauty and his lameness, and moreover because he has an expression in his eyes unlike any other mortal."

"I wish he were less peculiar; we should keep him longer."

Edwin stopped, seized Marquard's arm and whispered: "you fear--"

"Nothing--and everything. His texture is so delicate, a fly might tear it. But possibly it is more tenacious than we think," he added, as he felt Edwin's hand tremble on his arm.

"The wine you sent did him good," he said. "I thank you; it was a kind, philanthropic thought. I can not wish him different from what he is now. He would no longer be the same, if he had the nerves and muscles of a groom. And would he be happier? You don't know how happy he is, what a boundless capacity he has for transfiguring all the poverty around us by the wealth of his own soul, transmuting common dust into gold. If *I* gave him no cause for anxiety, he would have scarcely anything to desire."

"I have a word to say to you about yourself too, Philosopher. I alluded to it a short time ago in your room, but Balder was present, who is just like a girl; there are certain things which cannot be mentioned before him. Listen man, this disorder of your nerves is entirely your own fault; it's a sin and shame for you to permit that sponge, the brain, to exhaust the best strength of the rest of your organization. How can there be any balance of power? I tell you your whole trouble is to be cured in one way."

"You may be right, Fritz," replied Edwin quietly, as they crossed the courtyard. "But you see it's the same with this medicine, as with the one you just prescribed for Balder. We have not the natures to take it, and if we should force ourselves to do so, the disease would attack a more vital spot."

"Nature, nature!" burst forth the doctor, looking almost fiercely at his friend through his gold spectacles. "I'll answer for it, my son, that your excellent nature, which you have tormented so long with your cursed abstract idealism, that it no longer ventures to grumble--would instantly recuperate and grow merry again, if you would only for once dismount from the high horse of speculation and rely upon your own good common sense. Deuce take it! A healthy fellow like you living on locusts and wild honey, like the hermits in the Theban deserts, and if a woman passes by your cave, exclaiming: *Apage, Satan!* I had trouble with you even at the university. But now you seem to wish to continue this course, until nature, so shamefully abused for the sake of mere mind, is overstrained and fairly crazed with impatience."

"A very clever pathological lecture," replied Edwin smiling. "I will request the continuation in our next; there is always something to be learned. But for all that, Fritz, you wont get a kuppel'pelz^[3] from me."

"Nonsense! Who's talking about any such thing? But if *I*, with my constantly increasing practice, can find time for little romances, in which the mind has employment--"

"And also the heart, my boy."

"Well, the heart too, for aught I care, though that muscle is greatly overestimated, and with all your sentimentality, only fit for a dangerous hypertrophy. I'm now on the track of a little witch--"

"A fair Helen or Galatea?"

"Aristocratic, my son, and unfortunately very unapproachable--so far. But what am I thinking about? You must have already made her acquaintance."

"I?"

"Didn't you sit beside her in the box, day before yesterday? At least the doorkeeper told me she always took the same place."

Edwin turned pale.

"I have a faint recollection of it," he replied. "Didn't she sit very far front, and have brown hair, a very fair complexion, blue eyes--"

"Black or brown, my son. But we must mean the same person--and I, magnanimous mortal that I am, solemnly renounce all my claims in your favor."

"Then you must lend me your carriage, to continue this love affair properly," said Edwin, forcing a smile, "for one can hardly pay attention to this princess as a private tutor."

"You need have no anxiety on that score. To be sure I don't know the will-o'-the-wisp very well, she baffled all my conversational powers. But haughtily as she turns up her little nose--by the way it's a nose to rave over--there is evidently something wrong about her. Young ladies who go to the theatre alone, find their company home afterwards. But I will discover in whose cage this bird of paradise has its nest--yesterday I unfortunately came across an old Geheimrath, who wanted to consult me about his liver, just as I was going to follow the proud little nose. If it is as I suspect, you shall see, my son, what a base materialist is capable of doing for his friends."

Laughing merrily, he sprang into his light carriage, took the reins from the coachman and drove rapidly away.

Edwin looked after him. He could not be angry; only yesterday he had himself weighed possibilities and struggled with impressions, which placed this mysterious creature in no more favorable light. But to hear these thoughts expressed by another, as a matter of course, gave him a feeling akin to physical pain.

He had taken two volumes of Göthe to carry to her. Now he thought it would be the wisest course to avoid her house, her presence, and any further intercourse with her. But her face rose before his memory for a moment, her voice sounded in his ear, and all hesitation was over. Suppose she was better than she seemed? And what would she think of the strange man, who had at first forced himself so eagerly upon her, and then never appeared again?

But at least he would not see her to-day, and therefore merely handed the books to the striped waistcoat, and in reply to the boy's question whether he would come in, answered dryly: "It was not necessary, he would bring the next volumes at the end of the week."

As he went down stairs, he praised himself for his resolution and determined not even to look up at her windows. But this was beyond his strength. He even remained standing on the shady side a moment, as if uncertain which way to go, and allowed his eyes to wander, apparently by chance, toward the windows with the palms and the bird cage. He fancied he saw something moving behind the drawn curtains. The thought that it might be a man's head shot through his heart like a burning-iron. He closed his eyes and walked on.

He had promised to commence his lessons at the little house in the lagune to-day. As he mechanically turned his steps in that direction, it seemed almost impossible to retain any connected thoughts. Besides, the interview with the little artist and his daughter appeared as far behind him as if months had intervened, and was a matter of as much indifference as the people who passed him. He resolved to merely go there, excuse himself for to-day, and shake off the whole engagement he had undertaken, as best he could.

But the reception he met with in the little house, baffled his designs.

The artist, clad in his thread-bare velvet coat, with a barette shaped cap set jauntily over his left ear, was standing in the door-way, and as soon as he saw Edwin approaching between the wood piles, turned back into the entry, calling: "He's coming, he's coming!" Then he hastily advanced to meet him, took his hand in both of his, and said: "So I've won my wager, and can exult over my wise child, who for once was not so clever as her old father."

"What was your wager?" asked Edwin.

"Whether you would come or not. Leah said you had only promised, in order to avoid telling us to our faces, that you did not wish to teach such an ignorant pupil. With all your kindness, you glanced around you in such an indifferent way--looked so absent, and in a certain sense weary--"

"My dear sir," interrupted Edwin, "your daughter deserved to win the wager for her penetration. I *am* somewhat weary and absent-minded, my head is revenging itself because I have racked my brains too often, and the injuries it received cannot be quickly healed. In fact, if it were not for you and your daughter, I should be wiser to defer our lessons till a more favorable time. But if you prefer--"

"Leah! Leah!" cried the little artist, darting forward into the house. "Where are you?"

The young girl was just coming out of the studio, in the same plain brown dress she had worn the day before. Her black eyes greeted Edwin with a quiet, almost wondering glance.

"I hear, Fräulein," he said in a jesting tone, "that you have lost a wager on my account. You thought I would not come again, and as people usually believe what they desire--"

She gazed at him with a look, that entreated him to spare her embarrassment.

"It's true," she said blushing, "and I'm very much frightened to think that I must confess to some one *how* ignorant and bewildered I am. I was so anxious last night, that I could scarcely sleep."

"Than we must relieve you as quickly as possible," he answered smiling. "I will make any wager that you will sleep admirably to-night."

"Do you also know what is the forfeit of our bet?" cried the artist merrily rubbing his hands: "the loser was to paint you something, you may rejoice that you will have a picture by Leah, instead of one of my wretched daubs. You see virtue is its own reward."

They had entered the studio, which to-day seemed far more neatly arranged. Instead of the desk with its painting apparatus, a table containing only writing materials and a portfolio, stood at Leah's window. But there was a fresh bouquet of flowers on the sill, tall dahlias and asters whose bright colors mingled as if they wished to conceal the dull grey of the bare wall outside.

"We thought you would be more undisturbed here, than in the sitting room on the other side of the entry. Well; and so the hedge-sparrow is turned out of his nest by his unfilial off-spring!" said the old man, gently stroking the young girl's cheek. "My dear Herr Doctor, believe me: one may fare badly with spoiled children, but the real tyrants are the good, well behaved ones. It's a worse slavery than that of the most henpecked husband. Well, adieu, child, and be industrious; meantime I will make some studies from the back of the house near the stable as I have long intended. It's just the right light."

He kissed her on the forehead and left the teacher alone with his pupil.

When at the end of an hour he returned, he heard Edwin's deep, musical voice, and would gladly have listened a moment to learn the subject under discussion, but such a course was repugnant to his delicacy, and besides he hoped to hear how the lesson had passed off from the young girl herself.

Edwin rose as the little man entered. "Have I remained too long?" he asked. "I hope Fräulein Leah will bear witness that I have not tired her."

Leah said nothing. She was standing before the little table like a person just roused from a dream. The portfolio was unopened, the pen had not been dipped into the ink.

Edwin asked whether he could not see the sketches. "No, no," replied the little artist, "they are only for myself. And to-day in particular I have worked with my eyes, rather than my hand. I will only tell you," he added, smiling mysteriously; "that I am attempting something which will probably exceed my powers. I have long been anxious to make a picture of our lagune. You cannot imagine what charms of coloring the old muddy, dirty canal often displays, of course in a favorable light. I have also been experimenting with a little foreground I shall need, nay which will form the principal part of the picture, for I shall not succeed very well with the water. A week ago one of the wood piles was removed, which has stood for years directly in my way, since it obstructed the best view of the wall and quay. And see, that has revealed a fence, before which the prettiest weeds grow so luxuriantly, that I shall have scarcely any alteration to make. If I succeed, it will be my best picture, and may perhaps mark a new era in my development."

He rubbed his hands contentedly and went up to his daughter. "I hope, child, you have not become such a learned woman, that you forgot to offer the Herr Doctor any refreshment. You really have forgotten? Then I will do so at once--we have a bottle of excellent port wine in the house--a present from our good friend, the professor's widow. By the way, dear Doctor, I wanted to ask you something: you must do me the favor to pay her a visit. We are so much indebted to her for Leah's education--she was really a little piqued because I engaged a teacher for the child without first introducing him to her. The best woman in the world, and in many respects, that is in church history and the positive divinity, exceptionally well educated. You will not regret taking the short walk--she lives in Louisenstrasse--if I accompany you--"

"With pleasure, dear Herr König," replied Edwin. "But let me make the acquaintance of the giver before I taste her gift. Fräulein Leah has learned to-day, that a Greek philosopher believed that the earth rose from the water, so for to-day I will take only a glass of water. Next time we will see whether there is truth in wine."

Leah brought the glass of water, but was so silent, that her father before going away, asked anxiously if she were ill. "I never felt better," she replied with a radiant glance from her beautiful, calm eyes.

Shaking his head, the little man went out, accompanied by Edwin, who took leave of his pupil with a cordial pressure of the hand.

"My dear Herr Doctor," said he when they were in the open air, "is it not strange that a father cannot understand his own child? Certainly every human being is a fresh marvel from the hand of God. This is not like our other experiences, which are only a copy of our own natures and enlighten us in regard to ourselves, our strength or weakness. Only the great masters can have a

similar feeling, when from the breath of divine art something new appears, which resembles nothing in the world, and surprises the artist himself. I believe that Raphael, when his Sistine Madonna was completed, did not understand her much better than I do my daughter. Yes, yes, my dear friend, these are transcendent mysteries; we can only pray and thank God that we are considered worthy to experience them."

CHAPTER XII.

The Frau Professorin Valentin lived in a pretty new house, and occupied large neat rooms, which however, to an artistic eye, with all their tidiness had a somewhat gloomy, cheerless air. She received Edwin in the largest and plainest of all; the little artist had not accompanied him upstairs, he wanted to deliver a few engraved blocks to the person who had ordered them. The stately, fair-haired woman must have been remarkably pretty in by-gone years, and even now, though considerably over forty, her bright eyes and white teeth possessed a youthful charm, especially when she laughed. She was sitting with five or six seamstresses among mountains of calico and linen, from which she was cutting children's dresses and underclothes. She received her visitor like an expected guest, and ushered him into a smaller apartment, her real home, as she called it, which was fitted up with a writing table, book cases, a flower stand, and all sorts of pretty trifles. Over the sofa hung the portrait of a hypochondriacal rascal looking man with grey hair, from whose wrinkled brow and compressed lips it was easy to perceive that the care of his digestion had been the principal occupation of his life.

"My late husband," said the lady, as if introducing Edwin and the picture to each other. "I have been a widow ten years, but you will find everything here just as it was in his life time, this room (she opened a door to allow Edwin to look in) was his study, and contains his whole library, though as he was a mathematician, I can read none of his books. But they were his pets and his pride, and I think that picture would fall from the wall if one should ever get into a stranger's hands. If I had my way, the sooner I got the horrible things out of the house the better I should like it. They cost me tears enough when he could use them."

"Tears?"

"Yes, Herr Doctor, you're a learned man too, I hope you will do better some day and not say like my late husband: 'first my books, and then my wife.' And yet he married me for love and not mathematics. But after two or three years, although I had not grown exactly ugly, he found those horrid triangles and hexangles, and the queer plus and minus signs, far more attractive than the blue eyes and round cheeks of his young wife. Well, I do not complain, I had foreseen it and knew what I was doing."

"But aside from this jealousy, which you share with so many women, you must have enjoyed a great deal of happiness in these rooms, or you would not have so religiously kept them in the same condition."

The widow looked at him with a searching side glance, as if she wanted to ascertain whether he was not too young to be trusted with any confidential disclosures. His honest face, and frank, open bearing, untinged by any shade of intrusiveness, seemed to please her. He was quite different from the other young literati, whom she had seen with her husband. Her quick, womanly penetration enabled her to perceive at once, that she was in the presence of one of those rare men, who are really as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.

"You're still a young man, my dear Herr Doctor," she replied without the least sarcasm in her tone; "I don't know whether you have yet had the experience that certain natures are exceptions to the general rule, and do *not* pursue happiness, but become their own tormentors. Although very young when my dead husband offered me his hand, I was wise enough to know that I should not find what is called happiness with him. He who is to render another happy, must be capable of happiness himself. My poor Valentin was the most wretched self-tormentor that can be imagined, and without knowing it or wishing to do so, he tortured every one around him. I calculated upon this with mathematical certainty, as I now tell you. And yet I preferred him to all others, for he gave me a task, a constant, daily and hourly work to perform in myself, and taxed all my strength, which is very great and always longs to overcome every obstacle. Now nothing is more difficult than to conquer one's self; I was then a spoiled, petted creature, every one loved me, I coquetted with old and young, with my own heart, nay, God forgive me, with our Lord Himself. How it happened that my eyes were suddenly opened and I said to myself: 'You're a silly doll, you will ruin an immortal soul if this continues--' is too long a story. Enough, that as my heart had remained steadfast and honest, I resolved to try my fate with a very peevish or unhappy man. It will probably be no indiscretion, if I tell you that my dear old friend König was

my suitor at the same time; we still joke about the fact that I was his first love. When you become better acquainted with this man, you will confess that it would be difficult to find a happier person or a more loving Christian. If I had become his wife, I should have lived in Paradise. But this was exactly what I did not desire. I felt that to be treasured all my life by such an excellent man, would finally have spoiled me. Well, with Valentin I often had more of the contrary than was agreeable; but I have never regretted it. And now sit down by me, Herr Doctor, and tell me a little about my foster child, Leah."

"I tell you, Madame? Nay, it would greatly interest me to learn from *you* something about the childhood and early education of my pupil, who seems to be somewhat reserved."

A sorrowful smile flitted over the lady's pleasant, cheerful face. "If I could answer that question satisfactorily, you would hardly be sitting beside me now," she replied. "But excuse me a moment, I'm wanted in the other room."

One of the seamstresses had appeared in the doorway. Frau Valentin left Edwin, and he heard her in the next room giving orders and directions in her clear, positive manner. Then she returned.

"I always have my hands full," she began. "As I unfortunately no longer have any household cares, I willingly take as much of the work of the different clubs and societies to which I belong, as others wish to discard. Ah! Doctor, it affords a great deal of pleasure to have a crowd of deaf and dumb or neglected or orphaned children thank you for their warm, new clothes; yet a single child of one's own, who need not even be deaf and dumb or neglected, or even specially grateful, would bestow a very different kind of happiness. A substitute is never the thing itself. And that's the very reason why it makes me so sad, that the only child I could love almost as my own, avoids me so strangely; she's not cold or ungrateful, but I learn nothing about the best things that may be in her nature, and cannot impart the best of mine, since she does not know how to receive them."

"Are you speaking of my pupil?"

The Frau Professorin did not answer immediately; she sat in silence gazing into vacancy, with her pretty white hands folded in her lap.

"No one has ever caused me so much trouble," she continued, "and yet she has so much amiability, goodness, unselfishness, and independence. But that's just it, the one thing needful, the one thing lacking--you're a philosopher, my dear Doctor, but I hope not one of those whose knowledge has deprived them of faith. And this strange girl--it is not the pride of superior knowledge that makes her unbelieving; no one has a more modest opinion of her own acquirements. But it's in the blood. You ought to have known her mother, whose character she has inherited, trait for trait. Nothing has ever been more mysterious to me, than how my old friend, the artist, who has such a living need of God, could be so happy with this woman, who made no secret of her want of religion, and once when I asked her the direct question, frankly acknowledged: 'that she really did not know whether there was any God at all.' She would not have denied it; but I never disclosed it, I don't know whether she made such confessions to her husband, but I almost think he would not have been puzzled by them; he loved her very dearly. And to be sure, no one could help loving her; I was unable to do so myself, long after I had given up trying to lead her to the light which has guided me through all the depths and shallows of this world. To be sure the fact that she was a Jewess, rendered it difficult for her to obtain a knowledge of the truth. But if she had only been a devout Jewess! I respect all genuine convictions. But she, on the contrary, confessed to me with the calmest possible face, that she knew no more of all the mysteries of life in her thirtieth year than she did in her tenth; she did not *understand* either this world or the next, and had no desire to fathom their secrets; her beautiful, bright, thoughtless present, with her husband and child, was all sufficient. I fairly started when this was first uttered so plainly. What is this miserable twilight of our earthly existence, if no ray from above warms and brightens it until we reach the full light? And besides, hers was no shallow, sensual nature; or how would she have been able to value so highly, love so fondly, her delicate high-minded husband? But perhaps it was precisely because *he* remained all his life as little understood by her, as she was by him, that they were so fondly attached to each other. Possibly she felt a secret longing for the peace of the children of God, and he, that desire to save which does not renounce the most darkened nature and ever seeks the lost! Besides, she was far from despising or jeering at anything others held sacred, and took it as a matter of course that her child should be educated in the religion of its father. As she herself had none, and probably sometimes felt a horror of this nothingness, she did not wish to sin against her daughter. But it was of no avail. Nature is too powerful. I fear if the daughter were asked to answer a plain question upon her conscience, she would be found to believe little more of her catechism than her mother did."

The bell, which rang in the entry outside, interrupted the conversation. "Unfortunately we shall be interrupted," said the lady, hastily drying her eyes, which were wet with tears. "I requested you to call upon me, because as I said before, I love the child almost as fondly as if she were my own flesh and blood. You must tell me, dear Herr Doctor, what you are going to do with her, that I may be satisfied you will not make the evil still worse."

"I shall give her no religious instruction," replied Edwin, rising. "I am not a theologian. But the

philosophy to which I devote myself, has led as many to a personal God as away from Him. No knowledge can replace or destroy the needs of the soul, from which all religion springs. My psychology can quietly let alone what philosophers term predestination, and I am the last who would wish to divert any human mind from the path that leads to peace--though it certainly is not my office to dabble in the business of the missionaries."

Frau Valentin looked at him intently as he uttered these words. "I do not fully understand you," she said, holding out her hand. "But this I do know; you are a good, sincere, warm-hearted man. You will do the child no harm, for that only comes from the wicked."

Just at this moment a maid entered and announced: "Herr Candidat Lorinser."

"How fortunate!" exclaimed the Fran Professorin, and then turned to Edwin. "Now you must stay a little longer. You will make an acquaintance that will interest you more than an old woman who only hopes to be a good Christian like thousands of others."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Don't be repelled by the first impression," she added in an undertone. "I too was obliged to conquer a slight prejudice, but all trees do not have the same bark. This man's good qualities lie in the depths of his nature."

The person thus announced now entered with a hasty bow, cast a quick, strangely penetrating glance at Edwin, and then with an awkward manner, like a boy aping a grown man for the first time, kissed Frau Valentin's hand. When she pronounced Edwin's name, he bowed with studied courtesy, but instantly threw himself on the sofa as if utterly exhausted, took no further notice of this new acquaintance, but with the most entire absence of constraint as if availing himself of his privileges in the house, tore off a black cravat knotted around his thick neck, and began to comfortably sip a glass of wine, which Frau Valentin poured out for him, at the same time relating in a low, harsh voice, the result of various errands and commissions, which despite the heat, he had executed for his hostess.

Edwin had plenty of leisure to observe him, and found the warning not to allow himself to be discouraged by the first impression, very necessary. If he had followed his own inclinations, he would not have breathed the same air with this singular saint a moment longer. Now he remained and determined to make a study of him.

He who looked more closely at the strongly marked forehead, broad nose, and large, ever moving lips, could not help thinking the face a striking one, and in its rare moments of repose even attractive. Bushy, unkempt hair hung over the rounded temples, but the beard was closely shaven and the cheeks thus acquired a bluish tint. What most repelled Edwin was that the Herr Candidat either kept his eyes fixed intently on the floor, or else let them wander aimlessly over the ceiling, without noticing the persons in the room except by a hasty side glance. Moreover a bitter smile constantly hovered around his lips, while he was silent, but instantly disappeared when he began to speak. Then an almost fanatical sternness lowered on his black brows, a firm decision and imperious implacability, although he expressed himself in the mildest and gentlest words.

There was nothing remarkable about his black clothes, which were cut in the usual style, but he wore shoes that enabled him to move almost noiselessly, and a brown straw hat with a black ribbon a hand's breadth wide.

After relating the result of his visits to the sick and poor and meantime drinking a second and third glass of wine, he looked at an unshapely silver watch he had drawn from the heart pocket of his black coat, and hastily rose, saying that his minutes to-day were numbered. In reply to Frau Valentin's jesting remark, that it was strange a person who, like him, always lived in eternity, never had any time, he did not even answer with his usual smile. On reaching the door, after not having addressed a single word to Edwin, he said suddenly: "I shall consider it an honor to accompany you, Herr Doctor, if you will wait until I have said a few words to our excellent friend alone. Business matters!" he added, looking quietly at his patroness. The latter seemed to have expected something of the kind, and without any sign of curiosity led the way into the late mathematician's study, whither Lorinser followed her.

Edwin's feeling of dislike had grown so strong, that he could scarcely control it sufficiently to wait for the Herr Candidat. He could not understand a word of what was being said in the next room, and only heard enough to gather that Frau Valentin grew angry, but Lorinser speedily

soothed her; then a box was opened and money counted out on a table. Directly after both re-appeared in the sitting room, the professor's widow evidently out of humor and with deeply flushed cheeks, Lorinser following her in the calmest possible mood. He kissed his hostess' pretty hand and whispered something, that Edwin did not hear, but would not permit her to accompany him to the door.

The seamstresses were sitting quietly at work in the large room. The youngest was a slender brunette, with thick, shining hair, and beautiful black eyes. As Lorinser passed, Edwin thought he saw the girl blush and bend lower over her work, but the Herr Candidat seemed to take no more notice of her than the others.

When they had reached the street, and walked on side by side for some distance in silence, Lorinser suddenly stood still, removed his hat, and casting an absent glance at the clouds, said: "You must not misjudge me. This sort of practical religion, this busy attempt to earn heaven by making ourselves useful to our fellow mortals, is thoroughly repugnant to me, and if I allow myself to be used as a tool, it is only to have some kind of method in the madness. This course or conduct may be everything you please, warm-hearted, useful, a necessity to certain natures, but it is as different from true *religion*, as all human worship is unlike the genuine service of God."

"I have only made Frau Valentin's acquaintance to-day," replied Edwin. "But she did not give me the impression that she was one of those persons who hope to engage a place in heaven by their good works. She cannot imagine any worship--and therefore certainly not the service of God--without active exertion."

"You express her views exactly," said the other, as he withdrew his eyes from the clouds and fixed them again on the earth. "To act is a temporal thing; to be, to behold, to commune with ourselves--only thus can we here, though imperfectly, attain a conception of the Infinite. It is possible that in a purer and more sensitive husk than the one we now have, organs may grow, by means of which we can take an active share in the inexpressible energy of the Deity, become in a certain sense co-workers with God. Here below the highest point we can reach, is: an ecstatic realization that we possess God. Everything that perplexes us, procures our powers room to develop, tempts us, so to speak, from resting in God to rely on ourselves, no matter how useful it may be in a *worldly* point of view, is a sin against the Holy Ghost, a crime against our own souls. I do not know how far your philosophy will enable you to follow me."



Lorinser suddenly stood still, removed his hat, and cast an absent glance at the clouds.

"To the most extreme consequences of your view of the world, which extend to the familiar mystical quietism," replied Edwin with a calm smile. "This is not the first time I have encountered such a mixed temperament--you are undoubtedly phlegmatic--choleric--and therefore my philosophy is not perplexed about the formula. The only thing new and not quite intelligible, is how any one with such views can become a clergyman, accept an office as the servant of religion, which calls itself the religion of love."

"You are perfectly right. And I also am too honest a man to consent to the pitiful compromises and casuistries, which most clergymen drag with them through life as galley-slaves do the chains which grow into their flesh. I wish to have nothing to do with the so-called established church,

and abhor or pity the delusion that religion can be managed in bulk, like a joint stock company, on whose terms a deed of partnership is drawn up. There has never been a revelation, which has come from heaven to earth as of universal validity. *At every moment* the fulness of God's mercy is revealed anew, the Son of Man dies again, sinful mortals are saved once more by the Saviour's blood. But no one knows or perceives anything of this, except those, who have not exchanged the gold of their love for God, for the base coin of the so-called love for one's neighbor, only to be beggars when God demands a sacrifice. We have only one neighbor, God himself. Our lives are nothing but an act of mercy on the part of the Creator, who by means of a temporary separation from him, arouses the wish, the desire, the passionate longing for a re-union, and thereby affords us the first conscious delight of sinking back into eternity. The souls who never attain to this, are, as it were, only the dark elements in the nature of God, and in the great crucible of time will be separated from the purer ore and cast aside like dross."

"Go on," said Edwin after a pause, as his companion relapsed into silence. "I make no reply, because I have perceived it is utterly useless to work against such a fantastic condition of the soul. But I am always interested in watching this singular state of profound thought, which does not rest until having reached the highest pitch, the overstrained powers suddenly relapse into a voluptuous repose."

Lorinser paused again and cast one of those side glances, which so strangely distorted his features, at his companion.

"I see you have a tolerably good theoretical knowledge of the matter," said he. "Perhaps you may also be nearer the experience than you suppose. The unsatisfactoriness of the usual sensible analysis of the problem of life, must have long since been evident to you, as well as every other honest thinker. But most men, when they come to the point where their world is nailed up with boards, are modest enough to see the bounds of all human knowledge here, and turn back again like good sheep, who hit their heads against the sides of their pen. My dear sir, the fence is not so high, that with proper headway it cannot be overleaped, and the bound is so far from being a *salto mortale*, that the true life only begins on the other side. God is transcendent. If we are to approach him, we must *spring upward*."

"And do you believe that this leap depends solely upon our own inclinations?"

"Not entirely. Not every one, even if dissatisfaction gnaws at his soul, has obtained the power to lend his spirit wings. There are natures, like those of our good Frau Valentin, who lack the necessary elasticity. But where it does exist, it can, like any other power, be strengthened and steeled."

"I should be greatly obliged," said Edwin smiling, "if when occasion offers, you would give me farther instruction in these gymnastics. But I have now reached my home. I must not ask you to take the trouble to go in with me. The old staircase is dark and steep, and one is obliged to grope his way step by step, an easier operation for a dialectician of my stamp, than for him who without assistance soars through the seven heavens."

Lorinser did not seem to hear the jest. His eyes were intently fixed upon a female figure, which had approached the house from the other side a short time before them, and with a hasty bow to Edwin entered.

"Who is that lady?" he asked.

"One of the lodgers in our house, a very talented musician, who lives in great seclusion, so great that I can tell you no more about her."

"Will you allow me to look in upon you a moment?" replied Lorinser, stepping into the entry before Edwin.

Balder looked up from his book in surprise, when his brother entered with his singular companion. His soft, expressive eyes rested on the strange face for a short time, but soon seemed to have perceived all he thought worthy of notice, and remained persistently fixed on the sunlight that bathed the branches of the acacia tree.

The youth's appearance was evidently more attractive to Lorinser. He instantly directed the conversation back to his mystical experiences, revelations, and divine joys, as he termed them, and turning with unconcealed admiration toward Balder, declared that he seemed specially fitted by nature to penetrate the depths of these secrets. He would, if permitted, introduce him to other chosen spirits, by whom disclosures would be made that would render his present relations to life, shallow and profitless.

Edwin contented himself with now and then throwing in a sarcastic question, which Lorinser merely noticed by a shrug of the shoulders, but Balder, who met all his entreaties with unmoved composure, answered shortly, that he was not in the habit of going out and felt no longing for any other wonders than those revealed by his senses and quiet thoughts.

"You will think differently, when you are farther initiated," replied Lorinser. "I can boldly assert, that without suspecting it, you are in an unusual degree a child of God. The hour will come--"

Here he was interrupted by the entrance of Reginchen, who brought the brothers their dinner. Lorinser only vouchsafed her a passing glance, and the dishes she carried did not seem to him sufficiently choice to induce him to remain longer. He begged permission to come again at an early day, and withdrew smiling at Balder, who did not perceive it, as he was limping around the room helping Reginchen set the table.

"Dear me," said the fair haired girl, as the retreating footsteps glided over the stairs, "what a queer gentleman that is! I'd rather have mother scold me half a day, than listen to his husky voice and hear him creep about as if he had on felt slippers, for half an hour. It's fortunate he never looks any one straight in the eye, for if he did nobody could endure it, at least not I. Did you notice, Herr Walter: the whites of his eyes are like mother of pearl, or the quicksilver in our thermometer. He looks very ghostly, not like anything human."

"You foreboding angel!" cried Edwin laughing. "But don't be afraid of him, Reginchen. This godly fellow won't come again very soon; he saw that he had no power over our souls, and our flesh--I mean the excellent piece of meat your mother has sent up to us to-day--did not tempt his appetite."

"I hope you may be right," said Balder. "But I'm afraid we shall not get rid of this gloomy guest so quickly; he's only watching for a more favorable opportunity to steal in again, though I don't understand what he hopes to find here."

"We'll wait till he does, and if necessary use our right to close our doors. He has left us his card: 'Unter den Linden, No. 10.' Of course in the most fashionable locality. The children of God, who neither sow nor reap, since their Heavenly Father feeds them, can afford themselves every luxury, while we children of the world--but you're right, Reginchen, the dinner will get cold. Come, child, let me pour you out a glass of wine. I'll take water myself, to cool my indignation over the false prophet."

CHAPTER XIV.

Meantime Lorinser had only crept down one flight of stairs and stopped before the door on the second story. He read the name on the small sign, listened a few minutes, and then gently pulled the bell.

Christiane opened the door and gazed in surprise at the stranger, whom she had just seen with Edwin. His penetrating gaze rested on her a moment, then he raised his eyes toward the ceiling of the entry, as if solely interested in the spiders' webs.

"Fräulein Christiane Falk?" said he.

She made an almost imperceptible bow. "What do you want, sir?"

"Will you allow me to come in a moment, the errand that brings me to you can hardly be discussed here--"

She drew back a step from the threshold to admit him. In an instant he had crossed the ante-room and entered the half sitting room half bedroom, to which we were introduced the night that this story opened. Its appearance in the broad daylight was not much more cheerful, than by the feeble rays of the little lamp. The walls were hung with faded tapestry, but destitute of pictures. The floor was uncarpeted, there were no flowers, none of the hundred trifles with which lonely women adorn their rooms and endeavor to supply the lack of human companionship; nothing but a quantity of books on the bureau, the volume of Schopenhauer on the table before the sofa, and numerous sheets of music scattered in disorder over the piano. The whole produced the impression that there were no bright eyes here, to whom life was pleasant for the sake of its charms.

The face of the occupant only too plainly confirmed the testimony of the mute objects around her.

The features were unlovely, harsh, and no longer youthful, the brows almost met over the light grey eyes, the hair, thick but not soft, hung over the pale brow like a heavy shadow. The only charm in this stern visage, the full mouth with its dazzlingly white teeth, had a decided approach to a mustache, and by its habitual expression of gloomy defiance seemed to contradict the idea that this face could ever wish to please. The same avoidance of all desire for comeliness was visible in the dress. But even the most clumsy folds could not wholly conceal the fact that the

masculine head was placed on a most exquisite female figure.

She stood quietly by the table, opposite to Lorinser, who without waiting for her invitation, had thrown himself upon the little sofa and was scanning the apartment with his lightning like side glance. With a careless gesture of the hand he invited her to sit down beside him, but she remained standing motionless, with folded arms.

"Honored Fräulein," said he, "I have heard so much of your talent, my friend Doctor Edwin, your fellow lodger, has just confirmed it so warmly, that it seems to me like a direct interposition of Providence that I have now found my way to you. My business can be stated in two words. Some friends who were not satisfied with the public worship of the church, have for some time arranged a quiet service of their own, in which music occupies an important part. The lady who formerly played the harmonium, has gone away. There is no one among us who could take her place, so I undertook to provide a substitute. I thought of you, Fräulein. That you are no virtuoso of the common stamp, but a person to whom the mysterious nature of true, genuine music is revealed, I see by a single glance at that book, in which I read the names of Bach and Glück, and--allow me to speak frankly--one look into your eyes, which beam with a deeper radiance than those of ordinary women. Those eyes bear witness that your music is your religion. I will not conceal from you that this point of view does not yet seem to me the highest one. To me, music is only a stepping stone to divine happiness, though certainly one of the nearest to the throne of the Eternal. However, I am not here to preach to you. Besides, no one in our circle will annoy you by the supposition that you will share our devotions. But for what you give us, you will in every sense be richly rewarded. I only beg to tell you on what conditions--"

"And suppose I could not consent upon any condition?" she quietly interrupted.

He seized the book that lay on the table before him, turned the leaves without apparently taking any notice of their contents, and after a short pause replied:

"You will perhaps think differently, Fräulein, when I tell you that you need not attend these religious exercises in person. The instrument stands in a room, which is divided from the hall where we assemble by a tolerably large apartment. You will play as if to yourself, and not a whisper of what takes place in the little congregation outside, will reach your ears. In this way both you and we will be spared any mutual annoyance, and only share what is alike to all."

He looked at her with a keen, searching glance. She was gazing into vacancy, and seemed to be considering how far she should reveal her most secret feelings to this stranger. A bitter expression suddenly flitted over her lips, and her brows contracted.

"Pardon me," she said hastily, "if I must decline under any circumstances, to take part in what is called divine service. My reasons for so doing I may be permitted to keep to myself. I doubt whether they would be understood, far less appreciated by you, and I am not accustomed to be faithless to my convictions, even for the large fee you intimate I should receive."

"Your reasons?" he said smiling, as he rose and approached her. "Will you permit me to read these reasons, or rather this one motive from your brow?"

"Sir--"

She looked at him in astonishment and retreated a step, as if to protect her personal freedom. He stood still and again gazed steadily at the ceiling.

"The one reason that you will take no part in any religious service, is: that you have no God whom you desire to serve," he said in the frankest possible tone, as if he were speaking of something that was quite a matter of course.

She did not answer immediately. The man's amazing assurance seemed to intimidate her. She was forced to arm herself with her old defiance ere she could reply.

"Did you really read it from my brow, or only in the book on the table?"

"My dear Fräulein," he answered kindly, "if I had had the honor of a longer acquaintance with you, you would expect me to be able to solve so easy an enigma without such aid. The author of that book, believe me, with all his atheism, knew more of God than you do--at least at this time, for he knew that which alone leads to Him, and which so far as I see, has hitherto remained unknown to you, and therefore renders the natural estrangement from God you share with countless others, so harsh and apparently necessary: *sin*. You need not answer yes or no. I'm sure of it: whatever errors and weaknesses have entered your life, you have never known sin, *that* sin which alone arouses in the wilful heart the need, the longing for redemption, the burning sense of our own weakness and baseness, which makes us thirst for God and is at last stilled by the dew of mercy. Do you smile, Fräulein? This language seems to exaggerated to express the naked truth. Some day you will remember it, and no longer smile.

"No," he continued as if in sudden agitation, pacing up and down the room with hasty strides. "I will not give you up. I have felt too strongly attracted toward you, from the first words that fell from your lips, to be able to go away now and say to myself: this strong, beautiful soul will never find the way to the holy of holies. Even such a powerful guide as music will only lead you to the

threshold. Believe me, my dear Fräulein, I too have had similar experiences; I too once said like you: the God who has created heaven and earth and myself, is too great for my love, too distant for my longing, too silent for my confidence. And why should I have desired to approach him? What did I lack, so long as I had *myself*, my virtue, my worldly pleasure, my good works? Not until the day when I first became familiar with sin, when I had lost *myself*, did I learn how near this far off being can come, how eloquently he can console, how lovingly he can draw you to himself. Since that time all the sorrows of the world, of which that bewildering book speaks, have seemed to me mere child's play in comparison to the misfortune of being sufficient to ourselves and attempting to fight our way through the unconquerable horrors of existence, by means of common place honesty, courage, and innocence, the trivial 'always practice truth and justice.'

He remained standing before her and held out both hands, but she continued to keep her arms folded over her breast.

"I don't understand you," she replied, "and moreover do not know why I should take the trouble to understand you--above all, why *you* should take the trouble to attempt to aid me in your own way. I do not feel at all sick, and what I need to make me *happy* neither man nor God can give. If the sense of your sinfulness has made you long for a 'Saviour,' I do not envy you this happiness. I am a lonely woman; I have nothing but myself, my pride, my obstinacy, if you choose to call it so. If I must lose this, must become a worm and wallow in the mire--then to be sure I too might probably succeed in crawling to the cross. But I do not desire a God, who must draw me to himself through sin and disgrace! If he cannot clasp his honest, upright creatures to his heart, I prefer to remain a step child."

"You *prefer*." said Lorinser in a low, but very impressive tone. "If you always *can* do so."

"Who is to prevent me from being faithful to myself?"

"One who is stronger than our wills: the devil."

"I am too old for nursery tales."

"Oh! my dear child," he replied, "there are nursery tales which we first experience, when our infant's socks are laid aside and we have discarded the nurse's milk for sound human reason. Have you never learned that some power is exerted over our wills by a sudden, as it were magical influence? Has no eye ever bewitched you, no voice ever set your blood on fire, no hand ever destroyed your defiant obstinacy by a single touch?"

A deep flush suddenly suffused Fräulein Falk's dark face.

"How do you presume to play the part of an inquisitor toward a lady whom you see for the first time?" she vehemently burst forth. "Be kind enough to leave me, sir, our conversation has taken a turn--"

She drew back as if to leave the way to the door open. He smilingly took his hat from the table, but remained standing in the middle of the room, waving it carelessly to and fro, with his eyes fixed upon the floor.

"You wrong me," said he. "I am not so indiscreet as to seek to force myself into your confidence. What I said was aimed at people in general. Inspired poets and sentimental children of the world talk of the magic of love. As if these things were not perfectly natural, so natural that the power exercised over the will has been very properly compared to chemical processes. The word magic can only be used when unnatural--supernatural things occur. If you follow the promptings of your inclinations, your blood, your nature, even were it along the worst paths, to the greatest injury of yourself and others--is there any witchcraft in it? Error, weakness, perversity--I repeat it--are very human evils, and do not lead to God. But to be urged on to what is most foreign, hostile to your nature, to be forced, in dread and horror, to do what you abhor, to be faithless to what is dearest--you see, Fräulein, that this only occurs under the influence of a powerful spell, the only one that still remains in this enlightened world, and whose consequences God scuds his pardoning mercy to destroy or efface: *the magic of sin*. I beg your pardon for having troubled you so long. Perhaps I shall frequently have the pleasure of conversing with you about these mysteries."

He bowed with the look and smile of a man, who has tamed a fierce lioness and can now venture to enter her cage alone. She stood speechless, and made no motion to accompany him to the door. Her arms hung loosely by her side, her chin drooped on her breast, her eyes were closed as if she had given herself up to gloomy thoughts.

Mohr and Franzelius were just going up the narrow stairs, as Lorinser closed Christiane's door behind him.

Coming from different directions, they had met at the outer door, and unwelcome as the encounter was to both--for Mohr, who had his play in his pocket, would also have liked to see the brothers alone--each was too awkward or too proud to avoid the other.

They had bowed in silence, and Mohr had allowed the printer to precede him. When they now met Lorinser on the stairs, Franzelius stepped aside like a person who unexpectedly treads upon

a toad. The incident even made him forget his unfriendly relations with the eternal joker, and pausing on the landing he looked after the rapidly retreating figure, saying in a tone of the most intense abhorrence:

"Did you see that man, Mohr?"

"He came out of the young lady's room. Who is he? Where did you make his acquaintance, Gracchus?"

"He's the same malicious hypocrite who made that speech before our society. It's a pity the thought occurred to me too late, I might have thanked him for the information he gave the police."

"Or helped him down stairs a little faster; he seems to have scented this *esprit de l'escalier!*" Mohr replied, essaying to jest, but instantly added with a gloomy brow, "What did the pale rascal want there? Couldn't she have shut the door on him, as well as better people?"

"A bed-bug makes its way everywhere."

"You're right, Franzel!" replied Mohr with an angry laugh. Then twisting his under lip awry, muttered: "Eternal Gods! I would not have believed that a man could fall low enough to envy a bed-bug!"

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

He who undertakes to tell a "true story"--and ours is as fully attested as any a novelist ever gathered from family archives--he who represents life, as it is experienced, not imagined, must be prepared for all sorts of objections and contradictions. The most improbable events, as is well known, are those which most frequently happen, and on the other hand nothing meets with less credence than that which nobody doubts; though there are exceptions to the rule. Even on the stage we are not accustomed to have a lover play a character part, any more than it will be obvious to the readers of this entirely veracious history, when we report the authentic fact that Edwin, faithful to his voluntary vow, actually waited until the end of the week before he again entered the dangerous house in Jägerstrasse, nay that he even put his resolution to a still harder test, by waiting until the afternoon and occupying himself during the morning as usual. Our knowledge of the age he had attained before being attacked by love, only renders the matter the more incredible, as childish diseases are always more violent when contracted in riper years. We have as yet seen too few tests of his philosophy, of the influence of this stern science upon his character, to be able to derive any explanation of his stoical abstinence. But whatever share it may have had in his conduct, when on that Saturday afternoon, he at last entered the memorable street, he found himself in anything but a philosophical mood. The hand with which he stroked Balder's hair trembled perceptibly; instead of the two little volumes of Wilhelm Meister he intended to put in his pocket, he only took the second, and the volume which with its mysterious beauties might almost bear away the palm from her own Balzac. He answered Feyertag, who endeavored to draw him into a learned conversation as he crossed the courtyard, so confusedly, that the worthy man was greatly delighted and told his wife the Herr Doctor, was beginning to feel a proper respect for his intelligence; he had said things to him to-day so terribly learned, that they were almost incomprehensible.

On the way, our by no means heroically disposed hero endeavored to be prepared for an emergency, which he considered almost as a favor of fortune--that he might not find her at home, or be refused admittance. He resolved to bear this like a man and make no attempt to bribe or learn anything from the striped waist-coat. But when the solemn boy received him with the words: "The young lady is at home and begs the gentleman to walk in"--it seemed as if it would

have been utterly impossible for him to go away without seeing her.

When he entered the little red parlor, she was standing before the table at which she appeared to have been writing, and came forward to receive him with the frankest cordiality, as if he were an old acquaintance who had been long expected. The repellent coldness had vanished from her face, only a certain look of abstraction frequently recalled her former expression. She thanked him for having kept his promise and even brought her something new again. "But," she added, "I must not give you any farther trouble, especially if you continue to act as you did the first time, and leave the books at the outer door. You can surely make a better use of your time, than in running errands for a stranger, and I cannot promise you that a closer acquaintance will repay you for your trouble."

He answered with a few courteous words that betrayed none of the thoughts passing in his mind. Her presence had again produced so strange an impression, that he needed a short time to regain his composure. To-day, in her simple dress of crimson silk, with her hair wrapped in braids around her head and again utterly devoid of ornament, she seemed even more bewitching than when he first saw her. Yet there was a timidity almost bordering upon sadness in her voice and movements, that was contagious and overawed him more than her former careless ease.

"You would certainly have gone away to-day too, if I had not expressly invited you in," said she. "But it would not have required so much discretion to convince me that you are an exception to the usual rule. I saw in the first fifteen minutes of our acquaintance, that you were not like other men, from whose importunity it is difficult for a solitary girl to protect herself. That is why I am glad to see you again and thank you in person. I live so entirely alone, and although it is my own wish, the days are long and the necessity of hearing some voice except the twittering of the birds and the meaningless remarks of the servants, soon forces itself upon one. Besides, we like to discuss what we have read. To be sure--" she added hesitatingly, tapping the book that lay beside her portfolio with her rosy finger--"to speak of what you have lately brought me--"

"What have you read?"

"A great many of the poems; I was familiar with almost all from seeing them in collections, some even when I was at school. But in reading them together I now realize their beauty, at least so far as I understand them. But--Werther--you will scarcely believe that although I am twenty-one this is the first time I have read it."

"What an enviable person!"

"How so?"

"I devoured it at fifteen, when I was far too young and verdant to enjoy that most beautiful and mature of all the works ever written for young people."

"Perhaps I'm already too old," she said blushing, "or still too young. For--it will seem very foolish and perhaps incomprehensible to you: I had some difficulty in getting through it."

"That is," she hastily corrected herself, "I found certain things wonderfully beautiful, the spirit, the clearness, the lofty, melancholy thoughts, and what a living thing nature seems to become--I have copied many passages to read again. But the whole, the work itself--you will surely think me childish or heartless, if I confess that I was not in the least affected when Werther shot himself."

He gazed into her black eyes with a quiet smile.

"Not even as much by Père Goriot" said he.

"No," she answered in an undertone. "I cannot help it, nothing makes any impression upon me unless I can imagine it might happen to myself. This good Père Goriot, who is so ill repaid for all he does for his daughters, the daughters themselves, who have an actual passion for spending a great deal of money and living in fabulous luxury, I can understand very well. I too had a father who would have sacrificed himself for me if necessary, as I would have done for him, and it is by no means strange to me that people can set their hearts on a thousand beautiful things which only the rich should possess. But that a man can no longer live, because he--because he is in love--with somebody's wife--is a thing of which I have no idea. Why do you look at me so? Don't you believe me? You can do so safely, I always say what I think."

"I'm only looking at you," he replied, "because I do not know how to reconcile your words, which I do not doubt, with your face and your twenty-one years."

"And why not?"

"Do not consider it a tasteless compliment: but with such a face, I should hardly think a person could live twenty-one years in the world, without at least perceiving in others, what mad follies a man desperately in love may commit. And have you never been moved when you made some one unhappy, even if your own heart remained untouched? You have probably known nothing of hunger except from hearsay, and yet the sight of misery touches you."

"Certainly," she answered thoughtfully; "but you're mistaken, if you suppose I have never

suffered want myself. There have been times--but that's my own affair. On the contrary, the love that has been offered me has either seemed untrue and ridiculous, or excited actual horror and loathing, never compassion."

Edwin's surprise increased at every word, whose sincerity he could not doubt. But if it were as she said and her grave innocent gaze confirmed--how had she come to these suspicious lodgings in such more than doubtful company? What, if she had nothing to repent, was the cause of this avoidance of men, this mysterious love of solitude in one so young and independent?

He noticed that she looked surprised at his silence, and in order to make some remark, said:

"If you place so little value on the passion, which since the beginning of creation has, with hunger, been the motive power of the world, your purveyor of romances certainly has a difficult task. Or would you prefer novels of the latest style, which only contain enough love not to frighten the owners of circulating libraries?"

"No," she replied laughing, "I'm not quite so spoiled. Dear me, what I read aloud to my dear father was always French literature, which often, as I noticed by his making me skip a chapter, was by no means fit for a young girl. But do you know what I don't understand? Why the authors don't have a better appreciation of their advantages and write only stories which contain very elegant, rich, brilliant scenes, handsome parks, castles, numerous servants, and fireworks, concerts, and balls every night. I should never weary of such books, as when a child I could always read over and over again the fairy tales, in which a fairy or magician builds in a single night a splendid palace of gold and jewels, with the horses' mangers of silver, and their hoofs studded with diamonds. Ought not poetry to describe a fairer world than this, which with all its *petites misères*, is only too familiar to us? Instead of that, village tales have now become fashionable, and all the fuss, is made about them. Who can be interested in reading how Christen seeks a wife and obtains now a well-kept farm, and now a neglected one? And the principal point is always about a few hundred thalers more or less; when they are obtained, the story ends. That--you must not be offended by my frankness--is what seemed so strange to me in Werther: narrow commonplace surroundings, ordinary, provincial people, and the heroine--I will say nothing about the bread and butter--but has she a lofty, noble soul? Does she love Werther or not? And if she does--but you're smiling. I'm probably saying very stupid things. Teach me, if it seems worth while. It's so tiresome always to think for one's self, in doing which of course one is always right."

"My dear Fräulein," said he, "I have hitherto had very little inclination to disturb people who were in perfect harmony with themselves, even if I felt differently. Why should they not have the right to devote their attention solely to the beautiful and brilliant? I only wish you might belong to the favored few, who during their whole lives never see the wrong side of the world. He who has once become familiar with it, is certainly interested in finding even amid the narrow, commonplace limits of this miserable existence treasures and blessings, which fill his heart and make his life lovely. But you--"

"You are very much mistaken," she gravely interrupted. "I have already told you that I too know what it is to sit in the shadow and feel no ray of warmth from the sun that illumines the fairy castles of others. But it is for that very reason, that I do not wish to be reminded in books of what I have already had a sufficient experience of in my life, and found by no means amusing or poetical. And however it maybe with outward cares, their charms and pleasures; the inward poverty, the miserable, half developed, embittered, starved feelings, the oppression beneath which human souls drag out such a painful existence--will you assert that these also are fitting themes for the poet's art?"

He was just beginning to reply, with a sense of secret surprise at the gloomy, dismal feeling underlying her words, when the striped waistcoat appeared at the door of the dining room. The dwarf had evidently just brushed his tow colored wig, fastened his cravat tighter, and drawn on a pair of white cotton gloves, which only made his short hands more clumsy.

"Pardon me for not interrupting the regular routine of my day," said the beautiful girl, suddenly adopting a gayer tone. "That is my tyrant. Small as he is, and submissive as he pretends to be--if I'm not punctual at my meals, I lose his favor. The young man can vie in good sense and faithfulness with many grown persons, but his stomach is still a child's and must have its dues every two or three hours, or he gets very ill-natured. But I may venture to invite you to be my guest. The restaurant provides me with such an abundant supply of food, that even Jean sometimes gives up the task of attempting to eat the portion I leave. You have already dined? But you will at least give me your society; for my usual company, to which I will introduce you directly, is only a make-shift."

She preceded him into the little dining room, where the boy nimbly pushed a second chair up to the daintily spread table. But before the young girl sat down, she went to the bird cage and opened the gilded door. "There," said she, clapping her hands three times as if for a signal, "there they come flying out. Some of them understand the order of proceedings and will instruct the new comers--those shy ones at the back that will not venture out. You must not suppose I take pleasure in shutting up the poor things; I buy new ones almost every day, mere native birds, as you see, just to feed them here a little while, and then after they have given me their society at dinner, I let them fly away again. Many, to be sure, will not go; but I am not to blame for that. Whoever voluntarily resigns freedom for good food and care, must accept imprisonment

cheerfully. *Tu l'as voulu!*"

He listened to her quietly as a part of the gay feathered flock darted out of the cage and fluttered around the table and corners of the room, while the others remained timidly within. The window stood wide open; some of the most insignificant in appearance, after hesitating a moment, whetting their beaks on the sill and trying their wings, soared out into the open air with loud chirps and twitterings. The remainder, among which a beautiful gold-finch was the most attractive, crowded about the side-board and covered dishes on the table, in eager expectation of the good things they were to receive.

"I don't object to being alone all day," said the young mistress, taking her seat and motioning Edwin, with a gesture of charming authoritativeness, to sit down in the opposite chair, "but it is horrible to eat alone. One never feels so inhuman, selfish, and hard hearted, as when one is putting one piece of food after another into one's mouth entirely by himself. I always begin to think of the hundreds of thousands who have nothing to eat, and the thought disgusts me with my favorite dishes, so that I can scarcely half satisfy my hunger. But now look at this unruly rabble. How they quarrel and scuffle over every little crumb, and the greatest eater there, the little magpie, grudges the black bird every mouthful. Will you be quiet, you ugly thing?"

She took a silver salt spoon and tapped the bird, that was giving itself such airs, gently on the back, but without making any special impression upon him, and then cut some little biscuits which had been served with the dessert, into pieces, strewed sugared almonds over them, and divided these dainties between half a dozen little plates, which she placed in a circle on the table. The greedy birds instantly assembled around their food; only a few timid ones that remained on the side board preferred to take the crumbs she threw them, while the boldest perched on the edge of the dish of fruit, and rioted undisturbed on the magnificent pears and peaches.

Meantime she herself began to eat, after vainly urging Edwin to do so, and finally insisted that he must at least try some of the sweet Spanish wine, of which she only sipped a little from a slender crystal glass to drink his health. She ate in the same manner, tiny morsels which she took from her plate with the silver fork, and while busily talking, partook a little more freely of four or five vegetables and one sweet dish, but scarcely touched the meats. Edwin jestingly asked if she were a vegetarian. She requested him to explain the word, which she did not understand. "That's an excellent system," she said with a thoughtful nod, "I'm really a born vegetarian, without knowing it until to-day, and have often been laughed at in consequence. See that partridge, how sadly it thrusts its roasted beak into its own larded breast! I cannot look at it without reproaching myself for the happy creature's early death. And I was not even personally acquainted with the poor thing. But I could never have the heart to eat the chickens my mother had fed herself. She called it affectation! Dear me, my appetite in those days was far too healthy to allow me to be sentimental at the expense of my stomach. Now I have little enough and believe I could live upon bread and fruits."

As she said all this with a mixture of innocent gayety and womanly consciousness, while her manner toward her guest was one of the most perfect ease--he became more and more doubtful what to think of this mysterious creature. He had had very little intercourse with ladies who had seemed particularly worthy of notice. Face to face with this problem, which even experienced connoisseurs of women had given up, all his psychological wisdom was of no avail. But some secret feeling, which would not be stifled, told him that whatever perverted, noxious, or dangerous things there might be in this girl's character or fate, the depths of her nature were pure and true, and even the open coquetry with which she had entered into the rôle of a fairy among her enchanted princes in the cage, had a tinge of innocent fancy, and suited her as well as the ribbons and spangles of the child, who in play decks itself to represent a princess.

"You have grown so quiet," she said, paring a peach and placing half of it on his plate, "that I see there is something about me of which you do not approve,--perhaps the frankness with which I treat you like an old acquaintance. Say so openly; true, I shall not be able to change my manner, but I don't wish to impose any constraint upon you."

"I am reflecting," said he, "upon the strange chance which has brought me to this place. Is it not really like a fairy tale, that I am here in your society, while you do not even know my name, and I nothing more of you than yours?"

She raised the silver fruit knife she held in her hand, and with a roguish, mysterious expression, pressed it to her laughing lips. "Let that pass," said she, "it has all come about by natural means, without any magic or sorcery. But for that very reason, it is better to enjoy it so long as it lasts, and not spoil it by reflections and investigations."

"Will it last?" he asked gravely.

"A little longer, a few weeks perhaps, who knows? Afterwards--what will come afterwards nobody can tell. But if it seems like a fairy tale, be kind and wise enough to let it remain so, do not seek to penetrate any farther into my life, so that I shall be forced to explain the connection. There's nothing very remarkable concealed in it, at least nothing particularly pleasant or cheerful. I'm really glad that I have made your acquaintance; I was too much alone, and in my situation I must beware of all persons whom I cannot implicitly trust. Why I have confided in you, I do not know; but so it is, and I should really be grieved if you did not think well of me, or if you

were deterred from coming again in consequence of my frank expressions of opinion in regard to the various things I read or experience. And you must not come too often. I do not wish to cause gossip among the people in the house; but two or three times a week about this hour, before it is time to go to the theatre--only you must not first get your dinner at home. Will you promise me that?"

She rose and held out her hand, which he hastily grasped and pressed cordially in his own.

"May the meal be blessed to you!" she said smiling. "We always said that in my parent's house, and I miss it here. Jean has too much respect for me, and the birds cannot be taught to do it. So I shall see you again soon, and you will bring Göthe's other works, of which you have spoken?"

He bowed silently, involuntarily placing his hand on his heart, and in a very puzzled mood left her.

Just as he emerged from the house, a light carriage drove up; the gentleman, who had himself held the reins threw them to the servant sitting behind and sprang out with the laughing exclamation: "Doctor, are you mad?"

"Marquard! Is it you? Have you a patient in this house?"

"Only one, who as I see, is making my efforts superfluous by taking the cure into his own hands. Or have you not just come from *her*?"

"From her? I don't understand you."

"Hypocrite! As if I did not see the fire in your heart burning through your vest" (Marquard was fond of quoting from Heine.) "My dear fellow, you won't find it so easy to deceive an old diagnostician of my stamp. But how the deuce did you get on her track again?"

"Let's walk a few steps down the street," said Edwin coloring. "The windows are open, every word can be heard up stairs."

He seized the doctor by the arm and drew him away, relating in an undertone the story of the lost book-mark, and leaving it in doubt whether the accident had brought him here to-day for the first time. "And you," he hastily concluded. "How did you discover that our neighbor in the box at the theatre lived here?"

"By means of the vein I laudably struck," declaimed the doctor. "The renewal of my acquaintance with this fair Sphinx is only two days old, and I fear it will not long survive the third. Day before yesterday, while visiting a patient in one of the opposite houses, I was suddenly summoned from his bedside; a boy was dangerously ill; I must come as soon as possible to the very house before which we just met. How I scaled the staircase and entered the second story rooms on the wings of my professional duty--a doctor is an enviable person, Edwin! All doors open to him, while to you ordinary mortals they only unclose when you knock as honest finders of property, or--rascally seekers. Imagine my joyful surprise, when the fair enigma who had so icily dismissed me in the box, now hastily approached and in the confusion of terror claimed my assistance.

"Was she ill?"

"Not she herself But she has a lad in her service, a ridiculous little fellow, who had already amused me greatly when he summoned me from the other side of the street. The mysterious stranger--who at any rate seems to have a kind heart, especially for minors--had allowed her footman to invite a younger brother to dine with him, and the two precocious men of the world had consumed a bottle of Cape wine and smoked some horrible cigars. The striped waistcoat's stomach, already hardened to such sins, endured the orgy without injury, while the hopeful Jean junior lay like a broken lily on his brother's bed, and had frightened the young lady, who had not the least suspicion of the cause--the young tipplers had carefully put the bottle away--almost to death. Now I could not possibly do Jean--who was leering significantly at me, and had taken me into his confidence on the way--the injury of making light of the case. Besides, successful cures of difficult cases are a greater recommendation to a young physician, than the treatment of the sickness that follows a drunken spree. So I took the pallid scamp to his unsuspecting parents in my own carriage, and yesterday reported his rapid progress toward convalescence. I'm now just in the act of giving the second bulletin; but as, when I left him, the patient was eating pears and dumplings with the best possible appetite, and his noble patroness intends to visit him herself, you can understand that I shall not be able to pay many more visits to the fairy castle; for which I am very sorry--especially on your account, since according to promise--"

"I have just told you--"

"That you're a Cato or a Plato, whichever you prefer. Meantime--even without having felt your pulse--I see by your whole appearance, that you're on the direct road to remain so no longer. My best blessing on your conversion, old boy, and better luck than has fallen to me."

"To you?"

"Well, you may suppose that during my visit yesterday, I made every effort to appear not only the experienced physician, but also the profound connoisseur in female hearts and female beauty. *Oleum et operam*, my dear fellow! A statue, I tell you, a marble Sphinx would have been more moved by my engaging manners. This young glacier in Brussels lace remained as unapproachable as on the first evening, and will you believe it: even my secret ally, Jean the Little, who ought to be grateful--is a *rocher de bronze* in everything that concerns his mistress. The maid, my last hope, did not appear. So I'm just as wise to-day as I was before, or rather still more stupid, for all my experience and psychology have not helped me to understand our solitary beauty, or make up my mind whether she belongs to the great world, the *demi monde*, or no world at all."

"There can be no lack of people who will help you on the trail."

"Perhaps others know more," said the doctor, as he paused and cleaned his spectacles. "Meantime, as I told you just now: I give her up. I hereby relinquish her to you for the second time and forever, and swear by yonder turrets, that it does not even cost me an effort. She's an amphibious creature, a beautiful, faultless young serpent, just fit to drive men mad. I prefer warm, red blood. I've discovered some one--curiously enough in your house--a soubrette, who takes lessons from your piano-playing young lady--not by any means so exquisite or princess like as our sphinx, but to make amends--you know 'we don't cry for the moon' unless we are incorrigible idealists and star gazers, like certain people."

He laughingly shook hands with Edwin and entered the house before which his carriage was waiting.

CHAPTER II.

Ever since the day mentioned in the last chapter, Edwin had become a regular dinner guest at the house in Jägerstrasse. He came every third day, but could never be induced to encroach upon little Jean's share of the remains of the meal any farther than he had done the first time. He dined as it were symbolically, by dipping a biscuit in the dainty glass which the young hostess filled with Spanish wine. If she asked him why he would never gratify her by really eating, he pleaded his old fashioned custom of dining at noon. In reality, his feelings rebelled against being so luxuriously entertained in the fairy castle, after having merely been a spectator at the scanty meal in the "tun." Besides, he was now separated from Balder so often and so long, that he wished at any cost to keep their cosy dinner hour, where jesting with Reginchen roused him a short time from his reveries. Yet it happened more and more frequently, that his evenings were not spent at home. True, his fair friend always dismissed him just before she went to the theatre, and neither invited him to accompany her nor gave him any hope of seeing her afterwards. But the hour spent in talking with her, during which he played the part of the calm, clever thinker, her "wise friend," as she jestingly called him, left his soul in a state of agitation, a fever of doubt, longing, gloom, and happiness, which he was forced to calm by long, lonely walks, before he could associate with others again.

He knew also that Balder was rarely alone at these times, Mohr came almost every evening to chat, to play chess with him, or to sit at the open window and listen to Christiane's piano. He declared that this music and Balder's golden mane were the only domestic medicines that afforded him any relief, when he had a particularly violent attack of his chronic self-contempt. He often brought some of his verses with him or a scene of his famous comedy: "I am I, and rely on myself," to get the youth's opinion, but could never make up his mind to read them aloud. Now and then Franzelius also appeared, but soon went away again if he met Mohr. To be sure the latter, at Balder's request, made the most earnest efforts to curb his mocking tongue and to spare the fiery tribune of the people, who was so helpless when in a small company. But his mere presence annoyed the irritable fellow, especially as he imagined that since Mohr's return some secret barrier had arisen between himself and Balder. He loved the youth more than any other human being, and knew that no one understood him better. Now he was jealous of every smile that Mohr's quaint manner won from his darling, and in his stupidity and dullness, felt doubly at a disadvantage in the presence of the cynical jester, who nevertheless was an object of scorn to him, as a drone among the working bees.

Balder, with his delicate sensibility, would probably have been even more careful than usual to soothe his wounded friend; but he was very anxious, and his thoughts, even while the two young men were with him, secretly followed his brother along the unknown paths, of which he had such a superficial knowledge. Not that Edwin would have concealed where he went, and that he was daily becoming more and more ensnared by the magic of this singular relation, but he could not reconcile his mind to confess the full extent of his weakness, for in so doing he would have been obliged to have acknowledged it to himself, and against such an acknowledgement all the pride

and manliness in his nature struggled.

How contemptible he appeared to himself when at night, after he had wandered about, long and aimlessly, he again turned his steps toward the house in Jägerstrasse, instead of going home, to stand on the opposite side of the street pressed against the wall in some dark corner, until her carriage brought her back from the theatre, and then to wait hour after hour at his post, to see whether the door would not open again and allow some more fortunate person admittance or egress, until the light behind her curtain vanished, and every thing around him was hushed to repose in the coolness of the autumnal night, except the fever in his blood. How he cursed the hour which had first brought him to her presence, and made the firmest resolutions to put an end to this madness and never cross that fatal threshold again!

But the next, day would find him once more at the little table, envying the birds that pecked their food in happy ignorance and in freedom from suffering like his.

The young girl herself seemed to have no suspicion of how little prudence her "wise friend" possessed. She treated him on the tenth day exactly as she had done on the first, with the same frank cordiality, the same careless confidence; as if it were impossible he could ever become more distant or approach her nearer. When he came and went, she gave him her hand like an old friend, scolded him if he kept her waiting, questioned him, after she had once discovered that his nerves were disordered, most sympathizingly about his health, and urged him to use all sorts of remedies and medicines, of which she had read or heard. More than once she acknowledged that she did not understand how she had ever got through the long days before making his acquaintance, and only dreaded the moment when he would grow weary of wasting his time on such a foolish, ignorant girl, though to be sure the tone in which she had expressed this fear was not very grave. But though she must have been perfectly aware of her own powers of attraction, the idea that any deeper feeling might bind him to her never seemed to enter her head. The longer he watched her, the more he became convinced that in speaking of love as she had, she had given utterance to her real opinions. It actually appeared to her like a sort of madness, by which weak minds were sometimes attacked. How a sensible man, who came to see her every third day, brought her solid books and said very clever things, could be seized by it, would evidently have been incomprehensible to her.

He perceived all this, recognized the hopelessness of his concealed longing, the improbability of ever thawing the ice that surrounded her like a protecting wall. He had once asked what there was about him to inspire her, usually so reserved to every one, with so much confidence in him. She laughed, and shaking her head declared that that was a secret she intended to keep to herself, and when, contrary to his usual custom, he pressed her for an answer, she confessed that neither his honest face, nor anything he had said, had given her the assurance that he would not abuse her confidence, but--and here she looked at him with a bewitchingly droll, half timid, half doubtful smile on her face, as if wondering whether he would take it amiss--the fact that he wore no gloves, and did not pay any more attention to his dress when he made the second visit, than when he first called to return her the bookmark.

He laughed, but was obliged to exert considerable self control, to treat as a jest a matter that was far from being one to him.

He distinctly perceived that she only preferred him because, as a being belonging to a totally different sphere, she thought him perfectly harmless. In the seclusion of her life, a visitor who, like him, brought her amusement without making any special claims, was very welcome, and the fact that he meantime remained as much a stranger to her, as she to him, only increased the charm of this intercourse. Besides, a man who always visited her in the same grey summer suit and without gloves, was safe from the least suspicion of desiring any closer relation.

There were moments when he could not help being grateful to her honesty, for not leaving him in doubt about the impassable gulf between her worldly desires and needs and his own, when he suddenly shrank from the mere thought that she could ever return his passion, as if such a return would be a terrible misfortune. Aside from all the mystery that surrounded her, how could he ever hope to harmonize his fate and Balder's, their cheerfully endured poverty, his duties to his profession, with the life she led, and which alone could be satisfactory to her, since she expressed no wish to change it. He only needed to imagine her in the place of Reginchen, who brought them their dinner, and to transport to the "tun" the form of his enchantress, with the striped waistcoat and his silver dish behind her, to measure the abyss of impossibility that yearned between them.

Thus weeks elapsed, without any change, either for the better or worse, having taken place in their intercourse. To be sure he did not always find her in the same mood; oftentimes he even thought he perceived that she had been weeping, or she greeted him with a look of surprise, as if it were difficult for her to recall her thoughts from some distant scene to him and what he brought. But a few words from Edwin were sufficient to clear her brow and transform her once more into the frank, friendly child that, with all her pampering and the strange independence of her life, she really was. She fairly provoked him to sometimes catch her in a piece of carelessness or failure in etiquette, and then he treated her with condescending, sarcastic composure, as if she were a person not fully accountable for her actions. But he carefully avoided letting her feel his superiority in any other than a jesting manner. If, as she was fond of doing, she roved in fancy, with strange transitions of thought, over the world and mankind, life and death, time and eternity, he could sit for fifteen minutes, tattooing an apple in fantastic designs with a silver fruit

knife, and listening in silence. It always vexed her that he did not seem to think it worth while to contradict her, and declared that even if he laughed aloud and derided her, it would be less impolite than to sit silently smiling, while she was talking about the most serious matters. If the wind were blowing, or a fountain plashing, he could not adopt a more indifferent air--"Was it his fault?" he answered laughing, "that in her presence he often felt as strange an emotion as in that of nature, whose manifold voices frequently rippled over him with similar elementary power, without his feeling called upon to make any reply? He would seem to himself a ridiculous pedant if he tried to talk logic to the woodland birds, and reason to the waterfalls."

And yet, when he came again, it almost always happened that the conversation went back to the same point at which it had been broken off the last time. Then they exchanged parts, and it was his turn to give utterance to his thoughts and rhapsodize undisturbed over the most important questions. It was the strangest dialogue in monologues that can be imagined, since twice four and twenty hours usually elapsed between question and answer.

Was the cause of this, his fear of making the contrast between their natures too perceptible, the dread that any dispute must instantly part them forever, while he still considered it almost a duty, when the matter had once more become indifferent to her, not to withhold his opposition or deny his opinion. Or did he suspect that he should lose all mastery over himself, if he obtained more and more control over her and gradually harmonized and assimilated the heterogeneous traits in her character? And what was the use of this daring venture? What was to be hoped for, even in the best case? To tame a gazelle, an antelope--what can it avail in a zone and on a soil that are not created for tropical animals--

It was on a gloomy afternoon in September, the first autumn rain was falling, and the wind sweeping chilly through the empty street, the windows were closed and a little fire was burning on the hearth, though rather for the pleasure afforded by the sight of the bright flames, than through any necessity for warmth. The beautiful girl, who had often boasted that she had never been really sick, complained of a slight headache, sent away the carriage which was to convey her to the theatre, and threw herself on the sofa in the little red dining room, with her feet toward the flames, whose red flickering light lent some color to her pale cheeks.

"Read something aloud to me, Doctor," she said. "If I fall asleep over it, so much the better. But don't choose Hermann and Dorothea; I don't wish to offend you, as we have already quarrelled over it once, and yet I can't help being lulled to sleep by the wonderful verses, as if I were in a cradle, gladly as I would keep awake to listen to the beautiful story. Do you know that I consider this Dorothea a very enviable person, nay I have really never found the fate of any heroine in a novel happier than hers? Poor, orphaned, homeless--she suddenly comes into possession of a farm, and is loved and petted, and it all comes about as naturally as if such a thing might happen any day! She must have been very charming," she added after a pause, "I always imagine her tall and slender, with raven hair and grey eyes, a black ribbon round her fair neck, and ear rings with a red stone, which is really only a bit of glass--"

"By the way," he interrupted, "I have long wanted to ask you something: why do you wear no earrings or jewelry of any kind?"

"Because I am too poor to get large diamonds or real pearls, and I do not care for any other ornaments."

"Too poor?"

"Yes indeed, much too poor, far poorer than you perhaps suppose, at any rate poorer than Dorothea, who possessed the greatest treasure, contentment. I, on the contrary--do you suppose I should have considered it a happiness to become Frau Hermann?"

"If you had really been in love with him--"

She looked at him quietly, as if trying to discover whether he was in earnest, and then said:

"You're a singular person. Wisdom does not seem to be any protection against folly, and you take no notice of the existence of anything that does not accord with your system. How often must I explain to you, that I have no idea of what you call being in love. And see, even in your Dorothea, though created by a poet--and falling in love plays so prominent a part in all poetry--yet I can discover no trace of this singular condition. She meets a young man, who leads her from the street into his house and wishes to make her his wife. As he seems kind and good, and promises to become one of those persons who are represented as pattern husbands--why should she say no, especially as the pastor and doctor and provincial customs are not at all repulsive to her? And that's just why I envy her. I, on the contrary--but please throw a few sticks of wood on the fire; it's going out."

He did as she requested, and was kneeling before the hearth kindling the flames anew with a dainty pair of bellows, when a noise and altercation arose in the entry, which attracted his attention. The whinnying voice of little Jean, eagerly arguing with a deep bass, was distinctly audible, then the door of the ante-room was thrown open, and the disputants approached the little drawing room; the stranger, with a rude laugh, pushed aside the boy, who endeavored to prevent his entrance, there was a knock at the door, and without even waiting for a reply, a tall

fellow in a rich huntsman's livery, boldly entered, as if entirely at home.

The young lady had hastily started up and was gazing at the intruder in speechless alarm. Edwin had also risen from his knees, with the bellows still in his hand, and was just in the act of accosting the man, when the latter, with an elegant bow to Toinette, drew a letter from his pocket and laid it on the little table before the sofa.

"Beg pardon, Fräulein, if I have disturbed you," he said casting an insolent glance at Edwin, "but the Herr Count expressly commanded me to deliver this note into your own hands."

"Did not my servant tell you--?" Toinette interrupted.

"That his young lady was not at home, yes; and also that she wished to receive no notes, and preferred not to know the Herr Count, as she had already intimated by not answering the letters His Excellency sent through the post office--"

"Leave this room at once," fell with great difficulty from the lips of the pallid girl, "and if you venture to come again and force an entrance in this way--I shall find some means to protect my rights in this house."

"Pardon me, Fräulein," said the impudent fellow, with a saucy grin, "but no one has any rights in a house except the person to whom it belongs. If it is agreeable to my lord the count, to have his servant turned out of a house, or the doors shut in his face, when His Excellency is, so to speak, the tenant--"

"Insolent rascal!" Edwin burst forth. "Did you not hear what the young lady told you? I've not the honor of your master's acquaintance. But if he's a gentleman, it cannot be his intention to have a lady insulted by a boorish lackey!"

The man, with cool impertinence, measured the person who so unexpectedly addressed him from head to foot.

"And I, sir, have not the honor of your acquaintance," he retorted. "But as for my conduct, no one but the Herr Count has a right to call me a boor. There is the letter, and now I can go, as I have done my errand. I had no idea of insulting the young lady, that would have been entirely against my orders. But to have the first stranger--"

Edwin involuntarily raised the little weapon he held in his hand, but the next instant recollected himself. The bellows fell on the floor, he passed close by the man, opened the drawing room door, and fixing a firm glance on the suddenly intimidated lackey, exclaimed: "Be off!"

The man lingered an instant longer, then with another bow to Toinette, slowly retreated.

"I will inform His Excellency," he said on the threshold, "that the young lady had no time to answer the Herr Count's letters, because she had gentlemen visitors."

Edwin closed the door behind him. They heard the fellow laugh loudly and joke with Jean as he went away, as if nothing had happened.

A death-like silence pervaded the little drawing room. The beautiful girl sat motionless on the sofa, with her eyes fixed upon the fatal letter, which still lay unopened on the table, and her pale hands folded in her lap. Edwin stood at the door, his hand still raised in the threatening gesture with which he had motioned the insolent fellow to leave the room. Not until he heard the outer door close, did he suddenly move, as if he had shaken off an incubus, and quietly approached the silent Toinette.

"Will you have the kindness to explain this scene, Fräulein?" he asked in a voice from which every trace of agitation seemed to have vanished. As she did not immediately reply, he continued:

"May I hope that you will introduce me to this count, who apparently has some right to compel you to read his letters?"

She was still silent. At last she timidly raised her eyes and gazed at him beseechingly. The look penetrated to his inmost soul.

"If I beg you to ask me no farther questions, to trust me as before--"

"I should not refuse your request," he answered dejectedly, "but I should take leave of you at once--never to return."

"And why?"

"Because I do not desire to visit in any house in the capacity of a guest, without knowing who is the head of it. I do not wish to expose myself to the possibility of having the master instead of the servant, appear before me someday, and hearing that it does not suit his pleasure that you--should receive gentlemen visitors."

She seemed to reflect a moment.

"You're right, my friend," she now answered. "I owe it to you to explain all this, or rather I owe it to myself. What must you think of me? But I will not relate this long and sorrowful story to-day, or here in this place. Besides, your visit has already been greatly prolonged; it will soon be dark. Come to the gold-fish pond in the Thiergarten, where the statue stands, at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. It's very lonely there then; I've often sat under the trees with a book at that hour and not see three people pass. In that spot I will tell you all. If the charm our game of hide and seek has had, vanishes as soon as you know your friend's very commonplace and prosaic story--you yourself have willed it to be so. But that you may have a pledge of my sincerity at once--take this unlucky note away with you and keep it for me until to-morrow. We will read it together--"

She rose and extended her hand, which, absorbed in gloomy thoughts, he grasped and held firmly in his own. "I need no pledge," he replied. "Perhaps it would be best if I--"

"If I should bid you farewell forever," he was going to say. But he had not the courage to do so. He gazed into her eyes, which were again as unclouded, nay, which sparkled as brightly as ever, and mechanically he took the little note she held out to him. Then he bent over her hand and kissed it--long and passionately; it was the first time he had ever pressed his lips to her cool, soft fingers.

"To-morrow!" said he. "Keep your promise!"

"And suppose that the skies should fall during the night," she answered smiling. "But sleep calmly. What I have to say to you, is only worth knowing because you are still ignorant of it. Oh! my friend, I fear you will yet regret having destroyed the spell by your question, if from to-morrow the fairy tale is ended and Cinderella again sits in the ashes!"

CHAPTER III.

When, soon after, Edwin returned home, passed Christiane's door, behind which he heard loud, eager voices, and climbed the dark stairs, he was glad that neither Mohr's nor Franzelius' voice could be distinguished in the "tun." He was longing for an hour alone with his brother, and therefore the surprise was all the more unwelcome when he found Balder with his usual companions. Mohr was sitting opposite him before the chess board, which they had placed on one corner of the turning lathe, to take advantage of the last fading daylight. He had set a bottle of Rhine wine--a small stock of which he had stored in the cellar of the house, that he might not drink at the brothers' expense--on the window sill, and seemed so absorbed by the wine, the game, and the smoke of his cigarette, that he scarcely noticed Edwin's entrance. Franzelius was sitting in the middle of the room astride a chair on whose back he had clasped his broad hands, and rested his chin, while his gloomy eyes stared intently at the bust of Demosthenes on the book case. He, too, scarcely turned his head toward the new comer, and the greeting he vouchsafed him sounded more like the growl of a watch dog, than any human tone.

Edwin was no more disposed to talk. He stood behind his brother's chair a moment, stroked his thick hair several times, and then went to his desk, where he apparently began to read the newspapers. Once, however, he turned toward the chess players and said: "It would probably be better, Heinrich, if you would sacrifice your tobacco, which smells horribly, on the altar of friendship. The time for open windows is over, and Balder has already coughed three times."

Mohr instantly opened the window and tossed the cigarette into the courtyard.

Then all four were silent, until Balder rose saying: "A wooden king can't be expected to be checkmated more than five times. Besides, it's a hopeless task to play with you. You're a master of the art."

"Then I *am* good for something!" laughed Mohr scornfully as he tossed the little pieces Balder had turned into the box. "Master of an art in which persons of the least brains are often the greatest virtuosos. Nay, it is still a question whether a talent for chess is not a sort of disease, a hypertrophy of the power of combination. You see, Edwin, I, for instance--if this organ were in a normal state--should have made more progress in my play. I plan the finest chess problems through five acts, and when I afterwards examine them narrowly, they are mere wooden figures, no living creatures. Basta! I vow not to touch knight or bishop for a month, until I have arranged my comedy."

He emptied his glass and then slowly poured the remainder of the wine from the bottle into it. "Good evening, Edwin," said he. "We've not had the pleasure of seeing you in the 'tun,' for a long

time. Even to-day your thoughts seem to be far away--like our worthy philanthropist's, who has not spoken ten words since he's been here."

The printer rose from his seat with a violent jerk, passed both hands through his bushy hair and said: "It's true: I'm perfectly aware that I've long been a tiresome guest here. Therefore--and for one other reason--I hope our *feelings* are still the same--"

"What fancy have you taken into your head now?" said Edwin, still absorbed in his newspaper.

Balder had limped up to Franzelius and grasped his hand. "I was going to ask you, Reinhold," he said in an undertone, "to come some day in the morning; you will then find me alone, and I should like to say something about your last essay--"

The other turned away. "No," he muttered, "it's better so, wiser to put an end to this once for all. I'm glad Edwin is here too. I wanted to say it before, but you were so absorbed in the game: I shall take leave of you to-day--for an indefinite time--"

"Fools call it forever," quoted Mohr. "What devil has taken possession of you, Caius Franzelius? Do you want to found a colony of workmen among the red-skins on the Schultze--Delitz'schen principles? Or are you going to the Salt Lake of Utah, to disgust the Mormons with their immortality! Or--stop, now I have it--he can't endure the sight of a man who drinks Rhine wine, while the camels in the desert of Sahara often cannot get even muddy water."

The printer seemed about to make some angry reply. Edwin anticipated him.

"You don't know what you are doing," said he. "If you part from old friends, you must have some good reasons for doing so, for they are wares that are not to be bought in every market. It would be kinder, Franzel, to inform us of these reasons. Who knows whether they're so well grounded, as you imagine."

"I thank you, Edwin," replied the other in a faltering voice. "I'm glad it's not a matter of entire indifference to you whether or not our intercourse is given up, little pleasure as it has afforded during the last few weeks. As for my reasons--"

"I'm quite ready to forsake this locality, if unrestrained intercourse is desired," said Mohr quietly, rising.

"There's nothing personal to be said," replied the gloomy visitor. "The fact that we do not understand each other--unpleasant as it often is to be the butt of your frivolous jests--could not induce me to remain away from the 'tun' entirely. The matter is far more serious; to tell the whole story in a few words: I've decided to publish a newspaper, which is to acknowledge and defend my principles more plainly and openly than my fugitive sheets have hitherto done. It is to appear twice a week under the name of: 'The Tribune of the People.' I thank you for the nick-name, Mohr, which I have now made a title of honor. The prospectus will break with the last remnants of superstition and traditional delusions, and as the rich have good reasons for preserving these traditions, since they stir up the water in which they want to fish, it will appeal expressly to the poor and miserable. I have recognized this as my life task, for which I am ready to make every sacrifice--even the hardest."

As he uttered these words he looked at Balder, but instantly averted his eyes and pretended to be searching for his cap.

The brothers were silent, but Mohr went up to him, laid both hands on his shoulders, and said: "Franzel, although you don't like me, you must allow me before these witnesses to declare my respect for you. I envy you such a life task, although I consider it perfect folly. At least change the title. Your readers will hardly be sufficiently well versed in Roman history, to distinguish the difference between tribune and tribunal. Besides, why should we lose the pleasure of your society on that account? I will even offer to be a coworker: in case you, as I hope, issue a feuilleton, I should not be disinclined to write a few brilliant aphorisms--"

"Cease this jesting!" Edwin indignantly interrupted. "Franzel, what does this mean? Because you're going to establish a newspaper, must we clasp hands in an eternal farewell? You may do what you cannot leave undone. Are we our brother's keeper? Or have we hitherto found fault with all your sayings, to which we could not assent?"

"No," replied the printer, as he thrust his huge hands into his pockets. "But that's the very reason; you must be as safe in the future as you have been in the past, so far as it depends upon me. Unfortunately, I'm only too well aware that we shall no longer agree as well on many subjects, as we have done hitherto. But I'm determined to burn my ships; there shall be no more evasions, no half-way measures. The people at the helm cannot endure them. There will be trouble, they will use their usual coarse means--arrests, searching of houses, seizure of papers, watching for conspirators. I do not want to subject you--for I go nowhere else so often--"

"They can seal up all my papers," said Mohr dryly. "The mediocrity of talent, to which they all bear culpable witness, is at least not dangerous to the state. On the contrary, the less genius one possesses, the more useful he is as a tax-paying individual, a sheep in the flock."

Franzelius seized his cap.

"You will do us no harm," said Balder. "Let us take the risk. What could they find here? As I know Edwin--"

"I too would see them enter with the greatest composure," observed Edwin smiling. "No, Franzel, your fears are visionary so far as we are concerned. Can you not, in case of necessity, even swear that I have no tendencies toward socialism, but on the contrary am an incorrigible aristocrat, for which you have often reproached me?"

"And if they question you about your catechism, will you deny it? Will you deny that our principles are the same, and that we only differ in opinion as to whether the times are yet fully ripe for them? You are silent; now you see--"

"Scientific convictions are somewhat different from public speaking, and the police, thank God, no longer meddle with the freedom of thought of a private tutor of philosophy. But since we have come to this point--once more and, as it seems, for the last time: do you take me for a coward, Franzel?"

"You! How can you even--"

"Or do you not believe that I would be drawn and quartered, rather than deny my convictions? Well then, if you think me a man of whose friendship you have no cause to be ashamed, let me tell you this: what you are about to do, appears to me little more judicious, than if you wanted to set before an infant that had not yet cut its teeth, a roast chicken instead of its mother's milk or some of Liebig's preparations, with which it had hitherto appeased its hunger. If any one attempted to do that to my child, I should certainly forbid him the house, or at least endeavor to make his premature diet harmless."

"You talk so, because you don't know the people," Franzelius burst forth, "They are no longer children, their teeth are cut, and their eyes open; where this is not the case, we will help them, offer hard food that they may cut their teeth on it, instead of cooking the traditional children's porridge, perpetually lulling them to sleep with baby talk, when they are grown men, and the leading strings of guardians--"

"Don't get angry unnecessarily!" Edwin interrupted. "Who of us wishes to check the natural growth of the mind, instead of aiding it according to its powers? But what you have in view, is a forced, premature culture, your demagogical enthusiasm is a hot house, and that is why I repeat: make no useless sacrifices, which must not only ruin yourself, but many of your foster children. You cannot carve an Apollo from every block of wood; not every one who ties on a leather apron and earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, will be able to grasp the idea of the fall of man which a follower of Kant or Spinoza can form. Why, when there are so many crying wants of a coarser nature to be satisfied, do you desire to create needs for our less gifted brothers? Why show them what they lack, when, after they have with difficulty learned to feel their needs, you can only give them such very doubtful assistance? You aim to produce an artificial thirst, and then all you can offer them to assuage it, is a pear; for the fountains that flow for us, will, as matters now appear, long remain sealed to them."

"Edwin is right!" exclaimed Mohr, speaking for the first time without his sarcastic curl of the lip. "The people are asleep, dreaming all sorts of things, and Franzelius Gracchus goes about like Macbeth, and murders sleep. I've never understood how anybody can be so inhuman as to rouse a person who is slumbering. But that's the preaching of these humanitarians! You're just as selfish as the priests. For the sake of making the people see, you drum them out of bed at three o'clock in the morning."

"And suppose they are grateful to us for it? Suppose a nightmare has oppressed or bad dreams tormented them?" exclaimed the printer vehemently. "And that's just the case with the people. Their sleep under the night cap of superstition is no longer so sound and refreshing as it was a hundred years ago. All sorts of voices have startled them, and now they are slumbering in the dusk of morning and do not know whether it is time to rise. But why do I talk of this to you? You don't understand the times, you've never felt the pulse throbs of humanity stir your heart, with all your knowledge and good, intentions, you're--"

"Say no more, Franzel," whispered Balder. "You're excited; why should we utter angry words in the parting hour,--if you really intend to take leave of us? That we shall meet again, and before much time has passed, I'm perfectly sure."

"You--I will never lose you!" murmured the deeply agitated enthusiast, in a tone audible only to Balder. "You're right," he added aloud. "It's sad enough to feel that our paths must diverge. We should not make the inevitable unnecessarily difficult. Farewell, Edwin. I could almost envy you the power of keeping to yourself what you consider an intellectual possession; for to be sure, 'he who is foolish enough not to guard his own heart'--but--it's useless: *alus inserviendo consumor*. Adieu, Mohr. With you--"

He was about to add something, but thought better of it and left the room. On reaching the entry he paused a moment, as if waiting for some one. He was not disappointed. Balder followed him, on the pretext that he had something more to say. But he only pressed his hand in silence,

then threw his arms around his neck, hastily released him again, and Franzelius stumbled down the stairs, like a man whose head is heavy or whose eyes are closed.

"He's obeying his evil genius!" said Edwin, shaking his head. "I've seen the fit coming and vainly endeavored to stay it. But water will flow down hill."



Balder's farewell to Franzelius in the stairwell.

"It will soon come to a level and remain stagnant for some time," muttered Mohr. "I'm sorry for the poor fellow! Believe me, Edwin, it was always disagreeable to me to be continually compelled to make fun of him. At heart I not only respected, but liked him. He has exactly what I lack, and because he is not ambitious of distinction, he is indifferent to his own worth. He takes himself just as he is--I believe if he thought he was a superior person liable to be admired in society, he would indignantly ostracise himself."

Balder re-entered the room and they talked of other things; Mohr inquired about the private lessons Edwin was giving the young hedge-princess, as Leah was called in the "tun." But Edwin, whose thoughts were entirely engrossed with the confession his mysterious friend had promised to make on the morrow, gave very absent replies: he was explaining the history of philosophy from his own books. He told her without any oratorical flourishes, how the secret of the universe had been differently reflected in various human brains, how thoughtful minds had endeavored to interpret it and expressed the inexpressible in formulas more and more profound. "I have now come to ideology," he concluded, "which to one who possesses so deep an intellect as this girl, can afford a great deal of pleasure, and be comprehended without much difficulty. I'm amazed to see what progress she makes in Aristotle. Yet, after all, it only confirms the proposition that where a real need exists, the organs for it are formed, as the feeling of hunger always asserts itself when a creature possesses a stomach. It's a pleasure to see this girl listen. She has long languished for knowledge, now she fairly revives like a thirsty plant in the summer rain."

"Congratulate the Frau Doctorin," laughed Mohr.

The brothers' eyes involuntarily met.

"We're now just coming to Plato," Edwin forced himself to answer in a jesting tone. "Whether my pupil, in spite of her studies of hedges and lagunes, has sufficiently elevated thoughts to develop a taste for our 'tun' philosophy, I greatly doubt."

Meantime Franzelius, walking slowly down stairs, as if every step cost him a fresh resolution, had just reached the front of the house. When he came to the glass door that led into the shop, he suddenly stopped.

In the chair behind the show window, where Madame Feyertag was usually enthroned, sat Reginchen. It was already very dark in this corner, for the gas in the shop was usually not lighted in summer, and September, according to the Feyertag calendar, belonged to the summer months; yet notwithstanding this, the printer had perceived at the first glance who it was that sat in the corner knitting a stocking.

He seemed to struggle with himself a moment, then softly opened the door and with a: "Good

evening, Fräulein Reginchen!" entered the shop.

"Oh! dear, how you frightened me!" cried the young girl, starting from her seat.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Franzelius, "I ought to have knocked. But I have so many things to think of--sit still, Fraulein Reginchen, I--I only wanted--I came--"

He clutched his cap convulsively in one hand, and was brushing the brim with his elbow.

"My mother has gone out," said Reginchen, to make a little conversation. "But father is still in the work room. If you want to speak to him--"

"Oh no--but allow me--" He picked up the knitting she had dropped, but in so doing let his cap fall, and as she now stooped for it, their heads came in contact somewhat violently. He blushed crimson, but she burst into a merry laugh.

"That's owing to the short days," said she. "But father is anxious to save the gas. I drop so many stitches!"

Then both were silent again.

At last the printer, pausing before the case of ladies' shoes and gazing into it as intently, as if he were endeavoring to count each individual pair, said:

"You're fortunate, Fräulein Reginchen. You can stay in this house. I--I must--from to-day I shall--"

"Are you going away on a journey, Herr Franzelius?"

"No, Fräulein Reginchen, or rather yes!--it amounts to the same thing. I--I'm glad I've met you--I should like--I didn't want to leave without a farewell--"

"Are you going away for long?"

"No one can tell--perhaps I shall never return. Fräulein Reginchen, I cannot hope--you know I--I have always revered you--"

She laughed again in her merry childish way; but if the shop had not been so dark and he had looked at her, he would probably have noticed the deep blush that suffused her face. "Oh gracious!" she exclaimed. "Revered! No one ever did that before. A stupid creature like me, who can't do anything and doesn't understand anything, as mother tells me every day--"

"You don't know your own worth, Reginchen, and that's the best proof of it--I mean that it's no false worth. But excuse me for telling you this so bluntly: It's the first--and last time. And of course you--if I don't come back--will never give me another thought."

The prudent child seemed to know that silence is sometimes the best answer. She coughed several times, and then said: "Where are you going?"

"Wherever the winds and waves carry me!" he replied with sorrowful pathos, and then paced heavily up and down the shop.

"So you're going to sea! Dear me, how frightened I should be! Do you know, Herr Franzelius, I shall tremble every time that the east wind blows and the window panes rattle and the gas lights flicker--and you'll be on the angry sea--"

"Will you really do that, Fräulein Reginchen?" he asked hastily, pausing before her. "If you were in earnest--but no, why should you give yourself useless anxiety about a man who can never--to be sure, I--it will be a real cordial on my journey--and I wanted to say something else: I should like to take a keepsake to remember you and this hour."

"A keepsake?"--she involuntarily glanced at her knitting work, at which he too was looking intently. "I'm just at the heel," she said, "and I suppose you'll not wait till it's done."

"No, Fräulein Reginchen," he replied, "don't think me so presuming as to ask for such a gift--your own handiwork--so unceremoniously. But--if I could find any of your father's work--but I've an ugly foot, which is hard to fit with ready made boots--"

"I could take your measure."

"Yes, you might do that; but no, Reginchen, in the first place I would not accept such a service from you--"

"I would do it willingly, besides, I'm accustomed to it."

"No, no! A creature like you, and such an unlucky mortal as I--but if I could find a pair already made--"

He looked around the walls, sighed, passed his hand through his hair, seemingly endeavoring

to avoid her glance.

"You have not the smallest foot in the world," said the girl, looking at his coarse boots with the eye of an connoisseur. "If it were only as long in proportion as it's wide. But it's so short beyond the instep, it would be hard--"

"Won't it? Two elephants' feet!" said the printer laughing bitterly. "We men of the people, who don't tread as often as we're trodden upon, didn't need to have such big feet. But it's no matter. Who knows when our turn will come. Well, Fräulein Reginchen, if you can't--"

"Wait," she exclaimed, starting up and opening the show window, "I think I can find something for you; that is, if you can use jack-boots. But as you're going to sea--"

--"At least through fire and water.--Show me the jack-boots, Fraulein Reginchen."

He sat down on a low stool and watched her, as she nimbly leaned forward into the show window, dislodged with considerable difficulty two huge boots paraded there as models, and placed them in the shop. During this operation he again sighed, as if suffering. While, assisted by Reginchen, he tried on the boots, which fitted admirably, that is were much too large, he did not utter a syllable; but when with his feet cased in the huge polished coverings he stood before her as if rooted to the floor, he drew out his blue checked pocket handkerchief, wiped his forehead, and slowly replacing it, said: "Ask your father to send me the bill with the old boots. And now, Fraulein Reginchen, one thing more: take care of my friends up stairs as before--especially Balder. He--perhaps you don't know it--won't live to be very old; at least while he is here, let him know only love and kindness--"

He turned away because his voice failed, and furtively wiped his eyes with his cap.

"Good Heavens!" cried the young girl in terror, "what are you saying? Herr Walter--"

"Hush!" replied Franzelius putting his broad fore-finger on his lip. "You're a kind hearted, sensible girl--you'll keep it to yourself Oh! Fraulein Reginchen, if it were not for that, if it were not for many things--of which you have no suspicion--Heaven knows I--I would make no secret of my feelings, and tell you--but no! Love him, Reginchen, as much as you can. Will it be hard for you to love Balder?"

Again she made no reply. The question seemed to her a dangerous one. He was looking at her with a strange expression of anxiety and love; suddenly he caught both her hands in his huge palm, clasped them so closely that she with difficulty restrained a cry of terror, and burst forth: "If there is such a thing as an angel, you are one. Farewell. Think--forget--you have never had a better friend than I! I only wanted to bid you farewell--Fraulein Reginchen!"

He tore himself away and tramped out of the shop in his gigantic boots as hastily as if he feared to remain longer, lest spite of these firm pillars, he might lose his centre of gravity and fall at the feet of the shoemaker's little daughter.

Reginchen looked after him through the show window. Often as she had laughed at him, she could not do so to-day, she was much more ready to cry. No one had ever spoken to her so before. She had longed perceived that he liked her, and even prided herself a little upon that fact, because she thought he must be unusually learned, as he was always occupied in printing. But that he "revered" her, that he thought her almost an angel--! And what did he mean in speaking so about Herr Walter?

She sat down again in her chair in the corner. "I'll commence to-night to knit a pair of stockings for him to take on his journey," she thought. "If only I can get them done! His feet are so awfully big."

CHAPTER IV.

About the same hour Lorinser was sitting on the little leather sofa in Christiane's room, with his knees half drawn up on the seat, and his long arms stretched along the back, like a person who is making himself comfortable, because he does not intend to go very soon. Although it was already so dark that faces could scarcely be distinguished, no lamp stood on the little table. But from one of the windows in the front of the house gleamed a faint light, which frequently moved and fell upon the pale face of the man on the sofa, revealing the expression of eager expectation stamped upon the strongly marked features. Whenever the light flitted over Lorinser's countenance, the strange smile appeared on the mobile lips, and he lowered the eyes, which so

long as it remained dark, followed every movement of the woman who, with her arms folded across her breast as usual, was pacing up and down the room.

Suddenly she paused at the window, opened it a moment gasping for breath, and then turned toward the silent man on the sofa.

"How people forget the flight of time when they are talking," she said. "I see it has grown dark. Excuse me, Herr Candidat, my hours are so regularly apportioned--"

"You wish to send me away, Fräulein Christiane," he said making no preparation to move from his comfortable position. "I have really forgotten the true cause of my visit, in your musical revelations, which have afforded me a glimpse of depths hitherto unsuspected. So what answer can I give the baroness?"

"Is any positive answer required?" she said. "Why should I have told you how I prize music, except to explain that I will never become a drawing room teacher, that I would rather starve than share in the universal sin of the jingling, bungling profanation of what I hold sacred?"

"And yet you do not disdain to give lessons to a soubrette?"

"How do you know?"

"Because--well, because I've enquired about you. I must be able to answer for a person whom I recommend to houses like that of the baroness."

"Very well. I will tell you why I take this frivolous creature; from a motive which will be perfectly obvious to you, as you too are interested in home missions:--to save a soul."

"You want to transform this stage princess, who has already passed through so many hands, into a saint? You're jesting."

Christiane laughed, a short, hollow laugh, utterly destitute of mirth.

"What do you take me for?" she asked. "To make a person something which I myself neither am nor desire to be! And what has her mode of life to do with me? I'm willing to allow everybody to be happy in their own way. What I call saving her soul, is giving her an idea of true music. The girl has the most enviable talents, voice, ear, passion, the genuine, the natural musical sympathy, which in all such compositions instantly opens to her the real meaning of the author or the part, so that she not only repeats the notes, but reproduces the whole meaning to the life. This is rare, even among those who consider themselves great artists, and are paid as such. And that's why this stage princess as you choose to call her, is too high for Offenbach, and, indeed, perfectly capable of interpreting Mozart and the other great masters."

"And if you succeed, do you really believe that this rescued soul will be made any happier?"

"Who can tell? I merely do what lies in my power. Happy! If music alone could give happiness, few would possess such joy as mine. But it's only a substitute, perhaps the most powerful and noble, but not the real thing, not happiness itself. Of that I'm perfectly sure; I've had time to experience it."

"And what do you consider real happiness?"

She was silent a moment, not as if it were difficult to answer, but as if considering whether she owed the questioner any reply.

Then in a tone of cold resignation she said suddenly:

"Real happiness? I only know because I have never tasted it. Real happiness can be nothing but to sacrifice ourselves without losing ourselves, because we find ourselves again in something better than we are; to forget self in another, without fear of being ashamed of it, because that other at the same moment is thinking only of what we ourselves forget. You'll not understand me, and no matter if you don't. I'll light the lamp."

"You speak of love," he said quietly. "I understand you, because the same happiness you hope to find in earthly love, opens before us children of God in the bliss of eternity. Did I not tell you just now, that you must forget yourself to find yourself again in God, that there was no other redemption? Now you come to meet me half way."

"But I shall never be able to traverse the other half," she said bitterly. "Pray don't let us recur to that conversation. Once more--it's late. I've work to do."

Still he did not move from his crouching position on the sofa.

"Don't be narrow-minded," he said quietly. "It doesn't suit you. You have a larger nature than ordinary women; what's the use of these half allusions, this shame-faced, prudish reserve, where the point in question is the happiness of your life? If I could only really help you?"

"You? No one can help me."

"Except God, and he who leads you to Him."

"I do not understand you. Have I not told you plainly enough, that I feel no longing for your God and his pardoning grace? All I can do for him, is not to hate him; though he has placed me in this world as I am."

"As you are? And how are you?"

"You've just said it yourself: I'm no ordinary woman. I don't know what could be more sad for a girl. And really: ever since the tale of a dear God became improbable, ever since it dawned upon me that we poor human animals only move about in the great throng of creation and have no more claim to any special tenderness, than the thistles in the field, which the donkey gnaws, or the donkey that the miller's boy cudgels, I've become somewhat calmer. No one is to blame because I'm a joyless, ugly, lonely woman, with a man's face, except perhaps my parents, who died long ago and couldn't atone for it; the good people certainly did not know what they were doing, when they gave *me* life."

She poured forth these words in harsh, scornful tones, as one relates something that has long angered one, busying herself, while so doing, in lighting the little lamp with the green shade which she now placed on the table.

"I think you've heard enough," she added dryly. "You're now convinced, Herr Candidat, that such a mangy sheep would make a poor figure among the gentle flock you lead to pasture, so I beg you in the future not to trouble yourself about my temporal and eternal welfare."

"Certainly I have heard enough," answered Lorinser opening his eyes so suddenly upon her, that the metallic lustre of the whites, subdued by the green lamp light, seemed ghostly, "though you have really told me nothing more, than I knew at the first glance. You're mistaken if you think such confessions are new to me or repel me. They always proceed from an exceptionally powerful nature, and grace can work only where there is strength. Gentle, unselfish souls have nothing to oppose and so nothing to gain. But since I have fully understood your nature, it would be of great value if you would trust me sufficiently to disclose the external circumstances among which you have become--no, have remained, what you were from the beginning; I mean, your history, the events of your life."

"My history?"--she laughed. "I have none, or what I have has already been told you. My face is my history, my heavy eye-brows and the shadow on my upper lip are my destiny. My father happened to look as I do, and was considered a stately, interesting man. But I should have been wiser to choose the face of my mother, who was by no means famed for her beauty, but must have been exactly what I am not, a thorough woman. At least she made all sorts of innocent conquests. I, on the contrary, though I was neither stupid nor had unwomanly manners--I mean when I was a young girl; for I now go about boldly, like an old student--although my talents early attracted attention among my father's colleagues--he was one of the court musicians,--never made a conquest in all my life. That is, I might have married two or three times; but it was for very different reasons than love. One wanted to give concerts with me, another, who was an elderly man and tired of his bachelor life, needed a housekeeper, and that she should be ill-favored he rather preferred than otherwise. He thought he would be all the more sure of her faithfulness and self-sacrificing gratitude, in return for his making her a married woman. The third--but why should I tell you these disgusting tales, which at first deeply humiliated me. And though I might have learned from them what my mirror had not then taught me, I was mad enough always to select as the objects of my secret adoration, the handsomest, most agreeable, and most admired men, who never cast a glance at me. I had artist's blood in my veins, I could not help being filled with enthusiasm about everything that was lovable, charming, and distinguished, even if my heart should burst in consequence. But now I have reached my thirty-fourth year; youth with its foolish desires for love-sorrows, yearnings, anxieties, and honey that turns to gall, may well have raved itself calm. Do you wish to know more of my story? I am very sorry; but unfortunately I have nothing to tell of love adventures, broken vows, wanderings from the path of virtue. Unfortunately, I say. They would have made a change in the dreary grey of my days and years, a few blood red spots, a stain effaced with thousands of tears. Instead of that, I'm an old maid in the fullest sense of the word, and your 'magic of sin' has no power over my beggarly pride. Can you even imagine a bright, interesting, exciting romance with such a frontispiece?"--She suddenly removed the green shade and raised the little lamp to her face, which she turned full upon him in the bright glare.

"That's a matter of taste," he replied without the slightest change of countenance. "For instance, I for my part have always preferred faces full of character to smooth, meaningless ones, which might nevertheless be considered very charming, pretty, and attractive. Superficial sweetness nauseates me. To feel strength, bitterness, even icy scorn and hatred melt in the glow of passion, always seemed to me more desirable than the sentimental fusion of two harmonious souls. The woman who is to attract me, must have something of the devil in her. Put down the lamp Fräulein Christiane. It is illuminating charms which under some circumstances might become dangerous, and as I am at present entirely indifferent to you--"

At this moment the bell was violently pulled.

"Thanks for the interruption," said Christiane in a subdued tone, that the person outside might

not hear; "I should have given you an answer, which perhaps would have seemed altogether too unwomanly. Now I shall dismiss you without ceremony, and indeed--"

The bell rang again. Lorinser had put his feet on the floor, but did not seem inclined to leave his corner.

She looked at him with a glance of indescribable astonishment and anger, then took the lamp and went into the ante-room to open the door.

Mohr was standing outside; his face was deeply flushed, and his eyes, as soon as the door opened, strove with a keen, intent gaze, to pierce the darkness within; but his manner was perfectly unembarrassed, almost formal.

"I beg a thousand pardons, Fräulein," he said, "for having knocked at your door a second time at so unseasonable an hour, but if I violate ceremony, to an artist my errand will plead my excuse. I only beg fifteen minutes conversation;--Have you a visitor?" he continued, as he suddenly perceived the figure of a man in the adjoining room. "So much the better, that will prevent all thought of indecorum. Will you allow me to enter? There's a disagreeable draught on these stairs. Or shall I interrupt you?"

"Not in the least," replied Christiane, with a very gloomy expression, as she slightly bent her head. "To be sure I've not the honor of your acquaintance--"

"As a friend of your fellow lodgers up stairs, I thought I had a sort of right to introduce myself to you. A short time ago, in a merry mood, I made an unsuccessful attempt to do so, though my friend Edwin tried to prevent me. You cannot have condemned it so severely as I did myself, so soon as I came to my senses."

"I have no recollection, sir--"

"So much the better. It was quite dark in the entry. Today, by the lamp light, permit me to introduce myself to you: plain Heinrich Mohr; I scorned to buy a doctor's title. A man usually who has nothing to make him must have some distinction."

"Will you be kind enough to inform me--"

She was still standing in the ante-room with the lamp in her hand, as if she wished to get rid of him as quickly as possible, while he from time to time cast eager glances into the sitting room.

"I will come to the point at once," said he leaning against a chest of drawers which stood near the door. "What I have to propose, is no secret and requires no privacy. Unfortunately, it is tolerably well known to all who are aware of my existence--but will you not sit down, Fraulein? To stand so--" He made a movement toward the door of the sitting room.

"Thank you. I'm not tired."

"Nor I. So to proceed: I'm unfortunately endowed with all sorts of mediocre talents. One would be enough to make a man who is no fool, but possesses a critical judgment, thoroughly unhappy. In the arts bungling even is worse than in medicine. What does it matter if a few men die more or less? But to corrupt or lower the standard of art, is a sin against the divinity of genius. Don't you think so too, Fraulein?"

She looked at him intently, without opening her lips.

"But," he continued, "there's a false modesty too. Many a great man would never have believed in his own talents, if kind friends had not discovered them. Other gifts are, as it were, trampled under foot in the crowd, through malice and envy--men are very envious, Fraulein, Germans especially. I allude of course to the common envy of trade, which is no more allied to the ideal, high-souled envy, than a toad-stool is to a truffle--in short it's not easy for every man to know what's in him. My eyes have gradually been opened to the fact that my talent for rhyming amounts to nothing. But music, music! I play the piano very poorly and my voice is like a raven's; but in regard to the gift of composition, it always seems to me that I can compare very favorably with the shallow composers of waltzes, or writers of street songs. As for yourself, Fräulein--pardon me for having listened to your playing; you confided your musical confessions to the quiet courtyard--I--I have the deepest reverence for your talent--for--how shall I express it?--for the strong nature expressed in your style of playing. Now you see--I have just finished--for a long time I have been engaged on a great composition, which I have sometimes called--it's only a fancy, or rather a bad joke--my *sinfonia ironica*. You understand: so far, none of it has been written out, but in my head everything is as good as ready for the press--except the instrumentation. Musicians to whom I've now and then played parts of it, have usually been bigoted adherents of some particular school. I must confess that I gave none of them credit for really entering into the spirit of the work. With you the case is wholly different. I would wager, that if you would only give me an hour--"

"Sir," she interrupted, "you over-estimate my knowledge and judgment. I sincerely regret--"

"Pray do me the favor, Fräulein, not to condemn me unheard. I ask nothing more than that you

will listen to the first few bars, where the irony is still in the stage of oppression and grief--C. minor, which afterwards changes into F.--"

"I've never been able to understand the so-called language of music," she answered curtly. "So it would be better--"

"Do you dislike the title? Very well! I'll give it up. It shall merely be absolute music, like any other. I'll submit to hear Wagner all the days of my life, intensified one day in the week by Offenbach, if the first bars do not prove that the rest is at least worth hearing. You *must* allow me to play the introduction on your piano--"

He did not wait for her permission, but hastily entered the sitting room, so that there was nothing left her but to follow with the lamp.

Lorinser was still sitting in the sofa corner. His eyes were fixed on the ceiling and he seemed so lost in thought that he did not notice the new comers.

Christiane set the lamp heavily on the table, as if she wished to rouse him by the rattling of the shade.

"Allow me to introduce you to each other, gentlemen," she said coldly. "Herr--what is your name?"

"Heinrich Mohr, Fräulein. A name hitherto very obscure, but which you will perhaps help to some moderate distinction. But an introduction is scarcely necessary. I already have the honor of knowing that gentleman."

Lorinser fixed his piercing eyes on the other's face and then carelessly replied: "I didn't know I had the pleasure of your acquaintance before."

"That's a matter of course," replied Mohr, approaching the little table and raising the shade from the lamp. "The acquaintance has hitherto been entirely on my side. Besides, with the exception of a casual meeting in the entry, it's still very recent; it dates from last night."

Lorinser rose. He seemed to find the full glare of the lamp objectionable.

"Last night," said he. "You must be mistaken."

"My dear sir," replied Mohr with eager courtesy, "he who possesses so marked a face as yours, may be certain that no one will ever mistake his physiognomy, though to be sure, I only saw it for about five minutes through a window on the ground floor."

"Sir, allow me--"

"But I'll take my oath before a magistrate, that it was you whom I saw in very lively society--it was a house in König's stadt--you'll recollect. You must know, Fraulein, that I'm still poet enough to prefer night to day. I usually wander aimlessly about the streets till after midnight; to be sure one doesn't always see the brightest side of men, but if you wish to know them thoroughly--and they are so incautious! They fancy if the curtains are down, they can show their weaknesses great and small in secret. As if there were not chinks and cracks in blinds and curtains, and one tiny insignificant little hole was not enough to afford a view of a whole room, as a single word often gives a glimpse of the inmost depths of hypocritical souls."

"An extremely poetical fancy, to peep through curtains," Lorinser remarked, seizing his hat. "Unfortunately this time you've made a mistake in the person, as I could prove, if it were worth while to take the trouble, or the lady could by any possibility be interested in it. Meantime, as you are about to occupy yourselves with musical exercises my presence is superfluous--"

He bowed to Christiane and walked toward the door.

She turned to Mohr, who was watching Lorinser with a mischievous glance.

"I must request you to excuse me to-day," said she. "If your ironical symphony is anything more than a jest--you will always find me at home in the morning, between twelve and one o'clock."

Mohr did not make the slightest attempt to request a short respite for himself and his composition. The musical object of his visit seemed to have entirely escaped his attention, for his eyes were sparkling with delight at the thought of having driven Lorinser from his sofa corner. He took a cordial but respectful leave of Christiane, and followed the Herr Candidat, who silently walked out into the entry.

On the stairs they passed; Lorinser seemed to wish to give Mohr the precedence. "Pray go on," said Mohr in the most cordial tone, "I'm perfectly at home here. But perhaps you may prefer not to come up these steep stairs too often. You might get hurt. The house where I saw you yesterday is better lighted at any rate."

Lorinser half turned and said in a tone of suppressed fury: "You're very much mistaken, sir, if

you expect to intimidate me by such paltry expedients. I deny having any knowledge of the place where you pretend to have seen me; but I suspect from the tone you assume, that the company was by no means the best. Well I confess, that for a man who, in a lady's presence, denounces another and tries to represent him as a person who visits bad houses--for such a spiteful and slanderous spy, I repeat I've no feeling but profound contempt."

"Thank you," replied Mohr dryly. "If you had assured me of your esteem, I should have taken it more to heart. Besides, my worthy friend in the dark, I shall throw a little light on your path, should you show any disposition to continue your visits to this lady, whom you already know quite too well; I should be forced to speak still more plainly. I don't see why I am to withhold my information against an individual of your stamp, who visits workmen's societies for the purpose of denouncing to the police any speaker that may not happen to suit him. I have the honor to wish you a good night."

He raised his hat with mock respect and pointed out the path across the courtyard, but did not follow, until the stealthy steps of Lorinser, who in helpless rage could only exclaim, "we shall meet again," had died away in the hall leading through the front of the house. Then he looked up at Christiane's lighted windows. "This time at least I did no half way work!" he said in a well satisfied tone. "She will thank me for it some day. That singular woman is a whole-hearted creature."

If he could only have seen what the object of his adoration was doing in her lonely room! After the two men went out, she had hastily, as if to re-consecrate a sanctuary that had been profaned by evil spirits, taken from her bureau a small carved frame containing a photograph, and placed it like an altar picture on the table, so that it was brightly illumined by the lamp. Then she drew up a chair, sat down before it, and gazed at it in silent devotion. But her stooping posture becoming uncomfortable at last, she glided down from the chair upon the floor, and knelt, with her chin resting on the table and her eyes fixed with enthusiastic fervor on the little card. The pictured face gazed quietly into vacancy seeming to deprecate homage, and it bore the familiar features of--our Edwin.

CHAPTER V.

The following day was cloudy and dismal. When at the appointed hour Edwin arrived at the Thiergarten, he found it completely deserted. The autumn rain was trickling drearily down, the trees, which had hitherto still retained something of their summer aspect, now hung their heads and seemed to realize that the sunny illusion could no more be retained than their yellow leaves which were beaten down by the rain drops. Very dreary looked the gold-fish pond, its surface bestrewn with withered foliage, through which here and there a spot of deeper crimson betokened the presence of some fish that snapped at a water-fly and then indignantly retreated to the bottom again. Even the statue of Venus looked as mournful in the falling rain as if she were reflecting with horror that the time would soon come when a mantle of snow would rest on her bare shoulders, and a crow, pecking at her diadem, scream the harsh song of the Northern winter into her ear.

"She will not come," Edwin said to himself, after pacing up and down once or twice under his umbrella. "The weather is too disagreeable. Besides, perhaps she knows the contents of the Count's letter only too well, and it was merely a gentle way of getting rid of me. Then--what am I to do then. Did she expect me in that case, to open the letter and read what she could not tell me?"--He drew the note from his pocket and again glanced at the address: "'Mademoiselle Antoinette Marchand.' No, if she does not come, has not the courage to come--the fish yonder shall keep the secret."

At this moment a carriage rolled along the avenue and stopped before the open space at the end of the pond. The striped waistcoat swung himself down from the box, and out sprang the beautiful girl, wrapped in a long black silk cloak, with the hood drawn over her head like a nun, looking, with her sparkling eyes and slightly flushed cheeks, more lovely than ever. She nodded to Edwin from the distance and smiled so frankly that all his doubts suddenly vanished, and he secretly begged her pardon for them.

"I've kept you waiting," she said, as she hung lightly on his arm. "But my coachman made *me* wait. I suppose he did not think the weather suitable for driving. However, I am here now, and it's all the better that it rains; no one will disturb us; I shall not be interrupted in my confession and my 'wise friend's' moralizing and head-shaking will have no hindrance."

"Have I ever shown a decided inclination that way?"

"No, but I fear when you know me better--! True, it is said: 'that which can be comprehended can be forgiven.' But how are you to understand me? Hitherto you have taken me for heaven knows who, at any rate, for some very peculiar person, with good reasons for keeping her incognito. Now when you learn how simply everything can be explained, won't you think it your duty to guide me back to the paths of wisdom and self-sacrifice, which will lead me straight to an early grave? If I had not seen this conclusion foreshadowed so plainly, how gladly I'd have told you long ago what you're now to hear for the first time!"

"Try me and see whether I'm not less stern than my vocation," he forced himself to reply in a jesting tone. "I, like you, am no adept in self-denial, where I feel that I have to assert a natural right, and therefore I lack the first requisites of a moralist. What a foolish awe you have of a poor private tutor! I know professors of philosophy who have done the most absurd things."

"No, no, no!" she said earnestly, gazing down at the wet gravel, over which she was lightly walking. "You don't understand it. You and I are made of very different material. Can you understand why the little fish are better off down in that dark water, than if you bade them to the most luxurious couch of lilies and rose leaves? Every creature lives in its own element, and perishes in an alien one. Don't you see, that I too can philosophize?"

She paused, and for some time walked thoughtfully beside him, while the solemn boy following some twenty paces behind under a large umbrella, trod carefully in the dainty footprints made by his young mistress. The carriage waited in the avenue beyond.

At last she paused a moment, looked him full in the face with a mischievous expression in her large dark eyes, and said: "Before I betray to whom you have given your arm, Won't you tell me what you have taken me for?"

"I would not hesitate a moment," he answered smiling, "but indeed you wrong me. Because I have confessed myself a philosopher, you believe me foolish enough always to fancy things different from what they appear. Thank God, I understand my own interests better. I'm glad when I encounter something which banishes thought, and allows me to dream, as when I listen to beautiful music, enjoy a spring day, or the fragrance of clusters of roses. My thoughts--why should I deny it?--have been very much engrossed by you, perhaps more than was well. But the idea of imputing any blame to you has never occurred to me."

She laughed. "You're only evading the question. But no matter what good or evil qualities you have attributed to me: I am neither an aristocratic lady, nor an adventuress, but the very prosaic child of 'poor but honest parents.' Do you remember, in your boyhood, hearing of a ballet dancer on the Berlin stage called Marchand? But how should you? My father--he was a Frenchman--was still in the prime of life, when he had an unlucky fall from a flying trapeze, which forever shut him out from the field of his art, with all its joys and honors. He took this so much to heart, that he never wished to see or hear of the theatre, and voluntarily retired into exile in a miserable little abode in the Mark. Here he married my mother, and had three daughters beside the oldest, myself. One died young, but the two others married worthy burghers and became happy wives. Things did not prosper so well with me unfortunately. I never was like the others, and my good mother had a great deal of trouble with me. Perhaps she'd have been more successful in teaching me if she'd shown me more love, but though possessing the kindest heart in the world, she was always cold, stern and formal to me, and as my father only spoiled me the more, you can imagine what sort of training I received. I once heard it whispered that I was not my mother's child. But although in such a small place nothing remains a secret, and everybody knows his neighbors' business by heart, I never discovered what was meant by the hasty words, and almost believe it was only said in explanation of my mother's coldness, which was noticed even by strangers. Perhaps she was jealous of the love my father lavished upon me; for her aversion increased with years, in exact proportion as I grew prettier and my father petted me more. Besides, none of my sisters were like me. You ought to have known my father, in order to be able to understand and forgive him for idolizing me. When a very young man, he had gone through the best dancing school in Paris, and the impressions made by the last brilliant days of the Empire never left him. He always wore pumps and a white cravat, and when he felt particularly happy, told us tales of Paris, the entertainments he had witnessed at court--of course only from a corner of the gallery--the duchesses and marquises to whom he had given lessons, their beauty, grace, and the luxury that surrounded them, concluding usually with a heavy sigh, as he looked around our miserable room: '*Ils sont passés, ces jours de fête!*'"

"This always affected my mother unpleasantly, and my sisters listened to these constantly repeated tales without any special pleasure. They had very little imagination, and were completely absorbed in the petty cares and joys of the present; but these fairy like descriptions so filled my mind, that the wretched reality of my life became more and more distasteful to me. I dreamed of nothing but magnificence and splendor, a luxurious existence without any cares, and of kings and princes paying court to me. I gave grand names to my dolls, constantly practiced speaking French, which my father approved, and when one day at dinner, the conversation turned upon what each of us wanted to become. I, precocious little ten-year-old, exclaimed: 'I will be a duchess!'

"My mother angrily reproved me: 'it was wicked pride, I must try to become good and pious, modest and industrious'--you can probably imagine all I heard. My father was perfectly silent. Afterwards when I was alone with him, he drew me, still violently weeping into his arms, kissed

my wet eyes, and said only: '*Sois tranquille, ma mignonne. Tu vas gâter tes beaux yeux avec ces larmes.*' From that day, at home and at school, whenever any one wanted to tease me, I was called 'Duchess Toinette.' But I was not at all annoyed; on the contrary I liked the nickname far better than the simple 'Toni,' my mother usually called me. After a time as I became more sensible and perceived that my father's little pension would not enable us to live in ducal style, I might have lost this sickly desire for royal luxury, and in time learned to be satisfied with a modest income, like my sisters. But unfortunately there was a constant temptation close at hand. For years, our little city had been under the rule of a petty prince, and the ancestral castle still stood in all its magnificence on a wooded height, which could be climbed in ten minutes. The prince himself had been suddenly killed in the prime of life, while hunting. The solemn funeral, which all the inhabitants flocked to attend, was the first memorable spectacle that had left a lasting impression on my childish brain. Since that time, the princess had lived in the castle with her children, a pretty little boy some years older than I, and several daughters. The household was maintained in the same style as before, and after the year of mourning had expired, new guests and entertainments brought fresh gaiety.

"To be sure, we plebeian children only witnessed these things through the railing of the park, or if we could slip in, through the lofty windows that looked out upon the garden. But it was more than enough to give new food to my ducal dreams. The superb toilettes, the countless candles, the graceful curtseys, smiles, whispers, and flirtations, which I witnessed for hours, with my face pressed against a window pane, fairly intoxicated me. I would gladly have spent my life in the midst of such surroundings, and something told me I should have harmonized with them well. At least I did not understand my sisters, who always grew red and foolish if any of the strangers in their walks about our little city condescended to exchange a few gracious words with us children, who were standing curiously outside the gates. I always had an answer ready and made my little curtsey so easily, that more than once the ladies noticed me particularly, and exchanged with each other in French, flattering words about my looks, not a syllable of which escaped me.

"My father, who went to the castle, as he gave dancing lessons to the princess' children, often repeated the compliments that had been paid me there, and held me up as a pattern to my sisters. Of course this was not agreeable to them or their mother, and often caused unpleasant scenes. Often he brought home all sorts of dainties, confectionary, and rare fruits. The butler was his god-father. This again made my mother angry and with reason; for since I had tasted these delicacies, our simple fare, of which there was often scarce enough, was far too coarse for me, and I preferred to push away my plate and fast, rather than to eat a dish that didn't suit me. At such times I satisfied myself with the fruits and berries to be found in the garden and woods, and it was only strange that, in spite of all this, I did not grow thin or weak, but retained the fair complexion and red cheeks which, as I plainly perceived, were the envy of the rouged countesses and princesses.

"And some one else there was who admired them; this was no less a personage than His Highness, the little prince. He was an odd little mortal then, and I think will always remain so; thin and fragile as if made of porcelain, and equally stiff and polished, with a doll's face that would have been very pretty if one could only have believed it alive. And in an equally lifeless manner, as if he feared he might break while doing it, he paid court to me. We had met him once in the park, a horde of children dashing through the shrubbery with loud hurrahs; catch, and hare and hounds, were our favorite games. He had come there, Heaven knows how, without his tutor, and we suddenly grew quiet, more on account of his uncanny stiffness and fashionable dress, than from respect. But he was inclined to be especially gracious, to me in particular condescension itself, and I, stupid little monkey, prided myself upon it not a little. Dear me, I was only ten years old, but the idea of being a duchess was firmly impressed upon my mind, and I actually believed that he would marry me and realize all my fairy visions. So for several years this absurd secret flirtation, which wearied as much as it flattered me, continued, until at last the princess discovered it. To be sure, my chivalrous little lover declared that he had never had any intention of making me his wife, but merely his mistress. In spite of this precocious discrimination, however, it was thought better to break off the childish intimacy once for all; so I again became a duchess in anticipation, and even my father was no longer permitted to enter the castle.

"I remember, after this time, that is when I was grown up, but one occasion when I again saw the park and even the interior of the castle. Some cousin or nephew of my kind father came to visit us, for whom, during the few days of his stay every effort was made to place our usual homely mode of living in the most endurable light. As we could give him no special entertainment at home, we were obliged to make excursions abroad, and it fortunately happened that the princess and her children had gone to some springs. So under the care of the butler, we visited all the rooms, into which hitherto I had only peeped. My father was delighted to be able to mount his hobby, and constantly related how this, that, and the other had been handsomer, richer, or more tasteful in Paris. I could only gaze in silent astonishment, and yet it seemed to me as if all this were a matter of course, and I, if only permitted to do so, could use these costly articles as carelessly as if born in such a sphere. On the following day, the cousin stammered out a confused proposal of marriage, and, to make his worthy person more agreeable to me, described the charms of his own home--he had an oil cloth manufactory in a tolerably large city. I should like now to recall the expression with which I gave him a positive refusal. It was certainly one of which no full blooded duchess would have had cause to be ashamed.

"No! if I could not have my faithless porcelain prince, I would never take the first plain workman I met. When the cousin departed, my mother looked at me with sincere sorrow. 'Poor thing,' said she. 'You're not to blame, because others' (she meant my father) 'have turned your head. But tell me, for what are you really waiting'--I answered that I was waiting for nothing and for no one, and only desired to be permitted to live as I was doing:--this was only half true. You may well suppose that I was waiting for no lover, for I have frankly told you that up to this time I have been unable to discover any talent for sentiment in my nature. But to continue to live as I was--no, I could not have endured it forever.

"My father grew old and feeble, and many other little perquisites ceased, besides the dancing lessons at the castle, for which he had been handsomely paid. As the time hung heavy on his hands and he could read to himself very little, one of us was obliged to spend half the day in reading aloud his favorite romances, thereby neglecting her work, which to be sure brought in a very small income. But why should I entertain you with the details of these petty household wants? A man can never imagine all the embarrassments, all the secret tears and vexations of a young girl who is obliged to deny herself the necessaries of life to save the money required for the trifles she deems still more necessary, and especially one who has so much taste and love for luxury, that when the hard won finery is at last finished, she would rather tear it all off and go about in her Cinderella garb, because the articles obtained by so many struggles are still so poor. That is, the dress was really not so bad, for with a few yards of white muslin and some bows of ribbon a girl can look very well, especially at sixteen or eighteen, and with a face like the one God had bestowed upon me. But unfortunately, I continued to remember the real elegance, the Parisian toilettes I had seen at the castle, the beautiful fans and flowers, real laces and rustling satin robes, which my few pennies could never obtain. You shake your head, my wise friend. But consider, that a trout obstinately insists upon living in clear, fresh water, and no philosophy will induce him to be satisfied with a stagnant pond, where other very estimable fish are perfectly comfortable.

"And then--what had I to lead me out of these weaknesses and follies and make amends, if the fairy tale of which I dreamed, should never come true? You, my dear friend, have your thoughts, your ambition, your pride. But I--knew nothing thoroughly. How should I? Where could I have learned it? What had I been taught? To speak French, to play the piano a little--for the young chorister, who gave me lessons, tried to drown himself in the river on account of a hopeless love for me, and then married the pastor's daughter, who came up just at the right moment and shrieked for help, and of course the lessons were not continued. Sewing I had always hated, for it is absurd to suppose that embroidering, knitting stockings, and making shirts, can really render any human being happy, or compensate for unsatisfied desires--"

She paused a moment and gazed sadly into vacancy. A sigh heaved her bosom and made her nostrils quiver. "How cold it is!" she said, drawing her cloak closer around her. "Come, we will walk a little faster. Where was I? Oh yes; I was talking about knitting and sewing and everything connected with them. How often I've heard and read that a girl will find her vocation, her life-long happiness in love and marriage. I saw this confirmed in my sisters, who though younger than I, had their little love experiences much sooner, and patiently endured the tedium of knitting and sewing, since their minds were not idle, but wove the fairest dreams among the meshes and cross-stitches. Then they married utterly insignificant people, but were perfectly satisfied, and continued to labor with hands and heads for their husbands and children. But I--my prince had married, too, in accordance with his rank, and quite without agitation, as befits porcelain figures, at least so I heard, and I still stayed with my old parents, waiting to ascend my ducal throne.

"I ought to be there now, and after all it would be better for me, than to wander about here in the rain with you and talk of things that are hopeless. But these poor, dear parents, to whom I was a source of great anxiety--even my father shook his head sadly when my birthday came round--were both taken from me in a single week, and with them the only visible object in life of which I was conscious.

"Fortunately the butler, whom my father's will named as my guardian, was a sensible man. He perceived that he could not persuade me to remain quietly in the little house from which my parents had been borne to their graves, waiting to see if any one would come and take me away. He suggested, as I still had an unconcealed desire to know something of the world, that an advertisement for the situation of governess or companion should be inserted in several of the Berlin papers. A place soon offered that seemed very suitable. A baroness wrote to ask if I would take charge of the education of her two little daughters and assist her in housekeeping, as she was in delicate health. Nothing more than I had learned was required; masters and mistresses were engaged for all the difficult branches of study.

"This was like a deliverance to me. To live in a large, elegant house, make tea at the evening receptions, show that in spite of my provincial origin I could vie in elegance and manner with my lady in Berlin--now that you know me, you can understand what a tempting prospect this afforded.

"I persuaded my guardian to pay me my share of our little inheritance and the net proceeds of our furniture at once. I intended to keep the few hundred thalers for pocket money in the great city, or use it at once if my outfit should not be presentable. During the year that I wore mourning for my parents and was alone nearly all day, I had put my wardrobe in order as well as

I could. But who could tell what the baroness would say to it? Well, I needn't have troubled myself about her. I liked her very well, and also the house and children--I could not have desired anything better. But unfortunately I pleased her too well; for scarcely had we exchanged a few words, during which she scanned me from head to foot, when she said with the greatest cordiality: 'My dear Fräulein, I regret having given you unnecessary trouble. But you're far too pretty, to enter a house where there are grown up sons and a great many young people going in and out. You would turn the heads of some or perhaps all of them, and there would be murders and homicides to pay. Don't take my frankness amiss, but I know my circle, and moreover am ready to indemnify you for breaking the engagement.'

"There was nothing to take amiss, and so fifteen minutes after I was again standing in the street below, entirely alone, and without even knowing the name of a hotel where it would be proper for me to stay; for in my bewilderment, I had not thought of asking the baroness, who seemed very anxious to get rid of me before the aforesaid grown up sons came home.

"On one course, however, I was positively determined: not to go back to my former poverty in the little nest of gossips, where on Sundays the very flies dropped from the walls out of pure weariness, and during the week nothing was talked about but cooking, washing and saving--I would rather have drowned myself. And who missed me at home? Who needed me? Who would have been particularly glad to see me again? I should only have found malicious faces, taunts, and probably even heard evil interpretations of my unlucky expedition.

"As for the first time in my life, I walked in perfect freedom through the streets, and the elegant ladies rustled past me, the carriages rolled through the Unter den Linden, and the shop windows glittered with the most beautiful things, like a bazar in the Arabian Nights, or the enchanted cave of Xaxa, while I moved through the throng on the loveliest of summer days with a treasure in my pocket such as I had never before possessed, and for which I was accountable to no one--the thought suddenly darted through my mind: 'for once in your life see how rich, aristocratic people feel, whose left hands do not know how much their right hands throw out of the window. Live for once in plenty, deny yourself nothing, show the stupid money that has accidentally wandered into your pocket and for which you care so little, how you despise it, though you are only a poor girl and must earn your bread! If you were very avaricious and put your five or six hundred thalers in a savings bank, the paltry interest you would receive would not make you happy. When all has gone as lightly as it came, it will still be possible to creep back into the yoke. Then you will at least have experienced how happier mortals feel perhaps'--and I spoke as if some of my mother's nature stirred within me--'perhaps you will fare like the apprentices in a confectioners shop: become surfeited with luxury, and afterwards be satisfied to return to narrow, commonplace surroundings.' Well I had now decided that I would for once be Duchess Toinette in earnest. But as I was a perfect stranger, and did not know a single human being--who knows whether I might not have lost the courage to execute my plan. A little country girl cannot change herself into a great lady in the twinkling of an eye, even if she has five hundred thalers to use for the purpose. But chance came to my assistance. I had traveled to Berlin in a first-class carriage. I had long desired to try one, and while making our short excursions about the neighborhood always felt secretly ashamed and irritated because we were compelled to use a third-class conveyance. Now I could gratify my desire, and was very comfortable in my plush armchair, until a gentleman, who occupied the coupé with me, commenced a conversation which threatened to become a little dangerous. He was a very elegant, aristocratic young man, whose servant came to the carriage at every station to ask his masters' orders.

"I made such short answers to his gallant speeches, that he probably perceived he must adopt a different tone with me. From that moment he was courtesy and attention itself, and treated me as a high-born dame, though I did not conceal the object of my visit to the city. When we stopped, he took leave expressing the hope of seeing me again in a few days at the baroness' house, where he was a frequent visitor.

"This was a matter of perfect indifference to me then. His Excellency, the Count, as his servant called him, did not interest me in the least. But now suddenly, as I wandered through the streets racking my brains to decide what I was to do next, I heard a well known voice--it was the count's. He greeted me very courteously, asked how I had found the baroness, and when he had been informed of my fate kindly consoled me. I need feel no anxiety, I could not fail to obtain a similar and even more desirable position; he would himself make inquiries among all his acquaintances, and in the first place, as I told him my difficulty about finding suitable lodgings, he could recommend me to very pleasant rooms which he had once rented for a relative. She had afterwards decided not to take possession of them, as she had changed her plans; but they were still empty, and the landlady was a very worthy woman, with whom I would be very comfortable.

"Of course this intelligence was very welcome to me. I only insisted that I would not avail myself of the fact that the lodgings had already been paid for one quarter in advance, but remain my own mistress and be indebted to no one.

"He at last assented to this, and treated me in every respect in a modest and almost deferential manner. Yet I half regretted having allowed him to accompany me to the house. The landlady seemed surprised, and then--he would know where I was to be found. Who could tell whether he might not become annoying? And besides my incognita was destroyed. But my fear was groundless. On the day after I was settled, I received a note from him; he was unfortunately obliged to forego the pleasure of inquiring about my welfare in person, as his father's sudden

illness compelled him to set out for his estates at once. I acknowledge that I felt very much relieved. I was really entirely free from control, and could regulate my life as I chose.

"What that would be, if directed by my taste, you have known me long enough to be aware, although here and there various trifles were lacking. When I opened my box of ornaments, the contents did not look exactly like crown jewels. If I heard of a poor family, I could only show my generosity by the gift of five thalers. And then--I was quite too lonely. When people wish to live in ducal style, a little court must not be lacking. After I had lived entirely by myself for two weeks, I fortunately made your acquaintance. Then I was perfectly satisfied, and no longer feared the return of the count, although he wrote me letters, in which he abandoned his formal style of address and gradually became warmer and warmer. He confessed that even anxiety about his father's life had been unable to drive my image from his memory, begged for one line to assure him that his attentions were not wholly indifferent to me, described his state of mind in more and more exaggerated colors, and the more resolutely I left these foolish epistles unanswered, the more passionate they became. This was all that was wanting to completely disgust me with the acquaintance. I gave my little Jean orders to receive no more letters, and if a gentleman whose appearance I described, ever called upon me, not to admit him under any circumstances.

"And now this scene of yesterday! I could not sleep half the night from pure indignation. What does he imagine? For what must he take me, if he expects by this bold intrusion--for the servant had his orders--to obtain any concessions! Oh! these men, and what they call love! Am I not right when I fear this mad passion, which makes positively dangerous, people otherwise well-bred. And you--you have become perfectly silent and not interrupted me once. Speak at least, or I shall be forced to believe that you think me not only a poor fool, but a poor sinner."

She hastily withdrew her hand from his arm and stepped out from under the umbrella. The rain had nearly ceased, a faint ray of sunlight pierced the grey autumnal mist, she threw back her hood and revealed her face, deeply flushed by her eager words and rapid pace.

"My dear Fräulein," he said smiling, "confession for confession: the fool and sinner stands before you. But he hopes for absolution. It was beyond human power to solve unaided an enigma so simple and yet so singular. Besides, I must now confess--that 'worthy woman,' your landlady--"

"What! Do you know her? What do you know about her? Oh I pray do not leave me in ignorance any longer!" she exclaimed with anxious haste.

He soothed her for she had suddenly grown very pale. "We must not talk so loud," said he, "little Jean's great ears have approached nearer to us--" She again took his arm and turned hurriedly into one of the side avenues. "Well? Well?" she urged. "Oh my God, I had no suspicion of it."

He now told her all that he had heard from the woman, the previous destination of the rooms, the understanding between the landlady and the count, the dangers to which in her unsuspecting ignorance, she had exposed herself. "I myself," he concluded, "although often anxious when I thought of the mystery that surrounded your life--believe me my dear friend--only needed to see you enter the room, hear your voice, your laugh, to be perfectly satisfied, fully convinced, that nothing base could ever have dominion over you. I was much more inclined to believe you to be in reality what you were only feigning to be: a true princess in disguise who would again re-ascend her throne some day and then appoint the faithful servant, who during her exile had often chatted away her cares and *ennui*, to some position that would require no gloves, such as court book-inspector, or private secretary, or even chief bird feeder to Her Highness Duchess Toinette."

She did not seem to hear the jest. The sweet face was bent steadily toward the ground, the little hands trembled. She suddenly paused again.

"And the letter?" she asked, without looking at him, "Did you bring it with you?"

He drew it out of his pocket. "It did not disturb my slumbers," he answered smiling. "Shall we destroy it unread and throw it into the pond among the withered leaves?"

"No. Read it. Read it aloud." He broke the black seal and read the following lines:

"Honored Fraulein:

"You persist in refusing me a reply. I see that you put no faith in my written assurances of devotion, and if it were possible for anything to increase the strength of my love, it would be this proof of your proud reserve, I will henceforth spare you my letters, as I shall soon be able to reaffirm all my professions verbally, and then I hope to remove all your doubt of the sincerity of my passion. The event I feared has happened, my father died to-night, That the first lines I write after this heavy loss, are addressed to you, will prove better than any words could do, that all my hopes in life are bound up in your image, that my happiness or misery is in your hands. Whether, in my present condition, you will deem me worthy of kinder treatment I must humbly wait for you to decide.

"Ever yours

"If the man is to be judged from his style, we have been hasty in making the master responsible for his boorish servant," observed Edwin in a jesting tone, as he folded the letter and handed it to her. "Will you not at least condole with your faithful knight?"

Mechanically she took the black-edged sheet, but her face remained perfectly immovable. "Come," she said after a pause. "It's beginning to rain again. I don't feel very well. Take me back to the carriage. Oh! it's horrible! horrible! horrible!"

He consoled her as well as he could.

"Suppose he offers you his hand and a count's coronet," he said, at the same moment feeling a sharp pang in his heart that almost stopped his breath.

She did not seem to hear him, but shook her curls back from her face, so that her hair escaped from its confinement and rolled in luxuriant masses from beneath her hood. Then she threw back her little cloak as if suffocating. "Has it grown so hot?" she asked, "or is it only--but let's walk faster. I can scarcely wait till I'm at rest--and alone! No, no, you're not in my way, certainly not, I know what I owe you. But that--that--there are things we can only conquer when we can close our eyes and cry like little children. Do you know, my dear friend--I should like--But why speak of it? You can't understand. To-morrow will be your day, won't it? Yes, it was yesterday that you remained with me and that insolent man--but we'll say no more about it. I shall expect you to-morrow. Farewell for to-day. Forgive me for not asking you to drive home with me. But it's better so--besides, I don't know what I'm talking about--I--oh God!" She pressed her hand to her brow and paused a moment, as if her head reeled. Edwin ventured to draw her closer to him, "My dear, dear child, compose yourself," said he. "What has happened? What is lost?"

She instantly regained her composure, "Nothing," she murmured. "I thank you very much for all your friendship. So to-morrow--and farewell!"

She held out her hand and looked at him, apparently quite calm again, and then entered the carriage; the dwarf climbed nimbly up to the box, and Edwin saw her bend forward and look at him with a long, earnest gaze as she drove away. Then he remained alone in the grey day with his gloomy thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

Why was he so much more hopeless after her frank confession, than before? He now knew that his feelings had not deceived him, that the equivocal circumstances in her position had nothing to do with her real nature. Besides, nothing seemed to stand between them, no older rights and claims of any third person, no contrast of rank or wealth. She was as poor as he, as dependent, of equally humble origin, and when this artificially woven fairy dream had passed away, which must soon happen, she would be helpless in a strange world, where a friend and protector must be more to her than anything else. True--for the moment he had no thought of asking any woman to share his life. But hitherto he had neither desired nor expected such an acquisition to his existence. If the matter now became serious, why should he not be man enough to work himself out of the "tun" and provide more spacious quarters for three persons? If the matter should become serious! But that was what he could not believe after her confession, as readily as before. He had never seen more clearly that all his fire was blazing against a rock, that not even a suspicion of his state of mind had yet dawned upon her. To have heard the saddest story of sin, despair, and a lost youth, would have disheartened him less than this cool, unapproachable innocence.

Sadly he returned home, drenched to the skin, having purposely exposed himself to the rain to cool the fever raging within. While undressing he told Balder everything, even his utter hopelessness. "And yet, after all, it is best as it is," he concluded, "when I've once got over it. Could we receive a duchess here?"

Balder did not understand all this. To him the very thought that any one could refuse a kingdom for the sake of loving and being loved by Edwin would have been incomprehensible to him. He eagerly began to contradict him and to build castles in the air. "Let her once be poor again," said he. "Then she'll feel what treasures still remain. Besides, she's no commonplace person, and still so young; how much she can learn. And you're a good teacher. What have I not learned from you!"

"Yes, *you*, child," sighed Edwin smiling and stroking his hair. He was going to add something, but Mohr came in and told his adventure of the preceding day with that fine fellow, the mysterious Lorinser, and how the hope of establishing a musical intercourse with Christiane had given him so much energy, that he had written out the first bars of his famous symphony that very morning. He was in excellent spirits and according to his usual custom let off a shower of fireworks in the shape of sarcasms and quaint remarks, with which, to be sure, he was the only person amused, as the brothers only laughed from sympathy.

When they had sat together for some time, Edwin went to his pupil. Hitherto he had always felt a sense of comfort in the little house on the lagune. His passionate restlessness passed away, the young girl's great calm eyes, which rested so eagerly on his lips, had driven away all melancholy, so that he grew eloquent and cheerful, and unfolded to her the ancient sages' world of thought until long after the hour devoted to the lesson had expired. But to-day, for the first time, this beneficent spell failed. He was forced to plead illness and depart before the lesson was over, to Leah's evident regret.

The next day was "his day," but his impatience drove him to the house in Jägerstrasse early in the morning. He started, when he saw the landlady's broad face look peevishly out of one of the windows in the second story. He darted breathlessly up stairs and pulled the bell. His suspicion was confirmed. No striped waistcoat appeared, the shining glass eyes of the solemn boy did not welcome him. Instead, the landlady herself, without looking at him, sulkily opened the door.

"Whom do you want?" she grumbled. "Fräulein Toinette Marchand? I'm sorry. She has moved. Ah! so it's *you*? That alters the case. What do you say to it? You must know more than any of the rest of us, who were not thought good enough for the least explanation--Or do you bring some order? Pray walk in. I can make myself entirely at home here once more."

She allowed Edwin to enter and then followed him into the familiar red drawing room. Everything was unchanged: the flowers was there, the parrot was on the perch, only the bird cage stood open and empty, and the bronze clock on the marble mantel piece no longer ticked.

"Just think," said the woman, evidently glad to pour out her heart to some one who was half initiated into the secret, "she came home yesterday in a droschky--the first time she did not have her hired carriage, and the boy Jean came directly up to me and asked me to come down to the young lady. When I entered, I found her maid already packing. She herself was standing in the middle of the room, staring straight before her, as if she were troubled about something. When I spoke, she instantly recollected herself. She was obliged to leave the city at once, she said, and as she should not return to these rooms, wanted to pay me the rent. 'Leave the city,' said I. 'Good gracious! and so suddenly? And where are you going, if I may ask?' For I thought, after all the police will make a descent upon me, the secret, the crime she has committed is now discovered, and she wants to get away that she may not be caught napping. But then--she looked so haughty and composed, and did not address a single word to me more than was absolutely necessary, and yet I'm the landlady. As she went away in the midst of the quarter, it was fair, she said, that she should pay for the full three months--though she'd not been here quite four weeks--and counted out thirty-six thalers on the table. I could consider it so much profit. For everything else--though, dear me, she'd given me no trouble at all--she laid three louis d'ors on the table, and the maid too had her full quarter's wages and a handsome present. Then she went to the birds--the parrot belonged to the count--opened the door of the cage, fed them, and said: 'You'll let them go free,' and with a flashing glance and a nod of the head went down stairs to the droschky Jean had been sent to fetch, and on which her trunk was already strapped. She took the boy with her, but to what depot she ordered the man to drive--neither I nor the maid could hear. Mercy, what will the count say when he comes back, for I promised I would keep her for him, and he said 'you shall not lose by it, Madame Sturgmüller.' His servant was here yesterday, 'How had the young lady behaved?' he asked. 'Who was that gentleman with her'--he meant you. Well, I said no more than I knew--that you only came to dine and always seemed very quiet and brought her books. Then he laughed. 'They're probably studying something very beautiful, Madame, and if I tell my master, the count--' 'Well,' said I, 'why does he leave her all alone? Such a young thing--idleness is the beginning of all love affairs.' But he shook his head and wanted to know nothing about it. Now, tell me, my dear sir, what does all this mean? Merciful God, if I should be obliged to go before a jury after all--"

Edwin, in spite of his sadness, could not help smiling. He denied all knowledge of Toinette's movements, and his evident alarm at not finding her, proved his sincerity. He had never inquired into her circumstances, and where she had so suddenly vanished was as incomprehensible to him as to the landlady. He walked, the woman constantly talking to him, through all the pleasant rooms that suddenly seemed so desolate and lifeless, and for the first time entered the sleeping apartment, where the traces of a hasty departure were still visible. On the toilette table, among various empty boxes, stood a small bottle in which there was still a little essence of violet, a perfume of which she had been particularly fond. He took advantage of a moment when he was unobserved, to appropriate the useless relic. With what strange emotions he stood beside the bed and gazed at the snow white pillows on which her head had rested. "She was a beautiful girl," said the woman. "Even the most envious must admit that, and no princess could be more stately. But mark my words, sir: one of these days her name will appear in the papers, not on the first page where the arrivals and departures of the aristocracy are announced, but among the miscellaneous news, accidents and sentences of imprisonment for ten years or for life. Why shouldn't she have waited for the count, who's such a charming gentleman? If a girl has a good

conscience, she doesn't try to be peculiar, but is neither better nor worse than other mortals. Believe me, I know the world, and haven't rented rooms for ten years to the very best class of lodgers for nothing."

A feeling of inexpressible loathing overpowered Edwin. He hastily turned away, promising to call again some other time, and left the house, in the deepest melancholy.

CHAPTER VII.

She had not left a line for him, not even a note to say farewell; it was too much kindness to say: 'I'm going for such and such reasons, to such and such a place.' He was of so little importance to her, she was so utterly indifferent to what he must feel at her sudden disappearance. No nomad who strikes his tent, leaves his camping ground without casting a glance toward the fire where he prepared his meals, the spring that refreshed him, although he knows he shall find the same friendly elements everywhere. And he, whom she had called "friend";--what a horribly cold heart, that can prize the best treasures so lightly, leave the most unselfish devotion in the lurch so carelessly, like a bottle of perfume, which was pleasant to the senses, but which can be bought in any shop.

And on a creature of such a shallow mind, such an icy heart, he had for weeks lavished his thoughts and opinions; nay his very anguish when he had determined to break loose from her bonds, told him only too distinctly that it would be long ere the task could be accomplished. The more violently he strove to accuse her, the more victoriously the image of his upbraided friend, with her artless expression and the last earnest gaze the dark eyes had fixed upon him, rose before his fancy, and he at last perceived that he only reproached her in order to have a pretext for constantly occupying himself with her. He at last concluded a sort of truce with his passionate grief. It was still possible that she might write as soon as she was settled again. Had she not one of his books, Hafiz, from which he had last read aloud to her at table? To be sure, she might think he had given it to her, like the little copy of Hermann and Dorothea. And if not, why should the possession of a borrowed book disturb her, when she was in the habit of not even returning hearts into which she had glanced once or twice?

For the first time, he failed to tell Balder all that was occupying his thoughts, and merely said that she had given up her rooms, but would probably send him her new address.

This intelligence did not seem to trouble Balder much. He avoided saying so, but in his heart he almost wished that this might be the end of the adventure, for from what Edwin had said of the lady, it seemed more and more doubtful whether this passion, which made the grave, self-contained man so helpless, would ever compensate for the sacrifice of his repose. Much as he desired to do so, he could feel no affection for this singular being. His beau ideal of loveliness was in every respect the exact opposite of this dazzling vision. But he said nothing, for he was well aware that words would be spoken in vain.

"A little note from the Frau Professorin Valentin came while you were away. The zaunkönig left it in the shop himself."

Edwin absently opened and read it. It contained a request to visit the writer in the course of the day if possible, as she wished to speak to him about a very important matter.

He threw down the sheet, took up a volume of some work on physical science, and began to read. Balder, who was working industriously at his turning lathe--he had reason to be industrious, since of late, unnoticed by Edwin, the state of their strong box had become very critical--saw plainly that he did not turn the page, but did not venture to rouse him from his reverie. What could he have said to console him?

Evening came. The Frau Professorin's note seemed forgotten. But when Balder reminded him of it, Edwin started up and said he would attend to the matter at once; he was curious to know what important news could come to him from that quarter. So he left the room, with a dry "Adieu!" Seldom, as we know, did he part from Balder without a jest or a brotherly caress, but the spell of melancholy was too strong for him.

Since his first visit, he had only seen the estimable lady a few times in the zaunkönig's studio, from which she instantly retreated when he came to give his lesson. She seemed very kindly disposed toward him, with a motherly cheerfulness, which often, on her brightest days, reminded him of his own mother; so he noticed it the more plainly, when she now met him with anxious seriousness and a certain degree of formality.

"Dear Herr Doctor," said she, "I begged you to come to see me because I wished to discuss a matter which has caused me grave anxiety. Do you know that you've cost me a sleepless night?"

"You're too kind," he answered smiling.

"I'm entirely in earnest. I should have to like you much less than I do if my opinion of you could be a matter of indifference to me. Tell me, is it true? Are you really the author of this essay, or have you a namesake, for whose opinions you are not responsible?"

She took out a green volume, which she had carefully locked up in her writing desk. It was a number of a philosophical magazine, to which for several years Edwin had been a contributor.

"So far as I'm aware," he answered in a jesting tone, "my parents have had but one son Edwin, who devotes himself to philosophy. Let me see. 'Examination of the proofs of the existence of God.' Certainly that's mine. It's to be continued. It was left unfinished on account of my foolish prize essay."

He laid the book on the table, and now looked at his companion, who was sitting opposite to him with the most heartfelt expression of pitying surprise.

"So it's really yours!" said she. "And these views, these principles--you've not yet renounced them?"

"I don't know of what principles you speak, Madame. So far as I can remember, I refrain from making any hypothesis of my own, and limit myself entirely to a critical investigation of the opinions that have been advanced by others."

"Yes. So it appears! But can he who so coolly, in his own opinion, annihilates the logical proofs of an eternal truth, be expected to cherish the desire, to say nothing of the conviction, that this truth will endure, difficult as it might be to find reasons for it, or proofs which would incontestably establish to the reason its indisputable existence?"

"I might take that as a compliment to my essay," he answered, "although coming from a woman's mouth, it cannot of course be understood in that sense. Among scientific men, an investigation is thought the more worthy of credence, the fewer traces it bears that its author set about the task with a desire to find a certain result, or with even a previously formed conviction. In my department, especially, much greater progress would have been made, if even in the minds of its masters passion and prejudice had not dimmed the pure mirror of experience and clearness of thought."

"Greater progress!" cried the excited lady, letting both hands fall into her lap in sudden horror. "But for Heaven's sake, what progress can be made, to what can you wish to turn your attention after you have so successfully reached absolute nothingness?"

"And suppose I expected to prove," he answered smiling, "that this nothingness is just as fruitful as the other nothingness, from which, as pious men tell us, God created the world? But I'll not begin to philosophize here. Even if I could hope, in a short conversation, to make you understand that to which I have devoted the labor of a life, I should still prefer to keep silence. You're in harmony with yourself--what more can you desire? I, whose wants are so different, am also at peace with myself. Is it not better to rest satisfied with that, each respecting the other's mode of thought and feeling? Wherefore drag to light the differences about which we can never agree, instead of rejoicing over what we possess in common? It's so easy to dispute, and so difficult to become reconciled again."

"You think me intolerant," she replied eagerly, while a faint color tinged her pretty, delicate face. "But my Creator knows I am not. I confidentially believe that in our heavenly father's house there are many mansions. I honor every true, genuine conviction, even if ever so widely different from mine. My best friend, Leah's mother, was a jewess. My daily visitor, the Herr Candidat--"

"Herr Lorinser?" Edwin dryly interrupted. "Ah! yes, now I understand."

"What?"

"It's a matter of very little consequence; I know the people with whom I'm dealing. There are persons who take special delight in denouncing others, of course for the greater honor of God, of Christian love, and of eternal truth."

"You wrong him; to be sure he brought me your essay, but it was in consequence of a conversation in which I was compelled to admit that I was wholly in the dark about your opinions, and had not become much wiser from Leah's very guarded remarks. Do not suppose I'm blind to the faults and weaknesses of this singular man. I do not share his exaggerated mystical views. But even his errors, which arise from an ardent heart, seem more honorable, or to express myself more plainly, are more in sympathy with my nature, than--"

"Than a man's honest confession that he knows nothing at all about certain things."

"If it were only that! But must he, who knows nothing, or desires to know nothing about that

which is revealed to all who thirst for information, makes a business of shaking the faith, rendering the ground unsteady beneath the feet of those who do have the knowledge, or think they have?"

"If he really believes he is serving humanity, why should he not do what he thinks productive of good? To be sure, I should not undertake this business. I've not the temperament for it, the friendly importunity, nor any of the other qualities that are necessary to make proselytes."

"You have not? And this treatise--"

"Is not written for those who know or think they know, but for persons, who like me, are still seeking truth, perhaps doubting whether it will ever be possible certainly to know, and meantime think themselves justified in using the boundaries between knowledge and faith for a work which must tend to the advantages of both provinces."

"No," she said, as she suddenly rose, "we shall make no progress in that way. You're my superior in dialectics, and I see it's only chivalrous in you to avoid the contest. But answer one question plainly: is it really true that you not only have no God, but do not even feel any sorrow for it, any sense of something wanting, of cheerless desolation and loneliness, when you survey a world, from which to you the breath of a personal Creator has vanished?"

"And suppose I really did feel neither sorrow nor want, and yet did not find the world utterly cheerless?"

She gazed at him with a steady look, as if she were obliged to weigh such an answer before she could fully understand it. Her eyes grew dim, she retreated a step and sank down on the chair which stood beside the sofa.

"You poor, poor mortal!"

"We agreed not to philosophize, Madame," he answered smiling. "But, even in ordinary conversation, I suppose one may be permitted to remind the other of contradictions in which he has involved himself. Does he who has just told you that he feels no want, needs no consolation, seem poor in your eyes? Then see how ill it fares with the toleration of which you boasted. You allow every form of faith to exist, except that which acknowledges it has nothing that resembles a creed. The Jew, the Mussulman, the fire-worshipper, the idolater, who sees his God in a stock or stone--all seem respectable to you, and none so poor as an honest seeker after truth, who studies nature and his own heart, and cannot think all the signs and wonders he there beholds explained, when he uses for them a formula which means anything or nothing. Can you really consider it of any importance, that I should use the same word, if to me it expresses something totally different? Do you feel allied to an idolater, because in his language he gives a block of wood the same name that to you in yours, means the creator of heaven and earth? Would you not, though you might respect his conviction, have greater reason to say to him: 'Poor, poor mortal!'--?"

"'Blessed are the poor in spirit!'" she replied. "You certainly will not question those words, neither will you deny that every religious feeling springs from the consciousness of our own incompleteness, that he who lacks nothing, who is sufficient unto himself, cannot know the loftiest emotion: devotion to something loftier, richer, stronger--the ideal of what is highest and noblest, which we call God. And therefore the idolater stands nearer to me than the atheist. He shares with me the human need of worshipping, of bowing before some powerful, inscrutable being. Is he to blame if his ideas of this dim power are so narrow and gloomy, that in order to be able to reverence something, he forgets that he carved these gods himself?"

"Certainly not," replied Edwin gravely. "As little as you are to blame, for adoring a God you have carved yourself or rather suffered others to fashion. Oh! my honored friend, do not be angry with me, but the difference between the poor doll that the south sea islander believes to be the creator of the world, and the God of our ordinary christianity, does not seem to me great enough to create such a stir. Are not both carved after *our* pattern, one more rudely, the other more delicately, the former bedecked with barbaric finery and painted in gaudy hues, the latter, according to the taste of our times, adorned with more or less art and fantastic splendor, but always a work of our own minds? I will not speak of those really poor mortals, whom you also will hardly call blessed or think specially well fitted for their heavenly kingdom: of those who, under the forms of the Christian faith, practise the grossest idolatry, the merest image worship. But how do even the most enlightened, the most intellectual, who take the scriptural words 'God is a spirit' in the most solemn sense, imagine this spirit? In their holy zeal, they ascribe to it every quality that seems worthy of honor and love in themselves or others. And this ideal being, which they have created in their own image, and only endowed with the thoughtlessly collected attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, this God-man or man-God, they set on a throne somewhere in space, give him the world for a globe, and the lightning for a sceptre, and are perfectly convinced that in the fullest power and majesty, he will guide the stars on their courses, and decide the destinies of mortals with mercy and justice. And meantime the sorrows of the world take their course, evil reigns, the unequal distribution of blessings still exists, and the all-merciful, omniscient, all-righteous, and omnipotent God, does not move his little finger to effect a change; his most eager devotees must seize upon very common place, earthly means to keep the world in its grooves; but where these are not enough, where the whole cannot sufficiently protect the individual, then arises the old sardonic consolation: 'Help yourself, and

God will help you.' So we're again thrown back on ourselves. It is still our strength, our intellect, our good purposes! And yet earnest men, who have their doubts about the contradictory stories concerning the government of the world by a God who is just and good according to human ideas, are blamed if they seek to help themselves through life by their own efforts, and at the same time try whether they cannot make things harmonize without nursery tales." He had risen and was pacing up and down the room in increasing excitement.

"You reject the good with the bad," she replied shaking her head. "Who denies the imperfection of our ideas of the supreme being? Who asserts that our human images and comparisons describe his real nature? They are all mere make-shifts, a species of flying machine to enable us, who are denied wings on earth, to approach as near him as possible? Do you wish to deprive the poor mortals who languish in the dust, of this solace?"

"I? You're again forgetting that I wish to deprive no one of his religion, nor arouse in any one who is satisfied higher desires; nor to seek to guide him to what affords me happiness. Let them soar as high as they wish and can; but they, too, ought to permit the plain pedestrian, who climbs the rough path to the summit step by step, to move quietly on his way, and not throw stones at him from their balloons."

"Who does so? Who, that has understood the law of love, the most sacred tenet of our religion?"

He approached her and took her hand, exclaiming eagerly: "Not you, my honored friend. You will not cease to include in your prayers, the man who acknowledges that he does not join in the words, 'we all believe in one God.' Perhaps you will prefer not to associate with him, as with all our love for our neighbor, we do not choose an outcast for a companion. But ask yourself, how many of your brothers and sisters in faith have advanced so far in toleration that they will not only permit every one to be happy in his own way, but even endure those who feel no desire for what is called heavenly bliss, who see the circle of their duties and privileges, toils and joys, coupled here on earth, and do not wish to be more perfect, wiser, or more immortal than one can become with human intellect and powers? Yet the word 'godless' is still the harshest that can be said of a fellow man, and people speak of envy, hatred, revenge, and malice, as traits natural to humanity. But all neighborly love is refused the poor fellow creature, who confesses that he can form no idea of a personal ruler of the world, according to the human pattern, and the one word 'atheist' is sufficient to forever brand the most peaceful citizen, the noblest philanthropist, the most earnest seeker after truth. Yet we talk of an age of enlightenment! We boast of our freedom of thought, our scientific triumphs, and even men of science fear to express their deepest thoughts in their works, even those which are not even intended for the masses, in order to be sure of their peace, if not of their lives! Their real, inmost conviction, they whisper like some guilty secret into the ears of those whom they have recognized as kindred spirits, while childish folly, criminal stupidity, are permitted to display themselves in every street, and the holiest things are used by cunning speculators for very worldly purposes."

"What am I to answer?" said the Frau Professorin, with an expression of the deepest anxiety. "You yourself are noble and pure enough in your intentions, to be permitted without danger to your social duties, to disclaim what we call duties toward God. But what would be the consequence with the great majority, whose 'sensibilities are not so delicate, to whom piety, unconscious devotion to an inscrutable being, nay if you will, the *fear* of God, is a necessary check to their sensual natures, if you suddenly left them to themselves, and relieved them of all responsibility? Or what compensation can you offer nobler souls, of deeper feelings, that feel a need of sanctification, to make amends for a destroyed or diminished confidence in the love of God? My dear friend, if you had ever enjoyed the deep bliss of knowing yourself a child of God, you would willingly overlook the vagueness, the childish narrowness, that to pure reason this idea may seem to contain, and understand that it is natural to consider innovators dangerous, or even to strive to crush as enemies of mankind, those who threaten to deprive their brothers of this consolation."

"I understand, I excuse it--and yet I ask that it may cease," replied Edwin, "for really the danger with which the children of the world threaten the children of God, is a purely imaginary one. The offence we give is very harmless. No mind which, in your sense of the word, is religiously disposed, will endure to think of the world without a personal Creator. No seduction can take place where the germ of the fall did not previously exist. And the vacillating or utterly frivolous cannot be of so much importance to you as peace and tolerance. I cannot foresee the future, but I have a conviction that the time will never come, when all men will declare that they are of age and have outgrown the childhood that renders them happy, any more than that political freedom will ever become a necessity to all. Only let people cease to measure differences in viewing the world by moral standards, to regulate for the individual his capacities and wants, God and the world, to call him to account for mere opinions which have a very slight influence upon his actions. To be sure, those ideas of God, freedom, immortality, which even the free thinkers of the last century recognized as an inalienable possession of mankind, have at last, in popular opinion, been called in question by our intrusive, persistent investigation. But I'm as sure as of my own existence, that a time will come when honest children of the world will be permitted, without suspicion, to renounce that trinity also, and is not the hope of contributing to such a future worth the toil of the noblest? Then for the first time the word tolerance will have attained its full sense; then conversations like ours will be conducted without the slightest tinge of vehemence or bitterness, which have blended here and there with our words to-day, and for

which I in particular, as a philosopher, who ought to have learned to be patient and trust to time, sincerely beg my honored friend's pardon."

He bent toward her, took her hand, and raised it to his lips. She absently permitted him to do so, absorbed in thoughts which she apparently could not express in words. He had already reached the door, when she said sudden:

"Does Leah know these opinions of yours?"

He paused. A dull pain, a feeling of regret, overpowered him, which he did not know how to explain. "We have never discussed these questions," he replied, "or as school children say, we've not yet *come* to them. We're still at the Greek philosophers."

"But when you progress so far, shall you tell her openly what you think?"

"Certainly, as openly as I have told you. Surely if I showed no reserve toward you by your personal request and as a matter of friendship, to my pupil, I should believe myself to be fulfilling a sacred duty in speaking plainly. For this knowledge her nature yearns; she will digest it, it will be transmuted into a part of her blood. Could you be so intolerant, so envious, as to seek to deprive this excellent girl of what will be a positive benefit to her?"

For a moment she was silent. "I must be perfectly frank with you," she said, and the embarrassment which flushed her cheeks gave her a winning expression. "My old friend, Leah's father, asked me to question you about your belief. He found one of his daughter's exercise books, in which were certain expressions and sentences that startled him. He himself is entirely destitute of dogmatic fanaticism, as I've already told you, but he is a true child of God, and is now alarmed and grieved to discover that his only daughter aims to be no different from her teacher: an upright child of the world. Therefore--"

"I understand," Edwin interrupted with a bitter smile. "You need proceed no farther with his apology. Give my compliments to the worthy gentleman, who will not permit his child to eat from the broad dish, because his own mouth is formed to take nourishment from the narrow bottle. But from what I know of the girl, she will find proper sustenance in spite of this guardianship, though with rather more difficulty. The only loser will be myself. Those grave thoughtful eyes always had a good influence over me. But I might have known it would come to this some day, so--without ill-feeling--farewell."

She called to him to detain him. But he had already passed through the ante-room, without ill-feeling, as he had himself said, but not without a sense of bitter sorrow. "And these are the best of them!" he murmured. "If such things happen when the wood is green, what marvel is it that the dry, dead branches and knots, which can nevermore put forth leaf or blossom, crackle so merrily when a heretic is to be burned!"

He returned home and spent the remainder of the evening in quiet conversation with Balder, with whom he soon regained his lost cheerfulness, though the shadows would not wholly vanish from his sorely wounded soul. Both slept very little that night. When the pump handle creaked the next morning, they had been up a long time. Balder at his turning lathe, and Edwin wandering about the room, now and then turning the leaves of a book, both silent, as they usually were during the first part of the day.

Reginchen brought up with the breakfast tray a carefully folded package and a letter. They had just been left for Edwin.

When he had unfastened the strings and broken the seal, a beautiful porcelain plate appeared, on which was painted a bouquet of corn flowers, poppies, and wheat; on the edge, in gold letters, was the inscription: "A memento from a grateful pupil." There was also a sealed book, without any address, but the letter was from the old gentleman, and ran as follows:

"My Deeply Honored Friend:

"You already know what I have to communicate in these lines, which in consequence of the great esteem, and love I have always felt for you, I can hardly force my pen to write, I have never presumed to suppose that I alone possess the truth; but to secure to my child the happiness that I have enjoyed in my own life, is a matter that lies very near my heart. If peace does not come to her when sought in my way, I shall not forbid her to seek it in another; but I think she's still too young to clearly perceive the right path, and therefore I would rather leave her for a time without a guide, than see her moving along a road I think dangerous. Nevertheless, I shall always be grateful to you for having so kindly devoted your time to her. My daughter, who desires to be respectfully remembered to you, begs you to accept the accompanying specimen of her work--the forfeit of the wager you perhaps still remember. A book, in which she was in the habit of keeping an account of her progress with you, I will beg you to take charge of for a time, as I do not wish her to return to these studies at present, and cannot expect her to entirely give up the pages which are precious in her eyes. And now farewell, dear Herr Doctor. May you ever be prosperous and remember with the old affection,

"Your sincerely grateful

Enclosed in another envelope was a sum of money, not very large in itself, but munificent considering the circumstances of the man who lived in the little house on the lagune. Edwin instantly sat down at the table, sealed up the money again and wrote the following lines:

"Honored Friend and Patron:

"Deeply as I regret that my visits to your house which had become so pleasant must be so suddenly discontinued, I cannot help respecting the motive which prompted your letter, and in all friendship bid you and my dear pupil farewell--until we meet again! Thank your daughter most warmly for her beautiful work of art, which affords me the greatest delight. But I do not understand how you imagine yourself to be in my debt. You cannot expect me to accept a fee for my small beginning at teaching, any more than you would call upon a customer to pay for a half finished picture.

"With kindest regards, yours,

"E."

"There," said he to Balder, "we've done with that too! I can put the little bottle of violet perfume on this painted plate--two frail mementoes of a life and memories quite out of place in our tun. Come, child! We'll get to work again. Everything flows steadily on; ought not certain memories to find their way also to the great ocean?"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

A fortnight had elapsed. The autumnal storms, which had burst over the country, had stripped the last withered leaf from the top of the acacia tree, and the little garden with its shade loving plants, as well as the dry tendrils of the bean vines, were destroyed by the ceaseless rain.

Even in the "tun," whose inmates usually possessed the art of making the sunlight within shine all the more brightly in the stormiest weather, a strangely dull, sorrowful mood had prevailed, like the autumn mists which float over forest and meadow, and are only now and then lighted by a noontide sunbeam. A dull oppression weighed upon Edwin's mind, and with all his manliness he was unable to shake it off. This mysterious silence and disappearance caused him more pain than the sharpest break in his life, the most open renunciation on the part of the beloved being. He hourly felt that all must be past, but he could not yet realize it to be at an end. It was as if he carried a bullet in his body very near the vital organs, and until it was extracted, no one could tell whether he would survive or bleed to death.

Besides, now that he again spent more time in the house, he became very anxious about Balder. During the time of his futile love-making, when he had often only seen his brother at dinner or late in the evening, the latter had succeeded in concealing the fact that his time was divided between arduous toil and complete exhaustion. Now it could no longer be hidden. Marquard, whom Edwin instantly called in to prescribe for a first severe attack of pain in the chest, shook his head very angrily over the unpardonable carelessness which had permitted matters to go so far. He forbade Balder to make the slightest exertion, and during some of the stormiest days kept him in bed. Balder smilingly protested against his tyranny, and declared that he did not suffer at all; nay that he could breathe more freely and easily when in his stooping posture at the turning lathe. He would doubtless have carefully avoided acknowledging that, when at work, he could more easily forget the anxiety about his health which daily became more pressing. But it was useless. Edwin saw through the ambiguous words, especially as, roused from his long dream, he had now discovered for the first time that during the last few weeks Balder

must have done double work to defray the current expenses. This was all that was needed to make the recollection of the time so hopelessly lost, still more painful and bitter. "Careless children ought never to be left alone," he said reproachfully, crushing back tears of sorrow for his brother and rage against himself. "Now you have accomplished a fine piece of business, worked shamefully hard that I might not only play the fool the more undisturbed, but become your murderer into the bargain. Oh! child, all the duchesses in the world, who might want to make me their court-fool, would not outweigh a single hair from your thick locks, though they really might lose a few handfuls without injury. Instead of taking up my station on the nearest street corner, as was my duty, and waiting to see if some one would give me work, I've wasted my days in the most worthless way, playing the courtier, while you--fie! A fine brotherly love on both sides! One idles enough for two, and thoughtlessly allows himself to be fed at the expense of the other, who meanwhile works for two so recklessly that he almost deprives himself of life, and the idler of his only brother."

He would not allow himself to be quieted, until he had carried the dearest things he possessed, a few dozen of his most valuable books, to an antiquary, and thus defrayed the most pressing necessities for several weeks. Besides this, as the lectures had not yet commenced, he plunged headlong into all kinds of remunerative work, criticisms upon new books and contributions to scientific journals, and remained persistently at home all day long, with the exception of a short afternoon walk, never losing thought of Balder amid all his work. No one interrupted this strict seclusion except the faithful doctor, Mohr, who came daily for several hours to play chess, and Reginchen, who brought up the meals.

Some change seemed to have taken place in the child, which transformed her whole nature in a mysterious, but very charming manner. She no longer sang and glided about like a young bird, or even prattled in her half childish, half motherly way to Balder, whom she now had to nurse; but the thoughtful, somewhat absent and sorrowful expression her countenance now wore, undoubtedly suited it better than her former wholly unshadowed mood. She seemed to have grown an inch taller, her face was perceptibly narrower, her cheeks less blooming, but suffused with a delicate glow from within. Moreover she was often found, as if spell-bound, standing still in the midst of a task gazing steadily into vacancy. When Balder asked what she was thinking about, she blushed crimson and laughed in an embarrassed way, but the next instant her face again wore a strangely quiet expression, such as no one had ever seen before.

Even Edwin, who usually noticed her but little, remarked her altered manner. "Our little house swallow is thinking of building a nest," said he. "You'll see, Balder, before next spring she'll leave us to become her own mistress. It's a pity! I can't imagine the tun without this wandering ray of sunlight."

Balder was silent. He had long been uneasy about the matter. Little as he was in the habit of thinking of himself, this time, with a joyous terror that for some moments threatened to burst his heart, he could not help believing that he was the author of this change. On the very day Franzelius bade them farewell, the young girl had asked him to lend her Schiller's poems. She had heard so much about them, she wanted to see if they would please her as well as her cousins and the head journeyman. The book was in Balder's locked drawer; he had pressed in it a flower from a small bouquet she had once brought him when she came home from a walk. The verses he had written on her birthday were also there, but he did not think of them when he took out the volume. Afterwards, when it was too late, he had recollected them, and as the verses expressed somewhat plainly what for years he had carefully hidden in his heart, he could scarcely doubt that they would now do their duty and reveal all. Probably it might have been so, but for that twilight hour in the shop, when the state of another equally reserved soul had suddenly become clear to her. There was only room for one thought at a time in her head and heart, and therefore, as her love for literature was not very great, she had not taken out the borrowed book she had placed in her work table, and had no suspicion what a secret she would have learned. Even in her leisure hours, she did not have much time for reading. Whenever she was left to herself, she eagerly knitted the before-mentioned stockings, whose unusual size could not fail to remind her for many days of the lucky fellow destined to own them.

Balder, however, who knew nothing of all this, could not help interpreting in his own favor the altered manner of the child he secretly loved, especially as since he required her care, she had become at once more devoted and more reserved. His first emotion at this supposed discovery was, as has been stated, one of joyful alarm. Having renounced all the happiness of healthy men, he had never thought such an event possible, nay scarcely desirable. He looked upon himself as a passing guest at the table of this world, who could only taste the various dainties, and who after a short enjoyment of the pleasures of the feast, a modest sip from the beaker of earthly joys, must silently slip away. That he might take his place there with the others, join in the festivities till midnight, and drain the last dregs of the wine cup, was something of which he had not dared to think. He had yielded the more freely to a feeling of happy hopelessness, because he thought himself sure, of standing in no one's way by so doing. This fair, innocent child, in the exuberance of perfect health, possessed exactly what he lacked; that she had grown up in the insensibility of pure nature, without intellectual wants, culture, or training, while every expression, every gesture revealed strength, freshness, and the most joyous good nature, attracted him to her as one is attracted toward an object always longed for and always withheld. When she entered his room, he forgot his sufferings and banished the thought of the future, since she herself seemed to be satisfied with the present and the pleasures it contained; therefore the thought that any

change could take place in this familiar, unconstrained intercourse had hitherto never occurred to him.

Now he was suddenly thrown into a state of bewilderment in which he was no longer in harmony with his own heart, since that which had hitherto filled it with such pure and calm emotions, now appeared sinful, and certainly was the source of many sorrows.

But he had reached his twentieth year and the feeling of delight must needs outweigh all sadness. Almost insensibly, the hopes he believed long since buried, again appeared before his eyes. Why should not a miracle be performed in his case as well as in so many others, and nature summon her wondrous powers of healing, especially as the soul was now ready to assist? And if it should really prove that the strength of manhood was to make amends for the sufferings of his youth, how beneficent was the star which had enabled him to find in this little spot, the treasure that would make him rich for all time.

This belief became more and more fixed in his mind, so that he submitted to all the remedies prescribed without opposition and with far more patience than usual, and he even, often as a loving word to Edwin or Reginchen hovered on his lips, strictly observed the prohibition against speaking. He would lie half the day in a reverie, his eyes fixed upon the sorrowful plaster mask of the prisoner opposite him, composing verses which he hastily wrote down as soon as Edwin's back was turned. Even his old regret that he could not make up his mind to confess his secret to his brother, who never had one from him, no longer troubled him. When he had grown strong again and could at last go out into the world and cast aside all his premature renunciation of self, he would pour out his happiness, and compensate Edwin tenfold for what he had lost.

All these thoughts had passed through his mind, while the leaves of the acacia were falling off, and Edwin wandered about with a wound that would not heal. The oppressive stillness that pervaded the tun, seemed to have affected the other lodgers in the house as well; they appeared to be in that uncomfortable, chilly autumn mood, in which man, like nature, gradually becomes silent, until the crackling flames in the stove beget encouragement and the lips of human beings once more unclose. Christiane's piano emitted no sound. The head journeyman, whose grumbling and scolding often echoed in the air as long as the windows of the work shop remained open, was no longer heard. In the rooms occupied by the old couple no one opened a window to look at the thermometer, which hung on the shady side of the house. They well knew it was no weather for a once famous tenor to expose his throat to the air. Even Herr Feyertag was in a bad humor, although an unusual number of jack-boots were ordered and business was very prosperous. His son, who had imbibed from Franzelius all sorts of wild communistic ideas, caused him a great deal of anxiety, and out ran with seven league boots that worthy citizen and man of progress, his father. All such cares seem doubly threatening in the autumn rain, and we are the more inclined to believe the end of the world is coming, when the summer sunlight has long lulled us into forgetfulness of all anxiety.

But suddenly this consoler seemed inclined to return for a time to celebrate another festival. When Edwin opened his eyes one morning, the brightest blue sky was smiling into the tun, and the atmosphere was as still and soft as if ashamed of all the stormy misdemeanors of the last few weeks. As good things, like evil ones, rarely come singly, this morning also brought all sorts of unexpected pleasures. First came a letter containing money to discharge a debt long since given up as hopeless, the fee for a private lecture on Hegel's philosophy, which Edwin had given a sceptical Russian. The auditor had suddenly disappeared, and Edwin supposed him to be either in Paris or Siberia. But he had preferred to make his peace with the Lord, and had now obtained a position in St. Petersburg, from whence he sent double the fee. Edwin was just forbidding Balder (who in his delight suddenly broke his vow of silence and insisted that the money must be devoted to buying back the books that had been sold) to meddle with the financial department of the tun, which now, since Balder by his secret earnings had basely betrayed the confidence reposed in him, was to be exclusively in Edwin's hands, when Marquard came in, and after carefully examining the patient, declared him out of danger for this time. He cautioned him however, against any excitement or bodily exertion, which would again open the scarcely healed wounds. Then he turned to Edwin: "I wish I could be as well satisfied with you," he said, looking sharply into his face, "but I must confess that your appearance, your pulse, your whole condition, don't suit me at all. A few more days of this stooping, drudging, and brooding, and we shall be just where we were the evening of the ballet. Deuce take it! I'd rather prescribe for a whole cholera hospital, than a single thinking patient, who's always opposing Mother Nature, and by his pondering and cogitations during the day, tears into lint the repairs she makes in his nerves at night. Or is--you have no secrets from Balder--your crazy abstract love affair at the bottom of it? That was all that was wanting! How far have you progressed with the little princess in Jägerstrasse? Still the 'fir and the palm' longing and yearning in anxious pain?"

"If the matter is of scientific interest to you," replied Edwin with a totally unembarrassed face, "you may as well know that the story ended before it had fairly begun. I should be strongly inclined to put the apparition in the category of delusions of the senses, if it were not for the perplexing circumstance that the phantom which so mysteriously appeared and vanished, was visible to you also."

Marquard looked at him with a sly twinkle in his bright blue eyes. "May I feel your pulse again?" he said dryly.

"Why?"

"Because it's a matter of scientific interest to me, to see whether a philosopher, who makes truth his trade, can tell a lie without any quickening of his pulse. Besides, I can if you desire, go my way and pronounce you incurable. I should then come here only as court physician to the younger branch." He seized his hat and cane as if to go.

"I really don't understand," replied Edwin, as he quietly continued to cut the leaves of a book, "why I should take the trouble to lie to such an infallible diagnostician! In all seriousness, I've not seen the fair mystery in Jägerstrasse for a fortnight or more."

"For a very natural reason," retorted Marquard laughing: "because for a fortnight or more the beauty has lived in *Rosenstrasse*. Oh! you sophist! You strangle the truth and salve your conscience with the snares of your formal logic."

Balder looked at Edwin, who had turned deadly pale. The book fell from his hand, his lips moved but no sound came from them.

"There sits the detected sinner," cried the doctor in a jeering tone. "Ah, my son, lying and deceit are all very well if one is careful not to be caught in them. Besides, I am the last person to attempt to force a confidence, which is not voluntarily bestowed. Good morning!" Nodding to Balder, he left the room and stumbled grumbling down the steep dark staircase. When he had almost reached the bottom, he heard some one call him and Edwin came leaping down.

"Marquard, one word more!"

"What is it?"

"I only wanted to tell you--you may think what you please, but it's the plain truth--I thought she had left the city. What do you know about her? Is it anything more than a freak of the imagination, that she is living in *Rosenstrasse*--"

"In the third house from the corner, on the right hand side as you come from the long bridge. Of course on the second story. I was driving past the house yesterday afternoon, when it was still quite light, and instantly recognized her, as in spite of the infernal weather, she was standing at an open window. There are not two such faces. So, with a half sad, half wearied expression--thinking partly of Edwin, and partly of a velvet cloak--she leaned against the casement, and absently scattered bread-crumbs to the sparrows in the street. Suddenly she started back and shut the window. She might have seen me looking up, perhaps she even recognized me. However, as I had resigned her to you once for all--"

"Thank you, Marquard. Adieu!"

So saying, Edwin left the doctor standing on the dark stairs and hastily ran up again, without hearing the expression of astonishment which the latter sent after him.

When he returned to the tun, he endeavored to assume a cheerful expression, and even laughed heartily, as if Marquard had told him some comical story.

"It's all right," he said to Balder. "The tragi-comedy is to have an after piece. What do you say to that, child? We'll recommend the subject to Mohr for a fantastic story, the title will be promising: 'The Ghost in *Rosenstrasse*.'"

"All will yet be well," replied Balder gently, repressing a sigh. "Such a parting was unnatural, and who knows whether you both would not have suffered too severely in the trial. Now no harm is done except that she too must have suffered in having been deprived of you a week."

"Oh! you flatterer!" exclaimed Edwin, who was pacing up and down the room with his hands in his pockets. "Deprived of me? And what compelled her to be deprived of me, except her own free ducal will? Oh! child, child, don't let us call X, U to each other! The matter stands simply thus: I knew nothing of her, and she neither wished nor wishes to know anything of me. And now see, my dear child, what a pitiful weakling man, and especially your wise brother is! Instead of being satisfied that this fortnight's silence is meant as a discharge, he will not be content to rest until he has received his dismissal in due form, if in any way he can obtain another audience.

"You see," he continued, while Balder was silently trying to calm his fears at this new turn in the state of affairs, "we have our boasted free will and the admirable categorical imperative mood, the standard specifics for all attacks of moral fevers. I can solemnly assure you, Balder, I'm no coward, no such pitiful weakling, that I would not swallow the bitterest medicine, if I knew it would cure me. 'You can, because you ought!' Certainly, I can force myself not to steal, murder, commit adultery, or break any other of the ten commandments, because I know they are in themselves half holy, half salutary, and the world would be out of joint if we did not hold in check certain desires for our neighbor's purse, life, wife, or anything else that is his. But *here*, in my case--what do you command, Herr Imperative Mood? What do you desire, Herr Free Will? That it looks ill for *meum esse conservare*, if I simply baffle this longing and stay away, I have sufficiently experienced during the last fortnight. Whether matters will be worse if I see her again, who can tell? So I think I'll go there and ask her whether she thinks me a fool or a man

over wise, for again playing with heat and cold which have given me chilblains already?"

"Fortunately we're rich young men again," he added smiling. "For although she esteems me very highly because I visit her without gloves, it might seem quite too magnificent if I should call in a straw hat at the end of October. I will spend something on myself, child, and even look around for a respectable winter overcoat. My old one has gone Heaven knows where with Franzelius, who wore it for a Sunday coat."

He could devote no more attention to his books, but while talking to Balder in a half earnest, half satirical tone, made as careful a toilette as is possible when a man possesses but one suit of clothes, and finally, with his huge paper shears clipped his beard before the tiny mirror. "I should really like to know," he said, while engaged in this operation, without looking at Balder, "whether I should be less indifferent to her, if I were a handsome young fellow like you, so that she could be vain of me, or rather see her natural love of beauty satisfied by my insignificant self. That I shall ever be necessary to her, is not to be hoped. But to be an elegant superfluity, like a parrot, or a piano on which she doesn't even know how to play--the prospect wouldn't be very glorious, but for lack of a better. There, the bushes have been pruned till they're fit to appear at court. I look quite ghostly; this fortnight has been hard upon me. But perhaps it will touch her: 'heart-sick, pallid, and true.' Good bye, my boy. I'll bring back all sorts of things for dinner."

He was so strangely agitated that he embraced Balder, kissed him on the forehead, and then rushed out of the room, humming in his powerful "transcendental" voice--as Mohr called it--"*la donna è mobile*."

CHAPTER II.

His first errand was to a hatter, his second to a ready made clothing store. When, though the October sun was shining warmly, he took his way toward the Rurfürsten Bridge in his new winter overcoat, he could not help laughing at his shadow, which he could scarcely recognize in its present stately contour. He crammed the large pockets with oranges, of which Balder was very fond, bought all sorts of trifles for him, and seemed to himself very brave and resolute, in using so much self constraint as to lengthen the long distance to Rosenstrasse by his numerous delays. He even felt capable of maintaining perfectly his self control, if it should chance that he never saw her again. When he at last knocked at her door, he considered it a great proof of his courage, that he went to meet danger so boldly.

The third house from the corner on the right hand side--now he was standing before it. The early hour, which was by no means suitable for visiting, did not trouble him in the least. Yet he willingly allowed Mohr, who happened to meet him just in front of the house, to drag him away for some distance, and listened patiently to his contemptuous criticism of a new tragedy which had created a great *furor* the evening before, and which was a wretched abortion, badly pieced out with stolen fragments. What was at this moment, the "degeneration of the German stage" to him! what even his friend's hopes that his "*sinfonia ironica*" would at last obtain recognition, since a very able musician--he did not say it was no other than Christiane--was sincerely interested in it. They saw Franzelius on the other side of the street, engaged in an eager conversation with a dirty fellow in a blue blouse. He recognized them, but pulled his cap farther over his face and looked away. Mohr was just beginning to criticize the first number of the "Tribune of the People," which he had with him and which he declared to be an infallible remedy for melancholy. But Edwin suddenly turned away, and under the pretence that he had a lesson to give in that house, hastily retraced his steps as if to make up for lost time, and went up the steps without delay.

His heart beat even more violently than at his first visit to her. On reaching the landing, he tried several times in an undertone, to see if he had breath enough to say good morning. But not until he had gazed at the bell handle for at least ten minutes, did he feel sufficiently composed to ring and ask the old woman who opened the door, if Fräulein Toinette Marchand was in.

"She lives here," was the reply, "but it is so early that she isn't dressed yet."

"She will probably see an old friend," replied Edwin quickly, and without heeding the woman's gesture of denial he crossed the threshold. At the same moment, one of the doors leading into the corridor opened, and the beautiful face, looking twice as charming in a lace morning cap as it had ever seemed before, suddenly appeared.

She recognized him instantly; an involuntary movement of the head told him that her first thought was to refuse to see him, but the next instant she changed her mind.

"Is it *you!*" she exclaimed, but without betraying any surprise in the tone. "I half expected you; I know no one can escape destiny. Come in. You will doubtless excuse my cap."

He silently followed her into a neatly furnished room. His emotion was so great, that he vainly strove to utter a few indifferent words, and as if exhausted by a long walk, he sank down into one of the chairs beside her sofa. Neither did she seem to know what tone to adopt. Standing beside a flower stand, which however contained no exotics like the one in Jägerstrasse, she busied herself in pulling off the yellow leaves, and in binding up a drooping tendril.

He had time to look at her. She was attired, in a simple morning dress, which displayed her supple figure to even more advantage than her usual costume, and the little cap on her wavy brown hair gave her a somewhat matronly air, which contrasted most charmingly with the pale, childish face.

"My change is very much for the worse, don't you think so?" she asked, still busied with the flowers. "This plush furniture--it's said to be an elegant apartment, but in comparison to the really stylish appearance of the old rooms, looks like a mere lumber shop. However, I can pay this quarter's rent and live among respectable people. But tell me, how did you discover me? I thought, as I had discharged the carriage, and no longer allowed the dwarf, who begged most pitifully to be kept, to wear livery, I could live here in the most complete incognita--so long as my money lasted. You were angry with me because I vanished so suddenly, were you not? Look into my face and tell me frankly, whether you were really angry or not?"

She had turned hastily toward him and was now gazing at him with beseeching, mischievous eyes, as if she no more doubted the falsity of her words, than that he would be weak enough to show mercy before justice.

"My dear Fräulein," said he, trying to smile, "as you have, unfortunately, never permitted me to show you any kindness, I've not ventured to take the liberty of being angry with you. I had forced myself upon you, you took the first opportunity to get rid of me--that's so natural, that a man needn't be your 'wise friend' to understand it."

"Oh! no," she answered thoughtfully, "that's not exactly it. Do you know that I've more than once commenced a note to you, to tell you where I was to be found. Then I tore it up again. Silence seemed to me wiser for us both; wiser for me, that I might wean myself in time from that most dangerous luxury: a friend; and wiser for you, because some day you might get tired of being my '*wise friend*,' and then the affair would end in a way I would fain spare you. You smile. So much the better, if you find no danger in it. Besides, it would now be too late; you've found me again, probably your friend the doctor, who saw me at the window yesterday, tattled. I'm very glad you're here. You can't imagine what tiresome hours I've spent, almost always sad or listless."

"Where did you wish to go?"

"Yes, where? That was just the question. Back to my commonplace poverty--ah! at the thought a cold shudder ran over me, as if I were about to jump into a marsh and sink up to my neck. To stoop to the yoke of a governess, here in the city, where I've lived as a great lady, seemed terrible too. So I shall live on in this way a few weeks longer, and then when the last louis d'or is exhausted, close my eyes, and dare a plunge--into the great nothing. Or do you believe that there is a something?"

"No," he answered quietly. "And for that very reason, it seems to me folly to hastily throw away the something we possess here."

"Hastily? How long is one to wait? When would you permit a person, who did not find this something worth the trouble it costs, to take refuge in nothing?"

"When he quite despairs of being anything in the world, of making himself useful or giving pleasure to himself or anybody else."

"Well then--in that case, you might without hesitation sign my passport for departure. For that I am an utterly useless creature, and at the utmost can only afford Jean Jacques a little pleasure when I give him five groschen to feast at a cake shop--"

The tears that she had vainly endeavored to repress, burst forth, yet she did not turn away from him, but stood at the little table before the sofa, resting both slender hands on its polished surface as if to support herself, while large drops fell from her black lashes.

Edwin watched her with the deepest sympathy. He was obliged to use the greatest self control, to refrain from standing up and clasping her in his arms, to console her as one would a child.

"If you did not endure my presence simply for the sake of my wisdom," he said as calmly as possible, "I would give you the most absurd proofs, that your existence was a necessity of life to some one besides Friend Jean, a blessing, a source of joy, though to be sure not wholly unclouded. But aside from all nonsense: you must not go on so, Toinette. You're quite right: one who lives so during the day, at last passes out of the day into the night that has no morning. I see that I've come just at the right time. Courage, child, courage! Permit me to tell you that you don't

yet understand the life you wish to cast away. No indeed," he continued, as she gazed at him through her tears with a look of surprise, which seemed to say: 'yet I've experienced enough'--"you know only want and affluence; but there are a thousand steps between, on which a sensible person can sit down very comfortably and accommodate himself to the world. To be sure, he must possess one thing to make life endurable anywhere."

"You mean a contented heart?"

"Heaven forbid, my dear friend! It should be a very much spoiled, exacting heart; do you suppose, for instance, mine would take a predilection so easily? But it will not matter if the heart is needy and rich at the same time--that wonderfully contradictory condition called love, when we know not which is most blessed, to give or to receive, where we are never satisfied with giving and receiving, and in this absurdly delightful and nonsensically clever occupation, have no time to consider the rest of earthly things, plush furniture or wooden chairs, because the whole question of wealth or poverty has been transferred to another province."

He relapsed into silence, and eagerly watched the effect of his words. Her tears had ceased to flow, and she was gazing absently and dreamily into vacancy.

"I don't understand you, and you can't understand me," she answered with a scornful shake of the head. "How often must I tell you, that I've no talent for what you call 'love!' As in this present world, both in reality and romance, everything seems to turn upon it as a pivot, you must easily understand, that I do not suit such a world. No, things can't go on so, long. And really, if I were not so cowardly, and did not fear *pain*--but that will, always restrain me until life becomes still more unendurable, and the feeling of loneliness and desolation at last increases to a physical anguish keener than all other."

He rose and took her hand. "Dear Toinette, you're in a morbid, over-excited state, and must allow your friend to cure you. Will you trust yourself to me? You shall not swallow any bitter draught, or have your heart cut out, that we may see what this obstinate little muscle wants ere it can do its duty like a thousand others. I'll show you a little of the world, teach you how it is constituted on an average and how men bear with each other and till the void of which you complain, on week-days and holidays. To-morrow will be Sunday. I should think we might do like nine-tenths of our fellow citizens, and take advantage of the fine weather for a little excursion into the country.

"Willingly. But where shall we go?"

"That's my affair. I must beg you to leave the whole arrangement to me. Fortunately you have dismissed your carriage, so you will leave the striped waistcoat at home."

"Poor boy! Why don't you give him a share in the pleasure?"

"Because private tutors are not able to go out to amuse themselves with a train of attendants. I'll persuade my brother to accompany us instead. I hope you don't object."

"I! Didn't I tell you long ago, how curious I've always been to see what kind of a brother you have."

"You'll make the acquaintance of a very charming young fellow, and I warn you in advance, do not allow it to be too evident that you like him much better than your pedantic friend. With all my brotherly love, I won't answer for it that I should not feel a certain degree of jealousy. But many things which you think 'wise' and don't understand in me, will perhaps become clearer when you've seen a man like Balder. By the bye, you'll not wear a very magnificent dress? I hope to show you that the fewer ducal pretensions people make, the more royally they can amuse themselves."

She smiled. "You're a good man, to take so much trouble about a poor, incurable creature. Do whatever you choose, you shall have unlimited authority to improve me as much as you can."

"To-morrow morning at ten, then! Farewell, most august friend."

"You're graciously dismissed, worthy friend and marshal of the royal household." With a bow of mock condescension, she gave him her hand, which he raised to his lips with smiling reverence.

"And until to-morrow morning, neither poison nor dagger!" he cried on reaching the doorway, shaking his finger.

"I'll hold out until then," she answered gaily. "Out of curiosity to see your brother."

CHAPTER III.

"It's true! Rinaldo is in the old chains again!" exclaimed Edwin, as he entered the room where Balder sat alone, sunning himself in the window. He was apparently unoccupied, for he had hastily locked up the volume in which he had been writing verses, when he heard Edwin's step in the courtyard below, nevertheless the reflection of his poetic dreams still lingered in his eyes.

"Have you found her?" he asked. "How did she appear?"

"Exactly as usual, neither cordial nor repellent. Oh! child, if you could but solve this problem! How can one long for grapes, which not only hang too high, but are after all merely painted. If, in the moon, there live creatures resembling men, who breathe a special atmosphere, and have in their veins some vital ichor different from our blood, they may appear like this girl. Something of the true woman is lacking, and yet she possesses everything that hundreds of others need to attain the full meaning of womanhood. My brain aches with trying to understand the mystery."

He threw himself into a chair before the table, now set for dinner, and drank a glass of water.

"And shall you go to her every day as before?" asked Balder sadly.

"As long as I can hold out. As long as it lasts. For I fear she will ultimately become such a mystery to herself, that she will commit some mad act. I proposed to cure her, to make life dear to her, to transform Mephistopheles, 'first of all I must bring her into better company.' But I don't imagine I shall succeed in finding a life purpose for her, a task which will really warm her heart, fill her days, and of which she can dream at night. Ah! if she only had a brain like that of my little hedge princess Leah! But that's the strangest thing of all: she's clever and yet entirely without any craving for knowledge; without prejudices and perfectly indifferent to the opinions of others, kind hearted without any interest in mankind; gay without being contented, bright without being warm--and I, as a punishment for my sins, am condemned to lavish as much heart's blood upon this strange specimen of her sex, as if I were attempting a moral transfusion, instead of the physical one that has long been tried. You'll see, child: when I've once succeeded in replacing the moon-lymph in her veins with warm, earthly human blood, the first dandy that comes along will reap the advantage, and I shall have to pocket the disappointment. However, perhaps your clairvoyant eyes will solve the enigma more easily than I."

"I--how should I--?"

"I promised to take her into the country to-morrow and to bring you with me. She's very anxious to make your acquaintance."

"You're joking, Edwin."

"Not at all. I should like to know what impression she makes upon perfectly unprejudiced persons. In spite of my own folly, I'm sure that you're not in love with her. If you become really dangerous to her peace of mind, so much the better, let her experience for once what the feeling is and I'll endure the inevitable disappointment with dignity. Seriously, child, I should like to see what she's worth 'between brothers.' Besides, you ought not to decline, for Marquard thinks a drive in this air would do you a great deal of good."

A pause ensued. Balder gazed silently into vacancy and did not seem disposed to give an immediate answer. At last he said: "You must not take it amiss, Edwin, but I can't go with you; surely you know it will be better for me to stay at home."

"Better? For whom?"

"For all. I should only be a burden if I were obliged to limp about everywhere with you--and then--I've been in ladies' society so little. I should be either very stupid, or say something awkward which would embarrass you."

Edwin had risen and now stood directly before him. "Can you look me in the eyes, you cunning hypocrite?" he exclaimed. "As if you could ever do or say anything awkward! I know exactly why you don't want to go: you think I'm only taking you out of brotherly love and courtesy, and would really much prefer being alone with my cold sweet heart. But this time, dear searcher of the heart, you're entirely wrong. I assure you, by all that a private tutor holds sacred: you'll do me a favor by making one of this party. Besides, I've exhausted my Latin, and fear if we're alone she'll discover it and give her tutor lover his discharge in good earnest."

He knew what a trump he was playing, in representing the affair as a sacrifice Balder was to make for him. But the latter, contrary to his expectation, remained firm in his refusal, and as he pleaded the sensitiveness of his chest, Edwin was compelled to desist from urging him. The real reason: that he was longing for a day when he could give himself up to his love dream undisturbed and also see Reginchen alone, he certainly did not confess to Edwin, perhaps not even to himself.

The next morning dawned as clear and bright as could be desired for a Sunday excursion.

Punctually at ten o'clock Edwin entered Toinette's room. She came toward him with unfeigned cordiality, attired in a more simple dress than any he had yet seen, and laughed when she noticed his astonished face. "Is this right?" she asked. "This is the costume in which Duchess Toinette walked about her native city, when she had no court philosopher, court dwarf, or court splendor. I hope you're not courtier enough or tasteless enough to think this countrified garb pretty. Even my landlady, who has usually been very well satisfied with me, was horrified at the idea of my going into the country with my cousin--that's what you are now--in such a dress. But I've undertaken to cure you, as well as to be cured by you. You shall confess that beautiful things are beautiful and ugly ones ugly, and that we may make necessity a virtue or even a jest, but never a happiness or a pleasure."

"I'm afraid your cure will fail," he answered laughing. "You might crawl into a turtle's shell and still please me, if only your head and hands peeped out."

"So you're an incorrigible courtier!" she replied, shaking her white finger at him. "But where did you leave your brother?"

He told her that he had vainly endeavored to induce him to come with them.

"You've probably described me to him as something very horrible," she answered thoughtfully, "to the life, as I seem to *you*, a heartless, brainless, finery-loving creature. Well, perhaps he'll form a better opinion of me when he sees me with his own eyes; for I must make his acquaintance, that's settled. But now come. I feel a childish delight in the anticipation of this drive. We won't keep the carriage waiting."

"The carriage? Plebeian country parties set off from the city gate in a wagon. But you must be contented to walk there on your august little feet."

"Very well. You shall have no cause to complain of me."

She tied under her chin the strings of an old and somewhat shabby velvet hat, which however was very becoming to her young face, and called to Jean to bring her cloak. The boy came and saluted Edwin with the same solemn stiffness as usual. He was dressed in a common black suit, and only the high shirt collar recalled the livery. When the young lady told him that he might have his time until six o'clock in the evening and go to visit his parents, his thick lips curled for a moment in a joyful grin, but instantly resumed an expression of solemn respect. Then they left the house, and Toinette leaned lightly on Edwin's arm. The streets were full of people in their Sunday attire, elegant equipages rolled past them, the air was still, and when they crossed the bridge, all the windows of the old castle glittered in the autumn sunlight. Toinette paused before a huckster who was selling fruit.

"It's improper to eat in the street," she whispered to Edwin. "But just for that very reason you must buy me one of those beautiful apples. I feel as if I were masquerading. Why shouldn't we take advantage of our disguise? Or must people stare at plebeian picnics?"

"Heaven forbid!" he answered. "Eating is the main object. And as for the propriety--you see I wear no gloves today."

"But unfortunately, a terribly respectable hat. If the shops were not closed, I should make you oblige me by buying a new one at once. I liked your looks much better before; but it's no use now. We must both appear like scarecrows among the pretty Sunday toilettes."

"Then the birds will at least keep away from these grapes," he answered laughing, as he handed her a paper horn full of the fruit. "I'll put the apples in my pocket. Good Heavens! Here are the oranges I bought for Balder yesterday. What shall we do with all these blessings? Ah! here comes a droschky. Now we can eat our breakfast more comfortably."

He signed to the driver and helped his companion in. Just as he was in the act of entering the vehicle, he saw Leah approaching with her father. The old gentleman's face was as bright as ever, but his daughter looked somewhat paler, and for the first time Edwin noticed with surprise the dark brilliancy of her eyes and the grace of her walk. They also recognized him, the young girl with a sudden blush, the father, after a hasty movement as if to rush up to him, restraining himself. Then they went on in the stream of pedestrians, while Edwin entered the droschky and called to the driver: "To Charlottenburg!"

"Who was the beautiful girl to whom you just bowed?" said Toinette, turning to look after her.

"A former pupil. Do you think her beautiful? I confess I was somewhat struck by her appearance to-day. During the time I taught her, till within a few weeks ago, I noticed nothing remarkable in her face, except that she has very wise, earnest eyes."

Toinette made no reply and seemed lost in thought. After a time she said. "And what did you teach her?"

"If you'll not repeat it, to injure the child's character: in philosophy. To be sure it didn't last long."

"In philosophy? Is that a suitable study for us women? I thought it was only fit for men."

"So most men think, and that's why my little philosopher would find it hard to get a husband, if it should be noised abroad that she had taken lessons from me."

"That danger, as you know, would not frighten me, if you would take me for a pupil. But I fear I should disgrace you. I've learned too little and read too many novels."

"Novels are not the worst introduction to philosophy. Don't you think that Père Goriot affords more food for the thought, than many a text book placed in the higher schools for girls and which does not contain a syllable about what is called life?"

"It depends upon who reads it. I've had a great many thoughts. But they were so sad that they cannot have been the right philosophy, at least not yours; for you're always cheerful, so the world must wear quite a different aspect to you in your wisdom, from what it does to me in my stupidity."

"Very possibly," he said smiling. "But we must first prove it. You must tell me your thoughts, and I will tell you mine. Afterwards we'll see against which there are the fewest objections."

"And is there nothing more in philosophy? Did you make no farther progress in your lessons to that young lady?"

"Oh! no. I began with her at the A. B. C, told her how, from the most ancient times, thoughtful men had demonstrated the relations of things in the world and what singular dreams about origin and decay, soul and body, gods and spirits they had had. I'll wager that if you had listened, you would not have been bored; for you have a tendency toward melancholy, and philosophy is like a magic lantern; the clear outlines of the pictures of the world it conjures up can only appear on a dark background, but on that dark background is thrown the real brightness, the light that brings cheerfulness and peace, while the common every day sunlight, like ordinary human reason, is only sufficient for the every day restless flickering dawn."

She made no reply and gazed steadily into vacancy with a charmingly thoughtful expression.

After a pause she said: "And is any real goal reached? After pondering over everything, do we know something definite, something that cannot be called in question?"

"Yes and no. We arrive at what we have longed to know, the fact that there are secrets of which our narrow minds can never have anything more than a dim idea, although certain philosophers, who take the chimeras of their own brains for the revelations of omniscient truth, venture to give information even in regard to them. But is it not a gain to learn how much we are capable of knowing, and where the ever shrouded abysses lie? And the way along these--can you not imagine that it would be as refreshing and full of enjoyment, as to wander amid lofty mountains, among glaciers and ice fields, past ravines and waterfalls that seem completely inaccessible?"

"Yes indeed," she replied, "if one is sure footed and not predisposed to giddiness."

"The strength will increase on the way, if one is not a cripple when he leaves home. And then in addition to the pleasure of looking around, seeing the world, and drawing one's breath freely, do you know what other benefit will be received?" She looked at him inquiringly.

"In order to climb up, we throw away much of the useless and troublesome lumber we've dragged about in our shallow, thoughtless existence, and when we have reached the heights and arrived so much nearer to heaven and its stars, we learn to dispense with all this trash and despise it. The atmosphere is rarefied, and earthly things, viewed from the mountain tops, shrivel so incredibly that on coming down, we see the dearest objects and most beloved friends with very different eyes."

"By which they would hardly be the gainers. And then we should be more unhappy than before."

"No," he answered with an expression of quiet joy, as he thought of Balder, their boyhood, and all their struggling life in the bare tun. "What is really good and true, little as it may be prized by fools, appears for the first time in all its beauty, as allied to all the noble things we have experienced and learned far above the plane of every day life. You ought to make the attempt; I don't believe you would regret it. Besides," he added smiling, "my alpenstock and mountain shoes will always be at your service."

She looked earnestly into his face. "You think I don't see your aim. You want to destroy or disgust me with what you call my vanity, but which is really just as much a part of myself, as my brown hair, my white teeth, and my dark eyes. Very well, we'll make the trial. Begin the lesson at once; of course you must first tell me your thoughts, then you shall hear mine. So: 'in the beginning God created Heaven and earth'--"

He laughed and took a bunch of grapes from the paper horn that lay on the opposite seat of the carriage. "What are you thinking of?" he answered in a jesting tone. "This is Sunday, and

we're going on an excursion into the country. What would you say of a banker who accompanied a lady to Charlottenburg and talked to her on the way about stocks and bonds? To-morrow, if you feel inclined to listen, I'll read you as many lectures as you desire. With you, I shall at least run no risk, as in the case of my other pupil, of being discharged by an orthodox father and a theological aunt, on account of dangerous theories. And I'm not afraid of wearying you! For in the first place I can't imagine any novel so interesting as the history of truth, and secondly you know my weakness in being unable to look at you long without talking stupid nonsense."

She shook her finger at him again. "Don't let me repent that I didn't take little Jean with me for a chaperon, because I thought you a knight without fear and without reproach. And now we'll eat our breakfast."

Meantime the droschky was moving on in that contemplative trot which distinguishes the Berlin droschky horses above all others of their race and calling, over the broad road on which, during the last few weeks, the trees in the Thiergarten had strewed all their autumnal foliage. In spite of the beautiful weather, the foot paths on each side were entirely deserted, for the real stream of pleasure-seekers does not pour out of the city gates until the afternoon. They passed only solitary couples, so absorbed in themselves that they did not notice the two who drove by them eating grapes. Now and then, a carriage dashed past their phlegmatic horse. Whenever this occurred, Edwin saw that Toinette made an impatient movement and wrapped herself more closely in her cloak. The air was soft, almost still, but her ducal blood seemed chilled by the slow pace at which they moved. He laughed.

"I see clearly that your habit of being drawn by four horses makes you impatient of this half way style. Shall we dismiss our carriage and continue our way on foot?"

She instantly assented, called to the coachman to stop, and without waiting for Edwin's assistance sprang out as lightly as a feather. She did not even take his arm, but walked swiftly beside him, still holding in her hand the horn from which she was eating the last grapes.

"Why mayn't I give you my arm?" he asked.

"Look at those other couples," she answered petulantly. "Is there anything more out of taste than the sentimental custom of keeping step? Either the gentleman must take little mincing steps like the lady, or she must accommodate herself to his pace by making long strides, which is still more ugly. And all this because they love each other! We have not even that excuse, so let each walk as is most comfortable. You can't lose me, for I haven't a groschen in my pocket. If I ran away from you, I should be obliged to starve."

He laughed and said that was not the mode of death usual among duchesses, especially when they had such black eyes; to which she retorted that her duchy was hanging up in the closet at home; if she sold it she could scarcely live on the proceeds a fortnight, and even for that length of time not in a style suitable to her rank. Such were the harmless jests with which they amused each other as they walked on; he had never seen her in such gay spirits, and it was happiness enough for him, after his long separation from her, to be permitted to walk beside her and look at her every movement. It was so charming to see her eat the grapes, and when the paper was empty bite an apple with her little white teeth. She had removed her gloves and untied the strings of her hat and the sunlight falling through the bare branches flickered over her lovely face.

On reaching the first of the long row of villas, she stopped to rearrange her dress. It was even more lonely here. Most of the houses, on account of the early commencement of autumn, had already been deserted; in the gardens of the pleasure resorts, the Pagoda and others, tables and benches still stood awry, as they had remained during the long rains, and the yellow leaves were not even brushed away. But all this dreariness and inhospitality could not damp the spirits of our young pair. Toinette--and especially Edwin--were delighted to have the beautiful castle garden all to themselves.

"It's strange," said the young girl as they walked through the silent avenues and at last paused beside the famous carp pond, where to-day the broad heads of the fishes were scarcely visible beneath the thick covering of yellow leaves--"I always feel happiest and gayest when everything around is very grey and dreary. When anything was going on in my little native city, a ball or a shooting match, or any kind of festivity, I always felt very melancholy among the happy cake-eating crowd. And in our castle park, which is almost as ancient and venerable as this, and has a great many places where it's not safe to go, I've wandered about half a day like a little deer, and been perfectly at home. Do you see now that I'm nothing out of my fine clothes, that it's from no coquetry that I prefer to wear velvet rather than calico? Here, for instance, even beside you, I feel too poor and shabby for these royal avenues. You smile. Say what you please, it may be vain and foolish and brainless, but it's natural to me, and I can't help it, I shall carry it with me to the grave."

Meantime they had reached the mausoleum of Frederick William III. and his beautiful queen. The invalid soldier who guarded it was asleep on a bench, and when wakened seemed greatly surprised to see visitors so early, but Edwin gave him a large fee, and he opened the silent hall of death without objecting. Edwin did not enter it for the first time; but the magical solemnity of the dusky room had never moved him so deeply, as on previous visits he had been admitted with a

crowd of strangers. Now the light fell through the blue dome upon the silent marble figures and the young fresh girl at his side, who could not resist the spell of the place, and mutely, with a strangely eager expression, as if expecting some solemn event to happen, gazed for a long time at the glorified image of the royal lady. Edwin at last approached her, and in a whisper asked if she were ready to go. She did not hear him and remained spell bound by the fascination of the place, until the door keeper rattled his keys and reminded them it was time to leave. Then, as if longing for some hand to lead her back to life out of the regions of the dead, she took Edwin's arm and even in the sunlight that shone upon the park walked beside him a longtime in silence, absorbed in her own thoughts. He too kept silence, though his heart was burning. Never had she seemed so lovable, so far above all other women whom he had even known, as during her quiet reverie in the blue soft twilight. He had to use the utmost self control to speak of any thing but his passion.

"I'm really grateful to you," he began, "for being so deeply affected by that solemn spot. Scarcely any other place hallowed by art and association, has ever so moved me. Surely the fate of those two human beings has its influence too in the silence, the thought of so much dignity in misfortune, so much unassuming goodness on the throne, so much affection in the simplest form. Neither was intellectual or highly cultured. But in the decisive moment their innate nobility put the right words in their mouths, the right resolution in their hearts, and their thoroughly plebeian sense of duty always made them appear truly royal in the high position in which they were placed. And then--isn't it touching to think how this prosaic, sober, almost awkward monarch, devoted himself to his beautiful wife with an ideal love which outlasted death, and while building barracks and living simply and frugally in the plainest palace in his capital, was constantly thinking how he could have this house of death still more magnificently adorned by the greatest masters, because it contained his wife's heart and with it all the poetry of his life. Then at last he ordered his own effigy to be placed beside hers, wrapped in the simple soldier's cloak he had preferred to the purple mantle, that even in death, he might remain faithful to himself and to her. Isn't there greatness in so much humility, and more true royalty in this unassuming figure than in all the boastful imperial pomp of this great conqueror?"

At first she did not answer. Not until they approached the gate of the park and she drew her hand lightly from his arm to put on her gloves, did she say: "You're perfectly right; the only true nobility is to remain faithful to one's self. The common run of mankind concern themselves much about their neighbors' opinion, imploring their advice as to the guidance of their lives, but he who has the germ of a noble nature lives and dies by the light of his own inward grace and is sovereign of himself. As for these rules of living, they are pitiful torments which evil unhappy meddling people have invented to sour the life of their fellow mortals. He who thrusts his neck under the yoke deserves the bondage. One can grow old in such a servitude and yet never know what it is really to live."

CHAPTER IV.

The clock struck two as they entered the square before the castle. "What shall we do now?" she asked.

"We have now no more important task than to eat the best dinner we can get. I hope the table in the Pagoda has made some progress in civilization since my student days, when I used to revel in the famous *katteschale*. However, it's Sunday, and Charlottenburg knows the duty it owes the capital."

When they entered the handsome hotel, in whose lower rooms a somewhat motley company were already drinking coffee, a waiter came toward them and after a hasty glance at Toinette, showed the young couple the way to the second story. If they wished to dine alone, they would find empty rooms and tables there--

"There's no help for it," said Edwin laughing, "they evidently suspect you of a desire to enjoy my society alone; you'll have to reconcile yourself to it. But we'll drink our coffee in the open air, and then you can make up for the conquests you can't celebrate at dinner."

He went up stairs beside her and opened the first door, which led into a comfortable room. She sat down without ceremony on the little sofa, removed her hat and cloak, and assured him that in spite of the second breakfast of fruit which she had eaten, she was already very hungry. Edwin seated himself opposite her and took up the bill of fare. Amid all sorts of jests, they began to select their favorite dishes, and he could not help remembering their little dinners in Jägerstrasse. He inquired about her birds. She now had a dozen sparrows for boarders, she said, and would rather hear nothing about those delights of the table. She had afterwards learned that

even the restaurant had been in the conspiracy against her, and had only charged her half price. She would soon be reduced to Lotte's bread and butter. "But we won't talk about that to-day," she said suddenly, "it'll come soon enough."

She rose, yawned, and began to look at the lithographs that hung on the walls. "You see," said she, "if we had brought the dwarf with us, we should have been better served."

"The waiter seems to think we shall be satisfied with our young love. Wait a moment, I'll go down myself, enter into a tender relation with the cook, and bribe some ministering spirit to devote himself exclusively to us." He left the little room and hurried down stairs. Just as he was turning the corner, he ran against a gentleman who was rushing up. Their mutual apologies died on their lips.

"You here, Edwin?"

"Marquard!"

"No less a personage," laughed the physician. "And in the best of company. But you--is Balder here?"

"It was impossible to persuade him, unfortunately. You know him."

"So you're alone? Well, you shall join our party at any rate. It's entirely composed of your acquaintances, except my little suburban nightingale. Just think, the dear innocent child wouldn't compromise herself by taking an excursion with me *tete-a-tete*. She insisted that her friend Christiane must go too, or she would stay at home. Now the excellent musician is really very disagreeable to me, for the express reason that she trains young and lively talent to virtue and Sebastian Bach. But what was I to do? The little one laconically told me we would be taken for husband and wife, wedded in true burgher fashion, and I gave up the point. So I went to Fräulein Christiane to invite her, wondering in case she accepted, whom I should ask as the fourth man--a pleasure party of three is absurd of course. I thought of you for a moment. Would you have come? Well, when I went into her room, I found Heinrich, the dissatisfied, sitting at her piano, talking his contradictory little tattle. Do you know I think he has designs in that quarter despite the ugliness of his sweetheart. What could I do but offer him the fourth seat in the carriage? I hoped he would say no, for as you're aware, he can't endure me. But *quod non!* he eagerly accepted, and so far everything has passed off charmingly. We're in high spirits, even before the champagne, and what fire-works of wit will be let off afterwards no one can tell. You'll come in just at the right moment, and on the way home it'll be so much the better, if we can't all find seats in one carriage."

"You're very kind," answered Edwin, smilingly releasing himself from the grasp of his friend who wanted to drag him away at once. "But I've brought a companion too, and it's doubtful--"

"Whom? Surely not--? Oh! you deepest of all philosophers--'yesterday on a proud steed, to-day shot through the heart'--the princess?"

Edwin nodded.

"And I let myself be deluded into giving him the address yesterday--well done! So we won't disturb you, but leave the fir and palm to themselves."

"You're very much mistaken," said Edwin with a half sigh, "True, as regards the temperature, tropical vegetation doesn't ill suit me, if palms only didn't mean victory; for in spite of our apparent intimacy, her highness is still as much surrounded by ice as ever. I really believe the best way to prevent the chill from finally producing the sleep of death, will be to bring her to you--if she's inclined to come, which I scarcely doubt."

"Bravo! I'll prepare the ladies. A relative of yours? A little cousin from the country."

"For aught I care. I pass for her cousin in the Rosenstrasse."

"Capital! I'll answer for *our* cousins. They'll be somewhat jealous, which will make our attentions rise in value, in other respects we shall be extremely agreeable. So in five minutes. The last room in the rear on this corridor. And the dinner's *my* affair."

He left Edwin at the door of his room and brushing his thin locks with a small pocket brush and humming a tune, returned to his friends.

"Ladies," said he, as he entered the room where Mohr and the two girls sat at a neatly laid table, "I must beg your pardon for a somewhat arbitrary act. A friend of mine with a very charming and highly respectable cousin are close beside us, under the same roof. I asked him to join us, he's already acquainted with two of you, as he is no less a personage than our friend Edwin, the philosopher."

"*Another* admirer of our musician?" exclaimed Mohr. "I ought to protest against it; I had subscribed for all the musical enthusiasm that would be developed to-day, since Maquard adores in artists only the charms of women. But be it so! This Edwin is an old friend of mine, and

moreover deeply in debt to Fräulein Christiane for her daily free concerts."

"Isn't he a tall man with light hair, not exactly handsome, but interesting when he doesn't wear his old straw hat?" asked the little singer in a gay, twittering voice, from whose speaking tones one would never suppose that it could compass two octaves. At the first glance she looked strikingly pretty, but on a closer inspection one perceived that the features of the round face were not really harmonious, the large eyes and turned up nose, the sentimental mouth and sensual chin formed a strange contrast, and even her toilette was a bold composition of all sorts of fantastic fragments. She wore a tolerably ancient black velvet dress, which had once belonged to a much more stately prima donna, a singular looking scarf of tulle and lace, a breast pin with a photograph of a little terrier, ear-rings of coarse Roman mosaic, and in her hair which was cut short and curled in little rings over her head, a gold circlet. Her movements were sometimes very quick, sometimes slow and languid. Only when she laughed, in doing which she was apt to open her mouth a little too far, did the expression appear to which her more intimate acquaintances alluded, when they called her a "good follow," with whom "no one could get angry."

Beside this wild singular creature, Christiane's dark face, framed in its thick black hair, looked more gloomy even than usual, but gained a certain characteristic nobility, especially as the extreme simplicity of her dress contrasted advantageously with the theatrical costume of the singer. She had been sitting in silence when Marquard entered. At Edwin's name she started, but even then said nothing, merely nodding when Mohr asked if he should place a chair for the new guest on her other side; mechanically she smoothed the folds of her dark red woollen dress and passed her hand over her eyes. Adèle had told her she sometimes wore an evil, malignant expression, when her thick eye brows were not perfectly smooth. This was generally a matter of indifference to her, but to-day she did not want to look still more frightful than she was by nature.

They listened to the sounds from the entry. At last the opposite door opened, and Mohr started up to meet the new couple. When Toinette entered, the singer also rose and approached her, more to show her dainty figure than from any special cordiality. She saw at the first glance that she was entirely thrown into the shade by the new face, and could only console herself with the recollection of her toilette, which she considered extremely *comme il faut*, while the cousin's looked very provincial. Christiane greeted Edwin's relative with a silent bow of the head. She had turned pale when she saw the charming girl. A sudden weight rested upon her soul and stifled the words in her throat, she would have liked to rise and turn her back upon these unsuspecting people. But she must endure it. When Edwin addressed a few friendly words to her, and without asking any questions, took the chair at her side, the color returned to her cheeks, and she could say in an indifferent tone that she was very glad to have the pleasure of meeting him at last. He reminded her of the night when he had found her absorbed in Schopenhauer's Parerga, and apologized for not having continued the moonlight conversation by sunlight, on the plea of having had a great deal of work to do. But it was one of the "sorrows of the world," that we can often make the least use of the blessings that lie so close at hand. Meantime the soup was brought, and Marquard did the honors. The meeting with Edwin and his beautiful companion had put him in the gayest spirits, and he treated Toinette with a humorous formality, the cause of which the others did not suspect. Not a word betrayed that he had made her acquaintance before. He inquired about the condition and events of her native city, and asked how she liked Berlin and its inhabitants. The little farce amused the young girl too, and she merrily entered into it. Moreover she had the delicate tact to make herself particularly agreeable to Adèle and Christiane, so that after the first glass of champagne the singer, like the "good fellow" she was, touched glasses with her, declared that she had taken a great fancy to her, would go to see her in the city and in return Toinette must go to the theatre every evening that she appeared.

Christian also could not deny the charm of the new acquaintance, though she certainly felt no pleasure in it. Never had she seemed to herself so destitute of every grace, as beside this bewitching vision, who appeared gradually to win even her old admirer, Mohr, though he had at first been embarrassed in the presence of his old friend's "relative," who had so suddenly appeared. He became more and more eloquent, and in his own original fashion poured forth a multitude of quaint sayings, which he at last addressed almost exclusively to Toinette, perceiving that his grave neighbor only absently shook her head at his most daring paradoxes. Marquard, after fulfilling all the duties of a host toward his guests, comfortably gave himself up, without making any special exertion to be witty, to a low toned conversation with his little flame, and only sometimes condescendingly laughed at Mohr's jests, as if amused by the singular folly of a man who is making an entirely useless display. For a time Mohr allowed him to laugh and only occasionally dealt him a satirical thrust. But as he did not spare the wine and moreover gradually became heated by his own words, his real feelings toward the comfortable, self-satisfied man of the world, whom as we know, he accredited with a tolerably shallow brain and cold heart, at last burst forth.

"My honored friends," said he, as he rose and lifted his full glass, "I will beg your permission to speak for five minutes on a subject that is of interest to all. We sit here so cozily either liking each other or wishing we did. At any rate this modest little orgie is calculated to excite the envy of the so-called gods, since six people are on a tolerably green bough of sustenance, washing from their souls all anxieties about the present and future life, in, I trust, unadulterated champagne, and thus losing fear as well as love for gods and devils. As for the envy of the former, I'm far from making it a reproach to them. On the contrary, as I have no special reason to feel

any great esteem for them, since they've shown little friendship toward my insignificant self, it's this envy alone that partially reconciles me to them. These poor devils of gods, who, like us, can't always do as they please, thus show a truly human side; for, my friends, profound thought and mature experience have taught me, that what is truly human, full of genius, and so to say god-like in our race, as well as the human side of the gods, is *envy*. You stare at me, Fräulein Adèle, and seem to be asking your neighbor whether I'm always in the habit of expressing such crazy opinions, or only when I've been drinking sweet wine. But you're mistaken; I'm as sober as he is, innocent nightingale; for tell me yourself, would you be the charming creature you are, the spoiled child of the boards, the much photographed, much slandered, much adored *Adèle*, if you did not feel a deep envy of the happy mortal called *Adelina*, the divine Patti? Without this envy, which has accelerated your flight to higher and higher spheres, you would still be twittering imperfect couplets, as on your first debut. But for envy of the great champions of thought, our friend Edwin would now be a well paid professor of logic, reading stupid volumes year in and year out. But for this envy, our artist, Fräulein Christiane, would never have poured her whole soul into her finger tips, nor I, her unworthy neighbor at table, extorted from my reluctant brains one of the most remarkable compositions of the day, the famous *sinfonia ironica*. Fräulein Toinette too, whom I have not yet the honor of knowing very well, has--I read it in her black eyes--received her share of this hereditary virtue. For what is envy, except that which people usually call religion: the confession of our imperfections and distress, and the longing for improvement, to reach a higher round in the ladder, which we already see attained by loftier natures. Must we not feel better disposed toward the so-called gods, when we think that they too are not satisfied with themselves, that they too cherish unattained and forever unattainable longings for the joys of mortals, for a dinner in the Pagoda in pleasant society, bubbling over with wit and *Cremant rosé*? That they will go so far as to maliciously desire to destroy such joys, is a degeneration of the virtue of envy, of which I do not approve, but from which no virtue is safe. On the contrary, nothing can more deeply offend gods and men, than to meet certain souls who have never felt the bliss of a noble envy, who in their sublime self-satisfaction, deride or condemn every one who is not so well pleased with himself, who does not draw his face into such well satisfied lines, and when he is cleanly shaved pat himself delightedly on the back, and say to himself: 'You're a famous fellow!' My friends, I know what's due to the company. I refrain from all personalities. But when I see certain brows, one in particular, which begins to be prematurely bald, a brow that has the effrontery--"

He had spoken louder and more rapidly, fixing his eyes more and more steadily and defiantly on Marquard, who submitted to this singular apostrophe with the utmost good humor; but at the last words, the smile suddenly died on his lips. He again filled his glass, and rattled his knife on an empty one that stood beside it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "as we have no president, who could call any one abusing the freedom of speech to order, everyone must look out for himself. I take the liberty of interrupting the honored orator, because he's in the act of doing something for which I certainly should not envy him: disturbing the beautiful harmony that pervades this circle, by making to one of its members, who though perhaps unworthy is certainly not obstreperous, exactly the reverse of a declaration of love. I have the honor of being intimately acquainted with this member, and know that our friend, Heinrich Mohr, has always used his right not to think him agreeable. I have never disputed that right, though I myself formerly held a different opinion and thought this man whose soul was destitute of envy, a very lovable fellow. Since that time"--here he cast a glance of comical pathos at his fair neighbor--"I have found myself mistaken in this view, but for very different reasons. I will not enter upon the intellectual controversy about the virtue of envy. Friend Mohr will at least admit, that there are exceptions to the rule. I, my friends, have studied so much natural history, that I know the ostrich would not become any more perfect if it envied the falcon its wings, and the sparrow would be a singular fanatic if it practised solfeggi to outdo the nightingale. If therefore I early renounced the cultivation of talents I did not possess, and like a true realist, endeavored to take the world and myself as we are, it should rather be imputed to me as a virtue, especially as I have risen to a tolerable height in the admiration and enjoyment of gifts denied me, and moreover possess a few valuable qualities, such as for instance the ability to order a good dinner, to brew a punch, and to write prescriptions for intermittent fever. And now, after this effective little correction, I propose that we drink the ladies' health and beg Fräulein Adèle to use her exquisite voice in singing away the last remnant of discord."

A loud clapping of hands, for which Adèle herself gave the signal, rewarded this speech, during which Mohr had slowly reseated himself and emptied his glass in little sips. Refilling it, he turned toward Marquard with a peculiar twinkle in his keen grey eyes.

"I heartily assent to the proposal," said he, "but must first place on record a short personal observation, namely that I was a great donkey. The ladies will pardon the rude expression, since I doubt not, they are convinced of its truth. Fritz Marquard, I hereby declare that you're right in patting yourself on the back and thinking yourself a famous fellow. From this day I beg you to grant me your friendship, and hope to give you proofs of mine--"

"And if a man has fallen
Love guides him back to duty--"

sang Adèle, as she sprang from her seat and glided to an old piano that stood in one corner of the

room, and which was sometimes used for little dancing parties. She hastily opened it, struck a few notes, and called Christiane to try it more thoroughly. Meantime Marquard had crossed over to Mohr and cordially shaken hands with him; Edwin and Toinette also rose, lights and a fresh bottle of wine were brought in, and amidst the bustle of coming and going Christiane hastily ran her hands over the keys, and commenced Weber's "Invitation to the waltz." The room became quiet. Edwin had carried two chairs into a window recess, which was illumined by the last crimson rays of the autumnal sunlight. Without a word from him, Toinette took one chair and he sat down beside her. He had scarcely spoken to her at the table, but he had listened to her every word, and little as he appeared to look at her, had often turned his eyes with delight upon the delicate profile and black lashes. But now as she gazed out at the bare treetops, bathed in the crimson glow, with her head and shoulders likewise steeped in the radiance of the sunset, her lips parted as if her very soul were absorbed in the lingering beauties of the day, he forgot his self control, and gazed steadily into her face. The room was quite dark; two candles only illumined the table still crowded with the empty bottles and half filled glasses, and lighted up Marquard's pleasant features, as he sat alone smoking his cigar and looking intently through the round glasses of his gold spectacles at the piano. Mohr had thrown himself down on a stool beside the musician, Adèle was tripping lightly up and down the room, singing to herself in a low tone and sometimes with a coquettish gesture throwing at her friend, who continued to smoke phlegmatically, a grape, from the cluster which, in bacchanalian fashion she had fastened to the gold circlet on her head.

"You have been very charming to-day," Edwin whispered to Toinette. "I thank you for the conquests you have made of my friends. I'm vain enough to think you did it partly for my sake. If Balder had only seen you!"

"Why?"

"Because I always think of him, whenever anything pleases me; because I wish him to share my pleasures with me. Have you never had the same feeling toward your sisters?"

"I would gladly have felt it, but I never could succeed. Each thought only of herself, her few miserable trinkets, her lovers, and the next casino-ball. I really think sisters are scarcely capable of what you call brotherly love. But hush; she's beginning to sing. Who would have supposed there was so much music in the queer little doll!"

In fact a flood of melody now filled the room, as Adèle sang Pergolese's morning serenade:

"Tre giorni son che Nina
Al letto se ne sta."

Christiane accompanied her. The worn out instrument under her hands was fairly transformed, and gave forth tones of which it had probably scarcely been capable in its best days. When the charming little song was finished, Marquard rose and solemnly kissed the singer's hand. "Brava, bravissima! You're the singing-bounding-lion-teaser in the fairy tale."

"An *incantatrice!*" cried Mohr from his dark corner after having made a terrible noise applauding alone.

"Spare your enthusiasm, gentlemen," laughed the saucy girl, turning on her heel. "There are better things in store! And the lion's share of the lion teaser belongs to my strict teacher. Now: 'Ye who know the instinct of the heart--'" and without waiting for the accompaniment, she began the aria she had shortly before studied with Christiane.

The musician accompanied the song only with single chords. She was now sitting completely in the dark, having shaken her head in reply to Mohr's question whether she would have a light. Her thoughts were far from Pergolese, Mozart, and all her other musical saints. Above the piano hung an old fashioned oval mirror, directly opposite to the window in whose recess Edwin and Toinette were sitting. As the sunset glow slowly died away, she could distinctly see the expression with which Edwin's eyes rested upon the calm face of the beautiful girl. During dinner, her first jealous pain at meeting him with such a charming companion had almost disappeared, for he had not paid any particular attention to his lovely cousin. Now it suddenly flashed upon her, that this indifference had been, only a mask, and a feeling of inexpressible bitterness overpowered her, when she recalled the pleasure she had felt at the courteous kindness with which he had treated her. Now, sitting opposite the stranger in the crimson sunset, what a different language his eyes spoke! With the prophetic insight of a hopeless passion, she perceived that he loved this girl. And she could not even hate him for it. For had not the stranger every charm she lacked? To be sure, the keen eyes of jealousy told her that he met with no response to his feeling, the response that he deserved, and that she would have given. This cold blooded enchantress, even while Edwin's eyes were fixed upon her profile as a supplicant gazes upon the miracle-working image of a saint, could look unmoved at the dry branches without; her hand did not touch his, which he had laid on his knee as if seeking it, her soul--if she had one--where was it? And he, why did not his pride rebel against serving here without wages, when elsewhere he might have ruled? But rule over what? she asked herself. A heart which no one had ever tried to conquer, which no one seemed to consider a boon to possess, he least of all. Had he

not lived under the same roof with her for years, and not felt the slightest desire to approach the woman who daily spoke to him in harmonies, poured forth her inmost feelings in accents so intelligible to him?

It was this feeling that now overpowered her, and in addition to all the exciting emotions of these hours, the gayety, and the unusual indulgence in wine, fairly intoxicated her senses. A wild, fiendish rage took possession of her soul. When the aria from Mozart was over, she said curtly: "You are not in good voice, child; the champagne is beginning to revenge itself. You mustn't sing another note, or you'll be terribly hoarse to-morrow." And without heeding Marquard's remonstrance, she commenced a stormy improvisation. A string broke with a rattling sound--she did not notice it; a second and third--she played steadily on. Mohr, who had pushed his chair behind hers, while Marquard sat in the darkness on a little sofa beside Adèle, was in a perfect delirium of ecstasy. He had never heard her play so before, and was musician enough to say to himself that the greatest masters would be delighted if they could hear her improvise in such a mood. More than once he turned toward the two couples and enthusiastically tossing his long arms, endeavored to attract their attention to what this wonderful genius was producing. But he seemed to be alone in his admiration, at least to Marquard as he incessantly whispered in the ear of the singer, this remarkable playing seemed nothing more than the roaring of a storm, and Edwin, at this moment, believing himself unnoticed as the light without had at last wholly died away, had caught a curl of Toinette's hair and was holding it in his hand. Now he cautiously bent forward and pretending to fasten the string of the curtain, hastily pressed the soft tress to his lips. At the same moment the fourth string snapped, a sharp discord rang through the powerful passages, and the player started up pushing back her chair. "No more!" she cried in a hollow tone. "It's killing me! Air! Air!"

"For God's sake, Fräulein, what is the matter!" exclaimed Mohr, who had also sprung to his feet. "You're tottering, you'll faint--here, lean on me--shall I get you some water, take you into the open air?"

"No, no, it's over! Leave me! Why do you seize me so rudely? I'm well, perfectly well--at least I shall be perfectly well when I'm alone. The wine, the music, the darkness--give me my hat and cloak, I'll go out into the air a moment, then it will all pass off."

In the greatest perplexity he did as she requested, but she had spoken in so low a tone that the others scarcely noticed what was passing at the piano. Marquard alone hastily cast a glance at her. "Is the champagne revenging itself on you too?" he called in a jesting tone. "You ought to drink a cup of coffee, it will soothe your nerves. Or is genius made giddy by its own lofty flights?" There was no reply Mohr accompanied her to the door. "Stay here," she whispered imperiously.

"But you'll come back again?"

"When this feeling has passed away." With these words she left him, and in a greatly agitated mood he returned to the piano. It gave him pleasure to sit down in her chair and touch the same keys over which her hands had just dashed. But he did not play; only now and then he softly struck a chord, as if to caress the strings she had handled so roughly. Besides he listened constantly, but nothing stirred, and after a time he knew that she was not coming back again.

Suddenly he started up. "My friends," said he, "Fräulein Christiane has taken French leave of us. But as it's growing very dark and she did not feel particularly well, I think it would be better for me to follow and if necessary offer my services as escort, in case she cannot find a carriage. Marquard, will you attend to matters here and tell me tomorrow my share of the reckoning, Fräulein Christiane's expenses of course included. Good night and a pleasant evening!"

Before any one could reply, he put on his grey felt hat and disappeared also. Half an hour later two droschkys drove away from the Pagoda. The first was occupied by Marquard and Adèle, the second by Edwin and Toinette. The first, whose windows were closed to shut out the cool evening air, and which seemed in no hurry to reach its destination, soon turned off from the highway into the darker avenues of the Thiergarten as if with the intention of leaving its companion behind. In the second carriage the window on Toinette's side was open, although the breeze was somewhat damp and chilly. But the beautiful girl said she liked it, that the music had gone to her head, and in fact her cheeks were burning. As they drove on, talking about the people with whom they had spent the last few hours, the conversation gradually became less fluent and finally ceased, the moon rose above the tree tops, and aided by the extreme clearness of the autumn air soon cast a bright silvery light over the trees by the way side and the stones on the road. It was charming to gaze into the more densely shaded portions of the park, where mysterious lights and shadows played, where now a statue appeared in dazzling whiteness, and anon a black clump of shrubbery defied the power of the light. Edwin had looked out of his window for a long time, absorbed in thoughts which were both sad and cheerful. Once he fancied he saw a female figure walking swiftly along, which as he bent forward seemed to perceive him and hastily retreated farther into the shadow of the trees. He turned to Toinette, to tell her his supposition that Christiane had preferred to traverse the long distance to the city on foot, and made the discovery that his companion had fallen asleep. The moonlight was flickering over her little hands, that lay ungloved in her lap. In the dim light that surrounded her head, he could see her white teeth glitter as she smiled. For a time he restrained himself, though the pulses in his temples throbbed violently, but at last this smile on her lips was stronger than all his resolution. He cautiously bent toward her, and after a pause of five minutes, during which he felt her breath on his eyes, lightly

pressed a kiss on the half parted lips.

She instantly awoke, so suddenly that he drew back in alarm, glowing with blushes. "Where are we," she whispered. "Dear me, what bright moonlight! I believe I've been asleep. It's very impolite, isn't it? But people are wearied even by pleasure. I haven't enjoyed myself so much for a long time."

She talked gaily on; He could not discover whether she had felt the kiss or thought she had only dreamed of it. To be sure, he had not noticed that she returned it.

One more short hour, and he helped her out of the carriage in Rosenstrasse. She thanked him cordially and repeatedly for the delightful day. "We'll continue the cure to-morrow," she called, just as she was closing the door of the house. With these words she dismissed him, and absorbed in blissful dreams, he pursued his way home through the quiet streets.

CHAPTER V.

Beloved Sun,
To all benign,
Hold in thy heart
This child of thine!

Sleeping I lay
In fevered dreams,
Softly thou com'st,
With healing beams;

Hov'ring gently
With smile so bright,
Flooding my lone cell
With golden light,

Till the prisoned soul
From bondage free,
Like opening buds
Unfolds to thee.

Forcing thy way
Over the towers,
Mid roofs, through tree tops,
Among green bowers,

Caressing me gently
Powerful one!
Folding me closely
Beneficent Sun!

Few earthly joys
Have fallen to me,
All I possess
Are given by thee;

Refreshing fruit
Thou dost bestow,
And strengthening bread
As white as snow;

Another gift
The maiden fair,
With rosy cheeks
And golden hair--

Thou mak'st her bloom,
Child of the sun,

A joy and blessing
To me alone,

To this frail form
A halo lend,
Till she draws near
On me to tend.

Of her bereft,
Hopeless I sigh,
Nothing remains
Only to die,

So that thine eye
Alone may keep,
Watch over my grave,
And dreamless sleep.--

The sheet on which these verses were written, lay on Balder's knees. Soon after Edwin left him, he had seated himself at the window in the sunlight, and began his holiday by taking a sheet of paper and pouring forth the feelings that filled his soul. We know that he was never happier than when his heart of its own accord began to sing, and his hand could scarcely write fast enough to seize the melodies he heard.

But to-day he was particularly happy. His unusual capacity for finding pleasure in everything, even the smallest trifle, seemed heightened by the joy of convalescence. He gazed through the closed window a long time at the white cat, that lay on the sill blinking sleepily, sunning itself, and pretending not to see the sparrows that ventured close up to it. A small white cloud was drifting slowly across the blue sky. He became absorbed in the spectacle, as if he beheld the most wonderful pictures, until his eyes ached from staring at the radiant heavens; then he rose and walked slowly through the room, drawing the lame foot after him almost as if he were dancing, and from time to time pressing to his lips the last of the oranges Marquard had recently brought him, to drink in the fragrance and juice at the same time. Sometimes he thought of his brother, and how pleasantly the hours must be passing with him, sometimes of Reginchen, whose voice was distinctly audible in the front of the house, as she sat at the open windows of the kitchen working and singing to herself; then he paused before Edwin's book shelf, drew out at random one of the volumes, with all of which he was familiar, and read half a page only to restore it to its place again to meditate on what he had read. He even took up his tools as if to use them, but remembered that he had promised Edwin to rest at least a week. True, he considered this rest very unnecessary, for he had never felt stronger and better, or breathed more freely.

When Reginchen brought up his dinner at noon, she noticed his unusual gayety and cheerfulness. "Your sickness has done you good, Herr Walter," said she.

"No," he answered smiling, "it was your nursing, Reginchen."

"Well, it's all the same," she answered. "But why didn't you go into the country with the Herr Doctor? (she always gave Edwin this title.) No one who's well would stay at home to-day."

"Are you going into the country too, Reginchen?"

"I indeed! I'm the house dog to-day. My parents went to a christening at eleven o'clock, the journeymen of course all went off too, and there's nobody in the house except the old couple; *she's* sick, and *he* to keep her company is sick and cross, too. You may think I am joking; but just ask their girl. If he even has a cold, she worries so that she can neither eat nor drink, and is obliged to go to bed. It's comical, isn't it, but very pleasant to see two old people still so fond of each other."

"Still? I should think people would love each other more and more the longer they knew each other."

"Certainly! The longer the dearer. But it isn't always so. Would you like to grow old, Herr Walter?"

"If the people I love grow old with me, certainly."

"I shouldn't," she answered. "I used to think nothing could be worse than to die. But now--you'll laugh at me--I am often fairly disgusted with life, though I can complain of nothing. I feel so oppressed and anxious, and nothing pleases me; I wish for I know not what, and fear I know not why. You're so clever, Herr Walter. What is the cause of this?"

"Dear Reginchen"--and he seized her hand and gazed into the frank face which was turned toward him with innocent curiosity. He was seeking for words to intimate to her, that it was the exuberance of youth and the yearning desire for love which disgusted her with her everyday life; perhaps he meant to summon courage to confess that he too had the same feelings. But she suddenly withdrew her hand.

"Didn't you hear? The old lady has rung for me; heaven knows what she wants. Her girl has gone, because it's her Sunday out, and there's nobody to wait on her but me. Eat your dinner, Herr Walter, perhaps if I have time, I'll come up again for five minutes. You're altogether too lonely, and on Sunday too!"

She glided out of the room. He was almost glad that they had been interrupted. What could he have said to her, without entirely betraying himself? And if she had learned his feelings and confessed her love for him what would have followed? Would it not have been a betrothal, and must not Edwin have been told? And yet it seemed impossible that any one should know of this wonderful fairy dream. And could it be possible? He thought of his delicate health, his seclusion from the world, his youthfulness--he had seen but twenty years--was he one to step forward, like other men, and say: "here's a girl whose husband I wish to become, with whom I desire to found a home, and--rear children!" As this thought passed through his mind though entirely alone he blushed crimson and shook his head. Then he sat down to the table, and as he ate the simple food with a good appetite, his confidence in his destiny increased and he became very well satisfied and silently resolved if she came up in the afternoon, to tell her that he thought he knew what she desired and feared:--To give her heart to another heart, and lose her own life to celebrate a joyful resurrection in another.

But he had long finished his dinner, and the cat had licked the plates so clean that they shone in the sun, and still his little housekeeper kept him waiting. For the first time in his life he felt a weary impatience that he could not dispel. He heard the clock strike four and then five; the sunlight faded, and he suddenly felt an eager desire to get out of the desolation of his "tun" into the open air. How long it was since he had had the blue sky over him, or even put his head out of the window! A feeling of exultation thrilled his heart, as he took his old black cloak and cap from the chest of drawers, and thus equipped glided lightly down stairs. His heart throbbed as violently as if he were setting out on a long and dangerous journey, and yet he was not going out of the house at all, but only down into the courtyard, where he would wait till the young girl came, glide up behind her, and see her astonishment at finding him below.

In spite of the gathering twilight, the air in the courtyard was very mild, as if a remnant of the warmth of the sun which during the day had shone into the space between the four walls, still lingered there. Not a breath of air was stirring, and there was no sound either in the house or street. Balder felt almost like a boy who is playing hide and seek, as he entered the arbor covered with the yellow and almost leafless bean vines, sat down on the little bench, and noticed that no one coming from the front of the house could see him, as the poles were so close together and the black pump intervened. Besides he wrapped himself carefully in his cloak and turned up the collar, so that not even his fair hair could betray him.

Absorbed in fantastic dreams he sat waiting for Reginchen. What would Edwin say, when he came home and heard that Balder had had his excursion too. But the best part of it he must not be allowed to guess. Or should he confess to-day? If he had really been as happy as he hoped, and talked with her heart to heart--would he be able to conceal his joy? Would it not sparkle in his eyes, flush his cheeks, and burst from his lips of its own accord?

He determined to let matters take their course and to follow the dictates of his heart. If she would only come! She could not have forgotten her promise, but what detained her so long? He was weary with anxious longing, and yet he did not venture to look for her in the house. Who could tell whether he should find her alone?

And yet she was alone, even after he had been sitting in the arbor for half an hour. She had had a great many things to do for the old couple upstairs; finally after taking up the tea tray she had been dismissed, and now for the first time remembered her promise, but at the same moment it occurred to her that she had not yet looked at the volume of Schiller, which must be returned in a few days. If he questioned her, it would be very shocking to know nothing about the poems; what could he think except that she did not care for the improvement of her mind? So she sat down in the dark shop, whose half open door, admitted nevertheless light enough to read, laid the little book in her lap and took her knitting in her hand, for she thought it a waste of time to read without working. But she did not open the volume; her thoughts wandered far away to him of whom for weeks she had heard nothing, even through her brother. She would have liked to send him the stockings, which had long been finished, and then if he were in earnest--"he does not really love me," she sighed to herself. "But if he knew how often I think of him--he is such a good man!"

She remembered his sturdy figure and dark, honest face, with its black, bushy beard, so distinctly, that she could not help laughing, even at the moment when she secretly acknowledged her love. But she had a great respect for him on account of his trade of printer, which she supposed to be the most learned of all. Besides she knew through her brother that he composed all sorts of essays, which were very fine and always eagerly seized by the workmen. That such a clever and remarkable man should in her presence be as confused as a boy, not even daring to tell her he loved her, flattered her innocent and very modest self-consciousness not a little; nay it really touched her when she thought how dearly he must love her, that he did not seek some more distinguished and highly educated person. In return she meant to love him truly and faithfully and to learn a great deal, and thought it her duty, above all, to at least read Schiller, though she did not exactly understand the beautiful words. If *he* would sit beside her and read them aloud, it would be so much easier. She liked to listen to his voice, and her brother had often

boasted what an orator he was. But as he did not appear, she could do nothing but try to read to herself. She had just opened the book and read the first lines of the "Melancholie an Laura," when a black shadow suddenly appeared between her and the light, and she started up with a low cry, letting the book fall on the floor.

The subject of her secret thoughts was standing before her, or rather kneeling at her feet to pick up the book, stammering out an apology for the sudden entrance which had startled her.

Her nerves were so strong that she instantly recovered her composure, as soon as she was assured that the vision was no ghost, but her own sun-burnt lover, for whom she had so ardently longed. She laughed at her own terror, grew as red as she had before been pale, and could not understand why he was gazing so intently at the written sheet that had fallen out of the little book and which he had unfolded and read. She did not think it exactly polite for him to forget her for such a scrawl, but thought it must be on account of his learning. He also apologized as he laid the book down on the counter, and only asked timidly where she had obtained it. Herr Walter had lent it to her, and she had just commenced reading it for the first time. He had probably forgotten the written sheet. What was in it, that Herr Franzelius had studied it so eagerly?

"Fräulein Reginchen," replied the printer, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "will you allow me to put this in my pocket? I'll return it to him myself--it might fall into the wrong hands--but you've pardoned my bouncing in so abruptly, haven't you? If you knew, Fräulein Reginchen--"

So saying, he looked around in all directions with a very disturbed expression. She had never seen him so strangely excited before.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "Do you want a glass of water? If I can help you in any way--"

"You cart, Reginchen, you're the only person who can help me. But here--so close to the street, where we may be interrupted at any moment--oh! you do not know the subject of which I want to speak."

She certainly thought she knew. What could it be, if she alone was able to help him? And what could he have to confide to her, in which he did not wish to be interrupted, except the one, the one great subject on which he had never yet found courage to speak, and which she had nevertheless seen long ago in his eyes?

"You're perfectly right," she said in the most innocent tone, and yet with a shade of curiosity. "This is just like being in the street. Do you know, the work-shop is empty and there's no one in the courtyard; you can tell me everything there. But I must first lock up the shop. This is *such* a surprise. The very last thing to be thought of, your coming here to-day."

She hastily closed the heavy outer doors of the shop, so that both were suddenly left in total darkness. But the next instant she opened the second door leading into the entry and let him pass out. "There's nobody at home," she whispered, "my parents won't return from the christening until seven, the Herr Doctor has gone into the country, and only Herr Walter--"

She suddenly remembered what she had promised the lonely youth. But it was now too late, she would apologize in the evening.

"If its something that's to be an entire secret and you do not wish to be seen in the house, run across the courtyard as fast as you can. The old lady up stairs might happen to look out of the window. Dear me, what's the matter? You're so pale and don't speak a word!"

He made no reply but followed her advice. Without looking to the right or left, both glided across the little courtyard, which was now very dark, and entered the work-shop whose windows were directly opposite to the bean arbor. They were all closed.

"We'll open one," whispered the brisk little maiden. "You're not accustomed to the smell of leather and cobbler's wax, and besides there's no danger; as I said before, there's not even a cat in the courtyard to overhear us. Well? Have you recovered your breath a little? I really shudder at the thought of what this secret may be."

She had seated herself on a three-legged stool, with her back to the open window, that he might not see her face distinctly, and was smoothing with both hands the rebellious little curls that clustered around her forehead. "It's very hot here," she said as he still preserved his silence, and with both hands behind his back paced heavily up and down the dark room, absorbed in deep thought. At last he stopped before a table, on which lay various tools and half finished pieces of work piled upon each other.

"Reginchen," said he, "perhaps this will be the last time we shall see each other. If all signs do not fail, I shall either be a prisoner or on my way to America to-morrow."

"Merciful God!" she exclaimed with unconcealed anguish, "you're not in earnest."

"Only too much so," he answered in a hollow tone. "I am not surprised; I've seen this coming a long time. Reginchen--look at me and tell me: do you believe I'm capable of a crime?"

"You! You're the best man under the sun! You could not hurt a child--"

"Thank you, Reginchen. To hear you say so is a great consolation, perhaps the only one I shall take with me, if I'm compelled to fly; no, not even the consciousness that I'm suffering for a holy cause--"

"But pray tell me--"

"You're right, the moments are precious. I'm here to ask you for a great service, which you can render me and the sacred cause. Your brother, the best young fellow I have ever known--he's worthy to have you for a sister, Reginchen--if you wish to know farther particulars, ask him. He has all the numbers of my newspaper, on account of which I'm persecuted. True, I have irritated them, but we have all practised the patience of the lamb long enough, the ass's skin is at last becoming too tight for the lion, but perhaps he was unwise to betray himself by his roar before he was ready to spring. However, it is done; only slaves and cowards are always wise. I don't know what they intend to do now. But that it will--"

"Merciful Heavens!" she exclaimed, "will they try you, throw you into prison?"

"To render me harmless, yes! What is there new or strange in that? Oh! dear Reginchen, the falsity of this so-called justice is so old that quiet citizens may well accept it as a matter of course. But I'm not here to tell you things of which your noble innocent heart can frame no idea. See, this is my dearest possession"--and he drew out a tolerably thick leather pocket book, fastened with a string and sealed. "It contains papers, which if found on my person, would ruin not only me--what would that matter--but many noble men who have trusted me. I knew of no place where I could safely conceal these papers and letters, no one whom I could trust under all circumstances to protect them from every eye; for all my friends run the same risk; any night the police may break into their asylum and search their most secret repositories. Then I thought of you, Reginchen. No one will ever dream of looking here for papers dangerous to the government; your father, though a liberal, has always shaken his head at all the plans of socialism. Will you do me so great a favor as to keep my legacy and never allow it to leave your hands until I write myself and tell you to what address to send the packet?"

She hastily seized the pocketbook with both hands and thrust it under the thick woolen handkerchief she wore crossed over her shoulders and tied in a knot behind. "No living soul shall know anything about it," she said, "it shall be as safe with me as if it were in the bank. But oh! Herr Franzelius, have matters really gone so far? Must you go away forever?" She hastily passed her hand over her eyes, he must not see that they were wet; he was causing her quite too much pain, and she seemed to herself a very unhappy creature that all her dreams should be so quickly destroyed.

"Reginchen," he stammered, "I thank you for your sorrow--though--you cannot suspect what I feel. You would never have known, if I could have remained here--but now--since it can no longer do any harm--"

She gazed at him in astonishment with eyes that had suddenly become dry. "No longer do any harm?" she repeated.

"Yes Reginchen. When I am gone, you will soon forget me, even if you know that I--that I--but perhaps you do know it already."

"I, Herr Franzelius?" Her Eve's nature was again aroused; she would not make it easy for him, he must speak out. How could he possibly be so good an orator, when in her presence he stammered like a school boy?

"Reginchen," said he, drawing a long breath and taking a sudden start, "if you really have not noticed--and I believe you, for you're incapable of dissimulation--I--I have long--for two years--give me your hand, Reginchen. You see I've sometimes imagined that some day I should be granted the happiness of asking you--and your dear parents--to give me this hand for life. I--I have loved you dearly, unspeakably, ever since I knew you--and--though I know that I usually have very little success--either in life or with women--it often seemed to me--as if you too--"

He paused and let her hand fall, to take out his handkerchief and wipe his forehead. The little fair haired deceiver thought it more decorous to keep him in suspense a short time, though her whole heart drew her toward him and she would gladly have thrown herself into his arms at once.

"What are you talking about, Herr Franzelius?" she replied, half pouting. "You have loved me, and now--now it's over. Because you're going away, you will leave me behind like a troublesome piece of property that won't go into your trunk?"

"Oh! Reginchen," he exclaimed, suddenly gazing at her so tenderly that she blushed and cast down her eyes, "you're only joking. You know very well what I mean, and that I shall never cease to love you far more than any one else. If I tear myself away, believe me it's not only because I should think it unprincipled--with my uncertain future and the destiny which may be in store for me--to ask one so young and so unused to want and privation--"

"Oh!" she interrupted, "is that all? I've always heard that the principal thing is for people to love each other. Doesn't Annchen von Tharau's song, which you once wrote out for me, say:

"No matter what tempests may burst overhead,
We'll cling to each other our pathway to tread--?"

"My darling," He exclaimed, fairly beside himself with delight, while a ray of surprise and joy flashed over his gloomy face, "is this true? You have--you have remembered this--applied it to me, to us both? Oh! I never ventured to hope for so much. My precious Reginchen! And now--how happy I should be--if I only dared. Tell me once more, dear precious child, is it true? You would have gone with me, if I had proposed it--and your parents--But no, tell me nothing! It can do no good, and will only make my hard task still harder." He sank down on a stool by the table, and buried his face in his broad hands. Reginchen watched him in silence. She could not understand his behavior. What was it that stood in the way? Why could it "do no good," this acknowledgement of her love, and her willing offer to go out into the wide world with him?

Suddenly he started up and approaching her said: "Promise me, dear Reginchen, that you'll try to forget what I have said. I ought to have kept silence; but my feelings overpowered me. And now farewell and make *him* happy. He deserves it more than I, he also loves you truly and fondly--though certainly no one in the whole world can hold you dearer than I."

He pressed his lips to her hands, then strove to release them and rush out of the workshop. But Reginchen stopped him. "Dear Herr Franzelius," she said, "if you're in earnest and really love me, why do you grieve me so, by telling me things I don't understand, and asking me to make somebody else happy when I do not even know of whom you're speaking? I love you too, and if it were only my parents--but speak; I don't understand a single word of all you have said."

He paused at the door and looked at her in astonishment. "Is it possible?" said he. "That you have no idea of whom I mean? That you see him daily, and yet have never perceived what an impression you have made on his heart? I noticed it long ago, and suffered deeply in consequence. Oh! Reginchen, you don't know what it is to grudge such a friend the love of such a girl, because one loves her himself! And yet I know what I owe him, how deeply, perhaps fatally, it would wound him, if you and I--"

"Merciful Heaven!" she suddenly exclaimed, "no, no, it's impossible--you can't mean Herr Walter!"

"And why not?"

"Pray consider, he's so sickly, do you really believe he ever will be well again, ever think--dear me, how you startled me! I should never have dreamed of such a thing in all my life! Herr Walter!"

"I know what I know, dear Reginchen," replied the printer sadly. "What will be done *when* he is again well and strong, and whether that will ever come to pass--who can tell? But I should be a scoundrel, if I caused him who has already suffered so much, even the shadow of a grief that I could spare him. Oh! Reginchen, if you knew him thoroughly, the noblest, loftiest soul that ever dwelt in a fragile body--you could not help loving him as I love him, more than myself, and you would rather bear and suffer everything, than cloud even an hour of his life." Both fixed their eyes on the floor. An anxious, oppressive pause followed.

"So you really think--" Reginchen began; but she did not finish the sentence.

"I'm as sure of his love as of my own," Franzelius faltered. "If I could have cherished any doubt, everything would have been proved and made plain half an hour ago. I have no right to persuade you to anything against which your heart rebels. But I'm sure that now you know his secret, it will be impossible for you not to become attached to him; he is far more lovable than I, whom only your heavenly goodness--perhaps through mistake or accident--"

"No," she eagerly exclaimed, almost ready to cry, "now I must speak frankly; there was no special goodness about it except your own, and as to Herr Walter's being more lovable--dear me it's possible, but I can't help it--I'd rather have *you*; didn't you notice it when you tried on the boots, spoke of the stockings--wait, I'll get them right away, they've been finished a long time, I hurried so because I thought you'd have to go away, though not forever! Dear me, to think I must help you now, besides making the stockings."

"Girl!" he exclaimed, "you would really--It's too much--oh! now I see for the first time how happy we might have been."

"Who knows what may happen yet," she said, consoling herself as she wiped her eyes with her apron; "but wait here five minutes; I've got them in my work table. I'll be back again directly. They will certainly fit you and keep you warm."

As she passed close by him and went out of the door, he was strongly tempted to hurry after her, clasp the beloved form in his arms, and imprint his thanks for her gift on her fresh lips. But

he was so sincere in his purpose of resigning her to his friend, that he did not trust himself even to touch her, precisely because he felt that she would not have resisted. When she had gone, he sank down on a bench like a heavily burdened man and pressed his hands to his eyes. Amid all his sorrow, he revelled in the bliss of knowing that she loved him, and each word which had assured him of the fact still echoed in his soul.

He was suddenly roused from this happy reverie by a loud cry in the courtyard, close to the door that opened into the back building. He recognized Reginchen's voice, and in mortal terror started up, tore open the door, and was about to rush across the entry into the courtyard. But a terrible sight checked him.

On the threshold of the back building, which was reached by two steps, lay Balder, wrapped in his dark cloak and completely insensible. The unfortunate youth must have overheard the whole conversation, since he had not dared to move lest he should betray his presence. Who would undertake to describe the storm that raged in his soul, as silently leaning against the wall, he saw all his dearest illusions shattered! His still delicate chest heaved and labored till he thought he was suffocating, and the idea that the two happy lovers might come out and find him there pierced his heart like glowing iron. He had already risen to rush out into the street, when her proposal to bring the present from the front of the house again bound him to his dark corner. But he thought he would take advantage of the few minutes before her return. As soon as she had disappeared in the passage, he hastily dragged himself to the door--clinging to the wall as his limbs refused to support him, in order to reach the staircase that led to his room. But just as he had gained the second step, his strength failed, a stream of blood gushed from his lips, and he fell fainting on the threshold.

When Reginchen returned with the little package, she started at the sight of the dark mass that barred her way, but when she recognized the fair hair and saw the dark stains on the stones close by, she lost all composure and screamed for help as piteously as if she herself had been stabbed to the heart. She did not exchange a word or glance with the friend who came hurrying out. In the twinkling of an eye everything became clear to her, and she shrank like a criminal from the eyes of her fellow culprit. They carried the unconscious sufferer, who only uttered low moans, up the stairs and laid him carefully on his bed. In the midst of their efforts to restore him to consciousness, while still fearing that he might open his eyes and see them both at his side, Edwin returned and entered the room in the highest spirits.

With what anguish the sight that met his gaze overwhelmed him, they only can understand, who have lived long enough to experience the cruel mockery with which fate delights in suddenly hurling mortals from the greatest happiness into the deepest misery.

CHAPTER VI.

After Christiane had seen the couple in the carriage and fled from the wide avenue into the more densely wooded portions of the park, she had wandered about for hours without aim or object, at times pausing breathless to rest upon some bench.

The fog had become so impenetrable that the crescent of the moon hung a pale line of light in the grey sky and total darkness brooded over the intricate paths of the Thiergarten. It was no night for a solitary pedestrian, but she met no one, and she felt no fear. What indeed could happen to her? To be sure she might be attacked, robbed, or even killed by some drunken vagabond. But she was quite willing to run the risk of this, and the thought of other dangers to which a woman might be exposed in such a nocturnal ramble did not alarm her. When Adèle had once asked how she dared to go out so boldly at all hours of the evening, she replied: "I always go about with my face unveiled, I need no better protection." To-night in particular, with all the tortures of a hopeless love in her heart, she had become more firmly convinced than ever that she was a discarded step-child of Mother Nature condemned to perpetuate self-sacrifice; she felt a sort of bitter pleasure in the thought that she had nothing in common with the rest of mankind, either in love or hatred, but was as it were a peculiar being, allied to unknown creatures of darkness, who were as ugly as she, and therefore wise enough to avoid the daylight. In this wild mood which gradually obtained more and more the mastery over her, she would scarcely have been alarmed, if at some crossing in the paths she had chanced upon a crowd of spectres and been bidden to make one of their company. Anything would be better than to return to mankind, the best and noblest of whom had always made her the most miserable without even suspecting the fact. She shed no tears; all personal feelings--love for Edwin, jealousy of the beautiful girl--receded farther and farther into the background of her thoughts; only her own destiny, the world in which her fervid heart was languishing, the tortures of a lost youth, the dread of a lonely and loveless old age,--these rose in ghostly, exaggerated outlines before her soul, and from time to

time extorted from her a cry, that in the deep silence startled even herself.

When she came to the fish ponds, above which floated still denser fogs, she involuntarily paused. For a long time she stood and gazed at the dense whiteness which never shifted and which seemed to be waiting for some wearied, hunted human life to find rest in its depths. But her seething blood, inflamed by the unusual indulgence in wine, recoiled from the thought of such an end. Mechanically and without thinking of what she was doing, she picked up a stone from the roadside and threw it into the mist-veiled water. The sullen splash of its fall recalled her to herself. She drew a long breath, trembled, wrapped her cloak closer around her, and then walked away more slowly than before, but taking a direct lane toward the city, which she reached in half an hour.

In the wild chaos of thoughts that filled her mind as she went, there was one fixed resolution, to which she constantly returned: to-morrow she would leave the house where she lodged, engage other rooms, and then consider whether it would not be better to turn her back upon the city altogether and seek some corner of the world where life would be quite destitute of charm, nature most barren, and men utterly wretched. Invalids often go to springs merely to find companions in suffering and thus make their condition more endurable. Why should not the miserable avoid the neighborhood of the happy, in order to bear their burdens more easily among those who are wretched likewise?

As she entered the little courtyard of the house in the Dorotheenstrasse, she noticed that there was a light in her room; but thought the maid servant, who waited upon her and had a second key, was probably doing something there and unsuspectingly ascended the stairs. She had been unable to make up her mind to look at Edwin's windows.

On reaching her door, however, she did not find the key in the lock. "Perhaps the girl has only lighted the lamp and gone out again," she thought, as she hastily opened it. The little ante-room was dark and nothing was moving there, so she hastily opened the door of her sitting and sleeping room, but paused on the threshold in astonishment when she saw Lorinser sitting in a corner of the sofa, holding on his knees a book, from which he did not even raise his eyes at her entrance.

The little lamp with the green shade was burning on the table beside him and illumined the strongly marked countenance with its high, smooth forehead and firm mouth. No expression betrayed any special agitation of mind, and when he at last raised his eyes and fixed them on the dark figure of the woman who stood on the threshold in silence, gazing at him as if she could not believe her own eyes, no stranger would have suspected that he was a guest playing master of the house in the presence of the real occupant, so perfectly unembarrassed was the smile with which he greeted the newcomer.

"Good evening," said he, "you are late. Excuse me for having made myself comfortable here during your absence; I provided for plenty of light and warmth, and have whiled away the long hours--But my God!" he exclaimed, suddenly interrupting himself, "how you look, Christiane! You're deadly pale and trembling from head to foot--take off your damp cloak--come--here's a warm place in the sofa corner--will you tell me where your tea pot is? You must get warm again--"

"Leave me!" she hoarsely exclaimed, repelling the hands that tried to clasp her cold fingers. "I need no one--I'm perfectly well--it's only surprise, indignation, at finding you here after I've plainly told you that I did not desire your visits, that I would never receive you again."

"That's the very reason I've come," he replied in the calmest tone, while his eyes wandered toward the ceiling. "You've expelled me as we only expel one whom we deeply hate or--love a little, and therefore fear. Do you suppose a man will endure this, without at least making an endeavor to discover in which of the two situations he stands? I at least, even if you were not what you are to me, am not the man to obey blindly. I've had no rest, Christiane, that's why you see me here with but one question on my lips; when I have the answer, I'll go. But we must understand each other."

She had sunk into a chair, which stood beside the window. The damp cloak still hung over her shoulders, but she had hastily removed her hat as if the strings choked her. As she now sat gazing into vacancy, he supposed that she was reflecting upon his words. But it was only because she heard Edwin's step overhead, and all her former emotions again awoke. She forgot that Lorinser had asked her a question, nay even that he was in the room.

"You delay your answer, Christiane," he began again. "I don't wonder at it and greatly as I desire to have a clear understanding between us, I have no wish to hasten this explanation. Perhaps the most favorable thing for which I can hope, is to have your soul hover in a sort of twilight, so strangely compounded of sullen hate and dawning affection, that neither can gain the victory. Such a condition may be singular and mysterious to your strong nature, which is usually so quick to decide; you think you can shake it off by ridding yourself of the man who causes the mood. You're mistaken, Christiane. You may deceive yourself: I know that I'm already too near to you to be crowded out of your life so easily. You must go on until you arrive at either hate or love. No one capable of a real emotion, has ever yet had a half feeling toward me." He had approached nearer and was standing beside her with folded arms, gazing at her face which in profile was distinctly relieved against the dark curtain. His vicinity, his low, quiet words, the firmness with

which he asserted his position, angered her more and more. With a quick indignant gesture, she threw her cloak over the back of the chair and rose.

"I must earnestly beg you to leave me," said she. "Only on condition that you respect my wishes now, will I consent to take no farther notice of the manner in which you've intruded here. If you were as well acquainted with human nature as you profess to be, you would give up the crazy idea that I could ever give you any power over me either for good or evil. Our characters are entirely unlike."

"You talk like a child," he answered quietly, "or you don't know what you're saying. If the difference between us were not as wide as heaven and hell, we never could be anything to each other. Only opposite poles attract each other, simply because they seem to repel. Can there be a victory without a conflict? What you are to me, Christiane, I know only too well. What I am or shall be to you--you will soon learn, though you may now thrust the knowledge ever so far away. Or do you know another man," he continued gazing steadily into her face, "who in the hour when you are forsaken by all, when you feel more wretched than you have ever felt before, would come to you and offer you his hand to save you, who could again make desirable the life you would fain throw away as a worthless possession?" A lightning like glance from her gloomy eyes fell upon him. Contrary to his usual custom, he endured it and could not conceal his exultation; his bold shaft had struck the sore spot in her heart.

"Who has told you that I am miserable?" she passionately exclaimed. "And if it be true how do you know that I would not a thousand times rather remain unhappy than be rescued by you and your God? If you're right in supposing that all mankind has abandoned me, do you wish to rob me of what is yet left to me, my own individuality, my freedom, my solitude, in which I need answer to no one for my suffering? You've asked me the nature of the feeling that holds me aloof from you. It is this: I've a *horror* of you! In the first hour of our acquaintance I detected in you the demon to whom nothing is sacred, not even the grief of a poor unhappy woman; who merely to gratify his selfishness, would fain obtain the mastery over everything, and therefore does not even think what others despise or overlook--a creature so destitute of all joys as I--too insignificant to be made useful. But you're mistaken, and neither your heaven nor your hell will help you; this is the last time you'll ever see me, as truly--"

"Silence!" he imperiously exclaimed. "Do not forswear your own salvation, do not conjure up the fiends who are lying in wait for souls. And moreover no such vows are needed. Believe me, Christiane, I too have pride, and strength to suffer for its sake, and if I speak in vain to-day, it will be my turn to avoid you. But you must listen now. You're too just to condemn me unheard." He drew a long breath, as if he were obliged to gather fresh courage for what he wanted to say. Then suddenly in his softest voice, into which when he chose he could throw an almost magical influence, he continued: "Sit down quietly; I will try to be brief. But you are greatly exhausted. You have just suffered bitterly again; do not deny it, Christiane, my longing jealous heart, makes my eyes keen; I could not tell you what or whom it was that caused you pain, but your soul is still trembling from the effects of this blow. Is not it so?" He relapsed into silence and watched her intently. She was gazing into vacancy but her lips quivered. "You're a fiend," she murmured. "But go on--go on--! let us get to the end."

"To the end?" said he. "Oh! Christiane, if you were only more gentle, if your grief had not made you insensible to the pain of others, you would spare me further words. Have I not already told you, that from the first moment I saw you I recognized the inevitable destiny that bound me to you, and have vainly striven with all the powers of the soul and mind to escape the thralldom? I have concealed from myself nothing that could help to stifle such a flame--your obstinacy, your atheism, your indifference to all that usually charms and misleads your sex. I have told myself that I had no happiness to expect from this love, no future, no help for my own needs; the thirst for rule which you falsely impute to me--or no, let me confess it, which perhaps usually sways me--was never so ignominiously baffled as by you. Everything that can offend the vanity, the pride, even the honor of a man, or repel his affection, I have experienced at your hands. And now, Christiane, I ask you on your conscience: do you doubt the power of nature, or as I call it, the mystical force, which alone is capable, in spite of everything, of bringing me back to your feet? I was fully prepared to be misunderstood, reproached, abused. But that is the very miracle of love: it prefers to be trampled under foot by the beloved object, rather than caressed by an indifferent hand. Now have you still the heart to call me a fiend, only anxious to get your soul into his power? Your soul? oh God! I have given up the hope of winning it, spite of the pain it has cost me, I despair of initiating you into the depths of my life with God, making you a sharer in the bliss of my fears and longings. But believe me, Christiane, there is an earthly compensation for the highest divine ecstasies, of which all minds are not capable, a compensation which matures the soul and at the same time prepares it for higher degrees of knowledge: the blending of spiritual and sensual passion, that thrills me with ardent yearning if I only touch your hand, meet your eyes, feel your breath on my face. No one, no matter how much he may have suffered, issues from this bath of the soul unrejuvenated and unrefreshed, and indeed, my friend, for your own sake I wish you had the courage to rush with closed eyes into the flames from which the poor mortal creature, purged from all the dross of earthly sorrow, emerges purified as a new, divinely consoled being.

"This is the mystery," he continued as she was still silent: "no one comes to the Father save by the Son, no one can understand heavenly love who closes the heart to earthly affection. You have not found your God, my friend, because you would not yield to the power of your god--*man*, your

Saviour, who would have delivered you from yourself. Do you know for what sin Lucifer was expelled from the presence of the eternal one? He wished to remain in presumptuous innocence, disdained to submit to the power of love. Now he is freezing amid his flames, as you, Christiane, shiver with cold while your whole nature is on fire. Oh! my friend, you are silent. Would that I had an angel's tongue to win from your soul some echo, thaw your frozen heart. You say you have a horror of me. Oh! it is not of me, the poor weak man, whom a single glance of yours can curb; you dread your own fall, which must precede your deliverance, the loss by which you are to gain, the death through which you must live. 'So a heart trembles at the approach of love, as if it were menaced by death.' But you have a strong soul, Christiane, you will shake off this cowardice and risk all to gain all, death for life, sin for mercy, hate for love--

"I knew it," he whispered, and his voice grew almost mournful, without losing its passionate impetuosity, "when I first saw you and my heart instantly whispered your destiny: I knew this hour would come, resolutely as you might struggle, painful as were the thorns pride thrust into my soul. I have seen you from the beginning as I behold you now, and could not help secretly laughing at your foolish anguish, because you did not believe yourself formed to awaken love. You, whose looks and words and gestures have haunted me day and night, inflamed my blood as no woman ever had power to do! You, who hate me, *believe* you hate me--for this horror is only the mother of longing--have poisoned my dreams with cruel tortures and made my waking hours miserable. If you knew all that from childish pride I have concealed from you--fool that I am, only to writhe the more helplessly at your feet waiting for mercy or sentence! And the omnipotent one knows that but one thought, one voice in my heart gave me courage to endure all this: the thought that the hour would come when you would suddenly melt, and swept away by the same storm, say to me: 'You have suffered enough, take me. Let us perish to live again in each other!'" He had bent nearer and nearer to her, his lips almost touched her hair, his gaze rested on her brow, which was damp as if from mortal agony, and she had closed her eyes as if fainting. As she still remained motionless, a sudden terror seized upon him. "Christiane!" he cried, clasping her impetuously in his arms and seeking her lips with his. But at this moment he was violently thrust back. She had sprung from her chair and retreated a step. In the dim light of the lamp he saw her eyes wide open and fixed with an indescribable expression upon vacancy.

"You're a fiend!" she exclaimed. "Leave me instantly! if you have the Satanic courage to utter another word, I will throw the window open and rouse the quiet night with shrieks of murder. Do you hear what I say? If your own honor is not as indifferent to you as mine, go--go--GO!"

She uttered the last word in so loud a tone, and waved her hand so imperiously toward the door, that he remained silent. Yet he did not seem to be deeply agitated; nay even a smile hovered around his lips as he took his hat and overcoat from the sofa, bowed carelessly, and with a "good night" left the room. She heard him open the door that led into the entry and slam it violently after him, but could not distinguish his steps on the stairs. She was aware of his noiseless tread, however, and so at last believed herself alone. But the solitude only enabled her to collect her thoughts, and they made her still more wretched. She sank back into her chair, and the grief and anguish so painfully repressed found vent in passionate tears.

What had she been forced to hear! Although indignant at the art with which the gloomy fanatic blended the highest with the basest things, the divinest impulses with the maddest desires, striving with subtle boldness to lull to sleep the pure voice of the soul: was it not passion, she asked herself, that blazed within him, the language of unbridled love, which risks all to attain its object, and summons hell as well as heaven to its aid? Then she was not too repulsive to kindle such a fire, there was one man who would dare all for her, whom neither her hatred nor abhorrence could restrain from persecuting her with his ardent longings! From the chill in which she had shivered during her long walk through the misty night, into what a fiery gulf was she now hurled! or no, not yet into the blazing abyss, but the flames that rose from it were near enough to make her gasp for breath. She could not sit still in her chair, the air was so oppressively sultry; she opened the window, but instantly closed it again, as the fog, cold and damp as the atmosphere of a tomb, floated into the room making her shiver. Long before this the little fire in the stove had gone out, now the lamp failed also. She was in darkness, but she did not heed it. Pacing to and fro, absorbed in a chaos of thoughts, she mechanically loosened one article of clothing after another, letting each lie, where it fell. While thus groping about, she found herself beside her bed and sank down upon it. "To sleep!" she said aloud, and started at the sound of her own voice, then hastily cowered under the quilt as if for concealment. But she could not close her eyes; they burned too painfully after the long walk through the foggy night. She could not banish from her thoughts the eyes of the dangerous man she had just driven away; nothing availed her; they flashed upon her everywhere, even from the darkness and through her closed lids. In her terror she tried to banish the spectre by a spell which had never yet failed her, by conjuring up Edwin's form before her mind. Now even this was useless: with all her efforts, she could not recall the features that were usually so distinct; but Toinette's lovely face suddenly came uppermost in her mind, so bright and smiling that she felt a sharp pang, and drew the coverlid over her eyes to shut out the memory. The next instant she again threw it back, raised her head from the pillow and sat up, as if suffocating. A weary moan escaped her lips, she threw her bare arm over her face and buried her teeth in her own flesh until the keen agony recalled her to consciousness.

"He was right," she said to herself, "there is but one magic, the magic of sin. A God now, to whom one could pray: Deliver us from evil--but a God, who must first be implored--!"

She sat erect bewildered with anguish, her heart throbbing stormily; then gradually she sank back, into a recumbent posture, and at last fell into a half slumber. The night seemed yet more silent, the world seemed dead, and only she with her unappeased longing for happiness, could not perish. Suddenly she fancied that she heard a strange crackling sound, as if a bat were fluttering over the floor. A shudder ran through her frame; she could not move, her limbs seemed paralyzed by approaching death.

"Who is there?" she cried. No answer.

"Is there any one in the room?" All was still as death.

"I am delirious," she said to herself. "Oh! this long night! If morning would only come. Oh! for sleep--for one hour's sleep!"

She buried her head in the pillows and at last really fell asleep. In her dreams she met Edwin, and his manner toward her was different from what it had ever been. He smiled at her with his happiest look, and then grew grave again exactly as he had done when she had watched his reflection in the mirror, while he sat opposite to the beautiful girl. But now all his whispers and fond glances were directed toward her. Her heart would not believe it, it must be a dream, a voice ever repeated in her ear; but he talked so persistently and entreatingly, with looks and tones of such ardent passion, only, strange to say, in the exact words she had just heard from Lorinser, that intoxicated with delight, she could no longer strive against the miracle. Beloved by him! A thrill of joy made her tremble. She saw him bend over her, felt his breath on her face, her burning lips half parted in the empty gloom and murmured wild words----

A piercing shriek suddenly rang through the silent house, a shriek which in its terrible shrillness sounded so little like the accents of a human voice, that the sleepers whose ears it reached only started a moment, and then as all remained still, quietly relapsed into slumber again, believing it to be some dream or illusion of the senses. Up in the "tun" Balder moved in his restless sleep, and asked if he had screamed so himself. Mohr had sprung from his chair and was trembling from head to foot. He thought he had distinctly heard the terrible cry proceed from the room beneath. "Let me go down," he whispered to Edwin. "It sounded as if some one were shrieking for help against an assassin." Edwin stopped him. "Where do you want to go?" he whispered. "If it were she, perhaps she has thus relieved her heart of some heavy burden." They listened intently, but all below remained as still as death. Mohr gradually grew calm and continued to renew for Balder the applications of ice.

But the old maid-servant, who had come up the steep stairs with her little lamp for the last time, to ask if anything was wanted, was just passing Christiane's door when the terrible cry of mortal agony and wild despair fell on her ear. The kind hearted woman also thought that some sudden pain had attacked the young lady, but did not hesitate an instant to open the door with the pass key she always carried, and hastily enter the room.

When the light of her little lamp streamed far before her into the dark ante-chamber, the old woman remained standing on the threshold as if petrified, unable to take a single step forward or backward. She saw Fräulein Christiane standing motionless with bare feet, beside the wall at the head of the bed, the coverlid closely wrapped around her, her unbound hair streaming over her shoulders, her right arm with the fingers of the hand extended, stretched out before her, her eyes, dilated so that the whites glittered in the light, fixed in a rigid stare on the dark figure of a man, who also stood motionless in the middle of the room. Not a syllable was uttered. A stifled cry, like a rattling in the throat, came from Christiane, and from the spot where the man stood a sound very like the grinding of teeth. The man then turned, noiselessly and with apparent calmness, and seemed to be looking for something on the floor; then waving one hand toward the wall, and concealing his face with the other, he kept his back toward the little lamp, and glided bare headed past the old woman out into the dark entry.

At the same moment the white figure beside the bed sank down, and as the old servant rushed forward, the light fell upon a face deadly pale and distorted by the wildest convulsions of human agony.

CHAPTER VII.

Day had scarcely dawned, when the door of the tun was softly opened and Heinrich Mohr's herculean figure appeared on the threshold; he took leave of Edwin with a silent pressure of the hand. When, late in the evening, he had come to the house to see whether Christiane had returned in safety, he was soothed by the light in her window, and went up stairs to pay Balder a

visit and calm his excited nerves by a game of chess. When he heard what had occurred and saw the poor young fellow's condition, he could not be dissuaded from watching with him through the night. Franzelius had rushed off for the doctor as soon as Edwin returned. He found Marquard's doors locked, his master would probably not come home that night, the servant said with a significant smile. Another doctor, the best that could be procured, was then summoned and prescribed the necessary remedies. After this the night passed quietly without incident. The friends, both equally moved by this vicissitude of fate, scarcely exchanged a word during the long hours, but sat side by side on the bench by the turning lathe, each with a book which neither read, listening to the irregular breathing of the invalid. Toward morning, the slumber produced by opium seemed to pass into a healthy, natural sleep, and Edwin now insisted that Mohr should go home and make up part of the rest he had lost, begging him first to leave at Toinette's lodgings a note, which contained the following lines:

"Do not expect me to-day. Whilst I was eagerly imbibing full draughts from the cup of life, death knocked at our door. We still hope to defend our citadel against him, but until we are entirely sure of doing so, I shall not leave my post at Balder's side. Whether or not I can forget you in any fate that may befall me, you well know. I shall send you messages from time to time. If you want any books, please inform me.

"The envy of the 'so-called gods' has this time produced a master piece.

"Edwin."

When Mohr passed Christiane's door, he was on the point of ringing her bell, but it occurred to him that it was not yet six o'clock. But he came back again during the forenoon. He had scarcely been able to sleep an hour; a strange anxiety urged him to return to the house in Dorotheenstrasse, which contained all that was dear to him. As he vainly pulled Christiane's bell for the third time, the maid-servant came up the stair's bringing Edwin's dinner; (Reginchen would not appear.) The woman was evidently confused when Mohr hastily asked where the young lady had gone and when she would return. Fräulein Christiane had gone out early in the morning, she answered sulkily, she couldn't say where. She didn't trouble herself about the lodgers.

He was not particularly surprised; only it was disagreeable to be thus compelled to wait before he could see her again. But as he intended to stay in the tun for the day and night, he hoped at any rate to hear when she returned.

On going up stairs he found Marquard, who tried to put the best possible face on matters.

"There's no immediate danger," he said in a low tone, while Balder was sleeping, "if he will only keep quiet and not play any more tricks. What the devil induced him, instead of taking a little ride in the sunshine, to venture alone into the city and wander about the foggy streets till he was warm and tired."

That he had done this, Balder had written with a trembling hand on a scrap of paper, for which he asked Edwin as soon as he awoke, as if by his written testimony to remove all suspicion of any other cause. Franzelius, who came up a moment to inquire about his health, and scarcely dared to look the invalid in the face, had kept silence. And indeed he knew nothing definite; he left after insisting that he must be permitted to watch the following night. There was no longer any mention of his fixed idea that he was pursued.

Here was a fresh instance of the power a pure and noble soul can exert over coarser natures. There was not a loud word heard in the house; everybody moved about on tiptoe; a Sabbath-like stillness pervaded the workshop beneath, only interrupted by the smothered grumbling of the head journeyman, if the apprentice who was sent up stairs in his stocking feet every two hours to inquire about Balder, remained too long. Even the old gentleman in the second story had been to the tun in person to express his sympathy for Edwin, and Madame Feyertag, the only person who succeeded in seeing the patient, came down with tearful eyes and declared that he looked like a young Saviour, and it was heart rending to see such a picture of a man suffer so terribly.

Reginchen, as has already been mentioned, did not appear. The maid-servant said she was ill. Such a thing was hard to imagine, but no one had much thought for anything except whether Balder would ever rise from his bed again.

We must, however, except Heinrich Mohr, who in the deathlike stillness of the house listened for nothing more anxiously than the sound of Christiane's door. But there was no movement or sound beneath, though hour after hour elapsed and she had never before remained absent without informing the pupils who came to take lessons at the house, and who were dismissed to-day by the old servant, with a shrug of the shoulders. The uncertainty became harder and harder to bear. He had never passed hours so full of torture as these in the quiet sick room, beside the friend to whom he could not even speak of his fears, for Edwin's sole anxiety was for his brother.

Evening had already come, when Mohr with a beating heart suddenly heard a carriage drive up the street and directly after rapid steps cross the courtyard. Now the first flight of stairs creaked, a woman's light footsteps could be heard upon them; they paused at the first landing but Christiane's room was not the goal, for with light cautious steps the late visitor mounted higher, reached the door of the tun, and tapped lightly on it.

Edwin who was sitting beside the lamp, dozing a little after his sleepless night, instantly started up. "Come in!" he called softly, forgetting that no one was allowed to enter the sick room. The door opened, and Toinette's slender figure, wrapped in a silk cloak, glided noiselessly in. Her first glance lighted upon the bed where Balder was quietly sleeping, then she laid her finger on her lips and nodded to the two friends, who had started from their chairs and were gazing at her in astonishment.

"Toinette--you here!--you've come yourself!" exclaimed Edwin.

"Hush!" she answered. "He's asleep, I'm going away again directly. But I couldn't rest, I was determined to see how bad matters were. You wrote me such a short note, that I haven't got over my fright yet. Tell me, is he out of danger?"

"We hope so. But won't you sit down?"

"No, no," she answered, now for the first time glancing around the dimly lighted room, with an involuntary sigh which betrayed to Edwin how poor and uninviting the famous "tun" appeared to her. "I shall disturb you!" she added in a whisper. "Only let me look at him once more. Thank you," she added to Mohr, who had moved the lamp nearer the sleeper. For a few moments all three were silent.

"He's very handsome!" she said softly. "What a gentle face! So that is your brother! Do you know I should have known it instantly, though you don't look at all alike. What pretty slender hands, one would never think they had learned a trade; but he's moving, as if in pain; take the lamp away, we mustn't wake him."

"Won't you not at least sit down a moment?" pleaded Edwin, who could hardly restrain his feelings. "I can't offer you a sofa though. Neither philosophy nor the turning lathe has progressed so far as that."

"No, I can't stay. I kept the droschky waiting at the door because I only wanted to inquire in person. What a terrible attack! But at least he does not suffer. What does the doctor say?"

At this moment the invalid moved his head, raised it a little from the pillow, and slowly opened his eyes. His gaze was fixed upon Toinette, whom he seemed to notice with quiet curiosity, but without surprise. Whether he took her for some dream-vision, or whether he was really awake, they could not tell. "How sweet those violets smell!" he murmured. "Is it Spring already?" A faint smile lighted up his face and then died away. Slowly, as if closed by some stranger's hand, his eyelids drooped, and with a heavy sigh he sank back upon the pillows.

"He thinks he has seen a vision, and will dream on about it," whispered Edwin. "I wonder if he will remember you to-morrow."

"Don't tell him I was here," Toinette replied quickly, drawing her hood over her head. "Goodnight. I'm glad I've seen him, I really could not have slept without it." Mohr silently bowed. Meantime Edwin had lighted a small lamp and was prepared to accompany her down stairs.

"I'm making you a great deal of trouble," she said as she slowly descended the rickety steps, "but one might easily break one's neck here. And then, I've something to tell you, a request to make, but you mustn't be angry with me."

"What can I do for you?"

"It's not for me, it's for your brother. Things must not go on so, he ought to have a change, he can't spend the winter in that oppressive atmosphere. I'm angry with myself for having managed so badly, lived so recklessly. A fortnight ago I should have been twice as rich. But you'll certainly treat me like an old friend and take what I have, that he may go to some warmer climate, if not to Cairo or Madeira." He stood still on the stairs. The hand which held the light trembled.

"And you, Toinette? What is to become of you?"

"That's a matter of no consequence. Surely you know that 'My Highness' must end sooner or later, and I shall not have been utterly useless at last."

"Toinette! What are you saying! You're jesting, and I--in all seriousness, do you suppose I would accept your offer?"

"You would be very unwise if you did not. Do you call yourself a philosopher and still cling to such foolish prejudices? What can one human being give another that deserves less thanks than miserable money? I thought you despised it as much as I. But I see you're no wiser than other men, who don't hesitate a moment to take everything from a girl, love and life and honor, but who when the point in question concerns a few paltry pieces of money, become stiff-necked from an incomprehensible pride. Go! I see you don't love your brother even as well as I do."

In her indignation she ran down the stairs and crossed the courtyard so rapidly, that in following her his candle was blown out.

As he helped her into the carriage, he whispered: "We'll discuss this matter another time. But

whatever I do or leave undone, I thank you, Toinette, thank you from the bottom of my heart, for having been so sisterly, so kind, so--"

"Hush," she said. "Go back to your ugly tun again. I'm not at all satisfied with you, and am not to be conciliated by fine words so easily. Reflect until to-morrow. I shall see you again toward evening."

"No, dearest," he answered hastily, "you must not do that. Beautiful and worthy of you as it was to cast aside all scruples to-day, you must not again expose yourself to gossip without cause. Did you see good Madame Feyertag's face as we passed the shop door? I can't bear to have people form such an opinion of you, and besides--suppose he should see you when in the full possession of his senses and fall in love with you? One fever is enough isn't it?"

"You're a fool," she answered laughing, but instantly becoming grave again; "but if you'll write every day and give a full, very full account of him, I'll stay at home. But reflect upon what I said to you. Good night."

The droschky drove away, and Edwin looked after it till the dim lamps vanished around the corner. For the first time in all these weeks it did not seem to him impossible, but rather it seemed a blissful certainty, that the ice between them would be broken and a spring time arrive, which would make amends for all his tortures. At this moment everything, even Balder's fate, receded into the background. Bare headed and without a cloak, he stood for a long time in the gloomy street, as if intoxicated by contending emotions, and did not feel the first flakes of a November snow storm fluttering down upon him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Christiane did not return home at all that night.

Mohr, who had insisted that Franzelius must exchange with him and give him the night watch, again sat at the window through all the long dark hours uttering not a word, his eyes fixed steadily upon the door into the courtyard. When Edwin, toward morning, started from a short slumber, he found him still in the same position; his eyes were red and fixed, his face grey and haggard. He gave contradictory, half comical, half sulky answers, and altogether behaved so strangely, that Edwin, who had no suspicion of his state of mind, declared he was sick and insisted that he must go directly home and to bed.

He obeyed as mechanically as an automaton. In the courtyard below, the maid-servant met him, and he learned from her that Madame Feyertag had received a note from Fräulein Christiane early that morning: the young lady had been obliged to set out on a journey very suddenly, and it was uncertain when she would return.

Mohr nodded and acted as if the news had no special interest for him. Nevertheless he entered the shop, where Madame Feyertag was standing, under the pretext of inquiring for Reginchen's health. She was getting better, her mother said; it was only affectation, the whimsical child seemed to think it a joke to fold her hands in her lap and let herself be nursed. Then the conversation turned upon the music teacher, and her note was shown. It was written in pencil, evidently in great agitation, but afforded no farther clue.

Herr Feyertag also came in. He was very much depressed and his Schopenhauer wisdom seemed to have left him entirely in the lurch, for his whole heart was bound up in Reginchen, and this was the first time the child had caused him the slightest anxiety. He did not speak very kindly of Christiane, for whom he had always expressed the highest esteem. He would never let an interesting woman lodge in his house again. That had hitherto been his maxim, for women must above all things be women, and the strong minded ones, who lived alone, played on the piano, and were taken up with the sorrows of the world, did not exactly belong to the "weaker sex"--with or without moustaches--His good wife cast a significant glance at him, and shrugging her shoulders said "We know why you prefer weak women, Feyertag. Instead of talking such stupid nonsense, you ought to go to the police and ask if they know anything."

The faithful friend left the house with a still heavier heart. He told himself many times, that all this was perfectly intelligible, that nothing was more natural than this sudden departure, that the movements of musicians were perfectly unaccountable, and November weather no hindrance if the point in question were a duty toward friends and relatives. Might not a sick friend have summoned her, or her assistance been requested at some concert in the country? Nothing was more probable. And yet, when he thought of her passionate outburst in the Pagoda, her sudden

disappearance--why, if all were well, should he have this heavy heart, why should he be visited with this mysterious anxiety, which oppressed his breath, and aroused a hundred sorrowful ideas?

He got through the day as well as he could, found an opportunity to question Adèle, who also had not seen her friend since the excursion, and, as it grew dark, betook himself once more to the tun, where he felt most at ease. If she returned, he would at least be near her and would know it; this was his secret thought.

The day seemed to have passed tolerably well. Marquard was satisfied, Edwin said. How Balder felt when not asleep, was difficult to determine. He had not said anything except that he was very comfortable, but they knew him well, he had always concealed his sufferings. Fortunately he slept most of the time, and without narcotics. Entire exhaustion of all the vital powers seemed to have followed the attack.

He was still sleeping, when in the evening a very timid knock summoned Edwin to the door. In the passage outside, where a small lamp lighted the stairs, stood a figure wrapped in a narrow, old-fashioned cloak, with a high collar, in whom Edwin did not recognize the zaunkönig until the embarrassed little gentleman mentioned his name.

He had only heard of Balder's serious illness that noon, when one of the apprentices brought him a pair of shoes, but had had no rest since, and his daughter and Frau Valentin who was with them, had both urged him to inquire immediately in person. He was also to ask whether the ladies could be of any assistance in nursing or sending delicacies; Frau Valentin placed at their disposal her whole store of jellies and her cook, who had had a great deal of experience in preparing food for the sick. He said all this in such an earnest, beseeching tone, that Edwin pressed his hand with deep emotion. He would certainly remember this kind offer when Balder was convalescent. Would he like to see him a moment?

The little man entered the room on tip toe, bowed courteously to Mohr whom he did not know and then stood motionless beside Balder's bed. Suddenly he turned away, drew out his handkerchief and made every effort to stifle in its folds the agitation that found vent in passionate tears. When this was no longer possible, he hastily waved a farewell to Edwin and hurried to the door.

"He's forgotten his hat," said Mohr. "I'll follow the good old fellow and see that he gets down stairs safely, I was going away at any rate, Edwin. Our tribune of the people will probably soon be here." On the landing before Christiane's door he overtook the little artist, who had paused to collect his thoughts and dry his wet face.

"I've brought you your hat, Herr König," said he.

The artist nodded his thanks, put his hat on mechanically, and then slowly descended the staircase. He seemed so absorbed in thought that, contrary to his usual courteous custom, he took no notice of his companion.

But on reaching the street before the house, where Mohr was about to take leave of him, the artist suddenly seized his arm, and said: "If you have time, my dear sir, I beg you to walk a few steps with me. I've something to tell you. You're an intimate friend of both brothers. The Herr Doctor often mentioned your name. Perhaps, too, you know how it happened that I--that I found myself compelled to stop the lessons he gave my daughter. My creator knows it was no easy matter for me--or my daughter either, as you may well believe. It was like punishing her when she felt perfectly innocent. But that's not the point; to one who loves his child--but it ought not to be a chastisement for does not our heavenly father deny us many dear and precious things, we know not why? Of course I don't mean to compare our human wisdom with the infinite wisdom of God; I only say all this because perhaps you have thought me hard hearted. Indeed I'm not; I've probably suffered even more than my dear child; but I did not dream that she'd take it so much to heart. I tell you she has altered beyond recognition, become a totally different creature, not like a girl of eighteen or nineteen, but a wearied soul for which all the happiness of this world is past. My heart bleeds when I see her wandering about, uncomplaining, often even wearing a smile, but so pale! And that's why I couldn't restrain my tears when I saw your friend's brother lying on his couch of pain, I don't know how it happened, but I couldn't help thinking suppose my child, my Leah, should lie before me so, and I--an old man--no, no, my God--thy mercy will spare me that, this cup--" Overpowered by his feelings, he stood motionless with his face buried in his hands. To rouse him from his grief, Mohr at last said:

"You wanted to tell me something?"

"Yes indeed," replied the little artist, recovering his self-command. "You see, I'm aware your friends have no superabundance of money, and a sickness--you understand what I mean. I'm still in the Herr Doctor's debt. If you could induce him, at least now--"

"I doubt whether my friend would hear of such a thing, my dear sir. But you need feel no anxiety. We're a sort of communistic society, and where Balder's interests are concerned Edwin is not too proud to receive help from his friends."

"That's just it," sighed the little artist. "If he only knew what good friends he has outside of

your circle. Frau Valentin--an excellent woman, believe me, has in spite of everything the highest esteem for this admirable young man. But you see, as he so openly rebels against being called a child of God, and doesn't even recognize a heavenly father, can you blame an earthly father if he does not want his only daughter's inheritance of the kingdom of heaven argued and philosophized away? She's so young, ought she to surrender her mind and soul to a man who knows nothing, and wishes to know nothing of God? Isn't it better for her temporal welfare to suffer, rather than her soul should sustain an injury?"

At any other time Mohr could scarcely have refrained from arguing with the little artist and driving him into a corner. Now as he slowly walked beside him through the rude November storm, he only listened with half an ear. His thoughts were far away, yet at every muffled female figure whose gait and bearing had the most distant resemblance to Christiane's, he involuntarily started.

"If the hard winter were only over," the artist prattled frankly on, without taking the slightest umbrage at the silence of his gloomy companion. "Well, with God's favor, we shall soon see another Spring and then I shall no longer be anxious about my daughter. The doctor thinks change of air, amusement, and journeying, would restore her more quickly than any other remedy. A few months ago, this opinion would have startled me. A poor artist, who has never been prosperous or had particularly rich patrons--dear me, how could he obey such prescriptions? But when the need is greatest, God's help is nearest; that has been made manifest to me afresh. Just imagine, my dear sir, what has happened. I had only one little picture at this year's exhibition, which closed a fortnight ago--the times have been very bad--I was obliged to devote myself exclusively to my remunerative labor, wood engraving. Well, as I said before, I couldn't make up my mind to be entirely unrepresented in the exhibition, although I should hardly have been missed. So just before the doors closed I finished a little picture, one of my *zaun* pieces, which perhaps you've seen here and there. My speciality, my dear sir, in which I'm safe from competition. But what happened? On the last day, when I had wholly resigned all hope of selling my *zaunkönig* this time, in spite of its moderate price of forty thalers, and was walking resignedly through the hall, thinking: 'no wonder you're left; almost all the others are better,' I saw three gentlemen standing before my little daub, engaged in eager conversation and pointing so frequently to the picture, that I at first thought they were making fun of it; but no, they talked as gravely and earnestly as if they were standing before some master piece from which a whole theory on aesthetics might be demonstrated. I now recognized one of the gentlemen, a well known connoisseur in art, Baron L., and he also recognized me and whispered something in the ear of the taller of his two companions, who had a very aristocratic air, after which they continued to converse for some time in a low tone, the aristocratic gentleman looking at me through his eye glasses, till I was really embarrassed and tried to slink away. But the baron called to me and begged me to return, he wanted to introduce me to His Highness, Prince Batároff, who wished to make my acquaintance. Well I couldn't escape, I was obliged to answer a multitude of questions, especially about art, how I painted, what my thoughts were while painting, and even *why* I painted, as if that were not as much a matter of course, to an artist as eating and drinking. At last, after the prince had said something in Russian to his companions, he asked me what I earned a year by my pictures on an average. I quickly made a rough estimate and named the sum, which of course is no princely revenue, and on which alone I could not live. Upon this His Highness said: 'Would you pledge yourself, Herr König, on your word of honor, to give everything you paint to me, and not touch a brush without my orders? In return I would give you a regular yearly income, four times the amount of the sum you have named. But you understand me: if you should break your promise--' here the professor interposed and said that was not to be feared from me, that I was known to be a man of principle and religion, but he winked at me to accept the offer without a moment's hesitation. Tell me yourself, my dear Herr Mohr, could I have justified my action to my child if I had delayed? I joyfully agreed to the proposal, and am now in a situation to take my daughter to Switzerland next May, perhaps even on a little trip into Italy. Wasn't I right in saying that the ways of Providence are wonderful?"

"Wonderful indeed," replied Mohr, "so wonderful that in your place I should have been curious to discover the connection of affairs. As you acknowledge that your paintings are a specialty, how do you account for this Russian patron's fancy for getting a whole brood of *zaunkönigs*?"

"I asked the baron that question directly afterwards; for between ourselves, the prince didn't seem to me exactly in his right mind, and I thought it wrong to profit by a monomania. I know very well that I'm only a mediocre artist, many of my works I can't endure myself. But the baron quieted my scruples. My salary was no more to the prince than the bottle of wine which I certainly should not grudge myself on a holiday, is to me. Besides, he had a very shrewd head and was interested in my artistic individuality, as he called it. Well, a man's wishes are his own private affair. I'm now a Russian court painter, and the first quarter's salary has been paid in advance, but there's nothing said about an order and the sketch of my *lagune*, which I have sent and would like to finish, has not been returned to me: 'it will do very well,' was the answer. His Highness is still reflecting what he will order first."

"I congratulate you," said Mohr dryly. "If your opinion that you're only a mediocre artist were correct, it would at least be an *aurea mediocritas*, a golden mean, with which one might well be satisfied."

"My dear sir," replied Herr König good naturedly, without showing the slightest irritation, "all things must serve to benefit those who love God. I submitted to my mediocrity, even when no

Russian prince gilded it for me. If all creatures were of the same size, all men, plants and animals the tropical giants now to be found in some regions, what would become of the bright, cheerful diversity in the world? Even to belong to it, I consider so great a happiness that I think those artists very unfortunate who wish themselves out of it because they have attained only average success or even fallen below mediocrity."

Mohr cast a keen side glance at him. Were these words, which struck his sensitive spot, intentionally aimed at him? Had Edwin told the little gentleman anything about his symphony or comedy, and was this lecture on contentment intended to put a damper on his fruitless zeal? But the artist's bright innocent expression contradicted such a suspicion, and made it impossible for the other to utter the sharp answer that was already hovering on his tongue. Besides, while engaged in this conversation they had reached the little house on the canal, and the artist urged his companion so cordially to come in for a moment and take a cup of tea, that Mohr in spite of his dejection, could not refuse. Where else should he go? The wind was blowing from the river with icy coldness, and all life on the banks seemed frozen. Nothing awaited him in his lonely bachelor lodgings save a dark night full of anxious dreams. So he allowed himself to be guided across the timber yard, along the narrow path between the lofty piles of wood, toward the door, from which streamed a faint ray of light.

CHAPTER IX.

Leah was seated at the table in her little sitting room; before her was the tea urn, and a closed book but she seemed to have been occupied with neither, but entirely absorbed in her own thoughts. As the two men entered she started up, her first glance fell upon the stranger, and a look akin to disappointment flittered over her face. Had her ears deceived her and made her suppose that Edwin was accompanying her father?

She did not speak, but with downcast eyes listened to the report of the invalid's condition. Her father introduced his guest as a friend of her former teacher; she bowed in visible embarrassment. By degrees, however, as Mohr himself thawed out and began to talk about his university life with Edwin, she too became more at ease and performed the duties of hostess with the most winning grace. The guest was very much pleased with her, he even wondered that Edwin had never spoken of her personal appearance, which was really worth mentioning, though a sickly pallor made her seem older than her years, and her movements when she walked, were weary and languid. After she had poured out the tea, she took some sewing and sat down in an armchair at a little distance from the others, not far from the niche in which her mother's bust stood. A warm light animated the still features of the marble image, and Leah's transparently pale complexion, especially when her beautifully sparkling eyes were fixed on her work, made the semblance between the living woman and the dead marble so striking as to produce an almost uncomfortable impression upon the visitor. He again relapsed into his own gloomy cares and presentiments, and if the little artist had not continued the conversation with the most persistent cheerfulness, the mood that prevailed in the pleasant room would have become more and more dismal.

But with each passing moment the zaunkönig seemed to become more comfortable in his nest. When Mohr, out of courtesy, asked to see some of his work, he brought out of his studio with a diffidence with which, however, was blended an air of quiet satisfaction, a large portfolio, and began to spread the sketches before his guest. "These are old designs," said he. "When my wife was alive, I was in the habit while we sat together in the evening--the child yonder used to go to bed early--of scrawling my fancies on a sheet of paper. They were not so modest and tame as now, but took the boldest leaps and caricoles, as if they belonged to a great artist who possessed the ability to execute them. To be sure, even in those days, I knew that I was no Poussin or Claude Lorraine; but when alone, after toiling honestly all day as a mediocre artist, I would permit myself during the evening hours, to dream of what I would paint if I were one of those great geniuses. Now these fits come more rarely, and I'm slow to detain them. If I can't wholly reform, I merely sweep a bit of charcoal over the sheet for a time, and my sleeve effaces even the smallest trace."

Mohr turned over the drawings, which were on rather an exaggerated scale, and the way in which he expressed his opinion of one and another and detected the artistic idea in the often very imperfect lines, seemed to delight the little gentleman greatly. When the cuckoo clock struck eleven and the guest rose, with an apology for having already remained too long, the master of the house most cordially invited him to come again very soon, if their modest tea table had not seemed tedious. The portfolio, he added smiling, certainly should not appear again.

"My dear sir," replied Mohr, "I fear you would repent this philanthropic offer, if I availed

myself of it. I have a vein of that 'shelterless, restless barbarian,' and I like you too well not to spare you a closer acquaintance with me. But no one can answer for himself. If my own society becomes unbearable even to myself, I shall come and beg to be allowed to sit quietly in this sofa corner for an hour. Your tea urn sings so melodiously that in listening to it one quite forgets what a discord usually prevails in this world."

He shook hands with the father and daughter and left the little house in a strange paradoxical mood. "What is it that we want?" he muttered to himself, as, insensible to the storm he stood beside the river, gazing down into its gloomy depths. "This man, to whom everything seems to work together for good, because as a well trained child of God, he believes in time and eternity; who is satisfied with everything, his mediocrity, his weakness, his skill and want of skill, who makes a virtue of every necessity, even the heart-sorrow of his only child,—does he deserve honor or detestation? Is not this yearning for God, which ennobles everything to him, and shows him a paradise behind every face, in reality only selfishness in disguise? Is not even this piety, viewed apart from intellectual blindness, a fondling of self at the expense of others? I, who enter this house for the first time, can scarcely see the lovely girl without compassion and indignation at her fate, and her own father, trusting that his dear God will again lead the stray sheep back to the fold when the wolf has once been made harmless, reconciles himself to see the beautiful, talented, patient creature waiting away because her proper nourishment is withheld from her. Really, we savages are the better men! If I should ever have a daughter--"

He did not finish the sentence. The wind suddenly dashed such a whirl of snow flakes into his face, that he was forced for a time to close his eyes and mouth and cling involuntarily to the railing. When he again looked around him, the storm seemed to have raged itself calm, the moon even cast a misty light through the black clouds, and for a moment revealed the houses on the opposite side of the canal, from which, as it was now almost midnight, only a few lights gleamed.

"It's time to go home," murmured the young man. "Every one in the boats below is already asleep. I wonder how a man feels who's born in the cabin of a boat on the Spree and dies there, after gazing for sixty years through his window into this *Cloaca maxima!*"

He had not walked a hundred paces along the bank of the river, when he saw on one of the largest boats, loaded with wood, a crowd of people pressing in excited but silent eagerness around a dark object on the deck. From time to time the rays of a ship's red lantern flashed over the group, revealing the broad faces of the fair haired men and women, who were standing around something lying at their feet, and seemed to be discussing what was to be done with it, but in suppressed voices, as if it were a matter of great importance to settle the affair among themselves.

On one of the boat landings, directly opposite to the scene, stood Mohr endeavoring to discover the cause of this nocturnal assemblage.

A woman's sharp voice suddenly became audible above the confused buzzing and murmuring.

"Let the wet lump bring us into trouble? No, indeed. We're too smart for that. That's the third charming gift this week. First the drunken harper, then the new born babe, and now--"

"Don't scream so, mother," said a sturdy young fellow, who had just snatched the lantern from his neighbor's hand and turned its light full on the face of the prostrate figure, "You'll bring the police upon us."

"That I will," cried the woman, "and at once. When we took that sewing girl out of the water last Easter, and I put her in my own bed and made a cup of tea to restore her to her senses--what did the wicked minx do? Stole six pairs of gloves from a shop the very same day, and because we'd had her with us, we too got nabbed by the police just as if we were receivers of stolen goods. And I'm to get myself into trouble again by my kindness to strangers! God forbid. Let the police take care of the whole brood of suicides. Carl, put on something warm and run as fast as you can, till you find a watchman. We've taken a strange woman out of the water, who was dead as a door nail, and the rest of it."

"Stop," suddenly cried a hoarse voice. All turned toward the landing and to their astonishment saw Mohr leap down the steps and rush across the narrow wooden bridge to the deck. The next instant he had snatched the lantern from the captain's hand and fallen on his knees beside the lifeless form. The light fell brightly on the pallid face, whose half parted lips seemed still quivering with the agony of departing life. The heavy eyebrows were painfully contracted, and only a narrow strip of the eyes gleamed under the wearily closed lids. This rigid, almost masculine countenance, had obtained in death an expression of gentle, child-like helplessness, which exerted a softening influence even on the rude minds of the sailors. Mohr dropped the lantern, which was extinguished in its fall. For an instant the deepest darkness prevailed on deck.

When the boatman's wife, who had been completely silenced by the sudden interruption, had lighted the lantern, Mohr started up.

"How long is it since you found this lady and drew her out of the water?" he asked.

"Not half an hour. But no one can tell how long she's been floating," said the man to whom the boat belonged. "I'd gone to sleep, and suddenly woke and remembered that I had left my new

jacket on deck, and if the snow kept on it would be ruined by morning. As I went astern, I heard something strike the boat like a log of wood. The lady must have a hard skull or it would have been broken. Do you know her, sir?" Mohr made no reply. He had enough to do to collect his thoughts and decide upon what was to be done.

"Have you a litter?" he asked. "You can make three thalers by putting the lady on it and carrying her a hundred paces to a house where she will be received. I'll answer for the rest, and if the police should afterwards find out that you didn't give them notice of the affair, I'll take all the responsibility. But make haste, before it's too late!--There, lay her flat on her back and cover her with this cloak. And now forward--"

Not another word was spoken. His hasty, imperious manner, the promised reward and the prospect of getting rid of the disagreeable business, urged the sailors to the utmost speed. Two stout men lifted the motionless figure on a flat frame, which was used for unloading baskets of fruit, and fastened her firmly on it with a broad girdle. Her clothes and hair were still dripping with water, as she was raised and carefully carried up the steps of the landing. Then the bearers moved swiftly forward with their burden, while the others remained on the boats dividing the money among them. Mohr was the only one who followed the bier. He had not trusted himself to touch the lifeless body, but as it was raised he bent over the litter to keep it steady, and had brushed her hand with his cheek; its icy coldness froze the blood in his veins.

He ordered the bearers to stop before the artist's little house, but was obliged to ring the bell at the gate of the timber-yard a long time, before any one moved. How terribly long the moments were! Who could tell whether a hundred seconds more or less might not decide whether that motionless breast would ever again be heaved by the breath of life?

At last a door behind the wood pile opened, a flickering light appeared, and the zaunkönig's voice was heard asking: "what's the matter?" A very few words were enough to urge the kind-hearted little man to breathless haste. His trembling hands instantly opened the little door beside the gate, and without another syllable being uttered, the sad procession moved along the dark path to the little house.

CHAPTER X.

At this same late hour the boudoir of the singer, whose acquaintance we made at the Pagoda, looked very bright and cheerful. A candelabrum with five candles was burning on the daintily spread table, at which the gay beauty sat with her friend, resting on her laurels after the first night of a new opera.

"You were charming to-night, Adèle," said Marquard, as he pushed back a plate filled with oyster shells and rose to light a cigar at the candelabrum. "Really, loveliest of witches, you improve in each new part, and I shan't be surprised if one day you outgrow even me. But you've one talent that compels my highest esteem: I admire it even more than your acting, your singing, or the black art by which you make a whole audience madly in love with you."

"And that is?"

"Your talent for eating oysters. You laugh, Adelina. But I'm perfectly serious, believe me. I would engage to describe the mind and heart of any woman with whom I had been ten minutes without any other knowledge of her than eating oysters together, and never make a mistake--with the sole stipulation that it's not her first essay in the noble art, when even the most gifted person may set about it awkwardly."

"Well, and wherein does my merit in this direction consist?"

"First call Jenny and let her carry away the bouquets which have been thrown to you to-day. The odor of champagne, Havanas, oysters and roses all at once, are too much of a good thing and we shall have the headache. Besides, I'm far from being vain enough to think the couch of a beautiful girl softer, because it's strewn with rose leaves bestowed by less fortunate admirers."

"You're terribly *blasé!*" laughed the singer. "If you were not so amusing, I'd have discarded you long ago. But be quick, tell me your oyster theory."

"No," he answered with a calm smile, leaning comfortably back on the little sofa; "some other time. The subject's more profound than you suppose. All themes which trench on the boundaries between the sensual and the intellectual are very subtle, and I've too much scientific knowledge

to make short work of such delicate things. Besides, directly after your declaration that you only tolerate me because I'm amusing, I should be a fool to deliver a lecture on the physiology of enjoyment, instead of giving a practical illustration of the subject. You may do me the favor of taking off your head-dress, child. You know I've a foolish fancy for pulling your poodle head."

"Indeed!" she replied. "First give me a light for my cigarette, and then I want the explanation you promised me yesterday: the reason why you'll never marry. You remember, I had to go to rehearsal and you to a consultation."

"And you've not already discovered the answer yourself? Oh! Adelina, your love for me clouds your clear intellect!"

"You insolent, conceited fellow! But he's incorrigible," laughed the girl, as she carelessly took off the heavy false braids and laid them on the chair beside the wine-cooler. She really looked far prettier in her short and now disordered curls.

"There, now you're yourself again," said Marquard looking at her through his gold spectacles with unfeigned satisfaction. "And since you've laid aside all deceit, I'll honestly acknowledge, that out of pure sentimentality, I shall never marry; my tombstone will bear the inscription: 'Here lies the virgin Marquard.'"

"You and sentimentality!"--she laughed merrily.

"To be sure, my fair friend. Judge for yourself: don't you think it would be pastoral, that I should show sensitiveness if my wife were not faithful to me? yet I myself should be just as devoted to polytheism after marriage as before. I couldn't help it you see, but I'm too just to expect that a good, virtuous creature would be satisfied with such a small fraction of a husband."

"As if the right woman wouldn't be able to improve you and make you a whole man and husband!"

"Improve me, my friend!" he sighed with a comical pathos in his look and tone. "In case you should ever want a faithful husband, let me warn you to beware of doctors in choosing one. We really ought to take a vow of celibacy, like the Catholic priests. The man to whom you confess, must be either a stone or a saint, to escape the contagion of your sins. And yet I'd rather listen to the symptoms of an ailing heart, than hear of a contusion on the knee. Why do you move away from me?"

"Because you're a very frivolous fellow and have had too much champagne. Besides, it's late."

"Too late--to go. I left word at home that my servant needn't expect me. As I fortunately have no wife, I'll for once be as comfortable as other married men and sleep for one night without being disturbed by domestic troubles or by other people's. Here I'm no doctor, here I'm a man and may be permitted to act like one." He threw away his cigar and tenderly approaching the young girl, took both hands in his and swung them to and fro.

At this moment Adèle's maid entered, holding a card in her hand. "The gentleman's in the ante-room and earnestly begs to see the Herr Doctor."

"Tell him he may go--Why did you say I was here?"

"He didn't ask me. He gave me the card at once, in spite of my denial--"

"Mohr! Good Heavens, what brings him here at this hour! If Balder--excuse me, Adèle, but I must see what the trouble is." He rushed out of the door so hastily, that he upset the basket in which Adèle's little terrier was quietly sleeping. While she tried to still the loud barking of the frightened animal, Marquard had hurried into the ante-room with the question about Balder on his lips.

"I believe all is going on well at the tun," said Mohr. "But you must come with me at once: some one has met with an accident--we've not a moment to lose."

"Holloa, my friend!" replied Marquard, suddenly relapsing into his usual indifferent tone. "If that's all, four houses beyond, on the right hand side as you go out of the door, lives a very worthy colleague of mine, who has little practice as yet and probably will be more inclined at this moment to obey your philanthropic summons--"

"You'll come with me, Marquard," said Mohr in a hollow voice, which trembled with a terrible anxiety. "Christiane has drowned herself; we've just taken her out of the river; God only knows whether it's not already too late--" He tottered as he wearily gasped out the words; his powerful frame seemed ready to sink, yet he did not take the chair Marquard pushed toward him.

"You ought to have said so at once," grumbled the latter. "That's quite a different matter. Sit down two minutes, I only want to get my hat. The child in there needn't know anything about it yet."

An instant after he came out of Adèle's room, and not a word, not an expression of his grave face betrayed any remembrance that he had been so rudely interrupted in his bacchanalian

levity. When they were sitting together in the droschky, whose driver incited by Mohr's double fare, drove at a furious pace, he said to his silent, gloomy companion:

"Among all the painful and unpleasant tasks expected of us physicians, nothing is more sad, at least to me, than to do my duty in such a case as this. Every one owes Nature a death. But to arouse a poor fool, who thinks he's settled his debt and compel him to count out the whole sum again, because he didn't pay it the first time in the current coin of the country, is really a contemptible business, and enough to disgust one with the whole trade. I've been called in on such occasions four times, and amid all the rubbing and manipulating, have always wished my efforts might be vain."

"I hope this time, you'll--"

"You need have no anxiety. The professional spirit is stronger than philosophy or humanity. *Tiat experimentum et pereat mundus*, that's in this case: *vivat* a poor creature who has nothing to live for, but every reason to curse existence. Christiane! Have you any suspicion what induced her to do this? To be sure, we ought to remember that she has a fancy for taking French leave of pleasant company. Is anything known of her circumstances? An unhappy love affair? But you're like the statue of the Commandant!"

"Pardon me if I'm a poor substitute for the society you've just left," faltered Mohr. "I--my nerves are no longer the strongest; this has taken a violent hold upon me; between ourselves, Marquard, this girl, who seemed by no means attractive to the rest of you, I loved very dearly."

"My poor boy!" murmured the physician, as in the darkness he took Mohr's cold hand and pressed it gently. Then no more was said. Mohr threw himself back in one corner of the carriage and buried his face in his handkerchief. When they alighted at the timber-yard, Marquard saw that it was flushed and wet with tears.

The little artist was standing at the open door of the house. "At last!" he exclaimed. "We're nearly dead with anxiety and impatience. However there really seems to be some hope. Leah thinks she's beginning to breathe. Turn to the right, if you please. We've laid her on my bed in the studio."

"Stay outside, Heinrich," said Marquard, "and I don't need the young lady either. I shall manage better alone." He gave a few directions, said a soothing word to Leah, who was gazing at him with a strangely intent expression, like that of a somnambulist, and then proceeded to his difficult task.

The three were now once more together in the very room where, a few hours before they had chatted so comfortably around the tea table. But no one broke the silence. The artist had seated himself opposite to the bust of his dead wife, and seemed to be questioning the mute features about the eternal secret of life and death. Mohr, with his hands crossed behind his back, paced restlessly up and down the room like a caged lion, pausing at every dozen steps as if to listen. Leah sat at the window, gazing out into the storm. She did not move a limb, her eyes were closed, but not for a single second did she lose her consciousness of what was passing around her. The cause of this paralysis was neither bodily exhaustion nor the stupor that often follows great excitement. When she removed the clothing from the stranger's motionless body to wrap it in blankets, she had found under the wet corsets a small, leather case, fastened with a red ribbon. Thinking it might contain a letter which would give some cause for her mad act, or a card with her name, which Mohr had not thought to tell them, she opened it, unnoticed by the others. It contained neither letter nor card, but a photograph stained, to be sure, by the water, but in which she nevertheless recognized at the first glance--Edwin. We need add nothing farther to explain why she sat so absently at the window hour after hour.

At last--it was probably about four o'clock in the morning--they heard the door on the opposite side of the entry open, and directly after Marquard entered.

"Good morning," he said dryly. "We've won the victory and driven the enemy from all his positions. My adjutant, your excellent old servant, Herr König, has orders to pursue him and clear the battle field of all marauders. I'm going home to get a few hours sleep, and I shall then have the honor of seeing you again."

He bowed carelessly and left the room. As he was groping in the dark passage to find the door, he suddenly felt himself seized from behind and clasped in two trembling arms. Mohr lay sobbing on his neck.

CHAPTER XI.

Balder's convalescence was more rapid than could have been hoped for. At the end of a fortnight it had progressed so far that he was able to sit up a few hours and, though with the greatest caution, employ himself a little, read, and take part in quiet conversation. His youthful vigor seemed to kindle anew and pervade all his organs with vital strength. He had never seemed more cheerful than during these two weeks, never more winning than when he acknowledged the affection shown him by even the merest acquaintances. When Frau Valentin, who had daily supplied him with strengthening broths, jellies, and the most delicate game, was at last on the tenth day after his attack, permitted, as a reward for her motherly care, to see him five minutes, the short visit was enough to make the worthy lady fairly in love with her ward. Every day Madame Feyertag's first business was to go to the tun to inquire in person how he had spent the night; light a fire in the stove, because the girl made too much noise and Reginchen still avoided the room, and to water the beautiful palms, which Toinette the day after her visit had sent to the tun, to delight the invalid's eyes. She did not come again herself, but the dwarf with the pale blue eyes was sent every noon for the latest bulletin, which Edwin, faithful to his promise, wrote every morning. These lines were the only bond of intercourse between them. He had vowed not to leave Balder's side again until he should be well, with the exception of the hour at noon, when he delivered a lecture, at which time, his place was supplied by one of his friends. Either Mohr came to play chess, or Franzelius, who no longer seemed to have any other occupation, sat down beside him with a book and read aloud, an accomplishment of which he was a master. But not a word was exchanged with the patient on the subject that engrossed the thoughts of both. The names of Christiane and Reginchen never crossed their lips, and even the little artist, who often looked in, had agreed with Mohr that the unhappy girl's fate ought not to be mentioned in the sick room.

One beautiful sunny day in November, Edwin had set out on his daily walk to the university, and Franzelius was preparing to read aloud from a translation of Sophocles, when Balder, who was reclining near the window in a comfortable arm-chair sent by Frau Valentin, suddenly laid his pale slender hand on the book and said: "We won't read to-day, Franzelius, I'd rather talk about all sorts of things with you. I feel so well that it's not the least exertion to speak, and the sun is shining so brightly in the clear sky! Only to see that, is such an incomparable happiness that to enjoy it one would gladly endure all the evils of this life. Don't you think so?"

"I can't look at it without thinking that it shines equally on the just and the unjust, and beholds much more misery than happiness," replied the printer, looking almost defiantly toward the sky. "I wish it would die out once for all, and with it this whole motley lie which we call life."

"No, Franzel," said Balder quietly, "you are wrong. Even if the sun knew what it was doing, in creating and sustaining life, there is no cause for shame in such a work. Why do you call existence a lie, Franzel? Because its end is so abrupt? But your existence had its beginning as well and did that beginning ever bespeak a promise of perpetuity? On the contrary my dear fellow, there is much honesty in human life; it promises so little and yet yields us so much. Will you censure it because it can't be all that we visionary or dissatisfied or unjust people demand?"

"There's no joy to me in living," muttered the other gloomily, covering his eyes with his broad hands. "As soon as one need is satisfied, another takes its place, and he who ventures to differ from the opinions held by mankind in general never finds repose."

"And would life be worth the living if we were sunk in repose? Is sleeping, living? Or absorption in a dull dream of existence, such as the beetle has when it climbs up the blade of grass to reach a dew-drop--is that leading a worthy life? My dear fellow, if you drive necessity out of the world, how unnecessary it would be to live!"

"You're playing upon words."

"No, I speak in sober earnest. A short time ago I read a stanza, in Voltaire, which, like many things he says to the masses, is drawn from his deep hoard of knowledge and contains a pure gem of truth.

"Oh! who could bear the harden of his life,
The sad remembrance of the whilom strife,
The threat'ning ills that hover round his way,
If the dear God, to ease man of his pain,
Had not so made him thoughtless, careless, vain,
That he might be less wretched in his day.

"Don't growl at the poor translation; its a hasty improvisation which I ventured upon because I know you can't bear French. The sense is faithfully rendered, and it's a sense admirably suited to the senseless. I know of but one way that leads to real unhappiness, and that's when a person is vain and frivolous. And those lines contain much wisdom for it is just those people who lack the strength to endure sorrowful recollections of the past and anxiety concerning their futures, that are so deeply indebted to Nature for the ability of thoughtlessly and unconsciously enjoying their pitiful present. This will not bring them happiness, it will only make them less miserable, for the

real bliss of living they will never learn to know. He only can understand that who is capable of quiet reflection, or, if you will, who is able to grasp the meaning of both past and future at once. Perhaps, though you're exactly the opposite of vain and frivolous, even you won't wholly understand life for a long time as I've understood it. I have always been best able to enjoy life by retrospection; and whenever I wished to thoroughly enjoy existence, I have only needed to awake in myself a vivid remembrance of the various periods of my life; of my laughing frolicsome childhood, when I was in the glow of perfect health; then the first dawn of thought and feeling, the first sorrows of youth, when they came to me, the perception of what a full, healthful existence must be, and yet at the same time the resignation to my fate which is usually easy only to men advanced in years. Don't you believe that one, who can experience whenever he wishes such a fullness of life in himself, to whom for this purpose everything lends its aid, sorrow and joy, loss and gain, each showing him a new side of his own nature--don't you believe, my dear fellow, that such a fortunate man must consider it a mistaken conclusion, even if a philosopher gave it utterance, it would be better not to be born. To be sure, no one can deny that there are times when sorrow stifles the desire for existence and excites an overwhelming longing for mere unconsciousness? But oftentimes the greatest sorrow brings an increase of our life experience; how could we otherwise understand the triumphant delight which martyrs have felt under torture by fire and rack. They felt that their torment only confirmed their confidence in the strength of their own souls, pervaded as they were by an illusion or a truth that their tormentors sought to tear out or kill. The worst that could be inflicted upon them served to develop the highest enjoyment of their personality. And so all the tragedy of life which a shallow philosophy pronounces to be the misery of the world, is merely another, higher form of enjoying life peculiar to lofty souls. When death steps in at last, it's like the sleep that comes after a holiday, when people have been so long in an ecstasy of delight that they are weary at last and have no strength for future enjoyments." He was silent a moment and wore a rapt expression. Then he suddenly said:

"If the festival is over for me, Franzel, you must hold fast to Edwin."

"What nonsense you are talking!" exclaimed the other. "You've never been on a fairer way toward recovery than now. Your sickness was a crisis, Marquard said so himself."

"Yes it was a crisis," replied the invalid smiling. "It will decide, indeed has already decided something. Life has pronounced judgement upon this not very durable structure and written down its defects in red ink. Do you really suppose that Marquard does not know as well as I that the drama is played out? The slightest agitation, the least imprudence--"

"Balder! what are you saying! These are mere fancies, perhaps a passing weakness--"

"You think so because I can speak of the end so quietly? You ought long ago to have credited me with as much strength as was needed for that. I know how few are willing to rise from the table just when the viands are most tempting. And indeed, Franzel, life never seemed to me so fair as now. How many kind friends I have gained during these last weeks, how much, beautiful poetry, and lofty and profound thoughts I have enjoyed! But all that's of no avail, man must live and let live, and there are doubtless others waiting to take their turn. If you are sad, Franzel, I must wait for another time to make my last request; though I do not know how long I may have to linger. But come, be sensible. You know I love you dearly, indeed next to Edwin you have the first place in my heart. But I do not need to take leave of my brother. My whole life during the last few years has been only one long farewell. We knew we should not always remain together, I at least was fully aware of it, so we have enjoyed all our happiness, as it were, on account. But when the end comes, I know how it will be; at first he'll be unable to reconcile himself. And that's why I want to beg you to keep near him. His needs are great, and there are not many who can fulfill them."

"And that is the first thing you ask?" cried the honest friend, with an emotion he vainly endeavored to repress. "But for Heaven's sake, Balder, what sort of talk is this? You--you really believe--I--we--" He started up and rushed desperately around the little table in the centre of the room, so that the leaves of the palms trembled.

"You scarcely understand as yet all that I mean," continued the invalid quietly. "That you'll always remain his friend is a matter of course. But, to give me any real comfort, you will have to make a sacrifice."

"A sacrifice? As if I would not--do you know me so little?"

"I know you to be the most unselfish man under the sun," said Balder smiling. "But it is just this very habit of never thinking of yourself, that for his sake and mine you must lay aside, at least so far as you can do so without being faithless to yourself. Do you know what will happen if you go on as you have been doing? In two years, in spite of your friendship, you'll not set foot in the tun."

"I? But tell me--"

"It's a very simple matter: because you'll be thinking of your friends either behind prison bars or in America. Dear Franzel, must I tell you why you're not fond of living? Because you believe that a man only truly lives when he becomes a martyr to his convictions, I have always loved you

for this belief and yet I believe it a mistaken one. Test it awhile; say to yourself that you aid many more by living than you could by your martyrdom, and you will see that a man can guard his post very bravely and self-sacrificingly, without fool-hardily summoning the enemy by alarm shots. It would be an inexpressible comfort to me, if you would promise for two years to let alone all 'agitation' and see how affairs really are. There are currents in which it's a useless waste of strength to row, because the boat floats onward of its own accord, I know what it will cost you to do this. But it would be a great joy if this last wish--"

"Say no more," cried the other suddenly pausing before his friend, with his tearful eyes turned toward him--"Balder is it possible, that you--that you are about to leave us? And can you believe if that should happen, that I could continue my life as if nothing had occurred. When men can no longer behold the sun--do you suppose I could--that I would--" Words failed him, he turned abruptly away and stood motionless beside the turning lathe.

"I did not mean that I thought you could live on, the same as before," said Balder in a lower voice. "But you need a substitute for what you resign. You must learn to be glad to live, and I think I know how you would learn to do so most quickly. You must take a wife, Franzel!"

"I? What can you be thinking about? How came such an idea into your head? Just at this time too--"

"Because it will soon be too late for me to earn a kuppelpelz^[4] from you. True, I shall scarcely need it. I shall not feel cold where I lie. But I should like to know of you're being warmly sheltered. And I know from experience--I've been 'married' to Edwin--that the world looks much blighter seen with four eyes than with two."

"You see," he continued, as his friend still stood motionless, boring a hole in the bench with a point of a file--"Edwin will find a wife in time who will make him happy; then you would be left again with nothing but mankind to clasp to your heart, and beautiful and sublime as the idea is, it's not all you need--and that's why you get over excited, and the thought of martyrdom overcomes your judgment. So I think a little wife, who would know how to love and value you, would by her mere presence instruct you every day in the doctrine that Edwin has so often represented to you in vain: that you should husband your energies for the future and not prematurely sacrifice your life without cause. There is no danger of your becoming faithless to your convictions from mere selfish pleasure in your home. And then how can a socialist who knows nothing except from hearsay of family life, upon which basis the whole structure of society rests, who knows nothing of where the shoe pinches the father of a family, talk to married men about what they owe to themselves and others?"

As he uttered these words a bewitchingly cunning expression sparkled in the sick boy's beautiful eyes. He almost feared that Franzel would turn and looking in his face penetrate the secret design, the purpose of attacking him on his weakest side; so, rising, he limped to the stove and put in a few sticks of wood. While thus employed, he continued in a tone of apparent indifference:

"You mustn't suppose I'm saying all this at random. No, my dear fellow, I've a very suitable match in view for you, a young girl who's as well adapted to your needs as if I'd invented or ordered her expressly for you. Young, very pretty, with a heart as true as gold, fond of work and fond of life too, as she ought to be, if she is to wed with one who doesn't care to live; not a princess, but a child of working people. Haven't you guessed her name yet? Then I must help you: she writes it Reginchen."

"Balder! You're dreaming! No, no, I beseech you, say no more about that, you've too long--"

"I am astonished," continued the youth rising as he spoke and moving toward the bed "that you didn't understand me readily and meet me halfway. Where have your eyes been, that you've not seen that you have stood high in the dear girl's favor for years. Even I have noticed it! I tell you, Franzel, the little girl is a treasure, I have known her all these years, and love her as dearly as a sister, and the man to whom I don't begrudge her I must love like a brother. Therefore, blind dreamer, I wanted to open your eyes, that I may close mine in peace. To be sure I'm by no means certain that you've not already bestowed your heart elsewhere, and my brotherly hint may be too late. At any rate, whatever you do you should do quickly for the young girl's sake. She seems to have taken your long absence to heart, her mother says she is by no means well yet, and eats and sleeps very little I should like to see my little sister well and happy again before I--"

He could not finish the sentence. He had been seated on the bed while speaking and now he laid his head on the pillow and closed his eyes, as if wearied with the unusual exertion of conversing. Suddenly he felt his hands seized; Franzel had meant to embrace him, but instead, he threw himself down beside the bed, and with his head resting on Balder's knees, he gave way to such violent and uncontrollable emotion, that the youth was obliged to make every exertion to soothe him into composure.

At last he rose. He tried to speak, but his voice failed. "You--you're--oh! Heaven, forgive, forgive me! I'm not worthy!" was all he could stammer. Then he started up and rushed out of the room.

Balder had sank back on the bed and closed his eyes again. His pale face was almost transfigured, he looked like a hero resting after a victory, and for the moment did not even feel the pain in his chest. The room was perfectly still, the sunlight played amid the palm leaves, the mask of the youthful prisoner, suffused with a rosy light which came from the open door of the stove, seemed to breathe and whisper to its image on the narrow couch: "Die, your death shall be painless!" But a sudden thought roused Balder from this anticipation of eternal repose. He rose and dragged himself to the turning lathe, wherewith a trembling hand he unlocked the drawer. "It's fortunate that I thought of it!" he murmured "What if they had found it!"

He drew out the portfolio in which he kept his collection of verses. On how many pages was the image of the child whom he secretly loved described with all the exaggerated charms with which his solitary yearning had invested her; to how much imaginary happiness these simple sheets bore witness! And yet he could now let them slide through his fingers without bitterness. Had not his feelings been sacred and consoling to him at the time? What had happened, which could strip the bloom and fragrance of this spring from his heart? There would be no summer, but did that make less beautiful the season of blossoming? He read a verse here and there in an undertone, now and then altering a word that no longer satisfied him, and smiling at himself for polishing verses which no human eye had seen or ever would see. Many he had quite forgotten, and now found them beautiful and couching. When he had turned the last page, he took the pencil and wrote on a loose scrap of paper that he laid in the drawer in place of the volume of poems, the following lines, which he wrote without effort and without revision:

Good night, thou lovely world, good night!
Have I not had a glorious day?
Unmurmuring, though thou leav'st my sight
I to my couch will go away.

Whate'er of loveliness thou hast,
Is it not mine to revel in?
Though many a keen desire does waste
My heart, it ne'er alone has been.

Delusion's veil of error blind
Fell quite away from soul and eye;
Clearer my path did upward wind
To where life's sunny hilltops lie.

No idol false is there adored;
Humanity's eternal powers,
O'er which the light of Heaven is poured
Stand self-contained in passion's hours.

High standing on the breeze-swept peak,
Below may I with rapture see
The land whereof no man may speak
Save him who fares there wearily.

This is the rich inheritance
The children of the world shall own,
When crossed the wearisome expanse,
And fate's supreme decrees are known.

Oh! brother, who art seeking still
For love and joy, where I have sought,
I would your path with blessings fill
When to its end my life is brought.

Ah! brother, could we two aspire
Together to the glorious height,--
Hence tears! some part of my desire
Is thine. Thou lovely world, good night!

CHAPTER XII.

Suddenly Edwin's step sounded on the stairs. When he entered, he found Balder sitting before the stove stirring the bright fire with the poker.

"How do you do, child?" he said, with a brighter face than usual. "What are you doing? Where's Franzel? Have you been burning papers here?"

"I've been making up a little more fire," replied the youth, bending toward the flames to conceal his blushes. "It's beginning to grow cold. Franzel went out a short time ago, probably to visit his betrothed."

"Our tribune of the people betrothed? The conspirator conspired against? And to whom, if I may ask?"

"You were right, Edwin, in your suspicion that something unusual was the subject of Reginchen's thoughts. It's still a secret, however. But I'm very glad. They will suit each other exactly, I think."

"Well, well! how fast children develop! Our philanthropist and woman hater, and the little house swallow! This is news indeed! Well, I too have something to tell. Just as I was coming into the house, the post-man overtook me and handed me a letter, which, *entre nous*, is worth fifty ducats: we've won the prize, my boy!"

"Your essay? That's very pleasant!"

"Pleasant? Nothing but pleasant? I think your brotherly love receives the news of this miracle very phlegmatically."

"Because I think nothing more natural than that you should at last be appreciated. I've never doubted that you would be."

"Yes, yes, child," laughed Edwin passing his hand caressingly over his brother's luxuriant hair, "if you should read in the newspaper to-morrow, that a certain Dr. Edwin was made Grand Mogul, or what would be still more wonderful appointed minister of public worship and instruction, you would, in your famous blindness, lay aside the sheet and say: 'I'm only surprised that the bright idea didn't occur to them long ago.' Well then, you member of the *nil admirari* society, I can venture to tell my second piece of news without fear of causing you any special agitation. The faculty that were wise enough to assign the prize to my essay, have been so well pleased with me that in spite of my radical tendencies, they offer me a professorship. That is, for the present only surreptitiously. They have to struggle against all sorts of eddies and tack constantly, to bring me through. But they think, if I should come and show myself, certain orthodox colleagues, who believe me a child of hell, would see that the devil is not so black as he's painted. So I'm to come, see and conquer, and that soon, for the professorship has been vacant ever since Easter, and they would like to have the *collegium logicum* filled again during this winter session. The salary is not bad, at any rate it's a piece of bread, though for the present there's no butter to spread it with. Well, if we find we can't live down prejudices now, it's a sign at least that the light will eventually conquer the darkness, 'and the day of the noble hearted (that is to say, your dear brother) will dawn at last.'"

"Although it can't be done? But Edwin, I beg you--"

"My child, that's very evident. We can't strike our tent in winter and travel fifty miles toward the south, with your poorly patched lungs, especially as we don't know how the climate there will suit you. Ah! if the tun could be packed up just as it stands, and sent as freight, marked 'glass, this side up with care--!'"

They were both silent for a time. Balder held the letter from the faculty in his hand and seemed to be reading it again. The prize essay was mentioned in the most flattering terms, its special merits dwelt upon, and a private letter added from the dean, in which he emphasized the wish to obtain such promising young talent for the university.

Edwin had gone to his desk and was beginning to cut a pen.

"Are you still studying the letter, child?" he asked carelessly. "They write in a very pleasant style in that neighborhood, don't they? Well, we will do ourselves credit too."

"Does *she* know it yet?" asked Balder, without looking up.

"She? What are you thinking about? I haven't seen her for a fortnight. Besides, what interest would she take in it? It'll be time enough to tell her when I make my next visit, and she won't even be curious about the prize essay. Such a duchess!"

Balder quietly rose, laid the letter on the table and said: "You'll not hurt my feelings by refusing this, Edwin. I can spend the winter here if necessary and join you in the spring. You know what excellent care I shall have in your absence, and I shall never be really well again. But the most important thing is to first talk the matter over with her. There's no obstacle in the way now."

"Child!" exclaimed Edwin, throwing aside his pen, "do you want to drive me mad--that you represent as possible things, which once for all--But no, it's folly to even speak of it seriously. Come, let's eat our dinner, I hear them bringing it and since the knowledge has come to me that we possess fifty ducats, I feel as hungry as a millionaire--or no, millionaires are never hungry--I'm hungry as a man who has never seen fifty ducats at once in his whole life."

The door opened. But instead of the maid-servant who usually brought the dinner, little Jean entered, his round face with its staring blue eyes half buried in the high collar of a thick pilot-cloth coat, his hair carefully brushed, and his cheeks as red as Borsdorf apples from exposure to the sharp east wind. He held in his hand a paper horn, from which he awkwardly drew a bouquet of violets. "I'm to give this to the sick gentleman," he said in his automatic falsetto voice, "and my young lady wishes to know how he is."

Balder took the bouquet from his hand. "Say that I'm very well, and that my brother will call himself this afternoon to express my thanks for the beautiful flowers. And here--" he felt in his pocket and took out the last thaler he possessed--"you've had to come up these steep stairs so often--"

The boy retreated a step. "My mistress forbid me to take anything."

"Say to her that we've won the great prize in the lottery," replied Balder smiling, as he put the thaler into the pocket of the boy's rough coat. "And now go, give my compliments to your mistress, and this afternoon--you understand?" The boy nodded gravely as usual, and bowing respectfully left the room.

"What have you done!" exclaimed Edwin, as soon as they were alone; "Child, child, you force me to yield my head or at least my heart, to the knife. What pleasure in being called Frau Professorin do you suppose she would find?"

"Put the flowers in the water, Edwin, and then go to your desk. They're not meant for me. This afternoon will settle the rest: here comes the dinner, and the news that this morning has brought, has made me hungry too. How's Reginchen to-day, Lore?"

"She seems rather better," said the faithful old servant, who had lived in the house many years, smiling mysteriously. "At least I saw Herr Franzelius go in an hour ago; and as he's there still and has even dined with her, and as Reginchen first cried and then laughed, her sickness can't be very dangerous. Goodness me, and I've carried her in my arms!"

CHAPTER XIII.

When Edwin entered Toinette's room that afternoon, he found her seated on the sofa, evidently absorbed in thought, for she did not look up till he called her by name. A small box stood on the table before her, and she was absently turning the key backward and forward in the lock; her face was pale, and her eyes wore a strangely fixed expression. They rested on the newcomer's figure for some time, as if she found it difficult to recognize him; but it was only because she was forced to make an effort ere she could withdraw the look that had long been searching her own heart, and turn it again upon external things.

"Good afternoon, my dear friend," she said without rising, as she held out her hand to him, "have you come to see me again at last? That's very pleasant, but the best part of all is that you can do so with a light heart. What anxious weeks you have passed! Well, I too have been very miserable and the worst of all is that no nursing or brotherly love can help me. But let's talk of something else, of something more cheerful. You have drawn the great prize? I congratulate you."

He smilingly explained what had induced Balder to play this joke upon little Jean, but said not a word about the professorship.

"No matter," said she, "it is pleasanter for you to have won a prize in a lottery where one must have more sense than luck if one is not to draw a blank. And yet it's a pity that it was only a joke. It would have consoled me for being unable to keep my promise."

"Your promise?"

"To offer you the relics of my princely fortune, in case your brother should wish to travel toward the south. Although I've lived very simply ever since then--see, this is all I have left. When I've paid my last housekeeping bill, there'll be just enough left for a dose of opium."

She had unlocked the little box and allowed him to look in. It contained a few gold pieces and thalers.

"I'm glad you've some room," he answered in a jesting tone, "or I should not know where to keep my fifty ducats. Such splendor in our lowly hut--you've now seen the famous tun--we've not as yet had any use for a fire-proof safe."

"Laugh on," she replied closing the little box. "But I'm angry with myself for having been foolish enough and weak enough, just before you came, to weep over my bankruptcy. The stupid money really is not worth the tears. But you see, that's the very reason a great prize is such a splendid thing, because we've no longer any need to humble ourselves by thinking and worrying about money. I'm ashamed of myself that I could be so base, even for a moment. And now not another word on the subject; tell me about your brother. Is he really out of danger?"

Edwin sat down on the sofa beside her and spoke of Balder's condition, of the hopes which Marquard had given, of the great love which all his friends had shown him, and of the earnestness with which he had charged him to thank Toinette for all her kindness. "Of course I thank you for myself, also, dear friend," he added. "I imagine you wished to show me kindness too. You knew what I suffered during those days, and that nothing could give me more hope and courage than your sympathy. Will you believe that amid all my anxiety for that beloved brother, I still found time to miss you most painfully? If you had coldly remained aloof, how I should have been forced to reproach myself for having become half faithless to my brother, for the sake of a friend who was perfectly indifferent to him!" She made no reply. It seemed as if she had only half heard his words, and was brooding over a thought which had nothing to do with him and his presence.

"You're fortunate," she said after a pause. "You have some one who can make you both sad and happy. I--but do you know whom I have seen again? The count."

Edwin started up. His face suddenly grew pale. After a long pause, he said in a tone of forced indifference: "The count? In spite of the unequivocal declaration you made by your change of residence--"

"Oh! If you only knew him! Such a foolish man is not easily rebuffed. And I at least owe him thanks for having amused me, while you left me all this time to grow melancholy."

"He has--? You've received him here--allowed him to visit you more than once?"

"Why shouldn't I? If you should see him, you would understand that no one can be less dangerous than this adorer. You know how fire-proof I am; why I could spend a hundred years with such a lover, and my heart would never beat one bit the faster! To be sure, at first, when, Heaven knows how, he found me out and entered unannounced, I was extremely angry at the intrusion and received him so coldly that he remained standing at the door like a penitent and could not utter a word of the apology which he had prepared. I said things to which no one else would have submitted quietly. But he--at first he seemed utterly crushed, and then he suddenly threw himself at my feet and faltered out that he was a lost man, if I would not have compassion on him; that he had done everything to prove how honorable his intentions were; he had forced his mother, a very proud lady, to consent to receive me as her daughter-in-law; his aristocratic relatives had caused him a great deal of trouble, but he had at last succeeded in removing every obstacle from the way, and now I rejected him and refused him all hope. And then, still kneeling at my feet, he poured forth such a torrent of vows and protestations, that I really didn't know whether to laugh at or to pity him."

"Toinette! And you allowed him the hope--"

"I? If you think that you don't know me! When I found the torrent of words continued, all desire either to laugh or pity vanished, and I very positively and curtly declared that I had not the slightest inclination to become his wife, that if this would cause him unhappiness, I was very sorry, but that I could not accept the proposals of the first eccentric man I met, at the expense of my whole life. This was my final answer."

"And he still has the effrontery to annoy you? And you were yielding enough--"

"Unfortunately, my friend, I'm much more kind-hearted than you suppose. The first time he returned after this, as I thought, final dismissal, you could not have helped laughing yourself at the penitent manner, in which he sneaked into the room after little Jean. I received him only on the condition that not a word should be said about admiration, love, or marriage. As for the rest why should I, a *ci-devant* duchess, deny myself so cheap a pleasure as keeping a count for my court fool? I was so lonely, so out of spirits. And as I said before, you can't imagine anything more comical than his face and manner. He actually has no face at all; when he's not here, it's impossible to remember how he really looks, his countenance is exactly like those on the tailor's fashion plates, his nose straight up and down, his mouth straight across, and his whiskers just such as grow on the faces of I don't know how many young noblemen. But now imagine this commonplace physiognomy beautified by perpetual lines of grief, or rather by the attempt to look utterly miserable, and you must perceive that there could be no more amusing contrast. I abuse him as much as I can, say the most impertinent things, refuse to even allow him to kiss the tip of

my slipper, but have never succeeded in rousing him from his devout submission and adoration, I shouldn't be the daughter of a poor ballet-dancer and a vain, idle, tolerably desperate creature, if such an aristocratic slave didn't divert me."

"And how long do you propose to continue this delightful game?" asked Edwin, in a somewhat irritated tone.

Instead of answering, Toinette opened a box and took out several large photographs. "These are views of his castle," said she. "Here, as it appears on the heights above the forests; here's the courtyard, with the carriage waiting and the young count's saddle-horse standing close by--I call him young, although one never thinks of his age, for can a man who never really experiences anything grow old?--And here are three views of the interior: the dining-hall, the conservatory, and the boudoir for the young countess. It can't be denied that he, or at least his upholsterer, has good taste, but the master of the house is an unwelcome addition to all this magnificence. I told him so to his face. His only answer was a sigh."

"And how long is this proceeding to continue?" Edwin repeated.

Toinette threw the photographs back into the box and rose from the sofa. "You jealous friend; why should you desire to disgust me with this innocent pleasure in the evening of my life. Haven't you looked into my strong box? I do not wish to spend my days in gloom before the last thaler is exhausted."

"And then?"

"Then? I thought we had agreed that we are superfluous in the world, when we can no longer be useful nor give pleasure to ourselves or others."

"And have you already gone so far?"

"Exactly so far. That is, I should, as he says, not only make my count happy but enable him really to live, if I would give myself to him. But I ask you, what kind of a life would it be for us both! A quicker, plainer, more unequivocal suicide would be preferable. And besides for whom could and should I live? True, I believe you're an honest and sincere friend, but haven't even you during the last few weeks, managed to do very well without me? And would you be able to enjoy the little pleasure my existence affords you, if you should see that I was dragging out the most miserable days, under a burden of deprivations and petty cares, which would crush my whole nature and at last destroy me?" She had uttered the last words with increasing agitation, pacing restlessly up and down the room. It had grown dark. Little Jean knocked and asked whether his mistress wanted lights. "No," she answered curtly. The boy noiselessly retired.

"Toinette," said Edwin, "will you listen five minutes, without interrupting me?"

"Speak. I would rather listen, than talk myself. My thoughts, when uttered aloud, have such a strange sound, that an icy shiver thrills me. Speak, speak!"

"You've reached a point where you can neither stand still nor go on, I mean in the direction you have adopted. There's apparently but one other course: to plunge into the abyss. But that's only the impulse of despair, and you've no right to despair. Couldn't you first try to turn back, take some other direction and see how far you could proceed? You believe me to be a sincere friend; I also believe in my friendship for you, although with all my honesty of purpose, I cannot think solely of your fate, but also a little of my own, when I aspire to be something more than your friend. Don't be startled. I know I should speak a language you would not understand, if I told you of the deep, unconquerable, and ever increasing passion, which from the first hour of our meeting has taken entire possession of me and with which you will bear witness, that I've never troubled you until to-day. I don't envy the count the part he plays, but it would be just as foolish, to maintain total silence in regard to this love that exists and demands to assert its rights in so solemn an hour. I know enough of your life to be able to cheer myself with the thought that no one stands nearer to you than I. Is it so utterly insane to cherish the hope, that I might in time become still dearer, that you might find it worth while to continue to live, if you should share your life with me, belong to me and find your happiness in mine? Dear Toinette, I'll not praise myself: but all whom I have ever loved will bear witness that I'm to be trusted. In other respects you know me; from the first I have always appeared what I am, never either in a moral or intellectual sense, have visited you in borrowed attire. If I did not know, that despite your unfortunate love of display, you possess a soul, true, simple and incorruptable, I should not be such a fool as to offer myself to you. All I possess has belonged to you from the first hour of our acquaintance, and I believe it will be enough to support you without too many deprivations; the passion I feel has first made me aware what a treasure of love I have, enough for the most exacting heart, and so I do not speak to you as a beggar. Whatever you give me, I can outweigh, even if a miracle should happen--your heart at last awake to me, and all that nature has lavished upon you be merged into the best gift--the power to love.

"This probably surprises you," he continued after a pause, during which she sat motionless on a chair by the door, her face expressionless and immobile. "I too have been taken by surprise, although for months I have told myself that this hour must come, for in spite of your peculiar situation and the amusing game you are playing with the count, (Ah, Toinette it does not seem so

absurd to me!) I should scarcely have said what I have to-day, but simply continued to do my duty as a mere friend, had not something occurred which unchains my tongue. A professorship has been offered me. It's not only that I must go away and therefore leave you behind--my whole future is secured. You know I have no ducal aspirations. You have seen our tun and can understand that he who has so long climbed that steep staircase without a murmur, would not consider it a necessity of life to drive in his own carriage through miles of woodland to an ancestral castle. Yet I should never have expected you to climb to your heaven-upon-earth by means of such a tottering Jacob's ladder. Now matters are different, and though my means are still limited, my life on the whole will be quite endurable. My brother, of course, would be the third in the alliance--" At this moment little Jean entered and announced the arrival of the count. Toinette did not seem to hear him, but when the boy repeated his words, she said: "I cannot see him! Say I am not well!" The lad went out, and they heard an eager voice in the entry talking with him, then the door closed and soon after a carriage rolled away from the house. The room was perfectly still. Toinette remained seated in the chair by the wall, and Edwin on the sofa. He rose, and standing by the table seemed to be searching for some word that might loosen her heart and tongue.

"I understand your silence, Toinette," he said at last "You're too honest to hold forth hopes to me or to yourself in which you have no faith. Hitherto you've liked me because I made no claims upon you. Now I've confessed that I want all or nothing, and therefore have suddenly become a stranger to you, an unpleasant monitor, from whom you must defend yourself. Oh! Toinette, I feel what I've risked and perhaps lost, but I couldn't help it; I owed this confession to you and to myself; for the life I have hitherto led with you would if continued consume and destroy me, and the sacrifice would not even have afforded you pleasure, you're not vain and selfish enough for that. Why aren't you, Toinette? Why are you this wondrous mystery, whose incompleteness becomes a torture to itself? If you were a coquette, who found in human sacrifices and in her triumphs compensation for all the profound joys which can only rise from a deep heart, I should almost be grateful for it; it would be easier for me to put an end to everything between us. But no, send me away, tell me nothing more, I know what your silence means, and I know that no words of mine can awake a feeling which nature has not made possible to you." He moved, as if to leave the room, but his feet refused to obey his bidding; he could only walk to the window and stand there clasping with both hands the fastening of the sash, and pressing his forehead against the pane. Just at that moment, the young girl began to speak in a low, almost timid voice:

"Are you angry, my dear friend, because I have so mutely listened to all this, to all your kind, earnest words, which I do not deserve, for which I cannot even thank you as I ought? For you'll not believe how much grief it causes me, that you are so kind, and I--I remain as I am. Oh! you're right, it is becoming a torture to me, this defect in my nature. It's like a spell. I've read of a girl apparently dead, who lay in her coffin, surrounded by friends who were pouring forth their love and sorrow, while she, with all her efforts, could not stir or hold out her hand to her weeping friends, and say: 'I'm still alive. I love you and will not leave you.' It's the same with me. Nothing ever caused me so much pain as that you now wish to leave me, because you desire from me that which I cannot give. And yet I should think I was committing a crime against you, if I sought to restrain you. I could expect anyone else to be satisfied with what I can give, be it little or much. But you--I want you to have all you desire and need; you're worthy of something better than to be weighted through life by such an unhappy creature as I. My dear friend, if I were not perfectly sure that you would repent it, that I should make you unhappy and in so doing go to destruction myself, believe me, I would not hesitate a moment, even if I felt I should be miserable, You've become so dear to me that I would gladly forget myself to help you. But we must not deceive ourselves; it's impossible! You're too sensitive to be able to endure happiness at the expense of another." Then, after a pause she continued: "And yet you're perfectly right, all this must have been uttered some day. But it's inexpressibly sad that it should come so! Is there no help? When we've parted now--is there no hope, that we may again meet in life, if I still have a life before me, and clasp each other's hands like two faithful old friends? Must the parting be for ever?"

He turned and with a secret tremor, saw that she had risen and softly approached him. Her face looked out from the gloom with a touchingly mournful expression; she stood like a child pleading for forgiveness, with her arms hanging at her side and her head bent so low that her hair fell over her temples. "Edwin," she said softly, extending her hand and raising her eyes to his. His heart was burning with love and anguish. "Oh! Toinette," he cried, "farewell, farewell! Not a word more. All is said, the sentence of death is uttered!" Mournfully she held out her arms to him; he clasped her to his breast, pressed his lips to her soft hair, felt for an instant her breath on his neck, then tore himself away and rushed like a madman out of the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was a singular coincidence that on the very same day and almost at the self-same hour another of the friends placed the decision of his happiness or misery in a woman's hands, and received no more consoling reply, nay was rejected in still more mysterious language than Edwin.

It happened thus. Mohr had gone to the little house on the lagune, as indeed he did every day, to inquire about Fräulein Christiane's health. Neither he or any other man had seen her since the night of the accident; for she had positively refused even to receive Marquard, who had saved her life. She sat in the small room behind the kitchen, which the old maid-servant had given up to her; the single grated window looked out upon the canal and the bare, blackened chimney. Here she bolted herself in and opened the door only at Leah's knock, but remained mute even to her kindly inquiries, and during the first day sat like a statue on the stool by the window, with her eyes intently fixed upon the sullen waters below. It seemed as if she considered herself in a self-chosen prison, separated from the world for life. She touched none of the food her nurse brought, except a little soup and bread, and the only time she had spoken was on the third day, when she asked for some work. Since that time sitting always in the same place, she had sewed from early morning until late at night, mended underclothing, hemmed handkerchiefs, and answered all the young girl's timid entreaties and questions only by a pressure of the hand and a gloomy shake of the head.

The same cheerless report was all that could be given today. The night before, Leah had glided into the kitchen, listened at the door of the room, and heard the poor thing moving restlessly to and fro, perhaps to warm herself, for it was cold and she had refused to have a fire lighted in the little stove. She had often groaned like one suffering the deepest pain, and vainly striving to repress any manifestation of it. Midnight was long past before all was still.

"What will happen if God in his mercy does not perform a miracle and let a ray of his love and peace illumine the poor darkened soul!" exclaimed the little artist, with a deep sigh. "Oh! my child, don't you see I was right in saying that all earthly paths lead to darkness and error, unless we humbly strive to seize God's hand and walk by his side? This poor lost life! God forgive me, but I can scarcely help agreeing with the Herr Doctor: who can tell whether it was well for her, that we took so much trouble to recall her to existence?"

Leah was standing beside her painting table, with her pale face bent toward the floor. She made no reply. Her heart was so heavy with her own griefs and those of others, that had it not been for her father, she would fain have wished herself out of the world.

"My honored friends," said Mohr, rising from his chair, where puffing huge clouds of smoke from his cigarette he had sat for some time absorbed in thought, "I too am of the opinion that something must be done; we have given the mercy of God ample time to work a miracle. Perhaps that mercy is held in abeyance; perhaps God is waiting to see whether we will not ourselves move in the matter and assail the difficulty with our poor human powers. And to do this, I at least, a tolerably obstinate heathen,--no offense, Herr König--am fully resolved."

"What are you going to do?" asked Leah, looking up in alarm.

Mohr stretched his herculean frame, as he was in the habit of doing, when after long consideration he had formed some definite resolution. For a moment his muscular arms almost touched the ceiling, then he buried his hands in his bushy hair and said, half closing his eyes and drawing his mouth awry:

"This Marquard may understand his trade well enough, so far as the body is concerned, but rubbing the limbs is not all that can be done. The soul, which has been just as much benumbed by the accident, must also be warmed by spiritual friction and moral mustard plasters; for in its desperation it is still freezing in its death-like torpor, while the body is already rejoicing in the flow of the thawed blood. I'll go in and apply to this apparently dead soul, some of the restoratives we ought to have tried long ago."

"She will not admit you," said Leah with a sorrowful shake of the head, "and even if--have I not done everything in my power, by kind words and the most sincere good will--"

"Certainly, my dear Fräulein, but that's just it: you've handled her with gloves. I--now, I will try a ruder way. Devil take it! no offense, Herr König, but really the evil one, if there is such a person, would laugh in his sleeve and with good reason, if we let this poor soul, which we've toiled so hard to snatch from his clutches, fall back into them for want of aid. Here it's force against force, and a little cunning into the bargain; if you'll knock, Fräulein Leah, and say you want to come in and then let me step before you--such an innocent stratagem will never be imputed to you as a sin."

"I fear it will be useless," replied Leah, "even if it does actual harm. At least I--but perhaps I don't understand." She went out, and Mohr, with awkwardly feigned liveliness, followed her on tip-toe as if bent upon some mischievous prank. Yet the hands he passed through his hair trembled. When Leah knocked at the chamber door, a scarcely audible voice within asked: "Who's there?"

"I, dear Christiane," replied the young girl, "and I wanted to ask if you would allow--here is--"

At this moment the bolt was drawn back, and Mohr, without the slightest ceremony, passed

Leah and entered the half open door.

"Here's some one else," he said finishing Leah's sentence, "who would like to inquire about Fräulein Christiane's health. Pardon an old friend, that cannot endure to be always shut out by locks and bolts. By *Styx*, my honored friend, you've not chosen the most cheerful quarters. This dark cage is uncommonly well adapted to give the blues."

Christiane was speechless. At the entrance of Mohr, who instantly closed the door behind him, she had started violently and fled to the grated window, where she stood motionless, with her arms folded over her breast and her eyes cast down; she almost seemed to be asleep. The jesting tone died on his lips, as he saw the death-like pallor of her face and the expression of hopeless suffering that dwelt about her mouth and eyes. As he approached nearer and tried to take her hand, she drew still closer to the window, sank into the chair which stood beside it, and with averted face and shuddering limbs motioned him away. An inexpressible compassion took possession of him.

"Fräulein Christiane," he said when he partially recovered from the shock of such a meeting, "my visit is unwelcome to you; I'm sincerely sorry, but the reasons for my intrusion are far too grave for me to take leave of you at once, as well-bred people usually do under such circumstances. The more quietly you listen, the sooner you'll get rid of me. Will you listen?"

"No!" at last burst hoarsely from her scarcely-parted lips. "Go--leave me--I've nothing to hear or say!"

"Allow me to doubt that," he answered with apparent composure. "For in the first place you are ill. The wisest sick people don't know what's good for them, they are in a certain sense irresponsible beings. Whether you have anything to say to me, I do not know, but I, have a great deal to say to you. To begin without circumlocution: I know you're angry with me, because I prevented you from accomplishing your purpose and turning you back on this world, which for some unknown reason, you wished to quit. Do you know why I took this liberty? Not from common philanthropy. I should beware of grabbing the coat tail of the first person I might see making the leap. No, my dear Fräulein, what I did for you I did from common selfishness; for if you were no longer in this world, it would lose its charms for me, like a quartette from which the first violin was missing. Pardon the not very clever comparison, but while your face is so ungraciously averted, I'm glad if I can even patch my sentences together, without making any pretensions to style." She still remained silent, with her forehead pressed against the bare wall and her hands convulsively clasped.

"I don't know for what you have taken me so far," he continued in a smothered voice, as he leaned, against one of the bed posts and secretly wiped his forehead, although the room was by no means warm. "Probably you've not had quite so bad an opinion of me, as I of myself, since I was vain enough to put my best foot forward as far as possible. One thing however, you do not know: as a man I may be a tolerably useless, superfluous and ill-made individual: but as a poodle I'm remarkable. The few persons to whom I attach myself can never shake me off, no matter what they do, or whether I'm agreeable or disagreeable to them. And therefore, I must inform you, that it will be useless to reject me, ill-treat me, or even plunge into the water again to get rid of me; the poodle will leap in after you and bring you out again, even if he's obliged to do it with his teeth.

"I know that if you were to vouchsafe me a word, you would ask by what right I intrude upon you, what you are to me, why I annoy you with the information of my poodle qualities? Dear Fräulein, I might answer that I can no more give you a reason than the poodle could in the same situation; it is mere instinct. But a still better reply would be this: the misfortune of my life, dear friend, has been that I've always done everything by halves. It grieves me deeply, that this time also, in saving your life, I seem to have only half succeeded, and therefore I wish to see if I cannot complete my task, if I devote to it all my energies, my small portion of brains and heart and my large share of obstinacy.

"Don't be offended by the not very choice mode I take of expressing myself, dear Christiane! You may believe that I'm in the most solemn earnest. Do you know what I told the brothers in the tun, when I first saw you and received that well merited dismissal you gave? I said that you were a whole-hearted woman, for whom I had a great respect. And this respect I still feel, and because I believe you to be one of the rare women, to whom an honest man may without the slightest peril offer his heart and hand--"

"Hush! Oh! for God's sake, hush!" she interrupted, starting from her rigid immobility. "Go, go--say no more--each word is like a red hot needle piercing my wounded flesh. You don't know--you shall never know--"

"Nonsense, dear Fräulein! I shall never know! As if I wanted to know anything, as if anything I could learn would be able to change my opinion of you! No, my honored friend, that would not be a poodle's trait. His master may steal spoons, may be the saviour of his native land; it makes no difference to the dog, he licks his hand with equal respect. The motive you had for taking that premature cold bath, I shall never ask to know in this world. Of course you were not entirely yourself, you had been tasting some of the bitter wormy apples, that hung on the tree of knowledge, and the cramps which ensued appeared unendurable. So be it! That belongs to the

past, you've rid yourself of the indigestion by a violent remedy, and can gradually regain a taste for the household fare life serves up on an average. Isn't this clear to you, best, dearest of all artists? You would not be what you are, would not play Beethoven as you do, if you had passed by all the abysses and thorny hedges of this life safe and untroubled."

He waited a short time for some reply; then he tried again to approach her window, but she turned away with a shrinking gesture, as if he would be degraded should his hands touch hers.

"No, no, no!" she cried in a stifled voice. "You think a thousand times too well of me. I--oh! there's nothing that less deserves to live, that is less able to endure life, than the wretched creature for whom you, self-sacrificing as you are,--but no, draw back your hand; you don't know whom you wish to raise."

"Is it so?" he said quietly. Then we must call things by their right names, that we may understand each other. Statistics and public opinions unite in saying, that of all the women who arbitrarily seek to leave the world, nine-tenths seek death from misplaced affection, deceived, unrequited, or hopeless passion. Should your case be one of these, the common prejudices of the world cannot prevent me from placing my love at your disposal. I know you never can have done anything base, half way, contemptible, which alone could degrade you in my eyes, because it would destroy and give the lie to the image of you which I cherish in my heart. Even if a misplaced love had led you into the arms of an unworthy man, and indignant anguish at a piece of knavish treachery, devilish villainy--He suddenly paused, startled by the fixed, almost Medusa-like gaze, with which she looked him in the face.

"I thank you," she answered mournfully. "'Devilish villainy' the words are apt, very apt. It's only a pity that I can't tell you why they are so. But that--that no lips would utter, save in madness, and unfortunately madness will not yet come to me. Perhaps if I repeat the words over and over, reflect how well they apply--but no, Fate is not so compassionate! Into the mire with the worm, should it show any desire to crawl. But to crush it, to give it the death blow--ah no! that would be far too humane, too magnanimous for an adorable Providence. Fie, how bitter this earth taste becomes on the tongue!"

She shuddered, then started from her straw chair as if some strange power had rudely shaken her. "Can you still remain!" she exclaimed. "Don't you feel that I must hate you more than any other human being, just because you have restored me to myself, hurled me back to the fate I thought I had escaped? It is such a refinement of mockery, that you should come with your kind, warm-hearted desire to aid me now, when there's nothing more to be saved. Ha! ha! ha! Perhaps if you stay here a little longer, madness may come. Then you would have rendered a service, which would atone for much. Won't you sit down? We'll have a little music--a few false notes more or less--*pshaw*, what will it matter? The harmony of the spheres will not be interrupted. Well? Don't you like the idea? Why are you silent?"

"Christiane," said he, and the tone of his voice revealed a firm, inexorable purpose, "I will take my disagreeable face out of your sight--for to-day! But rely upon it; you will see me again. You do not know, cannot suspect what means a brave, honest man can summon to aid him in healing wounds that seem to be mortal. Christiane, despite all you have told me, I cannot give you up, cannot leave you to yourself; and this terrible, incomprehensible fate of which you speak--only give me time to struggle with it; I think I'm the stronger. Your life belongs to me. You threw it away, and I, the honest finder, restore it to you--if you despise it, it's mine. Only give me time! Only promise me--"

"Nothing," she exclaimed with savage resolution, by which she strove to arm herself against his beseeching words. "My life is over. You will never--never see me again!" She turned away and hid her face in both hands, which she pressed against the iron bars. After a pause she heard him say: "So be it; I will go. But every word I have said stands fast. Henceforth your life is mine. I'll see who'll tear it from me." Then he left the room. Leah and her father were waiting for him in the sitting room. He passed on in silence, as if he did not see them, and the expression of his face was so gloomy and menacing that neither ventured to accost him.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

When, late in the evening Edwin returned home, he found Balder lying dressed upon his bed, with the little lamp, by which he seemed to have been reading, beside him. His face was even paler than usual, his features wore an expression of feverish excitement, and his limbs were so paralysed by exhaustion, that he could only raise his head a little to greet his brother.

"What news do you bring?" he cried. "Nothing good? How is it possible!"

Edwin approached his bed and bent over him. "Child," said he, "you ought to have been undressed long ago. Do you know that you're very cold and pale? I've nothing now but you. If you play me any mischievous tricks--"

"Oh! Edwin I--But you, how do matters stand between you and her? For God's sake tell me! what has happened? What did she say?"

"Nothing new, child; nothing which could surprise us. But it will be better to say nothing more about it to-day. I've taken a long tramp and feel very well now. Don't you see I'm perfectly calm! Why do you excite yourself instead of going to sleep, as I am about to do?"

"No, no," cried the youth starting up in bed, while Edwin was trying to re-kindle the fire in the stove; "I want to know all! Do you suppose I could sleep? Tell me--"

"Well then, we had a thorough explanation and parted afterwards good friends, very good friends, but who, however, are resolved to avoid each other in the future. That's all, my boy! There, the fire is burning again. I feel terribly cold; and the night will be long and may bring snow. So Mohr, whose specialty is getting up a heat, hasn't been here! Come, we needn't grudge ourselves a little supper, now that we have become capitalists. I'll call Lore."

"I've already provided for that," said Balder. "I thought--we would have a pleasant evening together. She put it all down on the bench by the lathe--Oh! Edwin, is it possible?"

"What, my dear fellow? That there are people, young ladies especially, who don't find your brother so lovable as you, dear enthusiast? Ladies who would not prefer a tun and his heart to a fairy castle? Oh! child, if I really were the human jewel your brotherly affection believes me, don't forget how poor and tasteless the setting is, and that elegant young ladies regard fashion more than material. Courage, old fellow! We're too good to dispose of ourselves for less than our value; fool that I was to wish for something more in life, when I was already so rich. Haven't I wife, child, brother, and sweetheart all in one? Come on, child. I feel as hungry as if, instead of a stomach, I carried in my body the basket^[5] I received this morning, and the provisions in yonder corner look remarkably appetizing!"

"Unfortunate girl!" said Balder in a hollow voice.

Edwin paused in the middle of the room. "I thank you for those words," he said with a sudden change of tone. "She deserves that one should weep tears of blood for her. Not because she is unable to take a liking for my worthy person; in that, she is perhaps very wise. But to be a child of the world, as she is, and neither able to conquer her fear of annihilation, nor able to take refuge in the arms of the eternal one called Love--oh! child, it's terrible. To have a heart so heavy that it draws her into the gulf of death before she knows why she has lived--a mind so clear, that it contends that we have a right to give up an enigma we are weary trying to solve, even if it were our own life, in order to obtain repose! Yes tears of blood, precisely because she cannot weep them herself; for her poor Undine soul, in its despair, has not even the petty consolations of tortured mortals. Mark my words, no drop of blood will flow when she dies. She'll be found some day sitting before her mirror with a frozen heart. Turned to stone by her own image."

"Edwin! You think--she could--"

"Put an end to her life, rush out of the world--marry the count, which to be sure, amounts to very much the same thing. But hush! I hear Heinrich on the stairs. We'll show him cheerful faces; these have not been altogether happy days for him of late."

Mohr entered. It was touching to see how his gloomy face brightened when Edwin without saying a word, handed him the letter from the faculty. "I'll dedicate my comedy to these gentlemen," said he. "There seems to be some people in the world after all who know how to appreciate uncommon merit."

He remained until late in the evening. They pushed the table close to Balder's bed-side and all shared in the frugal meal, engaging in conversation about the latest events in their lives; a conversation during the progress of which each unburdened his heart to the other, and in acknowledging the necessity and inevitability of pain and sorrow they grew as calm as mariners who, floating with the stream, take in oars and sails and lying on their backs watch the

movements of the clouds.

But when the brothers were again alone, the memory of what they had recently experienced seemed to seize upon Edwin with fresh strength. "I would give my life to help her!" he said to himself. Balder doubtless caught the remark, but remained silent. When they had put out the light, he heard Edwin rise and come to his bed. "Child," said he, "it's so cold over there. Move a little nearer to the wall; I should like to hold your hand until I fall asleep. I've nothing but you, but that's enough, if I only know you're near me."

He lay down beside Balder, with his hand clasped in his brother's. It was not long before he fell asleep and breathed as quietly as a man who has peaceful dreams. But Balder lay awake for hours, revolving various unformed ideas in his mind.

When they awoke the next morning, they were as usual silent and absorbed in their own thoughts, and the events of the previous evening were not mentioned between them. Edwin looked over his notes for the lecture. Balder sketched some models lent him by his employer; only once the latter asked casually if Edwin was not going to answer the deans' letter immediately. "There's no great hurry now, child," replied the other. "But it shall be done. A change of air would be the best thing for me, and perhaps for you too."

"Certainly," replied the invalid. "I long to get away from this air." He meant more than his words conveyed, but Edwin did not see the calm smile that would have betrayed his thoughts.

"I shall leave you without any one to look after you to-day, my dear boy," said Edwin, as he put his notes in his pocket to go to the lecture. "I hope you'll be good and neither attempt to work, nor commit any other act contrary to police regulations. Farewell, child! Make up a little more fire. Your hands are so cold again."

At the end of ten minutes Balder threw aside his pencil, and began to exchange his dressing gown for a street suit. His hands trembled when, for the first time in many weeks, he again took out the old cloak and little grey hat he had worn on his last expedition to the courtyard. Despite his old fashioned, almost shabby clothes, and the weary manner in which he limped along with his cane, there was such a charm in his movements and the slight droop of the beautiful face, that no one would have smiled at the short cloak and worn felt hat.

He glided down the stairs very softly. On the landing before Christiane's door, he remembered how long it was since he had heard her play. He thought she had stopped on account of his illness and determined on his return to knock and beg her not to deny herself the pleasure any longer. The door of the workshop was only ajar. The head journeyman saw him pass, and called after him to ask a friendly question about his health and warn him not to catch cold. He answered with a jest and crossed the courtyard without looking at the bench in the bean arbor, but was obliged to stand still a moment in the entry to recover his breath. His heart throbbed loudly; he heard through the door Franzelius' deep voice, suppressed but apparently engaged in eager conversation, and now and then a merry, girlish laugh he had missed for weeks. Only a momentary pang thrilled his frame, the next instant he was calm and cheerful again. He felt strong enough to enter and greet the happy pair without envy. "Perhaps I will when I come back," he thought, and then limped softly forward, glad that he met no one who would have remonstrated against his hazardous venture.

A keen, cold east wind was blowing, driving before it flakes of dry crumbling snow. Fortunately an empty droschky was just passing; Balder stopped it, and as he sat within, wrapped himself closely in his cloak. But it was not the cold that made him shiver, but the feverish excitement of his blood; for every pulse throbbed in anticipation of the decisive moment he was about to meet.

When he reached the house in Rosenstrasse, he could not alight directly at the door, as an elegant carriage already occupied the place. He ordered the droschky to wait, and with many pauses, that he might not lose his breath, ascended the stairs.

Little Jean opened the door and stared at the unexpected visitor with eyes that grew larger than ever at the sight of him. There was some one calling on his mistress, he said, but perhaps she would receive him; he would see. He came back almost immediately and in his unmovably solemn manner, without uttering a word, opened the door of Toinette's room.

CHAPTER II.

When the young girl saw Balder, she hastily rose from the sofa and with the most winning cordiality approached him, holding out both little hands, as if to support his tottering steps.

"You've come to see me yourself--to-day!" she exclaimed. "But was it safe? The wind is so cold--my stairs are so steep--and yet you don't know how glad I am to see you well again. Allow me to introduce you to the Herr Count."

She turned toward a tall, slender man, dressed entirely in black, who sat negligently leaning back in the chair beside the sofa, and only noticed the young stranger in the shabby cloak by a slight bend of the head. A flush crimsoned Balder's face, partly at the count's haughty gesture, partly at the thought: "So he's the man who has supplanted Edwin!" His clear eyes rested a few seconds upon the countenance of the young nobleman, who had taken a newspaper from the table and seemed to be attentively reading it. He did not know why the regular features and faultless figure caused him so much dissatisfaction, and at the same time awakened a sort of compassion. He too had bowed in silence and now sank into the arm chair the beautiful girl had drawn forward with friendly solicitude.

He was now sitting opposite her, but at first could find no words with which to begin a conversation, he was so completely captivated by her face. In spite of Edwin's descriptions, he had not imagined her so beautiful and elegant, had not supposed that the tone of her voice and the expression of her dark eyes were so gentle and innocent. She seemed to attribute his silence to exhaustion caused by unusual exertion and left him to rest for a time, while she rang for the boy and ordered some sugar and water. Then she again turned toward him and in the most cordial manner questioned him concerning his health, and what remedies the doctor had ordered.

His only reply was to express his thanks for the friendly interest she had shown him during the past few weeks, and tell in how many delirious dreams the palms had played a part, and what pleasure they had afforded him in his hours of consciousness. At first his manner was hesitating and embarrassed, but when he noticed the sarcastic smile on the face of the count, who sat opposite him without uttering a syllable, he suddenly shook off his diffidence and gave utterance to so many bright and clever ideas that Toinette thought him very attractive, and frankly told him that his brother had slandered him, when he described him as a misanthropic hermit. She hoped to see him more frequently now; she was angry with him for having waited till he had been seriously ill before finding the way to her, and he might as well confess that the only reason he had not joined the party to Charlottenburg, was because he was prejudiced against her. Who could tell how Edwin might have slandered her too. She said all this in such a gay tone, that Balder was secretly amazed. Was it coldness of heart or self-control, that enabled her to speak of Edwin as if nothing had occurred between them, as if he would come to her again to-morrow and renew the old intercourse? Absorbed in this reflection he again became silent, and she also lost her gayety.

"You were going to say something more," she began after a pause. "I saw you repress the words that were hovering on your lips."

"You may have been right," he replied. "But if you'll allow me, I'll say it some other time. I'll not interrupt you any longer to-day." He glanced at the count and prepared to rise.

"My dear Count," said the fair girl, without the least embarrassment, "I should like to say a few words to Herr Balder alone. If you would go into the ante-room for five minutes--you will find books on the table, and can amuse yourself in feeding my sparrows."

"I hope the private audience will not last too long," said the young gentleman sharply, as he rose, and pulling his whiskers, walked slowly toward the ante-room.

Toinette's color heightened. "Have patience," she cried. "Herr Balder is a less frequent visitor than you, and I must avail myself of the favorable opportunity. Besides, you'll lose nothing important, so far as I am aware."

He made her an ironical bow and said: "You somewhat abuse your sovereign rights, Fräulein; but in case of necessity, the room to which you send me has a second door of egress. *Au revoir.*"

They were scarcely alone, when Balder seized Toinette's hand and pressed it warmly. "Dear Fräulein," he said, "I thank you for having allowed me this interview. I shall not try the gentleman's patience long. The object that has brought me here, in addition to the desire to thank you in person, is soon explained. My brother has told me--from the very beginning--the terms on which he stood with you, and that yesterday you deprived him of all hope. I don't know whether you were really as much in earnest as he supposed, whether it was indeed your final answer. And Fräulein, I'm so proud of my brother that I could not make up my mind to utter even a syllable that might sound like intercession to a woman who had really rejected him. It's not merely the partiality of kindred blood: I've lived with him six years and know his value, and I know that the best of women would scarcely be good enough for him. Therefore, if the woman he loved did not perceive his worth, it might at first be a great grief to him, but I should console myself with the thought that she did not deserve him and must lack the power to render him happy, if she could fail to appreciate his nobleness and wealth of intellect, and her incredible piece of good fortune to be loved by such a man. Knowing you as I do, dear Fräulein, through him

and through my own short acquaintance with you, I have formed too favorable an opinion of you to believe that you could be blind to the worth of Edwin's mind and heart. His ironical manner of speaking of himself, his simplicity, and disdain of all pretension have not deceived you in regard to the depth and warmth of his nature, the superiority of the man who has laid his life at your feet. If nevertheless you can endure the thought of losing him, I must believe that some other obstacle stands between you. You have always been honest and frank toward Edwin. Be so to me too, dear Fräulein; tell me openly whether I'm mistaken or whether I have made the right conjecture, in believing you would have accepted his offer if he had been entirely alone in the world, if he had not imposed upon you, for who knows how long a time, the care of an invalid brother."

She looked at him with an expression of the greatest astonishment and admiration. "Dear Herr Balder, how can you even for a moment--"

"You're right," he smilingly interrupted, "it would be too much to expect you to carry honesty so far. Therefore please say nothing, but let me tell you that this miserable obstacle does not really stand in the way, or rather that it will scarcely be an obstacle after a few weeks longer. I've asked our physician on his conscience--and fortunately he has one, so that I might even have believed a different answer than the one he gave. The poor mortal who stands before you, will soon be obliged to leave vacant even the modest place he now occupies in the world. Edwin of course has no suspicion of this; we are all accustomed to think even the inevitable improbable, if it's coming is long delayed. When it at last occurs, we try to accommodate ourselves to it as best we may. Edwin will get over his grief in time. For my part--I confess, dear Fräulein, I find the world very beautiful. I should have liked to continued your acquaintance too. But one must not be grasping; I've enjoyed life so fully, in a condensed essence as it were, that I really ought not to complain if the portion allotted to me is already consumed." He paused, a calm smile resting on his lips. When he looked up, he saw that Toinette's eyes were full of tears. "Why do you weep?" he asked anxiously. "I hope my fate, which causes me anything but sorrow--"

"No," she eagerly exclaimed, closing her eyes a moment as if to repress the tears. "I don't weep for you, dear Balder--pardon me for addressing you like an old friend or brother--you're not to be pitied, I *envy* you your beautiful life and your still more beautiful death, even if it is as near as you believe; perhaps it may be farther off than you think; a man can endure much, and doctors are bad prophets. If my eyes grew moist, it was for myself, because I'm such a poor fool, that I must remain in debt to you and your brother for the offer of all the good and beautiful things you would fain give me but which I must nevertheless decline. Dear Balder, if you knew--but why should you know? If I'm unhappy, isn't it my only consolation to at least appear no worse than I am, explain why, with the best intentions, I cannot make those I love as happy as they deserve to be?"

"I have repented a thousand times," she continued, pushing her hair back from her temples, and at the same time surreptitiously brushing the tears from her eyes, "that I did not yesterday tell your brother all my story. I have been reflecting ever since how I could repair my error, whether I should write my tale or beg him to come to me again. But it makes no difference; I may as well tell you as him that I now know that I shall have no happiness in life, never, never, either through myself or others. You shall know why, although the secret concerns subjects which are rarely mentioned between two young people. Dear friend, I can give you no better proof of the high esteem in which I hold you, than in telling you this sorrowful secret, which I only learned myself a few days ago."

She here cast a hasty glance at the door, through which the count had left the room. "I owe this knowledge to him," she continued in a lower tone. "As his relatives tried to persuade him out of his mad intention of marrying me, by harping upon my humble origin, he made inquiries concerning me in my native city; he wished at least to ascertain whether anything derogatory could be said about my family. The little that was known about my parents did not satisfy him; so he applied to the young prince, who of late has again resided in his ancestral castle and is about to wed his cousin. Madly in love as he is, the count did not conceal why he desired to information, and the young prince, now perhaps the only person who really knows anything about the matter, thought it his duty, by way of warning, to tell him the family secret that his mother, on her death bed, had confided to him. Oh! dear Balder, such horrible things happen in this world! Oh! that a poor mortal should be obliged to live and struggle against his fate in vain, seldom even knowing why he must suffer! But when they *are* known the stronger the reasons the less comfort they afford! Since I've known why I am constituted, as I am, that it all precedes from perfectly natural causes and that it is not at all surprising that I have never been able to make myself or others happy. I've also lost all hope that things can ever alter for the better." She leaned back in the corner of the sofa, rested her head on the cushion and gazed fixedly at the ceiling. "Do you know my story?" said she.

"My brother told me all."

"He has told you nothing; for I find that I myself knew nothing of the truth, that I did not even know my real parents. The good ballet-master was not my father, my father was the prince, and the woman I called mother, was utterly alien in blood; my mother was a poor girl, beautiful and unfortunate, more unfortunate even than her daughter. She is said to have loved a worthy young man, but he was too poor to marry her. The prince, who did not love his wife and never remained with her long at the castle, was residing in Berlin; he saw the timid young creature in the street,

and followed her. She would have nothing to say to him, his rank and wealth did not allure her, she preferred to remain a beggar, rather than prove faithless to her love. But her mother! Can you imagine how a mother can break the heart of her only child? Yet her mother did it. And now she is dead, and her unhappy daughter is dead, and the child of that daughter, who was forced to sacrifice herself without love, this child of misery and blasphemy lives and must atone for its parents' sin by carrying through life an unhappy heart that cannot love!"

She was silent, and he too sat without speaking, deeply moved by the hopeless tone of her voice. They heard the count pacing impatiently up and down the ante-room, carriages rolling along the street, and the bright winter sun shone cheerily through the clear window panes. Suddenly the lovely girl sat erect again, shook back her hair and said with a forced laugh: "Oh! how horrible! But what's to be done? It is and cannot be helped. Only those people seem to me pitifully stupid and cruel, who seek to make such a poor unfortunate being responsible for its acts, I would gladly be a good, warm-hearted, simple fool, like other girls, make kind people happy, and be tenderly petted myself, if it hadn't been for this terrible spell which is upon me; but my poor mother could leave me nothing but her hate and cold, mute despair, and from my father I inherited my princely tastes and empty hands. He loved me very dearly, they say, the more so because the purchased happiness with my mother was so short; she died when I was born. In order to be able at least to occasionally see me, he placed me, despite of the princess' opposition, with my foster parents, for whose child I passed. But he himself died young and forgot to provide for me in his will, and the princess never forgave me my existence. If she had lived to see me curse my life, she might perhaps have been conciliated. But she too is dead, and I'm all alone."

"Must you remain so, dear Fräulein?" said Balder, laying his hand gently on hers, which were clasped on her lap.

"My friend," she replied, "I believe that both you and your brother have the kindest intentions toward me. But it would be a crime, if I were to persuade myself that you could help me now, when I see all so clearly, know that my fate is to suffer from a taint in the blood. How can you persuade me to make your brother unhappy? For he would be so; I could never endure narrow surroundings. Of course if one loved, that passion would chase away all the rest, all the cares and poverty of daily life would be forgotten. My mother certainly would not have sighed or complained, had she become the wife of the man she loved. But--I will promise no one what I can't perform. To lead my sorrowful life alone, to my own cost, shrink from an unpaid bill and turn again and again a worn-out dress--that I could accomplish if necessary. The princess who had to tend geese, may have secretly wept herself weary; and if the worst should come no one can control me. But when I've once given my life into other hands, and am no longer mistress of myself, I should be obliged to persevere even if I saw that my unhappiness was weighing down another heart with sadness. And your brother is too dear to me for that, you can tell him so."

She rose seemingly wishing to end the conversation. But Balder remained seated and after a pause said: "So you want to deprive those whom you believe to be your friends, of all hope of conquering what you call your fate? I believe, like you, in the power of blood, but I believe too, in the power of the will and the might of love. Only one thing seems hopeless to me: the commonplace. I've not known many people, yet among the few I have known were some who felt so perfectly well satisfied with what was base and mean, that nothing higher and purer could touch and win them. But a noble spirit, like yours, unhappy because of its loneliness, suffering only on account of its inability to give joys to others--no, dear Fräulein, never will I believe that your heart can have no future, that you must forever remain in this sad, cold isolation, and all the efforts of warm-hearted men to melt your soul be utterly in vain. When I repeat our conversation to my brother, I know well what his course will be; he will not think of himself but of your fate and his duty not to remain away from you. You don't know what he can do. Not that he will seek to win you for himself, to creep into your heart in any way. But he will fearlessly battle with the dark powers that rule your youth, and," he added with a melancholy smile--"I'm only sorry that I shall not be alive to hear you, when you say to him: 'You've conquered; my heart has grown warm.'"

Toinette gently shook her head. "You're a good man, but a bad prophet," she answered smiling. "But no matter. Only promise me to live, for who knows what may happen; and tell your brother--what you please. I doubt whether he will come here again. He's different from you, prouder, more passionate, he wants 'all or nothing.' If he will only learn to be satisfied with a little--I shall always be glad to see him. But he must come soon, for I can't tell what will become of me. In three days I must decide upon something; for even if I loved life, I can live no longer as I am; servitude, poverty--or a third contingency, which might not be the worst. And now, my dear friend--"

She looked toward the door, which had already been once opened and hastily closed again. The youth rose and approached her. "I thank you most sincerely for all you've confided to me," said he, "and I shall carry away a lighter heart than I brought with me. But I should like to say one thing more; if it's impossible for you to refuse to receive this count, beware of letting Edwin meet him here. From what I know of my brother, he would not endure this gentleman's haughty manner, and even his mere presence, his cold, empty smile, his brow, behind which no noble thought ever germinated, would be so repulsive to him, that he would beseech you to choose between him and this third alternative. How is it possible for *you* to tolerate such a person near you? The very nobility of your own nature ought to make such a caricature of true nobility--"

At this moment the door was gently opened and the count appeared on the threshold. "Send this eloquent young man away, Fräulein," he said contemptuously, without vouchsafing Balder a single glance, "or you'll place me in the painful position of being forced to give him a lesson in good breeding, to make him understand that it's unseemly to express his very immature opinions about people in so loud a tone that those concerned can't help hearing it in the adjoining room. Of course it's impossible to feel insulted by such complimentary remarks from a saucy lad. But--"

"You forget where you are, Count," Toinette hastily interrupted, while Balder growing red and pale by turns, vainly strove to find an answer. "If the time seems long to you, pray go. I'm accountable to no one for the length of my interview with this friend."

"Undoubtedly," replied the count with a slight bend of the head, "you're at liberty to choose your friends, and no one is responsible for his taste. I, too, trust to continue the acquaintance of this hopeful youth--at some more suitable place. Farewell, Fräulein!" He took his hat and with an icy smile left the room.

"What have you done, Balder!" cried Toinette. "You've deeply offended him, and he'll never forget it. Why didn't I warn you? These walls and doors are so thin!"

"Pardon me the unpleasant scene; I deeply regret having caused it," replied Balder, extending his hand to her. "But I've no anxiety about anything else. I still believe the count has too much good feeling to revenge himself on a defenceless man for an unintentional offence, and then--no one can bear me a grudge *long*. I do not even know whether I can bid you farewell a second time?"

He bent over her hand, and, absorbed in other thoughts, she left it in his clasp. "Don't go yet," she said. "Wait till he has driven away. I don't feel satisfied about this matter. And you're exhausted, and you ought to take a glass of wine--"

He smilingly released her hand. "Although I'm not the strongest person in the world--my nerves are strong enough as yet to prevent any fear of men. You may be perfectly at ease, dear Fräulein, I shall find my way home safely. Farewell!"

He limped out of the room so quickly, that little Jean, who was sitting at a small table in the entry, writing exercises, was not quick enough to open the door for him. But when he had descended the stairs and reached the street, he saw the count's carriage still standing in the same place. "He's waiting till I have gone, and will then go up again," he thought, and regretted that there was to be a continuation of the scene just experienced. But as he looked around to summon the droschky, the carriage door opened and the count alighted.

"My worthy young gentleman," said he, approaching Balder, "we've not yet done with each other. I've taken the liberty of waiting here, to give you some good advice." He paused a moment and measured the youth from head to foot. Balder looked him quietly in the face. "I'm eager to hear it," said he.

"You're still very young and moreover in other respects not a person who could be held to the full meaning of his words. But for that very reason you will do well not to try forbearance too far. I inform you therefore that I don't desire to meet you in this young lady's drawing, room a second time.

"It will rest entirely with you, Herr Count, to avoid me. I've no reason to shun you."

"Then you must submit to the treatment I think proper to bestow upon any insolent person of your stamp."

Balder had turned deadly pale, and his limbs trembled, but instead of menace there was a strange expression of sorrow in the eyes that rested upon the man who offered him this insult.

"Herr Count," said he, "I regret that I expressed my opinion of you in so loud a tone that you could overhear it. It always pains me to offend any one. But I regret still more, that your subsequent conduct confirms my hasty judgment. I believe we've nothing more to say to each other."

He bowed coldly and beckoned to the driver of his droschky, which was waiting at some little distance. At the same moment he felt his cloak seized.

"It is true, my young friend, that I have done with you," he heard the count say in a tone of suppressed fury. "Your feeble health gives you the liberty, so easily abused, of saying what you please with impunity. But you will oblige me by giving your brother, in my name, the same warning that I have given you. Out of consideration for the lady to whom he, as I hear, is paying attention, I should prefer that she should be spared the necessity of making a choice between us. I'm not in the habit of putting myself on a level with the first person who comes along, and the affair might have unpleasant consequences for him. You'll be kind enough to give him this message, my young friend? And now I'll not keep you standing in the windy street any longer. I trust you have understood me." He drew back, bowed with mock civility, and sprang into his carriage, which drove rapidly away.

Balder remained silent and motionless. Involuntarily he placed his hand upon his heart, where he felt a keen pain. But it passed away again. His rigid features relaxed, and he smiled sadly as he drew his cloak closer around his shoulders. "What a contemptible man!" said he. "How anybody who is governed by such dull instincts must feel! And she, she could--no, Edwin, he is not dangerous to you, or she has never been worthy of possessing your heart!"

The droschky stopped beside him, the driver, who saw the pale youth standing so lost in thought, pitied him, and jumped down from the box to open the door and help him in. "Why, sir, you ought to be with your mother, instead of making visits. An old droschky like this isn't very warm, and you're shivering like a sentinel when it is ten degrees below zero."

"You are right, my friend," replied Balder smiling. "But I think the sentinel will soon be relieved. Drive me home as fast as possible, I shall hardly get out of doors again."

CHAPTER III.

Edwin was strolling down Friedrichstrasse with Marquard, whom he had met on his way home from the university.

"I thought it would only be a soap bubble of happiness," said he. "A removal at this season of the year is as impossible, as for him to remain here alone. You'd undoubtedly take the best care of him, and Mohr has even offered to move into the tun bodily as 'Vice-Edwin.' But nevertheless, my dear fellow, don't urge me. You don't know how we've spoiled each other. There are hours when it's troublesome for him to speak, and then I read the signs on his brow as clearly as my own handwriting. And, reproach me if you will for being sentimental, I, too, should fare ill without him. For the last six years my best thoughts have come to me in his calm presence. If I reached a point when I could make no farther progress, I only needed to look at him, and light dawned upon me from his eyes. I'm really afraid I should seem stupid, if I were to go to the university without him, and the faculty would think I'd had somebody's help in writing my prize essay. *Habeat sibi!* Some other door will open."

"You know your own affairs best," replied Marquard, who, wrapped in an elegant fur cloak, was strolling beside him with apparent indifference. "If it doesn't agitate him to think that he's the obstacle. Perhaps--it's only an idea--you might allege your regard for the princess in Rosenstrasse, as a pretext for not going away."

"Unfortunately the good advice comes too late. He knows that that is all over."

"What? Been made such short work of? How did that happen?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you some other time."

They walked on in silence side by side. At last Marquard said: "I see I'm the only practical person among you; for even our tribune of the people--though he's shown more common sense than I gave him credit for, in selecting from among the children of the people one whose father is a house owner for his bride--will scarcely become a steady married man and quiet citizen. You, my noble philosopher, are in love with a psychological problem, and our satirical friend, instead of at least acting out his comedy: 'I am I and rely on myself--'"

"What news have you heard of him? He came in to play chess last night as usual."

"His queen checkmated him yesterday, the game's up, the zaunkönigs were sitting in their nest with very anxious faces when I make them a short call in the evening. The mysterious night-bird they sheltered, has flown away, no one knows where."

"Could the poor creature for the second time--"

"That was the fear of her worthy hosts, behind whose backs she stole away. But I soothed their anxiety. After a conversation forced upon her by Mohr, in the course of which God knows what he may have said, undoubtedly with the best intentions, but in his mad way, she waited until papa König and the young girl had gone out, then suddenly emerged from her solitary corner and saying that she wanted to buy a winter cloak, asked the cook to lend her some money. When she'd got twelve or fourteen thalers--all the ready money the woman had,--she entered a droschky and drove away. It's not likely that she wanted to buy a pistol, having possibly taken a prejudice against water, for tickets to eternity can be bought cheaper by other routes. Moreover so many days have intervened since that unhappy night, that it's natural to suppose milder thoughts had come. In a note to Leah, she begged her not to seek to discover her, for that she would send her

word when she could find courage to live and a desire to recall herself to the memory of those who had meant kindly toward her, though they had acted against her will. Herr Feyertag might sell her furniture and piano, deduct the rent and the borrowed money from the proceeds, and give the remainder to the poor; the letter was resolute, like the woman who wrote it, but it was no suicide's bulletin; I know that, for I once made a collection of the autographs, last notes, etc., left by suicides just before they entered eternity."

"And Mohr?"

"He came again in the evening, and seemed to have been brooding meantime over some plan or to have had some other question to ask. When he found the cell empty, (no one thought of an escape, as the imprisonment was voluntary,) he became even more thoughtful, morose, and uncivil than he's been for the last few weeks. Even the little zaunkönig, who can usually stand a good deal, seemed somewhat nettled by his strange manners. For the rest--all honor to the little man! He's cared for the unfortunate creature like a real Samaritan, while from a Christian standpoint, suicides have usually been considered the very scum of humanity, the poor step-children of God and predestined to misery, and have always been buried outside the church-yard wall. A long hymn of praise might be sung over Leah's treatment of the stranger. My little Adèle actually gets jealous when I tell her how self-sacrificing, clever, and discreet the zaun-princess' conduct has been."

"And there's still no clue to the cause of this desperate step?" said Edwin. "When I think of our bacchanalian revel at Charlottenburg, and her playing--she seemed to be in such good spirits, like all the rest of us, only of course in her strange, sullen way--"

Marquard shrugged his shoulders. "Who can tell! Perhaps Leah! At least, whenever I alluded to the subject, she grew speechless in a strange way, like a person who has no talent for lying and therefore prefers to seal his lips. Mohr, who'd be easier game to an inquisitor, seemed, up to yesterday, to have no suspicions; but early this morning, so your old Lore tells me, he went to Fräulein Christiane's room, on the pretext that he wanted to buy the piano. There he rummaged in every corner, and at last found something--a little book, at the sight of which he uttered an inarticulate moan. What it may have been, his 'so-called gods' only know. However, he's happy now; he has an object in life which occupies all his thoughts: to unveil this mystery and trace the woman who has disappeared."

"I've wondered whether, after all,--did you never meet a certain Candidat Lorinser?"

The physician made no reply; for they were just turning the corner of Dorotheenstrasse, and Marquard's keen eye had discovered a crowd of people standing silent and motionless around a droschky in front of Herr Feyertag's shop. "What's that?" said he. "Are the neighbors waiting to see Jungfrau Reginchen drive out to pay wedding calls? We've not got quite so far as that--no, some accident--"

Edwin heard no more. Urged by a sudden presentiment, he reached the house at the very moment a lifeless body, carefully supported by the head journeyman and the driver of the droschky, was carried up the steps. He heard the crowd around him say: "There comes his brother!" then his senses failed. The by-standers caught him, as he tottered and seemed about to fall.

But it was only a momentary faintness that paralysed him. The next instant he heard Marquard's voice again. "Keep up your courage, Edwin! Come! It can scarcely be death!" Aided by his friend, he stood erect and allowed himself to be led into the house.

The entry was crowded with the members of the household and with curious neighbors, but they silently made way for them. All the apprentices were assembled in the courtyard, gazing at the upper windows as if expecting some message; but not a word was uttered, the whole house seemed holding its breath in terror.

The driver of the droschky now appeared in the doorway. "Good Lord, what a misfortune!" he said, approaching Edwin. "Such a young fellow! I really thought he was a girl in disguise, till he began to talk to the strange gentleman; then his eyes flashed as only a man's can. I saw he'd got a little heated, so I shut the window, and he jested when I told him he was shivering like an old sentinel. And all the way from Rosenstrasse here, I never noticed that, as one might say, he was driving to eternity in the old droschky! I suppose you're his brother? Well, there's no hurry about the fare." Edwin shuddered and his voice failed when he turned to speak. Marquard gave the man some money and took his number, in order to ask him some farther questions about the last scene; then he helped Edwin up stairs.

They had laid the lifeless form upon the bed just as they had taken it out of the carriage, still wrapped in the faded cloak. No one had gone up to the room except the head journeyman, Herr Feyertag and his wife; Reginchen had glided after them, but she had not ventured to enter and was crouching on the stairs, pale as a ghost.

When Edwin, leaning on Marquard, entered the tun, Madame Feyertag was kneeling beside the bed rubbing Balder's cold temples with some stimulant. Marquard permitted her to go on, and for some minutes closely examined the motionless body. Then he turned to Edwin, who had

sunk down on the foot of the bed. "Poor boy!" said he. "Come, Edwin, be a man! It was only a question of weeks. He's passed into the other world quickly and painlessly. Look at the calm face."

A loud burst of weeping interrupted him. Herr Feyertag, with gentle violence, led away his kind-hearted wife, who sobbed as hopelessly as if she had lost a child of her own; the head journeyman, with tears streaming down his face, softly followed them; he first tried to say something to Edwin, but checked the words that were on his lips. When he returned to the workshop, he sat down on a stool and buried his face in his hands. Half an hour later, when the apprentices stole in to continue their work, prepared for violent reproaches, they found the choleric fellow in the same attitude. He seemed completely transformed; but when toward evening, the youngest apprentice began to whistle softly to himself, he rushed at him like a madman and called him a heartless toad, for screwing up his mouth and whistling wedding tunes on such a day.

Over the house there was a hush, as if with the fading away of this one life all the joy of existence had vanished. Every one went about on tip-toe and closed the doors noiselessly. When, toward evening, the maid-servant went to the pump, she looked up to the open windows of the upper room, wiped her eyes, and stealing away with the empty pail, brought the water from one of the neighboring houses.

In the afternoon, Mohr came, and an hour after him, Franzelius, both entirely ignorant of what had happened. But Herr Feyertag sat in the shop and beckoned to every one who entered the house, in order to keep troublesome visitors away from Edwin. Mohr did not utter a word and no change of countenance betrayed his emotion, so that the worthy shoemaker shook his head, as, muttering something in a low tone, the young man left the shop, to go up to the tun. But it was a long time before he reached it. He first slipped into Christiana's room, and sitting there in the darkness let the first passion of grief rage itself calm, before he ventured to go to Edwin. Franzelius, on the contrary, had thrown himself into the arms of his future father-in-law, with such heart-rending sobs, that Herr Feyertag, who hitherto had placed no great confidence in him, because he believed him to be a bloodthirsty revolutionist, secretly admitted that his wife was right; Reginchen could not have found a better husband.

It was strange that neither of the friends ventured to let Edwin see their first sorrow, that both paid the common toll of human weakness before making their daily visit to the tun. Was it because of the habit formed during the last few weeks, of considering that room a sacred place, from which all the tumult of selfish sorrows and passions must be kept away, or did they fear that they could not endure the sight of the survivor, if they had not first regained their own composure?

They met on the stairs, just as Mohr was leaving Christiane's room. Without uttering a word, the old antagonists fell into each others arms, kissing and embracing each other as if there had never been any ill-blood between them. Thus a solemn vow of eternal friendship was exchanged, and they mounted the stairs hand in hand.

They found Edwin alone, still sitting in the same attitude as when Marquard had left him an hour before, to visit some patients. Balder was lying wrapped in his cloak, like a victor who had fallen on the battle field. Edwin was bent forward, leaning on the foot of the bed. He now half rose and with a faint smile held out his hands to his friends.

"Have you come too?" said he. "I'm glad. He's so beautiful! I can scarcely pity my own loneliness when I look at his face. Can you believe that he will never open his eyes again? And yet he never will, Marquard says he never will, and he must know." After a pause he continued: "Take a chair, Franzel. Pardon me that I keep my seat. We need not stand upon ceremony, and it is hard for me to move a limb. He's better off, I don't grudge him his happiness,--but it's hard to think we shall soon see his face no more."

Mohr had taken a chair opposite the bed, Franzelius was leaning against the door gazing through his tears at the closed eye-lids and marble brow of the beloved dead. When the room grew so dark, that they could scarcely distinguish each other's features, Mohr rose and insisted upon taking Edwin to his room, where he could get some wine and some light food to strengthen him. "You've a great deal before you; you must husband your strength. Franzel will stay here. We'll send a lamp up to him. The night watch can be divided between us." Unconsciously, like a somnambulist, Edwin obeyed. The strong wine Mohr pressed upon him threw him into a sound sleep for half an hour. As he awoke, he uttered a cry that made his companion start up in alarm.

"It's nothing!" Edwin said with a sorrowful shake of the head. "I was only dreaming that I heard Balder's voice. Just as I tried to take his hand, I awoke and suddenly remembered all. I thought my heart would burst; but I am strong again, only my eyes are still dry. Come, we'll not keep him waiting too long."

When they opened the door of the death chamber, they paused on the threshold in astonishment. Franzelius had taken advantage of their short absence to erect, with the aid of the household, a sort of catafalque. The turning lathe was placed in the centre of the room and covered with a black cloth, and on it was a hastily made couch, on which Balder was laid. At his head stood the palms, and beside them two tall laurel trees, which the old tenor had sent. His

wife had added two silver candelabras, which burned on either side of the bier and shed a calm light on the beautiful pale face. Instead of the little cloak, a white sheet, on which the slender hands rested, covered the slight form. The white cat had glided in through the open window and wandering around for a time, crouched finally at the foot of the bier with its yellow eyes fixed steadily on the candles.

Edwin seated himself on Balder's empty bed and drew his friend down beside him. "Thank you," said he. "We'll let no stranger touch him. No one but those who have loved him."

Franzelius mutely pressed his hand and turned away to hide his tears. Mohr had sat down before the chess board that stood on the little table in the corner, and mechanically began to move the pieces.

They had not long sat thus silent and alone, when some one knocked gently. Mohr went to the door and came back saying: "The zaunkönig is here, with Leah and Frau Valentin. They only wish to hear how you are, and have no desire to intrude upon you. But I thought if you had no objections we would admit them."

Edwin nodded and rose. When the little artist entered and cast a glance at the simple catafalque, tears gushed from his eyes. He blindly grasped Edwin's hand and held it firmly, trying to conceal his emotion behind his hat. Frau Valentin's pleasant face also disappeared in her handkerchief. Leah, without looking at Edwin, approached the bier and seemed utterly petrified with surprise at the incomprehensible mystery of death. Her face was as still and white as that of the departed. Only her eyes, which without the quiver of a lash, rested intently on the noble countenance of the dead, glowed with the intense fire of life.

For a time no words were uttered; at length Frau Valentin, wiping her eyes, approached Edwin. "Forgive me for coming," said she. "My heart brought me here. You needn't fear that I shall obtrude words of consolation that would be meaningless to you. But to me, to us, you will not grudge the comfort of believing that the Father has recalled his child, and that we other children of God shall meet him again in the eternal home; and meet you too, dear friend, who until then must feel his loss so terribly."

"Thank you," replied Edwin. "I know your meaning is the kindest. You wish to give me of your abundance in what you think is my poverty. To be sure, I've lost much; for what can replace the joy of daily and hourly drinking in every look, every thought that proceeds from such a soul! I'll say nothing about him; he would never let me praise him to his face, and I'm foolish enough to fear that yonder poor husk would begin to blush. To speak of him later--behind his back--will be the best consolation. As for the rest--do you really believe, that I shall not see him again daily and hourly, even without waiting for a heavenly meeting? If I were forced to await that, I should hardly linger long behind. But I have him, he can never be torn from me; the happiness of having known and loved such a creature in the flesh and blood, can never pass when the flesh moulders away. This spiritual intercourse is the only really living thing, the only eternity, and it continues to exist amid a thousand changes, an inextinguishable flame, even when the individual brain and heart which for a time have fed the flame, cease to feed it longer. They may well crumble to ashes, when their short blaze has kindled a fire in other souls." He paused. She had listened with deep emotion and a scarcely perceptible shake of the head; but repressed any desire she might have had to contradict him. Edwin now approached Leah.

"I thank you for coming," said he as he pressed her hand. Large tears welled to her eyes, but she did not utter a word. "See how beautiful he is!" Edwin gently continued. "I know you will never forget these features, and therefore I'm glad you can see him. True, his rare smile will never come again, and his eyes--but dear Fräulein, this is exhausting you too much. Let them take you home--I'll come in a few days--you ought to spare yourself."

A look from him summoned her father, who gently took the hand of the deeply agitated girl and led her out of the room. Frau Valentin embraced Edwin like a mother, and then followed the others. The room was again perfectly still, and they sat together in silence for several hours, until Marquard came and insisted that Edwin must spend the night with him. "To-morrow!" replied the latter. "Let me have my own way to-day. Go all of you, and leave me. Rest assured this course is best for me; I'll go to sleep, and my quiet companion will not disturb me."

At first Marquard would not listen to such a proposal, but Edwin was firm in his resolution, and they at last left him alone with the dead. It was ten o'clock on a cold, dark winter's night; the wind drove snow flakes into the open windows, and ever and anon the candles flickered as if they would be extinguished. Edwin, wrapped in Balder's cloak, had thrown himself on his bed without undressing, and now lay listening to the wind, the spluttering of the candles, and the distant rolling of the carriages in the crowded city. No restful sleep visited his excited senses, only a hasty changeful dream, in which scenes from his earliest childhood passed before his mind, and amid them Toinette seated in a light carriage beside a stranger, gazing coldly and sadly at him, followed by a vision of Leah's thoughtful face which appeared beside her mother's bust. When he opened his eyes to drive away these confused images, he looked straight into the round yellow eyes of the cat that would not leave the bier. This at last made him uncomfortable. He rose, took the animal in his arms and carried it to the door, to drive it down stairs. But when he turned the handle, he saw crouching on the threshold the figure of some one who seemed to have been peeping through the key hole.

"You here, Reginchen?" he exclaimed in astonishment.

The young girl had started up, and was standing before him trembling from head to foot like some detected criminal.

"Ah! Herr Doctor," she faltered at last, "don't be angry with me. I couldn't sleep, I tossed about continually, and let me close my eyes as resolutely as I would, I constantly saw him before me, and then--then something fairly drew me here--I thought when I'd once seen him I should feel better, that I could rest, and so I crept up stairs. I could, just see his face through the keyhole, but it wouldn't let me go away again. If you hadn't come, I believe I should have knelt here all night and been forced to look at him till I died."

"Won't you come in, child?" he said, taking her by the hand. "Don't be frightened. I'll cut off a lock of his hair for you. Do you want it?"

"No, no!" she exclaimed vehemently. "Not in there, not a step nearer! I'm so afraid of him, I'm afraid he will open his eyes, and ask--oh! Herr Edwin, you don't know--let me go--if I should touch a lock of his hair, I should never be able to leave his side again and I can't help being a poor stupid thing, who didn't understand him! Oh, God! my heart is breaking!"

Passionate sobs checked her utterance. But when Edwin put his arm around her and kindly tried to soothe her, she broke from him and darted down the stairs like an arrow, while he stood a long time in the darkness, musing over this strange enigma, ere he again threw himself on his cold bed.

CHAPTER IV.

On the morning of the third day the funeral took place. Franzelius, who had undertaken to attend to all the sorrowful details, insisted that this last duty should be performed at six o'clock. "Perhaps then the preacher will oversleep himself," said he. Edwin had assented. The clergyman belonging to their ward, who as professor of theology had met Edwin at college, came the day after the event to condole with him and ask for some notes for the funeral address. "You would do me a favor," Edwin replied, "if you would merely say what is absolutely necessary, what your formula prescribes. Eulogies from a person who knew nothing of the dead, have always been repulsive to me; and besides, as my brother shared my opinions, many a word would be uttered over his open grave, against which he would protest if he could hear it." The clergyman probably thought that the softened soul of a mourner would be good soil in which to sow the seed of religion, but Edwin cut short all farther conversation, and his colleague, in by no means the best of humors, left him.

Franzelius had still another reason for choosing the dark morning hour. A society of workmen, of which he was a member, wished to sing a hymn in the churchyard and could not assemble later. But he did not tell his friend a word of this.

He had kept his promise, no stranger's hand had been allowed to touch the dead body. Even the most painful task, he performed himself, screwing down with his own hands the coffin lid. Then, as the bearers wound slowly down the crooked stairs with their burden, he took Edwin's arm and supported him on the last sorrowful pilgrimage.

The street was only lighted by a faint reflection from the snow, and few persons were standing around the door. Edwin bowed sorrowfully to his acquaintances and then entered the first of the four mourning coaches, which instantly moved forward. He was accompanied by Mohr, Marquard, and Franzelius. The second carriage was occupied by Herr Feyertag and the old gentleman on the second floor, who despite the wintry cold, would not be dissuaded from showing his fellow-lodger this token of sympathy. The third carriage belonged to the little artist. He had come by himself and intended to follow the coffin alone, when he perceived the head journeyman, who with a large weed on his hat and a band of crape on his left arm, was preparing to accompany the procession on foot. Herr König instantly ordered his driver to stop, opened the door, and compelled the worthy man to take the seat beside him, which the modest fellow after long hesitation, at last consented to do.

The fourth and last carriage contained a young Pole and the president of a society, which numbered among its members many foreigners and formed the largest portion of the audience to Edwin's lectures. They followed the body solely from regard for their teacher, as they had never known Balder, and instantly drew down the curtains in order to beguile the long ride by discussing theatrical matters, the latest news, and smoking paper cigarettes.

From an upper window, a weeping girl wrapped in a thick shawl, gazed after the slowly moving carriages. It was Reginchen, who for two days had not made her appearance and steadily refused even to see her lover.

The procession moved through the Oranienburg Gate and traversed the suburbs for some distance, ere it reached the cemetery. The air was mild, as if a thaw were about to set in, and the snow over which they walked to the grave, yielded noiselessly under their feet. Beside the fresh mound of earth stood the clergyman, and behind him a throng of dark figures, the workmen to whom the printer had said that he had lost his dearest friend. The clergyman, whom Edwin only greeted with a formal wave of the hand, now read aloud the prayer for the burial of the dead and then approached the edge of the grave, into which the coffin was already lowered.

He began: "'In the midst of life we are in death.' But they who turn from the light of eternal truth, bear the gloom of death within their souls. They live as if they thought never to die, and die as though they were never to live again. What grief and terror will overwhelm them on the day when the graves open and the dead come forth to receive the crown of glory or the sentence of eternal condemnation. How the words of the Judge will thunder in their ears: 'I offered you salvation and ye rejected it with scorn and turned a deaf ear unto my message.' In your vain self-righteousness you chose to be your own deliverers, and have pronounced your own doom. Then will your pride bow before the throne of the Highest, and defiance be crushed before the majesty of the Son of Man. Then lips will sue for mercy, which on earth overflowed with blasphemy, denying with Peter and saying: 'I know not this man.' But we, who stand around this sad grave, will unite in silent prayer to God, and implore him not to enter into judgment with this our brother, to suffer a ray of his eternal mercy to transfigure and cleanse from sin the frail erring life, which too early reached its end!"

An unbroken silence followed these words. The clergyman had folded his hands over his book and closed his eyes in prayer. Suddenly Franzelius' suppressed voice was heard amid the group of friends who were standing at the foot of the grave:

"Let me speak, for I cannot be silent, I should despise myself, I should be a miserable coward, if I could hear such words spoken over his grave, without uttering a protest in the name of those who have known and loved him. What is that I hear? 'let there be no scandal?' Say that to those, who have not hesitated to carry the strife of opinions into the stillness of the churchyard, where even the bitterest enemies lie in death quietly side by side. No, my friends," he continued in a loud voice, springing upon one of the snow covered mounds, "we at least have not assembled around this grave, to stammer an abject petition for a poor sinner who, unless justice be tempered by mercy, is forever lost. This dead man will never be lost to us, and as by the might of his love and intellect, he has indeed redeemed himself from the curse of frail mortality, the terrors of blind delusion and the bonds of selfishness, his memory will help us to free ourselves also and to become more worthy of the joy of having been loved by him. For yes, he has loved you too, my friends who never saw his face or heard his voice. His great heart beat for all his brothers, for all who were poor and miserable, for all the children of this world, who come they know not whence and go they know not whither, and yet are too honest to console themselves with fantastic tales and be lulled to rest by idle dreams. What can be called sacred, if his grave is not? For do you know *whom* we are burying here? A laborer, my friends, who was ever sharing his last shilling with some poor man; a poet who never desecrated his genius for fame or gold; a hero, whose last act was a deed of sacrifice for those he loved. And is this life to be swallowed up in gloom? Should this grave be called a 'sad' one over which penitent sighs and pharasaical petitions for mercy must resound? Oh! my Balder, I know you would submit to even this error of a gloomy, intolerant formalist, with the quiet smile which was your only weapon against all assaults. But we, your friends, are not yet at peace, but in the midst of warfare. We must struggle for the weak who allow themselves to be intimidated by formulas preferring to leave their free souls in imprisonment than to shake themselves free from the hands of their tyrants, to learn to know and love this earth instead of despising its beauty in view of an imaginary world to come. Despise an earth, which has contained you, my Balder, a sky to which your noble eyes have been raised? no, a thousand times no! such a world is no vale of tears, and even in the bitterest woe beside your grave, we still have a feeling of triumph--we have possessed you, and all the calamities of life are richly compensated for, by the certainty that your great heart lives on in ours--Balder--my friend--my brother--"

His voice suddenly failed, he pressed his clenched hand to his eyes and turned away, but the next instant regained his composure and motioned to the singers, who stood in a dense mass behind him. Instantly a quartette choir, whose voices at first low and unsteady from agitation, became gradually clearer and more powerful, began a song, which Mohr had composed to the air of *Integer vitae*:

Brother, ere in the dust thy form we lay,
We'll to thy worth a loving tribute pay;
Thy virtues rare, and kindly heart, which were
A comfort on life's way.

Fearless thy earnest, noble soul did stand,
Not mid the lofty masters of the land,
But with thy brothers, 'mong their lowly huts,

A member of their band.

O! chosen one, for whom we proudly weep.
Of whom thy friends a loved remembrance keep,
How patiently thy weary lot was borne
Till peaceful thou did'st sleep!

Rejoice we at thy absence; gone before
Thy pleasures and thy pains on earth are o'er;
Rest thou, while on through strife and woe
We heavenward soar.

The last solemn notes died away, but there was still no movement among the group who stood with bowed heads beside the open grave. When after a pause they raised their eyes they perceived that the clergyman had disappeared. The old sexton, unable to understand the strange scene, had also retired leaving his spade behind him. While Edwin, standing between Mohr and Marquard, gazed into the grave as tearlessly as a departed spirit, it was rapidly filled, each person stepping forward in turn to cast in a spadeful of earth.

Franzelius approached Edwin, and they clasped each other's hands in silence. The mourner's soul was still benumbed with grief, and the same dull stupor rested upon him as the party returned home. He took leave of his friends at the door of the house and went up to his desolate cell alone.

He found everything in the neatest order, nothing was left to recall the sorrowful events which, during the last few days, had occurred in the quiet room. A bright fire was burning in the stove, the breakfast stood on the table as usual, and the turning lathe was once more in its place beside the window, with the tools arranged upon it as before.

But on Balder's chair lay the little chisel with which Franzelius had screwed down the coffin lid. At this sight, the spell which had bound Edwin was suddenly broken; he threw himself into the chair and gave free course to the bitterest tears.

CHAPTER V.

When Marquard visited Edwin the following morning, he found him at his desk, holding his pen in his right hand and resting his head on the left. A sheet of paper lay before him.

"Good morning, Fritz," said he. "You've come just at the right time. I must make a decision, and everything within me seems walled up. I need some one to unlock me. Perhaps you have the key." He looked at him with a weary, restless glance, and tried to smile. It was pitiful to see the effort he made to adopt a careless tone. His friend shook his head, "A decision?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed, and no less important one than to dip this pen into yonder inkstand and write: 'Honored Sir!' Will you believe that I've been working at this herculean task for two hours and have not yet stirred a finger?"

"You can do something more sensible."

"Gladly. If it doesn't require too much intelligence."

"Only as much as is needed to pack a trunk and go with it to the railway station. My fur boots are at your service, and also money to pay the traveling expenses. If you will only for once take the medicine, without reflecting upon the prescription, and pack up this very day."

"This very day?"

"What's the use of writing that you will come? You're going, and that's enough. I know all you want to say: that you don't feel like it, that you fear you'll not make a favorable impression just now. That's all nonsense. If you don't make haste at once, it's very doubtful whether you can ever present yourself in any place; you're far more likely to absent yourself--retire where we yesterday accompanied our own Balder. You've been moping about here for months. It's a bit too much, quite enough to break down a stronger man. Come now, make a dash, put on your dress-coat, visit your superiors and colleagues, set the cog-wheel of your career in motion, and let the grey substance in your brain rest, that it may make good its deficiencies. If this prescription is not carefully followed, I'll answer for nothing, or rather I will answer for the nothing into which your

insignificant self will soon be resolved. Have you had any sleep?"

"I believe so," replied Edwin, with an absent nod. "I slept night before last from two to three."

"I thought so!" exclaimed his friend, dashing his hat violently upon the table. "And no one made his appearance yesterday, to perform a work of charity and bore you till you fell asleep. What's the use of friends who are poets in private and lecturers in public? Where was Mohr, with his famous comedy? And our dear Franzel? Holy--"

"Philosophy showed poetry the door in the afternoon," said Mohr, who had just entered and overheard Marquard's words, "but don't be disturbed. Doctor, I'm not at all offended. It's long been known that you materialists have not classical culture enough to distinguish between Orpheus and Morpheus. Good morning, Edwin. I'm only here to tell you that I'm not yet fit for anything. The salt in my nature has lost its savor, or else grown bitter. As Bitter-salt^[6] it may perhaps be of some assistance as a purgative; (pardon the wretched pun, the times are too hard for good ones.) And then I wanted to tell you why the tribune of the people cannot appear to-day any more than yesterday. He's been imprisoned."

"Franzel?"

"Arrested and imprisoned. The police officers have extended their motherly arm toward him and taken the erring child. We needn't pity him. He's very well satisfied. My phenological science told me long ago that he has *la bosse du martyr*."

"But the occasion, the pretext?"

"The disturbance of a public act of worship. Your reverend colleague, Edwin, drove straight from the churchyard to the police headquarters, to complain of the atheistical opposition he had encountered. Franzel was doubtless already prominent in their books among the powers hostile to repose and order, so they took advantage of the opportunity to keep him quiet for a time. They can't do much to him, and a few weeks imprisonment is a more merciful punishment for godless heretics, than the wood piles of former days. I'm only afraid it will make him still more obstinate."

"And he's right!" cried Edwin, as he started up and began to pace up and down the room in feverish haste. "They want an open battle, they challenge it themselves, and there will be no peace until it has been fairly fought. How often, in this very spot, I've agreed with Franzel that we ought not to discuss anything, except with those who hold similar views, for certainly the truth will not be spread by arousing superstition and folly against it. But we ought at least to retain our right to go our own way, and much as people prattle about liberty of conscience, when the matter becomes serious, the liberty is only for those who think they have rented the public conscience; and we, in the belief that the more sensible people have already yielded, are constantly stopping half way. We submit ourselves to listen to unmeaning formulas repeated at the most important epochs of our lives; when a child is given to us, a tie formed for life, a loved one restored to earth, a stranger whose every word we would fain oppose, utters that which wearies if it does not anger us. I've endured it like a thousand others, and said to myself: it's no worse than to sign yourself at the close of a letter 'with respect and esteem,' when you feel neither; it is a mere form which can only bind those who find in it a substance. But I now see whither this carelessness leads. Instead of declining all priestly gabble, I paid no more attention while this warder of Zion was slandering Balder's dust, than if the wind had been blowing through the leafless branches, and was only roused from my reverie by our faithful friend's eloquent defense. If he had remained silent, I verily believe I should have been stupid enough to let the zealot talk on, just as once, when I undertook to be godfather, I weakly said 'yes,' when asked if I would strengthen the child in the faith that Jesus Christ descended into hell and rose from the dead on the third day. And now our poor champion must atone for the cowardice and false shame we have all shown in not honestly and thoroughly renouncing ancient abuses. No, I'll go and tell these gentlemen--"

"You'll be kind enough not to attempt to escape from my care," said Marquard quietly, as he seized the agitated man by the arm. "As for our scapegoat, I hope to set him free immediately. I am blessed with various connections, and fondly as conservative circles cherish the deceptions of a high church patterned after the English, they can't wholly shake off a secret fear of the free-thinkers, and are the first to counsel half way measures and compromises as long as possible. But you, my son, will now take an hour's walk, accompanied by Mohr, in the course of which you'll converse on the most shallow and insignificant subjects--"

He was interrupted by the old maid-servant, who came in to deliver a letter. A deep flush crimsoned Edwin's pale face as he recognized the handwriting, "Excuse me," said he, "if I glance it over."

He went to the window, and they soon heard him laugh aloud. "Good news?" asked Mohr, who was absently playing with the leaves of the palms.

"Excellent! And it comes just at the right time. I'll set out on my journey this very day, for you're right, Fritz, the air of this city doesn't agree with me. I must beg you Heinrich, to take my farewell messages to the little house on the lagune and to Frau Valentin. I--whether I ever set foot in the tun again, or trouble one of you to send my movables after me--at any rate, I'll write as

soon as I know how matters stand where I am going, and whether I shall remain. And now--perhaps you'll excuse me--the train leaves in two hours, and I still have all my arrangements to make."

"We yield to force," said Marquard dryly, "and I dispense with all the formalities of leave taking the more willingly, as I'm sure all this is mere bustle, and we shall not get rid of you so quickly."

He was not mistaken. Two hours after, Edwin still sat as unprepared for traveling as before, gazing at the letter which lay open before him, as if he expected to discover some other meaning in the lines, than that which the words conveyed. They ran as follows:

"My Dear Friend!

"The time has expired, the three days have passed without my seeing you again, I had scarcely hoped that the disclosure I made to you through your brother--give my kindest regards to him; I envy you the happiness of possessing such a relative--that any word from me could produce any impression upon you since I can retract nothing, cannot deceive you and myself.

"I have ceased to desire to exist and have exhausted my means to do so. You know that with me both amount to very much the same thing. I cannot understand how people can remain attached to a life, whose conditions are limited to simple existence. And yet--I must suffer more than I yet suffer, physical and spiritual hunger must gnaw still more sharply, ere I can bring myself to try the last resource. Meantime the pain is dull, and sometimes blended with the hope that it may not last forever. So I wish to try whether I shall be better amid entirely new surroundings. The old countess has invited me to spend some time at her castle; she came for me in person, and little as I like her, I have still less reason to be over fastidious. When you read these lines I shall be on the way.

"I can scarcely ask you to write to me. But if you do not prefer to utterly forget me, pity me more than you condemn. I shall never cease to remember you.

"TOINETTE."

At noon, when kind Madame Feyertag went to the tun to interrupt his solitude, and ask if he wanted anything, he seemed perfectly calm, spoke of his speedy departure, thanked her for the love she had shown Balder, and made all sorts of arrangements, in case he should enter upon his duties as professor at once. He even ate a portion of the food brought up to him, but could not make up his mind to go, and the trunk he had brought down from the attic remained unpacked. Old Lore saw him wandering about his room late at night; his lamp was not extinguished until after midnight.

When Marquard called the following morning, he was not at all surprised to hear that the Herr Doctor had not yet gone. "He has a disease of the nerves called absence of will," he said to the shoe maker, "it's hard to reach, but I think if we can once get him on the way--"

At the door of the room he started violently. He heard Edwin's voice talking in a very strange tone on all sorts of matters. When he entered, he found his friend sitting on the bed with dilated eyes, holding the little bottle of violet perfume and Leah's plate, and striking them together like a tambourine and a drum stick. He did not recognize the new comer, and continued his discordant music, which he accompanied with confused, delirious words, and verses of Italian poetry--apparently from Dante. On the little table beside him lay a small copy of the Divina Comedia, and beside it Toinette's letter. The back of this was covered with writing in Edwin's small hand, which had probably been done just before the fever set in, and his friend in amazement read a singular improvisation in the style of the Inferno, whose echo must have excited the sick man. Although Balder had said that his brother was a poet, he had not been caught in such sins for years, and in his days of health, certainly would not have fallen into this fever for versifying. But as it sometimes happens in dreams or a state of somnambulism, that we suddenly practise with wonderful skill an art whose rudiments we have scarcely mastered, these lines had been written without an erasure, as if dictated by some other, and as even the worst verses were far superior to what Edwin usually acknowledged, and the cynical, over-excited tone of the whole was utterly foreign to his nature, Marquard looked upon them as a record of words uttered by a man possessed with a devil, and forced to repeat what the demon suggests. The verses ran as follows:

Methought that all my tasks were duly learned,
And I prepared to turn my back on school.
Must I examined be, to show what rank I've earned?

Then pray begin to ask your questions o'er,
For I am almost tempted to display
Before you all my wisdom's scanty store.

Our life--whence comes it?--That we do not know.
And whither does it tend?--From dusk to night.
Its purpose?--Earth to teach us to forego.

Say, 'What is God?--That, God alone doth know.
And what is pleasure?--To be free from pain.
And pain?--To lack all pleasure here below.

Not always must we joy in self-denial.
We are too far removed from actual life,
And to the ground 'twixt two beliefs will fall.

Well, in the first class I have learned this truth,
Which in the sixth I dimly did suspect,
Hollow's the nut we have to crack, forsooth.

When scarcely from the nurse's arms escaped,
We gnaw, till on it we have cracked our teeth.
By earnest zeal reward from toil is reaped.

To feel the pangs of hunger never stilled,
Mocking us alway as dry husks we gnaw,
In the delusion we are being filled.

Then, though of course the palate, without question,
Is thereby fooled, the stomach's soothed, and we
Our nap can take fearing no indigestion.

Naught save the carelessness that questions never,
Goes satisfied away. It took the shells
For kernels, and thought ignorance clever.

It hopes, when shrinking from the pangs of death,
That life's just opening, the best to come!
When its last sun doth fade, and fails its breath.

A brighter heavenly light will swiftly shine.
Good dreamers! After school there is no doubt
That a pleasant vacation will be thine.

Next to the university, the student,
When once the school examinations o'er,
Will go, and with the change be well content.

From obscure toil and hours of study free
Into this world we go; only again
Quiet and insignificant to be.

No difference exists 'twixt old and young; nor
Any trace of cheerful intercourse,
No longer rings the cry "Excelsior!"

And say, are all these changing forms in quest
Of this? This lavish outlay too! Oh fools!
Who in this world think "all is for the best."

To me, from whom its joys have passed away,
It seemeth like a dream of the great Pan,
Sprung from his burning brain on some dog day.

Dixi! Although thy brains thou'st often racked.
The matter is not yet so plain and smooth.
The aid of ripe experience thou hast lacked.

Not yet? A little longer turn the pages dreary,
Conning the self same lesson? Said I not
Of sitting on the school bench I was weary?

Loathsome the animal, whose monstrous jaws
The food long since digested idly grinds,
And grinds again, nor ever makes a pause.

No matter, still thou must remain to aid
Thy weaker schoolmates on the lower forms,
Till themes are all prepared and lessons said.

Why sullen looks and frowning brow display?
The hours of leisure may be occupied

In scribbling rhymes, while schoolboy pranks you play
And on the school room bench your name enscribe.

CHAPTER VI.

Sensitive minds are in the habit of terming the union between body and spirit an unequal marriage, a *mèsalliance*. And yet good and evil days might teach them a better term, show them that whatever may be thought in regard to the difference of origin, in the conscientious fulfillment of every duty the dust born portion certainly does not fall below the other, which is said to be its master. How could the soul enjoy the sensation of pleasure, if its faithful companion did not lend to it the aid of the senses, to say nothing of the joys which, even to the most transcendental, arise from the senses alone. And if, in the pure ether of spiritual enjoyment, we tremble at the thought of our resemblance to God, what tortures we should suffer in the knowledge of our likeness to the worms, if the body did not again befriend us, and as distress reached its climax, transfer the conflict to the domain of the senses, thus, as it were, retrieving the vantage point it has lost, until it has gained new strength and new armor to end the struggle in its own territory.

Thus the severe illness which attacked Edwin was a boon to his sorely wounded spirit. For weeks he lay senseless, a prey to a violent nervous fever. He recognized none of his nurses, neither Franzelius, who after having been released from his imprisonment with an impressive warning, spent his nights regularly in the tun, sleeping perhaps a short time on Balder's bed, when toward midnight the patient grew a little calmer, nor the faithful Mohr, who acted as sick nurse during the day, and who in the intervals when his constant attendance was not required, found his sole recreation in sitting at Balder's turning lathe and playing countless games of chess. At the commencement of the illness, Marquard had been inclined to send Edwin to the hospital, where he could have taken charge of him more easily. But the other two friends and Madame Feyertag would not listen to the proposal, and although the illness lasted for weeks and months, the kindhearted woman never for a moment regretted that she had kept the sick man under her roof. Her heart and her linen chest, her hands and those of her old maid-servant were always open and ready, whenever they were needed. "My worthy friend," said the zaunkönig to her husband--he came every day to inquire how the sick man had passed the night--"your explosive theory is brilliantly refuted, and the wisdom of Solomon proven:--'the price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies.'"

A calm smile rested on his lips and he looked at the crape on his white hat. The shoe-maker shrugged his shoulders. "The intention is good," said he, "but the idea is usually weak. For instance, there's my daughter Reginchen!--Well, I won't praise her, but Schopenhauer is right again in regard to her explosive effect. The Lord knows what ails her; her mother didn't make half so much fuss when she was young. But her imaginative power Herr König, is beyond any man's comprehension. You know she's betrothed to Herr Franzelius. Didn't she act at first as if she would die if she couldn't have him? Besides, he's a very respectable man and if he only gets rid of his radical nonsense, can make a good living; for it can't be denied that he has education and what's called character, and with the few groschen she'll bring him, he can settle in life and even start a printing office. Well, as I have only this one daughter--we're weak, Herr König, we men when we are fathers. But now, just think of this: ever since the young gentleman upstairs died, the silly thing has worn black as if he had been her brother, and all the betrothal gayety is over. When Herr Franzelius comes in the evening, they clasp each other's hands for ten minutes and hang their heads like a couple of weeping willows, and all the rest of the day she sits still and reads Schiller's poems, and if I ask how much of her wedding outfit is completed, she says: 'There's no hurry about that, father.' Yes, yes, Herr König, it's just as I say: the will is good, for she still means to marry him; but what notion she's taken into her head, to be suddenly absorbed in Schiller when she ought to be thinking of making up underclothes and bed-linen--if I've got the least idea, I'll never attempt to tell the difference between neat's leather and calf skin again. By the way, where's your daughter? It's an age since I've had the honor--"

The little artist, who had listened with evident sympathy, was so much disturbed by this question that his only answer was a heavy sigh. At last he said: "The dear God some times tries us very severely, Herr Feyertag. He has long showered blessings upon me, I was happy in my home and in my art, and really always strove hard to keep my mind humble that I might not be rendered arrogant by so many mercies. Since I've become a court-artist, especially, I've examined my heart and uprooted every fibre of pride, for after all there are many far more deserving and talented than I, who yet accomplish nothing, while my modest speciality--but now I've been chastised in what was dearest to me. My Leah's health is failing, no one knows what to do for her,

even Dr. Marquard can say nothing except that it may improve when the weather is more favorable, when we can travel. But its now February, who knows how matters will be in April or May. Oh! my dear friend, all my life I've clung to the consolation that our heavenly father chastises us because he loves us, but if I should be compelled to endure--"

He paused suddenly and without, as usual, leaving his regards for Madame Feyertag, hastily quitted the shop.

At this time, Edwin had been out of danger for several weeks and even a relapse was no longer to be feared. His physical health was visibly improving; but his intellect seemed inexpressibly slow in regaining its clearness and strength. He could sit at the window for hours with a very cheerful face, without seeking any amusement or occupation. Not until the first days of early spring came and he could drive out in the noonday sun, did the mist which had settled on his mind gradually dissolve. His memory regained its power slowest of all. When the events which had occurred during the last few months before Balder's death were mentioned, it was with the greatest difficulty that he could re-unite the sundered threads.

Even after nursing was no longer necessary, Franzelius still continued to sleep in the tun. Edwin had begged him to do so, because he felt how much pleasure it afforded the faithful friend to thus fulfil what he had promised Balder. Moreover, after being alone all day--Mohr having sought solitude for some time, it was pleasant when evening came to see the honest face and to be lulled to sleep by quick conversation. True, there was no lack of other visitors. The little artist came and Frau Valentin, who again as far as Madame Feyertag's jealousy permitted, hastened convalescence by preserves, strengthening broths, and various delicate birds. But the more his strength returned, the more indifferent and content with his position the invalid seemed.

The news that another had obtained the professorship offered to him had come long before. Edwin had seen it in a newspaper and submitted to the disappointment with great indifference. What was his career to him now? He was happy in once more feeling strength to think of new books, and eagerly read the important works that had appeared during his sickness. Toinette's name never crossed his lips. He once asked whether Marquard had seen a letter which he had received just before his illness and which he was unable to find. "The maid-servant probably lighted the fire with it long ago," Marquard answered dryly; "was it anything of importance?" He did not want to return the fatal sheet which he had carefully laid aside, until there was no possible danger of a re-opening of the old wound.

But this danger seemed at last to have disappeared. One day, when Marquard was making a short call, Edwin with a perfectly calm face showed him a note he had received an hour before at the sight of which his friend could scarcely conceal his alarm.

"It has come true," said Edwin smiling, but with a slight flush. "I thought the lime twig would not release the bird again. Well, I hope her gilded cage will be large enough for her to fancy herself at liberty."

"May I read it?" asked Marquard.

"Certainly. Unfortunately I've never had any secrets in common with her, and you have long thought her what she seems here."

The note ran as follows:

"You discarded me so suddenly, dear friend, that if I were sensitive I should now keep silence in my turn. But as, from the beginning of our acquaintance, I was as sincere in my friendship as you in your unfortunate love, my feeling is more lasting, as well as more compassionate and considerate than yours, I should not like to have you learn through the newspapers, that your poor duchess has resolved to make a mésalliance and in a few days will be called countess. Why have I made this resolution? If your philosophy can find no answer to the question, will you expect a hopeless simpleton to furnish one? Why are we in the world at all? Perhaps a curiosity to learn whether any reason for existence would declare itself was the sole motive that induced me to take this step, at which you will doubtless feel some degree of indignation. Believe me, it is only a preparation for the last extreme measure, the step into nothingness. Besides, I have not been untrue to myself, I told him all, even that I do not love him. But as he is more easily satisfied than certain people, and asks nothing I cannot give, I think we shall get along with each other very well, as we generally end best with those with whom, we have never begun. With you--I feel it by this letter, which can find no close--I should never have been happy. But it is the same now. There are some absurd destinies, is it not so, dear friend?"

"In spite of everything ever your own

"TOINETTE,

"P. S.--Little Jean sends his compliments to you. It was on his account that I decided to marry the count. He would have been miserable for life, if he had not been permitted to wear the count's livery, which is green embroidered with silver, and makes him look like a green-finch in a gala dress.

"Despite all this I still wish I were--"

The last line was erased, but the words were yet legible. Marquard silently laid the letter on the table.

"What do you say to it?" asked Edwin, as he slowly replaced the sheet in the envelope.

"Nothing. I've long since given up saying anything about the countless varieties of the great species, 'woman.' I hate unscientific talk and therefore only try to look at each individual case from the practical side. At present I should like to hear what you say to it. You've taken more than a theoretical interest in the case from the very beginning."

"I'll tell you, as soon as I have found the formula. Hitherto, it has only been boundless surprise."

"At her decision? Why, I should think--"

"No, at its effect on myself. Will you believe that I read this letter without any quicker pulsation of the heart than if it had contained the news that the Sistine Madonna had been removed from Dresden to Munich. It seems as if the enchantment had vanished with the old blood the fever consumed. Countess Toinette--I can say it as calmly as Reginchen Franzelius."

Marquard, with immovable composure, looked him steadily in the face. "Bravo!" said he. "You ought to have a red ticket: 'dismissed cured.' To-day you must take a little walk, then for dinner--but I'll consult with Madame Feyertag about that."

He pressed his hand, whose temperature did not seem to exactly please him, and left the room. On the stairs he met Mohr. "Be kind enough to watch Edwin to-day as closely as possible and not leave him alone long," he whispered hastily. "His old love has accepted her count. He says he's perfectly indifferent to it, but this idealist is not to be trusted. Tell Franzel to keep watch to-night. I'll look in again to-morrow."

But this time the clever physician was mistaken. When he returned the next morning, he found his patient looking much fresher and brighter and his pulse in a perfectly normal condition. He listened to the account of the expedition made the day before, which, favored by the brightest March sunlight, had for the first time restored Edwin's confidence in his strength. "To-day, with your permission, I propose to make a visit," said he. "I want to look in upon my little friend and patron in the Venetian palace. He's not made his appearance in the tun for a week. Did the child of God only have intercourse with the child of the world as a good samaritan!"

"You're very much mistaken," replied Marquard looking unusually grave. "Our zaunkönig is watching his nest, because his brood is looking very miserable."

"Leah? Sick? And how long has she been ill? Why do I first hear of it to-day?"

"Why should I gossip about one sick room in another! I only wish I were as successful there as here. But there are cases which remind us rather roughly of the limits of our powers."

"Can't you understand her sickness?"

"Her case requires a wiser man than I. I know that the seat of the difficulty is in the mind, and I would even venture to touch the sore spot with the point of a needle. But what will that avail, if the remedy, which I also know, is not to be bought at any apothecary's?"

"A disease of the mind?"

"No: a simple consuming fever with a perfectly clear intellect. In short:

"By angels 'tis called a heavenly bliss,
By devils a woe of th' deepest abyss,
While mortals exclaim 'it is love.'"

"Love? Is the poor girl--"

"In love, and so deeply that her life is imperiled. Oh! my dear fellow, these still waters!"

"And who in the world--But to be sure, from what I know of her, she'd not confess it to you, or any other human being."

"A good family doctor needs no verbal confession in such cases. We've other means of examining a feverish little heart--quiet noiseless means. At first, its true, I was on the wrong track. I imagined--mind, this is entirely between ourselves--that I myself was the fortunate object and cause of this mysterious suffering. After all, it would not have shown any want of taste in her, and with the romantic occasion of our introduction--the night when we rescued Fräulein Christiane from drowning--who would have wondered if she had at first revered me as the saving angel, then admired, and at last learned to love. And I confess the bare thought cost me several sleepless nights--until about midnight. You know what I think of love and matrimony, but my most sacred prejudices were in danger of being vanquished, when I fancied that a girl like this

zaunkönig's daughter could really want me for her lawful husband. There's something about her which must make it difficult, nay impossible for an honest man ever to be faithless to her. I'm as good a conductor of heat as an iron stove, and opportunity added fuel to the flames. Under the pretext of being obliged to watch her, I daily spent an hour in her society, almost always alone; and besides, just at that time, I'd had a quarrel with my little nightingale. Adeline had been a little too enthusiastic about a handsome Hungarian. So I took advantage of the holiday thus given my heart, to make studies beside the lagune, to ascertain whether I could change my sentiments and transform myself from an admirer of ladies in general, to the adorer of one."

"And in what did these studies consist?" asked Edwin forcing a smile.

"That's *my* secret," replied Marquard pathetically. "Enough I gave up the game as I saw it was lost to me; but with the zeal of jealousy searched for the man who stood in the way. My old sympathetic method didn't leave me in the lurch this time."

"May one know--?"

"It's not my own invention. One of my colleagues in the dim past made use of the stratagem. You know the story of the sick prince, who was in love with his step-mother, and whose secret the physician discovered by feeling his pulse just as the queen was entering the room. Well, I couldn't introduce the man whom I suspected into Leah's sick chamber. There was an obstacle in the way. But his name, which I uttered apparently without design, while clasping the delicate round wrist of the little Jewish-Christian, produced precisely the same effect. A sudden quickening of the pulse to forty more throbs a minute.

"Of course the case is not particularly interesting to you," he continued, as Edwin made no reply but with averted face gazed steadily out of the window. "You've never had any different feeling for this pupil, than for any other student. At that time you'd been bitten by the serpent, and even if you had been offered the three graces attired in their authentic Olympic costume, you would have blindly pursued the ducal banner. Whether under these circumstances, however, it would be well for you to pay your visit to the Venetian palace today, you must decide yourself. True, we usually recommend rubbing chilblains with snow, but unfortunately a woman's heart is somewhat more delicately organized than the sturdy extremities. I thought it my duty to make this acknowledgement. Adieu!"

He patted his silent friend on the shoulder and left him alone.

It would be impossible to describe Edwin's state of mind in a few words; we can scarcely venture to say whether joy or perplexity predominated in his strange bewilderment. The first overwhelming surprise was succeeded by the sense of secret shame that this could have so amazed him, the burden of a fault, which pardonable on account of its total unconsciousness, was yet unable to wholly absolve itself from the charge of ingratitude. How selfishly unfeeling it now seemed, that he had not even repaid with friendly recognition her many unobtrusive tokens of the most humble affection! Even today, when he had determined to see her again, it was principally the father, toward whom he thought he had a duty to fulfil. And now he learned that the happiness and misery of this young girl's life depended upon his presence or absence.

He closed his eyes and recalled all the scenes in which she had played a part, from the first interview in the little house to the evening when she had stood beside Balder's catafalque and gazed at the still face with an expression of the deepest woe. He saw her so distinctly that he could have sketched her features line for line, the beautiful lines of the eye-lids, which had attracted his attention at their first meeting, because they moved very little, as if the eyes had more strength than those of others to bear the light without the quiver of an eyelash. Then the delicate, strongly marked brows, which contracted when she was in thought--her father often teased her about it; her forehead was like a white page containing some secret inscription, and the eyebrows arched beneath it like two large interrogation points--all these things appeared before him, and the quiet droop of the head when it was difficult for her to understand something he was explaining, and the sudden movement with which, when she had grasped the idea, she raised it as if exulting in her victory and demanding new and more difficult tasks.

This girl loved him, and for months he had not had the slightest suspicion of it!

He took the plate she had painted for him from his desk, where he kept all sorts of writing materials lying on it, and looked at it as if for the first time. Without thinking what he was doing, he breathed on the surface and polished it with his handkerchief. It seemed as if he thought some secret cipher was concealed among the flowers and ears of corn, which must now stand out and reveal what thoughts had passed through her mind while she painted.

Suddenly it occurred to him that he possessed something better than this. The volume written by her own hand, in which as her father said, she had copied his lessons--a deep flush crimsoned his face as he remembered that it still lay unopened in his desk. True, how could it have interested him to see whether his pupil had correctly understood all his words, since the instruction was to cease. But suddenly this pledge entrusted to his care became of the greatest value, as a fresh means--since she would disclose her feelings in it without reserve--of obtaining a thorough knowledge of her, and then: did he know what confessions she might have made between the lines, confessions which had so long remained mute and unanswered?

As if to repair the omission by the utmost haste, he now drew out the package and tore off the enclosure. A plain thick volume, like a diary, appeared, on whose blue cover was written the word "journal." A flourish had been drawn beneath with the pen, and as he turned the leaves he found many traces on the margins of the pages that the writer had dreamily drawn, intricately interwoven flowers and figures, before summoning up courage to commit her thoughts to paper.

It was anything but a simple exercise book. The records dated much farther back, to a period three or four years before her acquaintance with Edwin, and contained all the secrets of her young life, everything which since her girlish heart had awakened, had aroused grave doubts and questions.

There was scarcely a trace of external events; only from the reaction on her mind could it be inferred that even this most quiet, uniform life had experienced its trials and storms. But instead of merely describing the tone and contents of these pages, let us at this point, while Edwin for hours absorbs himself in reading, insert a short extract from oft-interrupted soliloquies of this earnest young soul, which will at least afford an idea of its principle characteristics.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM LEAH'S DIARY.

"Since I burned the old volumes in which I so conscientiously gave an account of all my secret struggles before and after confirmation, I have had a horror of all writing. But is not this feeling similar to that experienced by a person just recovering from small-pox who sees himself in the glass for the first time, and desires to break the innocent mirror that shows him his real face. I wish I had not burned those diaries. True, they told a tale of sickness; but have we any reason to be ashamed, if we are attacked by fever and rave in delirious fancies?"

"As to what befell me at that time--either I am greatly mistaken, or we are developed by sickness; few escape this development by pain, I think, and those few only because their natures are too weak and their blood too stagnant.

"But when I reflect upon it, it was not shame because I must endure these childish tortures before reaching clear views of life, which made me destroy the old journals; it was a gnawing remorse that I could see so plainly and yet lack the courage to openly assert my convictions. I could not even plead the excuse that my unbelieving mind was not wholly clear, and when my lips repeated the confession of faith, I only made a vague protest. I knew perfectly well that I was uttering a monstrous falsehood, my own quiet creed in black and white gave the lie to the public confession in church, and in addition to the first act of cowardice, I committed the second one of destroying these mute witnesses, as if thereby I could stifle my own consciousness.

"I can still remember how, in those days, a shudder like the chill of death ran through my frame, as, one after another, I heard all the main points of the creed which my benumbed brain had for months vainly striven to comprehend, echo loudly through the church, and at each one a voice within me shrieked 'no! no!' and yet the 'yes' fell from my lips, and I suddenly felt as though I were dead, since I had so publicly and solemnly belied my own nature. It seemed as if I had forsworn my existence, renounced what was nearest for something alien, and taken what must ever be foreign to my character as my dearest possession. Oh! the shame, the confusion, in which I returned and was forced to allow myself to be congratulated on my disgrace and degradation. For months I have been unable to regain my courage, or enter into cordial relations with myself, so utterly was I crushed.

"In those days, no palliating circumstances occurred to me, neither the timidity natural to my sixteen years, nor the horror that would have filled the solemn space if I had told the truth, nay I did not even think of the true motive of my decision, the grief I should have caused my dear father by a step so unprecedented. I heard only my own voice professing a religion of which my heart knew nothing, nay which to myself I had even clearly refuted, openly refused, and yet now acknowledged as the substance of my deepest thoughts and feelings. It weighed upon my conscience like a perjury; then I burned the books.

"Why have I now commenced a new one? What have I to discuss with myself? Ah! the silence which I have become accustomed to keep, because I fear the sound of my own thoughts, has at last reached such a point that nature and the world and my own heart are also dumb to me. There is no one to whom I could utter my secret feelings. My father would be frightened if he should see such deep gulfs and lonely heights in my soul. Aunt Valentin speaks a different language, and others who come to the house take me for a strange and not very lovable girl, who has few attractions.

"It's all the same. On the whole, silence makes us far happier; but we ought not to forget to talk to ourselves. I will practice the art again. Hitherto I have always lived at peace with myself, except for that one great discord.

"And that--I have now clearly perceived it--is the fault of the bad habit of expecting young people, just as they are beginning to suspect the value of words, the difficulty of the enigma of the world, the depths of the abysses of life, to be contented with a few answers learned by rote to the most mysterious questions! It is cruel, to compel them either to carelessly cast aside every doubt, in obedience to the exhortations of a good man, who by virtue of his office is not permitted to doubt, or the tremendous courage to step forward before a whole congregation and reveal the inmost depths of their souls!

"The objections I ventured to make during the time of instruction were all so easily refuted--with the theological self-sufficiency and supreme wisdom against which there can be no debate, since it refers every spiritual doubt to the poor hypercritic's conscience, and instead of any real arguments has only the inscrutable retort: 'we must pray to God for faith, and he will bestow it.' Is not that like saying that when I am hungry and ask for bread, I can have an opiate, that I may forget my wants and dream of full dishes? Thoughts disturb me, and to escape from their conflict, I must pray for thoughtlessness?

"But they are happy and wish others to have the same joy. If only the same food satisfied and nourished all!--

"*May 10th.*--I have been driving about the city with Aunt Valentin, buying all sorts of things. While we were so engaged she took advantage of the opportunity to labor again at my poor soul, which I thought she had given up as hopeless. But she really loves me, and therefore does not weary in constantly directing my attention to what renders her happy. I said very little in reply. There was so much noise and bustle in the streets, I had not felt cheerful and gay for so long a time, why should I spoil my enjoyment of the beautiful sunlight with arguments and self-defense? But at last, when we were again approaching our little house, in order not to delude her with false hopes, I remarked that I certainly greatly needed redemption and often longed for it with bitter pain. Yet how was I to feel love for a Saviour who did not answer my questions, did not know my sad thoughts, and stood before me as a sinless, perfect god-man. The mystical act of dying to rescue erring humanity has always been incomprehensible to me. Single beautiful rays of his nature shining through his doctrine might have warmed me; but I needed not only to be warmed but enlightened, and besides the wants of the heart, about which I am never uncertain, I have other needs, which the catechism does not still, and which--even if they are unnecessary or wrong--no dogmatic words can soothe.

"My dear father who was just going out, met us and interrupted Aunt Valentin's reply. No theological subjects are ever discussed before him, he has positively forbidden it. His relations toward God and all 'that is not of this world,' fill his whole nature so completely, that he himself says it is like a second health. If we speak of it, we must already be half sick, as we usually do not feel it at all. I envy him the happy certainty of constant intercourse with his God, who is as living a presence to him, as if he could see him with his eyes and touch him with his hands. I, on the contrary, always feel alone with myself, my human heart, my human thoughts; Aunt Valentin calls it godless, I call it god-forsaken. But is it my fault, that it is so? Have I not honestly sought him in tears and despair, the nearer the time came when I was to confess him in public? And he has not suffered me to find him!

"*Evening.*--I have been obliged to finish a piece of work, a vase designed for a wedding gift, roses and sprays of myrtle with the interlaced initials of both names in the centre. I can understand how my father is so 'satisfied in his God.' He has a much less exacting heart, and is also content with his art, while my half-way talent shames me. This too is a matter of temperament. It is an impossible thought that we must wish (that is pray) to close our eyes to our own deficiencies, to be satisfied with trivial things. It is well not to murmur, to submit to what cannot be altered, but to falsify our own judgment for the sake of so-called contentment--I shrink from it as from a heinous sin.

"Perhaps if I had great talent, or any high, difficult life-work taxing my energies, I might sooner cease to brood over inscrutable things. He who creates something in which he can himself believe, will perhaps in time lose his curiosity or the anxious desire to understand what has been created around him. He knows or imagines he knows why he lives. Each day seems to show him. I, on the contrary--if I were not necessary to my father--

"*Two days later.*--I stopped writing day before yesterday, because some impulse suddenly urged me to read the New Testament again. I had not opened it since so many incomprehensible, threatening and condemnatory sentences perplexed my heart and then threw it back upon itself. Now, since I have lost the childish awe of hearing in it the voice of an infallible spirit, an Omniscient God, since I have read the story of one of the noblest and most wonderful of men, I have found much that greatly refreshed me. But the subdued tone of the whole at last oppressed me again. What do we mortals possess that is more elevating, pure, and consoling than joy; joy in beauty, in goodness, in the brightness of this world! And while we read this book, we are constantly wandering in the dusk of expectation and hope, the promise of eternal life is never fulfilled, but just dawning when we have struggled through time, uncheered by a bright ray of joy, a jest, a laugh--the pleasure of this world is vanity--we are referred to a future which makes

the present worthless, and the brightest earthly bliss, that of becoming absorbed in a pure, deep, loving thought, must also be suspected by us, since only the poor in spirit inherit the kingdom of heaven--

"I am poor in spirit, but it makes me unhappy that I feel it, and at the same time feel that if I could break through these restrictions, I should no longer be what I am, not yet become sure of my redemption and happiness. For what transcends me is no more mine.

"And then the thought that this gentle man, in order to belong to all humanity, should turn away from his relatives with such strange harshness, have no family ties--I suppose it was necessary but it always chills the ardor of my feelings. All the other great souls I have loved, have been glad and bright, and amid their majesty were allied to my nature by the chords of human needs. When I read Goethe's letters, of Schiller's narrow circumstances, Luther and his family, or of the people of still more ancient times, up to Socrates and his scolding wife, I always feel a breeze from the native soil out of which the plant of their spirits has sprung, and which also bears and supports my insignificant one. But the absence of everything akin to humanity alarms and estranges me, and to make amends I have not even the faith to believe that all, as with God, is perfectly right.

"I have often wished I were a genius, for I thought geniuses must be very happy people, since with a sudden bound of fancy they leap over all the abysses of doubt at which quiet thinkers, to whom no brilliant idea suddenly lends wings, stand gazing helplessly. But on the other hand no applause from others or myself--though I greatly value genius--would induce me to relinquish honest labor, even if it advances slowly or does not reach the goal at all. This is my piety since I lack any other. Genius and devotion are probably incongruous, but without the consciousness of being absorbed in quiet honest devotion, in studying the mystery of life, not even our brief existence would not be worth the trouble of living.

"*End of July.*--I have worked hard at my studies from nature. I think these industrious months which have filled my portfolio, must have done me good; for I now believe I am on the track of my own views and opinions, and have freed myself as much as possible from what I learned, which never satisfied me.

"True, while I was doing so my journal has been neglected. I have painted until not only sight and hearing, but thought failed. If absorption in nature and art could content me, I should have experienced a few months of perfect happiness.

"Aunt Valentin has brought to the house a young man whom she holds in the highest esteem, an artist who belongs to the Nazarene school, not without talent and not unattractive, but in spite of his St John's head, as Aunt calls it, he will never be dangerous to me.

"*August 2d.*--When I think I must some day belong to a husband, I am always filled with fear, so greatly do I feel the need of loving, yielding up my heart, in whose depths many things are unchained which will some day burst forth like hot springs. But I know that I can only deliver up my life to a man, when he is what I have so often sought in books--a very Saviour; when he is so far above me in strength, goodness, and intellect, that I can always receive from him, no matter how often I ask. It is said to be more blessed to give than to receive. But in marriage, it seems to me, since a woman gives her all, she ought to receive more than her all. It may be that these are dreams woven in a girl's idle brain, and that in reality such a union of two in one is impossible. At least my own parents, exemplary as they were, my good aunt and all the other happy married people I have seen, do not correspond with this ideal. However, there will be plenty of time to lower my standard when it is necessary.

"*3rd.*--Aunt Valentin has just been talking about N--r. She said he esteemed me very highly, loved me warmly, and should consider himself happy if he could win my affection and make me his wife. I have seen it coming, and my answer was the more free from embarrassment, the less I reciprocated the feeling.

"*He* my saviour? He, who has not the most distant idea of my nature, and who would not have the least comprehension of my needs, if I told him all?

"'We are too unlike,' I answered. 'He is mistaken if he thinks one like me could make him happy.'--Aunt Valentin eagerly protested against this. He knew my religious opinions, and that was precisely what had turned the scale. He now felt how much he had to give, otherwise his modesty would have discouraged him. We discussed the matter a long time, debating whether with the possibility of conversion and future understanding, two persons so widely different in belief might venture to join hands. Dear me, she believes it because she desires it. This reason for faith does not exist for me, since I do not even wish to attract him.

"A nature like his, which is alarmed by everything vague and seeks repose at any cost, even that of truth--I mean truth to itself--such a peace-loving soul would be chilled to death in the storms of thought which are my element. It requires courage to stand as sentinel on such a lonely post, and not even know when one will be relieved--if at all.

"*Wednesday, 6, A. M.*--I awoke last night and could not fall asleep again on account of the heat, so I rose and sat down at the open window, where the night heaven looked down upon me

with its countless stars. Then suddenly, when all around was so calm and silent, and yet so grand and wonderful, a feeling stole over me as if I distinctly heard my soul say: 'No, this boundless expanse contains no heart whose pulses throb in harmony with yours. But do not fear. We breathe and move and will and think according to eternal necessity, and are not solitary, even amid the desolation of midnight.' And as I said this to myself, I heard my dear father's quiet breathing and stole softly into his room. There he lay smiling so lovingly in his sleep, that I involuntarily knelt beside him and gently kissed his hand; then I returned to my bed and slept more sweetly than I had ever done before.

"Long ago, when it occurred to me, that what people call God was a vision created after their own image, a thrill of superstitious awe stole over me, as if I must be punished in some way for my audacity. But it is childish to suppose that if a conscious, omniscient, omnipresent being really holds the world in his hand, our doubts or misapprehensions would offend him, as an earthly monarch would be angered if a sentinel did not pay him due honor. But the childish tricks and farces which we daily see performed with the utmost seriousness, and even take part in ourselves, have gradually made us in earnest. People in Catholic countries believe that they offend this God,—whom they call all-good and all-wise—if they pass a church without removing their hats or making the sign of the cross, and in many Protestant houses they do not appease their hunger without asking the Saviour to share the meal. This is child's play, and very harmless and even pleasing, if in these little pious, symbolical exercises, men did not lose the capacity to realize the vast heights and depths of the idea of God, that would be worthy of this vast universe. But you make him out what you are yourselves, a being irritable, capricious, and so susceptible to flattery that he cannot bear to have a man, at a rare piece of good fortune, cry out: 'Well done;' but at once spoils the poor mortal's mirth. If forsooth nothing can be gained by a formal suit, he must try again to appease him, a being, that with all his majestic designs, does not suffer a sparrow to fall from the roof without serving his purpose, let alone a poor slater, who leaves a wife and children penniless.

"Very well; let them model their household God as they choose and can. But why do they rage with fire and sword or angry denunciations against all who cannot make the magnificent creation harmonize with such a creator, who to atone for the contradictions and mysteries, hardships and delusions of life, seek something besides the rewards and compensations to be received: in another world? Why should one who troubles nobody with his wanderings and searchings, not be permitted to fight his way through at his own risk, but always be forced to walk on the great high road, where by the rays of the privileged lights so much is done and approved that is utterly repulsive to him.

"*Later.*--My father too--in his tender affectionate way--has also asked what I think of N--r. I made no concealment of my utter indifference, and begged him to inform the worthy man that he might cherish no delusions. 'You know,' said I, 'I have always been a terribly obstinate child, and only one person has had with me the patience I need--yourself. I should be a simpleton if I left you to quarrel with somebody else who will not even listen to what I say, but already believes me a stray sheep.' He laughed and said he did not wish to give me up, I should have to run away from him till he could become reconciled, and besides he only wanted to know my opinion; the affair had seemed to him very improbable.

"I clearly perceived that Aunt Valentin, to whom he can never refuse anything, was at the bottom of the matter. But with all his mildness and gentleness, there is one point where he becomes firm as a rock, and we perfectly understand each other: a person who lacks real nobility and greatness of soul can not influence him, spite of the best qualities. And therefore--"

"What I wrote yesterday afternoon has been strangely verified.

"Aunt Valentin interrupted me and induced father also to leave his work and enjoy the fine weather in the Thiergarten. A concert was to be given for some benevolent object. When we reached the place, we found, as I suspected, N--r already there. As it was very crowded, he had secured places for us, so we sat very comfortably looking at the gaily dressed ladies and children, who moved up and down near us, and listening to all sorts of overtures and dances, which failed in producing a pleasant impression, on my ears at least. But the air was like balsam, the recent rain had made it soft and free from dust, and in the midst of the music a calm, cheerful feeling took possession of me, and I was very grateful to aunt for having afforded me this pleasure. She looked very bright; I often think she does not grow old, but in spite of her hard, dogmatic ideas, retains some of the innocence of childhood in her features; my father was very gay, his new coat fitted him perfectly, and we joked about it; even N--r seemed more agreeable than usual. Among all the *blasé* vacant, or frivolous faces, his grave modest countenance looked like a human face amid mere masks. Suddenly, in a pause between two pieces of music, we heard from an adjoining table, where several officers were sitting, loud words about us, or rather me. A very saucy looking young lieutenant was beginning to tell his companions why he thought me pretty. I will not repeat his language here, but though not intended to be insulting, it was an offence against all good breeding, especially as various jests, stories, and satirical remarks, such as are common among gay young men, were added. Father turned pale and looked at Frau Valentin. 'We ought to go away,' said Aunt, 'this is intolerable.' 'We ought to request them to stop,' replied father, glancing at N--r. 'It would be better to avoid a quarrel and any scandal,' replied the latter without daring to look up. 'Why can't we remain quietly here, and let these children of the world continue their talk, which doesn't concern us.' 'Us?' said my good father rising. 'I should think, as we're

sitting at the same table, it concerned us all if any person behaved rudely to one. I'll see whether this babbling mouth can't be stopped.' 'Would you--?' exclaimed N--r in astonishment, but father did not hear him. He had approached the table, courteously raised his hat, and said a few words in a tone so low, that I did not understand them; there was a strange roaring noise in my ears. I only saw his dear, gentle, honest eyes flash with an unusual light, a flush mount to his cheeks, and an expression of such firm resolution rest upon his features, that even the blustering young officer remained perfectly quiet, and no one interrupted him. When he had finished, he paused a moment to ascertain whether they had anything to say, then as all were silent and only the principal hero faltered a few incoherent words, father smiled very pleasantly, raised his hat again, and bowed to the whole table. Meantime the orchestra began, and when the piece was over, our neighbors departed, courteously raising their caps to my dear, knightly father, in doing which the ex-orator did not even venture to look at me.

"N--r was overwhelmed with shame, but father behaved as if nothing had happened. Afterwards when we were driving home with Aunt (my peaceful suitor had found some pretext to bid us farewell,) he took occasion to tell her that in the future she need not encourage this singular person to visit our house. 'I know,' said he, 'that we're told to turn the right cheek when smitten on the left. But although I greatly desire always to be disposed to forgive insults to myself, as soon as they are addressed to another, especially a lady, you must allow me to defend myself and hold the man who either has not the heart or spirit to do so, a weakling, with whom I prefer to have no intercourse.'

"When we were at home and alone, I threw my arms around my dear, noble papa's neck and kissed him till he was fairly out of breath and began to scold, though there were tears of joy in his eyes.

"N--r was not mentioned by either of us. I think I shall not see him again--

"How little the days bring, that really touches the heart! Oftentimes this void is not at all oppressive. A mist seems to enfold me, which is already beginning to grow less dense and be gilded by the first rays of the sun, which I cannot yet see. A soft, delightful expectation pervades my soul, like the anticipation of very pleasant events, experiences, and enlightenments, which will undoubtedly soon take place. But when another day has passed in monotonous waiting, I lie down on my bed with a very heavy heart, and think: suppose nothing should happen? Suppose all your hoping and waiting should only befool you? For I have long understood that our wishes can give no claim to their gratification, our longings no right to their fulfillment. We all strive toward perfection, and remain in our incompleteness.

"But there is so much beauty, depth, and joy accessible to me, even in my limited sphere--and yet I am unable to attain it--am still far from it--the greatest happiness is beyond my reach.

"To-day I stood a long time before a shop where medical and philosophical works were displayed in the window. If I only had money enough, I would buy all whose titles please me and read them hap-hazard, as the man in the fairy tale ate through a mountain of pan cakes and found priceless treasures. But the little I earn by painting--

"I have again looked over the contents of our book shelves which I already know by heart. Even in our great authors, I do not find what I seek and need. Then I mechanically took down a volume of Becker's History of the World and read a portion of it. If I only had some connection with those long past wars, political revolutions, and historical events! But the happy betrothal of our pretty little neighbor, our landlord's daughter, is really more important to me at this moment, than that Ninus married Semiramis, and Cleopatra had several husbands. Does not very much the same farce go on under different names, in other lands and costumes, a farce whose origin and purport we understand no better when we have read all these fourteen volumes?--

"And yet, if we did understand, could we endure life? Is not the fancy that we have something very important and necessary to do, is not this delusion perhaps the best in existence? At the theatre we ought to forget, as much as possible, that the actors behind the footlights are rouged and obey the prompter's voice instead of the dictates of their own hearts.

"I can still remember how I felt, when in my childhood I sat toward evening on the flight of steps leading down to the canal, gazing at the tiny spot gilded by the slender ray of sunlight that made its way between the high roofs. I always grasped at it and thought I could take the golden water in my hand. Then it was once more as dull and dirty as everywhere else in our lagune. But I had fancied or read somewhere, that if one knew a certain spell it would not turn back to common water, but remain liquid gold. Yes, if one knew the spell!--

"My good, kind, ever loving, ever thoughtful father! He has given me to-day a joy never experienced before. He has found me a teacher and brought him home at once. The very first words exchanged with the Herr Doctor have convinced me that he is wholly unlike all the others, that he knows what I need, what I have not found in books and hitherto have not asked from men.

"If I should describe the wonderful impression this man and our first conversation--"

Here the writing suddenly stopped at the bottom of a page. The following sheets seemed to have been cut out with a small pair of scissors--how many could not be discovered. Then began in a clear, regular hand--all the previous writing had shown traces of agitation--an elaborate account of all Edwin had said during his lessons. He was astonished, since in his presence she had scarcely written a name or a date, to see how clearly the essential portion of his statements was given without the slightest misunderstanding, and yet in her own words, so that her memory was the least merit. No description of personal moods and experiences interrupted the quiet flow of these thoughts, but oftentimes there was a dash or interrogation point on the margin, a sentence thrown in which showed that here and there the writer's mind had not yet penetrated the lowest depths, and was obstinately seeking to fathom them. "This might be printed just as it stands, as a history of philosophy for women!" exclaimed Edwin, when he had read the last line. "What a head! And I, when she was gazing so dreamily into vacancy with her great eyes, thought 'where is she wandering'--when she perhaps understood better than her teacher.

"It's a pity that it closes so soon! I should like to see what she would have made of later events. But there's something more."

He had turned the page and now read as follows:

"The most difficult thing in life has always seemed to me to clearly perceive, in a conflict of duties, which is the higher, and those are the happiest and most ingenious who can do so. If goodness were a perfectly simple matter, what would be more delightful than always to be good? But that reason must put in its word where affairs of the heart are concerned, that we must think of what is customary, and often come to no positive decision, is sad, because it makes us doubt that on which we should most rely, our own consciences, and---whichever path we may choose--leaves in the soul a sting, a something to regret.

"We are firmly convinced that it is our duty to offend no one. It is the law of the gospel, as well as of our deepest feelings, which deals with all the sorrows of the world, and therefore makes every individual, out of compassion for the others, labor to alleviate the misery of the world. And now each individual again strives toward perfection, to the full extent of his powers, and yet can rarely carry his point without injuring others, as a tree in the midst of a forest has only just as much light and air as the neighboring trees admit. And therefore many a one withers and pines away, knowing it, foreseeing the end, and obliged to be silent--

"Yes, obliged to be silent even if speech would injure no one, when a mere prejudice decides it to be unseemly to grow beyond a certain height and breadth, and that those who are exceptions, would be struck by lightning; Oh! why must----"

Here several lines were erased. Then on a fresh page was a letter:

"I never dreamed that I should ever give this volume to any one, least of all that it would come to your notice, my honored teacher. But father wishes that the instruction for which I owe such inexpressible gratitude, should cease, that for some time I should turn my thoughts from all that was the subject of your lessons. He begged me to destroy these pages too. But I cannot yet resolve to do so, and requested him to allow me to place the volume in your care. So what came from, you returns to you again.--I beg you not to laugh at the earlier records, if you happen to cast a glance at them. I must now dispense with that which during the past few weeks has occupied all my thoughts and feelings, and for which I can never thank you enough! How deeply this grieves me I cannot tell you, and yet I feel that it would be the only thanks I could offer, if I could make you fully understand how much I shall now sacrifice. You would then perceive how much you have given me, and that I have received everything, even what was perhaps somewhat above my comprehension, with the most eager and honest purpose. At least I must tell you that presentiment and the incompleteness of my knowledge will never torture me in the future, as they have done in the past, now that I know there are clear judgments, and that even an untutored, simple girl, if she collects her thoughts and has the right guide, can at least advance far enough to comprehend the grandeur of the task, and exercise her powers upon it.

"Farewell, honored Herr Doctor. Be kind enough to accept the little memento I venture to send, and hold an indulgent memory of your sincerely grateful pupil,

"L. K."

CHAPTER VIII.

It was high noon when Edwin turned the last page of this confession, and meantime the maid-

servant had brought his dinner, which stood untouched on the little table. Even now he sat motionless at the window for a long time, with the book on his knees and his hands crossed on it, as we place them on a chafing dish by whose feeble glow we try to warm ourselves.

When he rose, his eyes sparkled with a light as strong and brilliant as if the slow work of his convalescence had suddenly been completed. He extended his arms toward the blue March sky, and drew a long breath, like a person who feels strong enough to cope with anything that may come. "If I could only speak of it to Balder!" he said to himself; then he carefully locked the book up in his desk and went out into the street.

Once more life seemed dear and pleasant, the motley throng of people as delightful as the swarming of bees in midsummer, the faces he met kind and dignified. He paused before the shop windows, entered a confectioner's more to look at the dainties and the human beings who were eating them, than to enjoy them himself, and visited several of his intimate acquaintances, whose thresholds he had not crossed since the autumn. All congratulated him on his recovery, and said the sickness had rejuvenated him. At last, when he had walked till he was tired and remembered Marquard's threats if he attempted too much at first, he went to Mohr's rooms and would not be deterred from entering when told he was not at home. A strange, joyous restlessness urged him to see all sorts of strange people and things, and remain with them for a time, in order to have the secret pleasure of thinking of the treasure he concealed in his bosom; as in times of special happiness, when the lofty joys we experience render our sleep full of dreams, we wake, turn from one to another and reflect that the joy we feel on awaking, is the only real and actual experience.

Mohr did not return home. When Edwin had ransacked his room, looked through his books, and softly struck a few chords on Christiane's piano, which Mohr had bought at the sale of her effects, he at last resolved to go home. He was delighted to see Franzelius, but did not tell him one word of the subject that was occupying his thoughts. But as he fancied he read in his friend's honest countenance something like a reproach that Edwin could be so cheerful, almost wantonly gay, when Balder had scarcely been dead five months, he took his hand, and said gravely: "Franzel, I know of what you're thinking. But have patience with me a little while. Signs and wonders happen, and a dry stick which seemed fit for nothing except to be hacked to pieces and cast into the fire, suddenly puts forth green branches. If *he* had lived to see this, I really believe the joy and wonder would have prevented his death, we should have kept him here."

Then the next morning, when he opened his eyes and saw the sunbeams playing among the palms, he could not help thinking of a verse of poetry he had read somewhere, and as Franzelius had long since risen and gone to his printing office, he softly repeated it:

How pleasant to wake in the bright morning's glow
When one has lain down with a soul full of love.
And hear in our wonder the heart laughing low
And know not the music that maketh it move,
Till full soon the radiant light comes, and low
The purple veil is withdrawn from above,
Revealing the vision of love just dawning,
Nodding and murm'ring: "Good morning! Good morning!"

He started up and hurriedly threw on his clothes. All hesitation was over, and he now reproached himself for having waited yesterday to see whether other thoughts would come during the night. If it had been admissible to make a call at nine o'clock in the morning, he would have rushed off without his breakfast. But he allowed another hour to pass, and then in the brightest of spring sunlight, turned his steps toward the Schiffbauerdamm and the lagune.

"Where are you hurrying at such a rate, Herr Doctor?" he suddenly heard some one call behind him. "One must borrow the wings of the morning to overtake you."

It was extremely disagreeable to be compelled to stop and give his pursuer a courteous answer. And yet the speaker was a man whom he was usually by no means unwilling to meet, a Livonian baron, whose great wealth gave him the means to indulge his passion for art and extend and correct his powers of judgment by constant travel. He had a gay, careless disposition, with which a sort of Berserker rage that overwhelmed him whenever the conversation turned upon spurious pictures or undeserved fame, oddly contrasted. One who saw him passing through the streets in his negligent attire, with a broad brimmed black hat crowded down over his bald head, and eyes that from constant searching and gazing, protruded like a snail's, as if eager to touch everything visible, would scarcely have expected to find the artistic judgment and delicate enthusiasm, which had made him dear to Edwin.

But to-day nothing could have been more inopportune to our friend than this meeting. He pleaded a business engagement as the cause of his haste, but could neither decline the troublesome companionship, nor conceal the goal of his walk.

When the baron heard the zaunkönig's name, he paused in astonishment, and with a "*Cospetto di Bacco!*" seized Edwin by the coat.

"Listen to me, my dear fellow," he exclaimed, "this is a dispensation of Providence, or there is

no God. Do you know I was just in the act of taking the same walk, and grumbling because I was obliged to do so, and now I'm heartily glad to be relieved of the necessity."

"Have you an errand to the artist, which I could perform in your place?"

"If you will be so kind, my friend; for that you can do so, and ten times better than I, is just the miracle. But first hear *di che si tratta*. Last autumn, when the exhibition of paintings was held here, I had the honor of escorting Prince Michael Paulovitsch Batàroff, our great Mæcenas, you know, a man who between ourselves has allowed a wretched Byzantine daub to be imposed upon him for a Taddeo Gaddi, and otherwise paid dearly enough for his connoisseurship. But that's of no consequence if he's in the right hands, his money sometimes goes to the right man. Well, I am, so to speak, his oracle. Whenever anything is offered him, especially by a modern artist who is not yet famous, he always wants to ascertain from *me*, how the picture really suits *him*. Of course I'm as rude and inconsiderate toward him, as a good diplomat must be to conceal his subtlety. At that time, when as I've already mentioned, we nosed around the exhibition, in doing which he used me as his truffle-dog,^[7] he had his pathetic days, when he would pour forth the most incomprehensible tirades about the moral influence of art, the priesthood of genius, and the incapacity of the German race to produce any great artists--phrases which always made me think of the famous symphony on the influence of blue on the arts, from the *Scènes de la Vie de Bohême*. Well, one day he was riding his hobby: in art only the highest developments have a right to exist. If he could be a Caligula of æsthetics, he would wish that all mediocre painters had but one neck, that he might sever it from the trunk at a single blow. I, who've grown old enough to make a wry face at the theory of perfection in art, dryly remarked that I knew spheres of life in which bungling did still more harm. Was not a mediocre statesman, doctor, priest, nay even an unskilful cook, far more injurious to the community, than a poor devil of a painter, who quietly daubs his little square of canvass, and meantime thinks himself an artist who understands how to enjoy life and beauty far more than other mortals? Whom does he injure except himself, if he sells nothing, and is compelled to starve with his wife and children? And if he really helps to corrupt the taste of the public, would the crime be any more reprehensible, than that committed by a statesman who incites nations to war against each other, or a cook who destroys our stomachs, let alone miserable doctors who can't heal them again. No, I would not on any account wish the innocent mediocrities away, unless they were blatant fools or scoundrels, and procured large orders by intrigue. A hundred bunglers were necessary, before one genius distinguished himself; but whether this eternal star enjoyed as much happiness amid all its splendor, as the majority of these ephemeral insects derived from their feeble spark, was very questionable, etc., etc. His Highness condescended to laugh and call me a paradoxical sophist. 'Look at this picture, my dear baron,' he exclaimed stepping before a genuine zaunkönig, which really did cut a very poor figure. 'Will you, even in the presence of this sufficiently pitiful production, assert that the kingdom of heaven belongs also to the poor in art, that the worthy painter was satisfied with his work and would not joyfully abandon his trade, if he had learned anything else? I'll wager that most of these gentlemen, who pretend to glow with the sacred fire of genius, would not hesitate a moment, as they've only got into the habit of painting, as old Schadow said, to get out of it again, if they were better paid for their idleness, than for their bungling industry.'

"Well, he's not usually so unjust. You know, my friend, what a part materialism plays at the present day, even in art. But the cold, *blasé* tone thoroughly enraged me, as I know the condition of the so-called sacred fire of art in His Highness' own breast. Just at that moment I saw our zaunkönig, with his good, modest face, standing at some little distance, almost alarmed to see people linger so long before his insignificant picture. 'Suppose you make the trial, your Highness,' I hastily replied. 'The artist who painted this picture is close at hand. My Mantegna against your Luini, that no money in the world will induce this worthy man to sell the pleasure of occasionally sending such a little abomination of art into the world. But we must go to work delicately. An open offer would mortally offend his pride. Propose to give him a yearly salary, on condition that he does not touch a brush except for you, and must wait till you give him orders. I'll declare your Taddeo Gaddi genuine, if the little artist can hold out even a twelvemonth, without scrawling his hedges and foregrounds.'

"What do you say to this malicious wager? Shameful, my dear fellow, wasn't it? But it popped out all at once, and really my Mæcenas was prince and Russian enough to think the trick very clever. I was ashamed of myself, when the zaunkönig was summoned and showed a touching confusion, when he heard that his 'speciality' had at last found the right purchaser. 'How much do you earn by your painting in the most successful years?' asked the prince. 'Three hundred thalers at the most,' was the reply. 'Well, I'll give you a thousand, and from this time you're my court painter. You'll receive your salary from the embassy every six months, and in return bind yourself not to touch a brush except to execute my orders. Adieu!'

"So the good little man stood as if he had suddenly fallen from the clouds, surrounded by several perplexed, envious colleagues, who were paying him sarcastic compliments. But do you know, since that day I've not slept as quietly as usual, for I've also undertaken the pleasant task of watching the new court painter, to see whether he scrupulously keeps his contract. As I should make the mischief still worse by tattling, and moreover at last hope to win the wager and bring off my old friend with all the honors, I must after having said A., go on to B. I was just on my way to him again. He once told me that the spring always arouses in him a desire to paint. The trees themselves are then as dry as hedge poles, and vegetation is scanty; he can at any rate reproduce that. And yesterday the secretary of Legation handed me a letter, in which our artist asks His

Highness whether he may be permitted to paint a very charming picture for him: the last snow on a low heath, with the bright spring sky arching over it, the first tender grass, etc. All letters to the prince, at least from artists, pass through my hands. Well, I shall win my Luini sooner than I expected. But this espionage is very repugnant to my feelings. Dear Doctor, you're an entirely disinterested person, and might do me the favor, especially since, as a psychologist, it must be of interest to you--"

"My dear baron," interrupted Edwin laughing, "I'm very much obliged to you for the part you wish to assign me in this tragi-comedy, but I really don't know whether I can undertake it, whether the visit I'm about to pay may not be the last for a long time, perhaps forever. Yesterday I wrote to L., where a professorship of mathematics is vacant. If it is given me, I've determined to exchange the air of Berlin, which does not agree very well with the constitution of a private tutor, for some more favorable climate. Besides, you take your wager altogether too much to heart. To say nothing of the fact that psychology will be greatly indebted to you, I see no danger whatever to our excellent friend. Like you, I'm convinced that you'll win, and then, as Russian princes always have their whims, it will be easy to find some pretext for breaking the bargain. Your Herr Michael Paulovitsch will have a good lesson, and the zaunkönig his thousand thalers, which in spite of all, he'll have honestly earned. But here we are at his nest. Won't you come in with me? For this time I can place my talents as a police inspector at your disposal."

"*Mille grazie*," replied the other. "I'll take you at your word. Write a line this afternoon, either yes or no, to inform me whether the old sinner is secretly spoiling colors and washing brushes, or conscientiously keeps to his bond. I'll then add a postscript to his letter to the prince. Adieu, my dear fellow, I wish you success!--"

Edwin's heart beat violently as he entered the little house. The door chanced to be open, and he met no one in the entry. His heart told him that he should find Leah in the sitting room on the left. Yet he knocked at the door of the studio, and without waiting for the "come in," crossed the threshold he had so long avoided.

CHAPTER IX.

At his entrance the little artist started from a chair by the window, where he had apparently been seated a long time, absorbed in deep thought.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, and his sad, honest face brightened, as he held out both hands to Edwin--"you again walk among the living. It's pleasant that you instantly remember your old friends--though this is not exactly the right atmosphere for a person just recovering from illness--you come to people who, in the midst of the loveliest air of Spring, sit in affliction and the shadow of death. Well--it's as God wills, I keep calm."

With the tear's streaming down his cheeks, he now told Edwin that Leah had grown so ill that she could scarcely get an hour's sleep, and the food she took was hardly enough to nourish an infant a week old. Yet she bore her fate with a divine patience that often made him wonder whence she derived her strength, since she neither prayed nor accepted everything as the will of an all merciful Father who could make even the most incomprehensible and hardest things result in a blessing. "In that she's like her mother, whose only defense and weapons against all sorrow were silence and meditation. Go to her, dear Doctor, I know she'll be delighted to see you. She always esteemed you so highly, and God is my witness that I've often reproached myself for yielding to Frau Valentin and interrupting your lessons. Doctor Marquard says the sickness is connected with the mind--if she could but divert her thoughts, and not brood perpetually over one idea--Ah! me! If philosophy could give her sleep and appetite, preserve my child to me--" He paused and pressed his handkerchief to his eyes.

"If you'll give me leave, dear Herr König," said Edwin, "I'll try what I can do. Philosophy has already banished many evil spirits and infused new blood into whole races. I'll speak to your dear daughter, and hope it is not yet too late."

He turned away to conceal his emotion, and hastily left the studio. When he entered Leah's room, he found her resting on the sofa with a book in her lap, her beautiful dark eyes fixed upon it, each a burning fire in whose glow a waxen image is slowly consuming. In other respects she was not altered, except that her complexion was more transparent and a sorrowful smile seemed frozen on her lips. But as he approached her and with a few cordial words took her hand, a deep blush suffused the delicate face and gave to it the appearance of blooming freshness and health.

"What sorrow you are causing us, dear Leah!" he said drawing a chair toward her couch. "No,"

he added as she attempted to rise, "you must remain as you are, if you don't want to drive me away. I'm so glad to see you again. Since that terrible day I've only heard of you through others. And yet not entirely through others, through yourself, too. Do you know that I read your journal yesterday for the first time?"

She moved her head as if to beg him not to talk about it, and replied: "You've so many better things to do--if my father had not desired it--"

"No, dear Fräulein," he answered, "I only wished I had not spent my time over things so much more useless, before I took up that volume. And yet, who knows whether I should before have been capable of estimating the full value of the treasure entrusted to me."

She suddenly turned pale. "No," she murmured, "do not talk so, don't treat me like a silly child, to whom you must make pretty speeches, because you perceive my weakness and think you must spare or flatter me; it pains me--I've been used to different things from you."

"I know you're ill and need consideration," he replied in a trembling voice. "And yet, dear Leah, I've come to tell you something which will at any rate excite you, think what you please and answer as you may. Since I've read those pages, it has become evident to me that I've been groping about in the mist like a dreamer and not perceived a real happiness--the happiness of having found a soul, such as is revealed in those pages, never to lose it again!

"They've tried to part us, dear Leah," he continued with increasing agitation, while she lay with closed eyes and hands clasped upon her bosom, without any sign of life. "But it only served to unite our hearts more closely. We've both experienced how necessary we are to each other, how little qualified to cope with life alone. True, you'll doubt whether I've really missed you; nay I did not even realize it myself. I was enchained by a passion which like some diabolical enchantment, made me a stranger even to myself. I know not how much you know or suspect, dear friend. For the first time in my life I learned, a woman's power, and suffered keenly from it. It's over, Leah, the last trace of it has vanished. She's about to become another's wife, and I heard the news without the slightest heart-throb. Oh! Leah, those were terrible days! When I think that the result might have been different, that I might have been forever forced to bow to this power--a power which treated pride and freedom, all that was worthy and precious in life, as a toy, and rendered me almost unfeeling, even in the days of Balder's keenest sufferings--I shudder at myself and the danger I have escaped. But you ought to know, Leah, the weakness of the man who now comes to you and says: 'will you, can you, notwithstanding all that has happened, unite your life to mine? Can you give your soul to one who has already once lost his own, while both he and you, perhaps may never wholly overcome the smart of his servitude?'

"If you were to say no, Leah, I should understand why and be forced to bear the pain. I know that I was dear to you. You would have burned that book rather than have entrusted it to my care, if your heart had not resistlessly drawn you toward me. And yet, Leah, I should not think less of you if after the confession I have just made, your heart should draw back, your pride forbid you to be satisfied with that which I offer with this perfect candor. You've a right to expect and demand that the man to whom you give yourself will repay you for the treasure with such enthusiastic and passionate devotion, that even the thought that any other power could become dangerous to him, would never enter his mind. I, dearest Leah, am, as you see me, a fugitive, whose wounds are scarcely healed after a severe battle. I come to you because I know I can nowhere be safer, nowhere find a more inaccessible refuge than with you. What I feel for you--we've not yet come to Spinoza," he interrupted himself with a quiet smile, "so the phraseology of the schools is not familiar to you. He, the great philosopher, calls the feeling men have for that which he termed God--the absolute something which encompasses, does and wills everything--the exaltation of all emotions which follows when we become absorbed in the nature of this one and all, he calls 'intellectual love.' It's neither a jest nor a blasphemy, but the simple words of truth when I say that with such a love I love you, Leah! That blind, demoniacal passion, which is usually called love, has been washed out of my blood--I trust forever! What now lives in me is the happy consciousness that you're the best, purest, noblest creature that ever appeared on earth, the one being in whom my world is contained, and that the man whom you should love and to whom you consented to belong, would be the happiest of mortals!"

As he faltered the last words he knelt beside her couch, and taking her hands held them clasped in his, fixing his eyes upon her cool, slender fingers, unable to look her in the face. He remained for a long time absorbed in a blissful stupor; it was such a relief to have told her all, that he felt he scarcely feared her answer, although he was far from being sure of a favorable one.

She still remained silent. At last he grew anxious, looked at her, and instantly started up in alarm, for he could not doubt that she had fainted. He hastily seized a little bottle containing some powerful stimulant which he found on her table, and poured some on his handkerchief to rub her temples and restore the color to her pale lips. "Leah!" he exclaimed, "come to yourself again! Oh! do not punish me so fearfully for my thoughtlessness; oh, how could I, when I found you so ill--"

Her lips moved and she slowly opened her eyes. "Forgive me for alarming you, my beloved!" she murmured. "The happiness was too great--too sudden. But--I'm well again--I live--aye, I will live, now that I know, through you and for you--Edwin, is it possible!"

She raised her arm and timidly put it around his neck. He bent toward her face, now again glowing with blushes. "My wife!" he whispered. "You are mine! mine! mine! And so surely as I hope to be happy through you--" His lips, which met hers, stifled and sealed the vow of eternal love and constancy.

CHAPTER X.

The same day, toward dusk, the little artist was seen hurrying along the street in which Frau Valentin lived. Any one who had seen him in his studio that morning, would scarcely have taken him for the same man. Although the March winds could not seem exactly Springlike to elderly gentlemen, he had stolen lightly out of the house without an overcoat, like a youth whose hot blood keeps him warm. He had paid five groschen for a little bouquet of violets which a poor girl offered him, and fastened it daintily in his button hole; his white hat rested jauntily over his left ear, as always happened during his hours of inspiration, and those, who saw him pass, looking around with a merry joyous face, nodding sometimes to a pretty child or flourishing his cane, might well suppose that wine had played one of characteristic pranks on the little man, and persuaded him that he was once more a youth of twenty, and might yield to the most unbridled gayety as freely as the most hopeful young schoolboy.

But when he saw Frau Valentin's house in the distance, his joyous manner suddenly changed, his step became more moderate, a grave expression shaded his face, and he even paused as if considering whether it would not be better to turn back. Then he seemed to summon up all his manhood, energetically fastened the upper button of his coat, set his hat straight, and with resolute steps walked toward the dwelling of his pious friend.

He found her up stairs in the large room among a party of little girls who came to her twice a week after school, to be taught sewing, and then, strengthened by lessons of wisdom and virtue and a cup of coffee with a huge roll, were dismissed to their homes. The hour had just expired, and the little ones were crowding around their benefactress, who usually had to prevent them from kissing her hand by kindly stroking the round cheeks or giving a friendly pat on the shoulder. In spite of the dim light, she instantly perceived by the voice and expression of her old friend, that some important motive had brought him to her, and hastily led the way into the adjoining room, where her little lamp was already lighted before the picture of the dead professor. Her first question was concerning Leah. "She's very well," replied the artist, as he took the bouquet of violets from his button hole and gallantly offered it to his old love.

"What has happened to you, my dear friend?" asked the lady in surprise. They used the word *ih*^[8] in addressing each other when alone, as they were too intimate for the formal "you" and yet did not venture to adopt the familiar "thou."

"To me," he answered boldly, as if he were really meaning to conceal something from her. "I don't know what you mean, my dear madame. I'm just the same as usual. But it's suffocatingly hot here. Allow me at least to open the windows--"

"Don't talk nonsense, my dear König," she said quietly. "I can read your good old heart as easily as the coarse print of my hymn book. You've come here to tell a piece of news that pleases you, and yet you've not the pluck to speak out. And that's just what surprises me; for whatever pleases you, my old friend, has always been agreeable and welcome to me. So out with it quick. I must go to the meeting of the lying-in society in half an hour. Is Leah improving? Has any quack of a doctor suddenly inspired you with such good courage?"

"You are the very embodiment of wisdom," replied the artist, who had taken the chair at her work-table and was thoughtfully rummaging in her little basket. "It is certainly a doctor, who has inspired me with courage, but he's no quack, and the affair is altogether--"

He hesitated again and stooped to look for a thimble which he had luckily dropped. "Keep your hands away from my things, for heaven's sake," said the good lady sharply. "You know your meddling makes me as nervous as I should make you if I wanted to paint a part of your pictures. And now, once for all, for I hate all mysteries and enigmas, what doctor are you talking about and what hopes has he given to you?"

"You shall hear, my dear friend, but I know you'll not like the mode of cure, and that's why I want to prepare you a little; for you often put on a look that makes even an old friend fear you. But if you want me to speak out: our Leah's engaged!"

"Engaged! That's certainly a piece of news nobody could be prepared for. My dear old friend, I

hope you're not joking with me. You almost look as if you'd come from a drinking bout and had all sorts of fancies and notions in your head."

"Another sign of your sharp-sighted wisdom, dear lady!" laughed the artist, rubbing his hands in delight, for he had already told the most difficult part. "I really have emptied half a bottle or perhaps three quarters, as my son-in-law, he who is to be I mean--these people who are in love don't know how to value good wine--"

"Better and better! Have matters already gone so far? A formal betrothal dinner, and Leah's second mother would have heard nothing about the matter, if the wine had not betrayed it. Well, Herr König, I've had to forgive many things in the course of our long acquaintance; but this--this--"

The artist started up from his chair, as if he had been touched by a spring and approached his offended friend, who had seated herself on a sofa and tried to look resolutely away.

"Dear lady," said he, "first hear how it all happened. It was precisely because we all have so much respect for you, that we wanted to reflect a little and discuss the matter among ourselves, before we asked your consent. It came upon me like a thunder clap. And amid all the happiness--you may believe me--the thought of what you would say to it never left my mind a moment. You best know how I submit to your authority, and how willingly I yield to the gentle yoke, though you often treat me worse than my long years of love and loyalty deserve. But this time--no! I could not ask you first. Tell me yourself: if your child had fallen into the river and a man was ready to pull her out, would you first ask what faith he had? Now you see, although I know you don't like the doctor--"

"Doctor Marquard? That marriage-hater and Don Juan? That child of the world in the worst meaning of the word--and our Leah?--"

"God forbid, my dear friend, this time your prophetic soul leaves you in the lurch. But I scarcely know whether the right man will not seem still more frightful to you. You see, I'm perhaps a weak Christian, at any rate weaker than you, and as for the higher branches of theology, you've more in your little finger than I in my whole artist skull. And yet--I too felt a little alarmed when the children came to me and confessed what had never entered my mind, that dear godless fellow of a philosopher--"

"Edwin? Doctor Edwin? Oh! my presentiments!"

"Yes, indeed," said the little artist, "no other than the dismissed teacher, who now wishes to continue the interrupted lessons all his life. Do you think my poor daughter's rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes consoled me at once for the destruction of my hopes in regard to her religious life? But, as I said before, only a monster of a father would have had the heart to say no, when the life of his only child was at stake. Or if that word is too harsh--it would have inquired a martyr of the dark ages, to prefer to see his child pine away and die, rather than live and be happy with an unbeliever. And that her sickness was only concealed love and that she would have wasted away without Edwin, I saw plainly enough at dinner, when simply because he sat beside her and looked tenderly into her face, she suddenly, in spite of her happiness, felt an appetite she has not had for months, and afterwards when he had gone away, lay on the sofa sleeping more soundly than if she had taken all the opiates in the world. Then I slipped away to come to you, my dearest friend. And now say a kind word to me--or if it can't be kind, an angry one, anything is better than to have you sit on the sofa so still and silent, with your handkerchief pressed to your face, so that I can't even see what sort of expression my best friend wears when she hears of my poor child's happiness."

The widow withdrew her handkerchief and revealed eyes streaming with tears, which looked at him with a singular expression of mingled indignation and kindness. "You're an old hypocrite," she said, drying her lashes. "I'm not what you call me, your best friend, or you would not have misunderstood and slandered me to my face, and to those too lovers, as if I sat here with the air of the judge of a supreme spiritual court, to whom it would be dangerous to bring news of such an engagement. Fie! shame on you for a faint-hearted fellow. You're a weak Christian indeed, if you expect to find in your fellow mortal a heart full of bigotry and intolerance, instead of one submissive to God's decree and accepting with gratitude and hope whatever he sends--If I can't help crying, not only from joy and thankfulness that our Leah is saved, but also with anger toward you, you reprobate, make amends for your sin by taking the godless doctor my congratulations this very day, and inviting him to dine here tomorrow; one of a party of four; do you understand? And moreover give me your word of honor, that I'm better than my reputation, and no ossified theologian. Don't you know my dear friend, that God's ways are wonderful? Suppose he intends to draw to himself these two hearts, that neither know nor desire to know him, by this circuitous way: first leading them to each other, and causing them to experience all the joys and sorrows of married life, in order, hand in hand and heart to heart, to guide them back to their heavenly father? There's no more influential home mission than matrimony, for two honest people, of course, and that the doctor, with all his blindness, has an honest soul, we've never doubted. So yes and amen, dear friend, and because it's such a day of joy, all sins must be forgiven. As a token that I bear no malice--come, dear father of the future bride, and let her mother embrace you."

"You're a blessed angel right out of heaven!" exclaimed the artist, making such an enthusiastic use of the permission, that the blushing lady was at last obliged to defend herself by force. "Yes indeed," he continued, when he recovered his breath, "this marriage has really been made in heaven, all the signs prove it. Think, dear Frau Valentin, how wonderful it is, that this very morning I was sitting thinking whether it would not be better to resign my position and salary as court painter to His Russian Highness, rather than continue to live on the money so indolently and dreamily. For I said: who knows whether the prince has not already forgotten me, and that I may not sit year after year, like a fool, waiting for orders which will never come?' But now I see that the dear God has so arranged this, that I need not portion my Leah quite so shabbily. Dear Frau Valentin, I know what you've always said--that that was your affair. But after all a father would also--"

He was just in the mood to tell everything he had planned for the immediate future, when Frau Valentin's maid-servant entered and announced a visitor. The gentleman only wanted to ask a question, and would not give his name. Before her mistress had time to answer, a hasty step was heard in the ante-room, and to the zaunkönig's no small surprise, the gigantic figure of Heinrich Mohr crossed the threshold.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," he exclaimed in his hoarse voice. "Although I've the reputation of being unceremonious, I'm not usually so bold and uncivil as to enter a lady's room without ceremony. But circumstances which will be explained at some future day--the conviction, that there's danger in delay--perhaps several lives may depend upon whether this lady will grant me five minutes conversation--"

He had poured forth these words with such strange agitation, his whole appearance was so singular, that Frau Valentin really did not know whether she ought to grant his request. But the little artist relieved her of all hesitation.

"My dear friend," he exclaimed, "don't have the slightest scruple. My mission here is fulfilled, and I must hurry home to illuminate the Venetian palace; our lagune must flash and sparkle like the Grand Canal at the weddings of the doges, and you're invited too, my dear Herr Mohr. No refusals. You owe it to your friend."

"To whom?"

"Why our doctor, your friend Edwin, my little Leah's betrothed husband. Haven't you heard of it yet?"

"Not a syllable. So he's engaged! I congratulate him. But don't depend upon me for this evening."

The artist started and looked at him in astonishment. This indifferent manner of receiving such wonderful news surprised and vexed him. But his joy was too great to be long clouded. "As you choose," said he, "we won't quarrel about it. Besides the young couple won't miss you, and to sit with an old fellow like me--you're right, it would not be much pleasure. So another time and farewell!"

He seized his hat in the exuberance of his delight waved an adieu to Frau Valentin. While so doing, the pins which had fastened the somewhat rusty piece of crape came out, and the sign of seven years mourning fell on the floor. He was about to pick it up, but changed his mind. "No," said he, "we'll let it lie. If the mother can look down upon her child, she will think it natural if no crape is worn after this day. Farewell, my best friend! I still insist that you're an angel."

CHAPTER XI.

As soon as the artist had left the room, Mohr, who had remained gloomily standing at the door, approached the astonished Frau Valentin and said in the tone of a foot-pad, who demands the traveler's purse at the pistol's point: "you know a certain Lorinser, Madame. As I have reason to think this man of honor a scoundrel, who with persistent cunning escapes the punishment he deserves, I take the liberty of asking whether you've heard anything of him since he left Berlin."

"Lorinser!" exclaimed the good lady. "Oh! dear Herr Mohr, say nothing about that unhappy man; he has already caused me sorrow enough. No, no, I don't know where he is, nor do I desire to do so, I will never see him again, and I think I'm tolerably sure he will never approach my threshold as he has every reason to remain away from Berlin."

"In so believing, Madame," Mohr replied with a short fierce laugh, "you have probably misjudged this Protestant Jesuit. True, when a few months ago and again very recently I made inquiries about him at his former lodgings and the police headquarters, I learned that he had gone away. But people like him, who live on such intimate terms with angels and archangels, ascertain before death, how one must manage to move about as a glorified body. One saves rent thereby and passes through every key hole. That this mysterious man should have forever abandoned the great city, where people can take advantage of others so much more comfortably and profitably, always seemed to me improbable. And this very morning, just as I was doing him the honor to think of him, he drove past me in a droschky--to be sure I only saw him through the window, and he has let his beard grow; but I hope to be condemned to go to the same heaven into which this fellow hopes to smuggle himself, if I was mistaken. Pardon my somewhat strong expressions. Since scoundrels like this, our beloved in the Lord, adopt a sweet pastoral style, an honest man must wrap himself in his natural bluntness."

"You've seen him? Lorinser? No, no!"

"I'm sure, Madame, that no other man has those mother of pearl, Lucifer-like eyes in his head. And besides, he seemed to recognize me, for he hastily cowered back into the corner of the droschky, but it was too late. Unfortunately I lost sight of him again. Perhaps, I thought, he's gone to his old customers once more; it's a Christian duty to forgive even such an imp of Satan, seventy times seven times. And after all, I said to myself, he's doubtless always behaved properly to the good Frau Valentin and not let the mask fall. I confess I half expected to find him here, when the servant said you had a visitor, that's why I rushed in so hastily."

Frau Valentin had sunk down upon the sofa and was gazing into vacancy with unconcealed horror. "No," said she, "we've done with each other. I'll take care, that even if he should have the effrontery to knock, my door will not be opened to him again. No man has ever more shamefully misused the holiest words and trampled the purest confidence underfoot. I'll not mention the sums of money, amounting to hundreds of thalers, he has talked out of me for charitable and religious objects, in order as I afterwards learned, to use them for himself and his dissolute life. But that he could do me the injury to corrupt an excellent young girl, to whom I gave employment in my own house--let's say no more about it, my dear sir. It always makes me so angry when I think of it, that I forget all the commands of charity and wish this fiend in the lowest depths of hell."

"Hm!" muttered Mohr between his teeth; "money embezzled--an innocent young girl--very valuable material. Pardon me, Madame," he continued aloud, "if I'm not yet inclined to cut short this interesting conversation. Perhaps you would have the kindness to tell me the name and residence of this unfortunate girl?"

"What interest can you have in it?"

"A very Christian, or at least an honest one, honored lady. For when the arch-angel Gabriel--or was it Michael--drove the arch-fiend to the spot where he belonged, the lesson of forgiving seventy times seven times had not yet been invented. Suppose I had a fancy for playing arch-angel? Trust me without fear. I'll wager your poor protégé knows where this wolf in sheep's clothing has his den, and as I've all sorts of things to settle with him--"

"Do what you believe to be your duty. I'll not prevent you; that is, forestall God, who has perhaps chosen you for an instrument to execute his decrees. Here"--and she tore a leaf out of her pocket book--"here's the list of my seamstresses. The name through which a line is drawn is that of the unfortunate girl."

"Like the black tablet in the doge's palace: *Marino Falier, decapitatus pro crimine*. Permit me to write down the number of the house. There--and now forgive this disagreeable visit, Madame. The messengers of the Council of Ten in Venice were notorious for their obligatory intrusiveness."

She took leave of him with a silent bend of the head; but as he was passing through the ante-room, she called him back to entreat him for God's sake to deal considerately with the poor girl, who had deserved a better fate. "Have no fear," he replied. "We children of the world are all sinners ourselves, and know how poor sinners feel."

Half an hour after, he knocked at the door of a garret in one of the most out of the way streets in Friedrichstadt. A man's voice called "come in!" Seated on a table in the deep recess of a window, to catch the last rays of light, was an odd little figure with his legs crossed under him, sewing busily on a woman's dress. At the mention of Fräulein Johanne's name the busy little man let his work fall, shook his head angrily, and exclaimed in his hoarse falsetto tone:

"Can you read, sir, or not? Pray look at the sign on the door, and see if there's not an inscription on it in large letters: 'Wachtel, Ladies' dressmaker.' The person whom you seek did live here, but is now entirely to set up for four flights of stairs. Of course the fall is first down stairs from the garret to the ground floor; after a time they go still farther down: into the cellar, and then five feet under ground. Besides, it isn't my affair; ladies' tailors are not responsible for the first fall of man. Why! Well of course you know that yourself. Ha! ha!" He laughed and took up his needle again.

"Does the young lady live alone?"

"Yes and no, according to the way you understand it. 'I'm lonely but not alone'--as Schiller says. But try yourself, sir; I believe she's no longer as timid about having evening visitors, as she used to be when she worked for me; I work for her now, but I'm better paid at any rate. This sort, you must know--"

"Does a certain Herr Lorinser happen to be with her, a clerical-looking, pale man, with a black beard?"

"Can't say, sir. It's not my business to keep the register. Mam'selle Johanne will be glad to tell you what you want to know--her present admirer is a clerk, in a banking house, and can't get away till the counting house is closed. So if you want a private conversation--ha! ha!"

Mohr silently nodded a farewell and left the grinning little man. A feeling of repugnance overpowered him, which only increased, when on reaching the entry outside of the first floor rooms he heard a girl's voice singing one of Offenbach's favorite airs.

His ring interrupted the song. Directly after, a slender young girl with singularly large sparkling eyes in her pale little face opened the door. "Is it you, Edward?" she exclaimed. Then perceiving her mistake, said without any special sign of embarrassment: "What do you want, sir?"

Mohr looked at her a moment with an expression of sincere sympathy, which however formed so singular a contrast to his stern face, that the beautiful girl was alarmed and began to consider how to get rid of this mysterious man.

"Don't be anxious, Fräulein," said he suspecting her thoughts, "true, I'm not 'Edward,' but I come with the best intentions. If you would give me two minutes--"

"Please, sir, if it can be settled out here--"

"As you choose. Be kind enough to answer but one question, whether you know the present residence of a certain Herr Lorinser--"

A deep flush suddenly crimsoned her face, her eyes which had hitherto flickered with a strange restless light, now glowed with a sullen angry fire, and her hand trembled on the door. She was evidently obliged to reflect before she could reply.

"Why do you ask this question?" she said in a low, hurried tone. "But come in. Here in the public entry--"

He followed her into the ante-room, and she closed the door behind them, but remained on the threshold and did not invite him to sit down.

"Fräulein," he began, "I have a personal matter to settle with this man. He vanished for some months and has now appeared again, and as no one can help me on the track--for I suppose he has not used his real name again in the city--"

"But why do you come to me? Who told you--?"

"Some one who means well toward you and deeply regrets all that has occurred."

"I know whom you mean: Frau Valentin. Ha! ha!" she exclaimed, with a sudden change of tone, "so it is she! And she means well toward me! Why yes, as she understands it, so she does! When I went to her again and wanted to work--for I thought she would surely receive me, though old acquaintances would have nothing more to do with me--I was met with only a shrug of the shoulders and a stern face; she was very sorry, but she couldn't give her other seamstresses such an example--then a few thalers were pressed into my hand and a recommendation to some house of correction. First I wept--then laughed, as I always laugh now when I hear that these religious people mean well toward us. Go back again and tell her--"

"Pray, Fräulein," he interrupted, "let's keep to the point. That wolf in the sheep's clothing of humility, that vender of souls, who treated you so shamefully--"

"I'll neither see nor hear anything of him!" she exclaimed violently. "I'd rather die, than be compelled to meet this man but for whom I--but pshaw, it's not worth while to get angry about it. I was a simple child, I believed everything I was told, now I no longer believe in anything, neither in heaven nor in hell, only in the little space here on earth, where I'll not allow my peace to be destroyed. Excuse me, sir, for receiving you so uncourteously but I'm not yet dressed and am going to Elysium--a concert and ball--we can't be young but once. If you want to know where the Herr Candidat lives--he no longer calls himself Lorinser, but has taken the name of Moser--there's his card, on which he wrote his address. He said his first visit was to me, that he still loved me and would prove it and provide for me. But as I said before, I'd rather jump out of the window than have anything more to do with the abominable scoundrel. Perhaps"--and she lowered her voice a moment--"perhaps there's some truth in the tales about the other world and the last judgment. But if I'm condemned, then I'll open my mouth and tell what I know; what I was, and what I have become, and through whom. Here, sir, here's the card, and now--"

She opened the door, bowed with an easy grace, and took leave of Mohr, who fluent of speech as he usually was, remained silent from deep compassion for the poor lost girl.

CHAPTER XIII.

The clock struck seven as he left the dwelling, and night had closed in. The house whose number was written on the card, stood at the eastern end of the city, and he felt somewhat exhausted by the many excitements of the day. Yet he could not make up his mind to defer his visit until the morrow, and therefore threw himself into a droschky, and drove through the dark streets absorbed in thought.

At last he paused before a neat two story dwelling, and by the light of a lantern read the name of the owner under the night-bell, and above the word "Rentier." In reply to his ring, a maid-servant appeared, and positively refused to admit him. Her master and mistress were just at prayers with the gentleman who rented the upper room, and she was not allowed to announce any one.

"And you must not announce me either, my pet," Mohr calmly replied, pressing a thaler into her hand. "I want to surprise them. I'm a very intimate friend of the Herr Candidat, and he'll be wonderfully delighted when he sees me enter so unexpectedly. When I've once found him, I'll let him continue his prayer without interruption."

The girl did not mark the tone of savage sarcasm, in which these words were uttered, but took it all for coin as good as the thaler she held in her hand. She lighted the generous visitor up to the second story and with a smile of secret understanding pointed to the door, through which a strange dull buzzing sound was heard.

Mohr distinctly recognized the voice of the man whom he had pursued for months with unquenchable hate. The blood rushed to his head, and he needed several minutes delay to regain even the appearance of calmness. "Go, my good child," said he. "I need no farther help to find my way."

After she had gone, he listened a few moments longer. Lorinser seemed to be reading aloud from some book of devotion, and at intervals came long drawn regular tones, like a person snoring. Mohr softly grasped the handle of the door and opened it so noiselessly, that he stood in the room for some time before those present perceived him. Lorinser sat on a wide sofa, the lower half of his face was shaded by a heavy black beard which made him almost unrecognizable, and his closely cropped hair was covered with a three cornered black velvet cap, which worn as it was far back upon the head exposed the high polished brow. Nestling beside him in very unequivocal proximity, sat a pretty young woman who seemed to be looking at the book also and eagerly following the words, while she held his hand firmly clasped in hers. An elderly man with a simple narrow-minded face was leaning back in a large arm-chair, and accompanied the reading with his peaceful snores. Mohr needed but one glance to understand the condition of affairs.

"Don't let me disturb you," he said suddenly in the most courteous tone. "I merely wish to say a few words in private to Herr Candidat Moser."

Lorinser started up, the young wife uttered a cry and let fall his hand, the sleeper rubbed his eyes in astonishment. For a moment it seemed as if all three had been petrified by the sudden appearance of the stranger. Mohr did not grudge himself the mischievous pleasure afforded by the scene, but quietly approached a step nearer and bowed to the mistress of the house.

"Whom do you want here, sir?" asked Lorinser, who had hastily regained: his composure. "I've not the honor of your acquaintance."

"So Peter said," replied Mohr dryly. "But you, I hope, will remember me before the cock crows. Permit me to take a seat. Will you have the kindness to introduce me to the company, or shall I do it myself?"

"This insolence goes too far," muttered Lorinser, who had grown deadly pale. "Do you presume, sir, to force your way into a stranger's house and disturb the devotions of the family without apology?"

"I do, my worthy sir. The night will be long enough to continue that which, to my great regret, I've interrupted. I desire only a quarter of an hour of your precious time--and will not disturb you longer."

The young wife had turned away to conceal her embarrassment, and now glided out of the room. Her husband prepared to follow her.

"Stay," exclaimed Lorinser, still clinging to the mask of indignation. "You must bear witness, my dear friend--"

"As you choose, my good fellow," said Mohr with icy composure. "It will be a favor to me if the gentleman will make a record of our treaty. To begin: in the first place--I've just come from Fräulein Johanne--"

He looked Lorinser steadily in the eye, and the effect produced by this name was fully equal to his expectations. A short pause ensued, then Lorinser whispered something in the ear of his host, and the latter with a submissive bend of the head, left the room.

They were scarcely alone, when Mohr drew his box of Latakia out of his pocket and began to make a cigarette. "You'll permit me to smoke I hope," he said affably to his silent companion. "The air here is abominably bad, the breath of heaven and hell mixed; I am afraid of the contagion and should like to disenfect myself."

Lorinser's eyes were fixed upon the floor. Not a muscle of his rigid face betrayed the feelings that were aroused by this visit. But when Mohr had lighted his cigarette, he said with a slight cough: "I must beg you to be brief, I don't like this odor."

"As brief as possible, my dear fellow," answered Mohr phlegmatically. "You'll give me credit for having troubled myself about you only for very serious motives, not merely from a desire to continue an acquaintance which is utterly uninteresting to me. The class of human beings to which you belong is, thank God, by no means numerous, but sufficiently well known for it to be a mere waste of time to study it. Goethe has described it admirably in Faust; you remember the passage where he speaks of a certain abortion. Even the manner of playing you represent, is not new. Zacharias Werner and others are your predecessors, so you've not even the merit of originality, but are simply a second-hand scoundrel."

"I only wish to observe," began Lorinser without losing his composure, "that we will suppose you to have poured forth all your invectives and come to the point at once. I'm accustomed to insults, and console myself by thinking, that far more holy men, nay our Saviour himself--"

"Beautiful!" interrupted Mohr. "But one good turn deserves another. I'll avoid every incivility except those which the mere business in hand may entail, and you'll promise me not to again desecrate in my presence a name so venerated as that of the founder of the Christian religion by uttering it with your lips. I confess my weakness; it makes me fairly sick, when I hear that a--how shall I express it--a poor sinner--that's not insulting--is playing a blasphemous farce in the name of that sublime sufferer and champion of humanity. So we're agreed? Very well. And now we'll proceed at once to business. Do you know this?" He put his hand into his breast pocket; Lorinser involuntarily shrank back.

"Calm yourself," said Mohr with a scornful laugh. "I've no pistol in my pocket, to aim at your breast and force you to a full confession. I despise such melodramatic means, which moreover would undoubtedly fail if directed toward such a holy man, to whom a martyr's crown would be a fitting reward. What I've brought here, is only a little book, a neat pocket edition of Thomas à Kempis. Your name is written on the first page, I mean your real name, before you believed in a second baptism and exchanged the somewhat foul old Adam of your 'Lorinser' for a speck and span 'Moser.' Do you recognize the little book?"

He held it out, and when the other had assented to the question with a silent bend of the head, laid it on the table. "Thank you," he continued; "you'll make this business easier for both of us, if you'll drop all unavailing and useless lies. I found this little book in a room in Dorotheenstrasse, from which on the day of your nocturnal visit, a lady in whom I'm interested, disappeared. I was fortunate enough to find her two nights after, and, as you're perhaps unaware, with dripping garments and in a very silent mood. We worked for five hours to obtain the smallest word. When she at last decided to open her eyes and lips, of course there was no mention of you. But the little Thomas à Kempis, probably in revenge for having been taken in paths where there can be no question of the 'Imitation of Christ,' committed the indiscretion of gossiping; the old maid-servant, who unlocked the room for you in the evening and saw you creep out again at a much later hour--you probably supposed you'd be seen only by God, who is already accustomed to close his eyes to your doings--this worthy person, I say, in reply to my questions, told me all and then suffered her mouth to be sealed forever. So there are only four persons who know this secret of that night. Three of them have good reasons to keep silence; but the fourth might in some devilish mood, against which we must be on our guard, or for some 'benevolent' or profligate object, tell the tale. To prevent this, my dear fellow, you'll say to that fourth person, that I am determined in such a case to stop his mouth forever, by shooting him down like a mad dog or finding some other way to silence him. You've understood me? A syllable, a wink, a shrug of the shoulders, which would impugn that lady's honor, and you'll receive a passport into the better world." He was silent, as if he expected some explicit answer. Lorinser had leaned his head back and was gazing at the ceiling. He coughed several times and passed his long, pliant fingers through his beard.

"And is this all that has brought you to me?" he asked after a pause. "I hope you admire the patience, with which I listen to your disconnected fancies; but I beg you not to abuse it." Mohr looked at him with icy contempt.

"You are a precious rascal," said he. "Under other circumstances I should wonder at the iron mask Mother Nature has put in the place where other men wear their faces. But, as I said before, the atmosphere here is so unpleasant that I'll limit myself to the most necessary words. So in brief: do you know the present abode of the lady who is the subject of our conversation?"

"No."

"Have you determined never to inquire for her?"

"Why should I, since I no longer have any relations with this lady?"

"No longer have any relations? You express yourself admirably. But are you also disposed to bind yourself, if by accident you ever meet her again, to leave the place and the city at once and avoid her for all future time?"

"A singular obligation. You expect me to subject myself to all the inconveniences--"

"I regret that I'm compelled to still further increase these obligations. You must also forever renounce the pleasure of seeing me with a solemn oath--although the peculiar relation in which you stand toward your God, considerably weakens the value such vows usually have between men of honor. However, I've means to compel you to keep your promise."

"I should be glad to learn what they are."

"With pleasure, honored sir. Unfortunately, I'm unable to give you without ceremony the chastisement you deserve, as we crush a venomous reptile under foot. It would expose me to all sorts of unpleasantnesses, and as I still have duties toward my fellow men, I must avoid as long as possible the extreme measures which would bring me in conflict with the criminal courts. However, although vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I feel a repugnance to seeing a good for nothing fellow, like you, roaming about at large, and as the arm of civil justice is either too short or too clumsy to seize such clever criminals, I've resolved to set in motion against you a noiseless and silent *vehm-gericht*. Whenever I meet you in the future, I shall brand you without mercy--in what manner will depend upon the inspiration of the moment. But out of the world in which I live you must go!" he exclaimed, suddenly raising his voice almost to a shout, as he rose and threw his cigarette away. "Do you clearly understand me? I will not tolerate your presence, will persecute you until you no longer poison the air I breathe; perhaps the simplest way therefore, would be for you to decide without much hesitation to emigrate to America, and join the Mormons, a vocation for which you've all sorts of valuable qualifications, in case you don't prefer Cayenne, a region in which home missions still have a fine field."

A pause ensued. The two mortal enemies looked each other steadily in the face.

"And if," said Lorinser at last, "instead of taking advantage of all these benevolent counsels, I prefer to inform the police to-morrow morning, that a madman broke into my house with threats and attempts at intimidation, and request protection against this violence? Certain private affairs, over which you seem to have excellent reasons for drawing a veil, would probably not withhold me from procuring myself peace at any price."

"At *any* price? That might perhaps be somewhat costly for you. Or would you like, in answer to this notice, a complaint to be entered by an honored patroness--on account of the embezzlement of money entrusted to you for the poor?"

"Embezzlement!" exclaimed Lorinser, starting up. For the first time during the whole conversation the iron mask fell, and his real face appeared, disfigured by the most violent distortions.

"Embezzlement?" he repeated. "What ridiculous words you use; they serve to show how far you are from understanding a nature like mine! Or no: you're probably well aware whom you have before you, one of the elect, who pass through life enwrapped by the atmosphere of the supernatural, and do not think themselves compelled to keep always in the straight roads made for sober children of the world. What is money to us? A wretched, despicable necessity, as worthless as the other conditions of this poor clay! He who never rises from the dust, may allow himself to be a slave, watch pennies and reckon shillings. But should he who offers the poor treasures with full hands, those treasures which neither moth nor rust corrupt, opens heaven to them, and raises them out of all anxiety and trouble into the fulness of eternal life, scruple to receive from them what the lowest and basest human beings can give each other, coined metal or stamped paper, and haggle over his daily bread by mouthfuls with those who must forever remain his debtors? Would you come to such a man with accusations about careless bookkeeping, which to be sure to the petty souls in this world of trade seems to be the only sin against *their* holy spirit?"

"Bravo!" replied Mohr dryly. "You've memorized your part well and delivered your little speech bravely. But it can't produce an effect on every audience. These magnificent views of the work

and money, which you share with all interpreters of dreams, alchemists, and false profits, from Mohammed down to our own times; this artless pilfering of enthusiastic innocence, which in its blindness so eagerly seizes the most glittering baits, may suit those who cling to you and find their interest in being preyed upon by you. *Volenti non fit injuria*--you've probably learned so much *Jus*. But the good Frau Valentin, who is not in love with you, does not stand on the same theological soil, or desire to purchase any religious enlightenment for hard cash, looks at the matter from the standpoint of common plebeian honesty. I think you've some idea of what people call honesty and good faith. The excellent soul, in her narrow mindedness, holds fast to these and thinks that he to whom she has given money for her poor, is a miserable cheat, when he uses these funds to defray his own expenses and pays for oysters and Rhine wine to the honor of God."

"You're a devil!" muttered Lorinser grinding his teeth.

"I never considered myself an angel," replied Mohr, still in the calmest possible tone. "But at least I hope to be no stupid devil. You've seen," he continued, as he again opened his tobacco box, "I'm tolerably skillful in the art of rolling cigarettes. If the one now in process of being made, is completed before you've given your consent to my very reasonable compromise, I shall go straight from this sacred place to the profane dwelling of a magistrate with whom I'm very well acquainted. You don't smoke yourself? A pity! It's often very useful to aid one in keeping cool. Blücher smoked in every battle."

A suppressed snort of fury came from the dark end of the apartment, whither the other had retired. Suddenly he rushed to the door and flung it wide open. "Leave this room!" he shouted in so loud a tone, that any listeners outside could not fail to hear it. "That we never meet again shall be my care."

"Thank you," replied Mohr, putting on his hat. "The cigarette is just finished. I knew we should come to an understanding. *Intelligenti panca*. You're too polite; you need not so courteously open the door for me. I know the rule of all ghosts and spirits, that they must go out the same way they came in. There! And now success to you devoutness."

Without vouchsafing another glance to his conquered foe, he walked passed him with the calmest possible expression of countenance, while Lorinser, trembling from head to foot with passion, stood beside the door with clenched lists and slammed it violently behind his enemy. When Mohr was going down stairs, he fancied he heard a low groan of fury, such as might be uttered by a wild beast that has fallen into a pit. An expression of bitter loathing passed over his stern face, and his underlip curled with scorn. When he again stood in the cold dark street, he paused, drew a long breath, extended his muscular arms as if to throw off an unendurable burden, and for a moment closed his eyes.

"Where shall I go now?" escaped his lips. "Wither turn to regain what is lost? No, not lost forever! If I'm forced to search the earth to its remotest confines I shall find her, I must, I *will* find her. Poor, poor woman! I will give you peace, so far as is possible for men to know peace against devils!"

He walked on a few steps, absorbed in deep thought, then paused suddenly and passed his hand across his brow. "Good Heavens! I had nearly forgotten it while occupied with all this baseness; Edwin and Leah receive their friends to-night! I'll go there. I must see some good people, to restore my faith in humanity."

And whistling the adagio from the symphony in C. minor--his invariable remedy when he wanted to drive a bitter taste from his tongue--he turned toward the zaunkönig's little house.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

At the moment when after a lapse of four years we resume the thread of our story, we find Edwin sitting at the open window of a hotel, attired in a costume very similar to the one which he wore when we made his acquaintance on a certain moonlight night. Again he wears an unpretending grey summer suit, with a black tie fastened loosely around his neck, and a straw hat, which, despite the changing fashions, is in shape nearly identical to one worn long before, lies on the table, adorned with a fresh bouquet of heather blossoms. Even his features show no trace of the four years that have passed; indeed he might now be taken for a younger man, his cheeks are slightly bronzed by the air and sun, the line between the brows has disappeared, the restless glance has vanished. He has just completed a long letter, and now lays down the pen to feast his eyes a moment on the forest clad heights, which, rise behind the trim little city. The time is twilight of a warm summer evening; the air, as usual after the crimson light of sunset has faded, is full of tremulous, translucent brightness; a silver grey sky which merges into white, and relieves the eyes by forming a background to the masses of tree tops and the mountain ridges upon whose crest is uplifted the lofty tower of the old church, like a black silhouette against a sheet of silver paper. In the foreground a few faint local colors and hundreds of individual details fill out the picture. The railway station only separated from the hotel by the wide street, swarms with people; but it is Sunday and as if in deference to the day there is no noisy bustle, no goods loaded and unloaded, and only persons traveling for pleasure seem to be waiting for the next train, which is to leave in an hour.

Meantime it rapidly grew dark. Edwin is compelled to move nearer the window, in order to read, and we, as old friends, may be permitted to look over his shoulder and see what he has written to his Leah.

"My Beloved Wife:

"I have been here just two hours, during which time I have slept as soundly as I ever did at midnight. It was a foolish whim of mine, the desire to reach this place to-day; for to do so I was compelled to walk in the heat of the noonday sun. I might have known Mohr would not tear himself away from his home one instant before the term began, and of course I have not found him here and may be obliged to wait several days. However, his dilatoriness has procured me the pleasure of strolling through this mountain region by moonlight, which I have done for the last four stages of my journey. Dearest, it was unspeakably delightful, to leave at moon-rise the hot rooms where I had spent the day and then walk through the silent woods, which grew cooler and cooler, until when the moon was about to set I reached some cosy nest which was ready to receive me. To be sure he who wants to write a hand-book of travel, must manage differently; the moon is the poet that transfigures all things, but it is after the style of Eichendorff, who with his rustling tree tops, flashing streams, and distant baying of dogs always conjures up the same dreamy mood; so that at last it makes no difference where we wander, whether in Italy or the Thuringian forest. For me, who only wanted to thoroughly shake off the school dust and forget everything that could remind me of the agreement of triangles and the theory of parallelograms, this twilight mood was exactly the right one, in which all forms blend together and I as it were returned with a living body into the Infinite. 'Give my soul full freedom'--how often I've repeated the words! How often I've thought of and pitied you, because, as a woman, you can never enjoy the strange, sweet wondrous delight, which I inhaled in full draughts with the night breeze. The spell can only work in perfect solitude. The ear must hear but one footstep, when the night reveals its secrets and there rises that wierd vibrating hum, a noise like that our earth might make, moving through the grooves of space. It is like a fairy dream, dearest, to look up to the stars and become absorbed in the measureless silent enigmas; the countless 'burning questions,' which nevertheless burn only the souls of dreamers and night wanderers. And amid the depression caused by the loneliness of the world it was a grand feeling of triumph the consciousness of loving and being loved, that though fallen in the deepest abysses we are never really given over solitary and hopeless, to the spectres of night, since we can raise above us a shield our pure, honest purpose, our strength and love of good, and feel ourselves allied to all our struggling brothers, and throughout all this journey you were always by my side, beloved, and on the other walked our Balder, often in such bodily presence, that I actually saw your eyes sparkle, and thought I distinctly heard your voice as it sounds when you steal behind me and whisper in my ear: 'do I disturb you?'

"As I said before, I deprived myself of all this, when the fancy seized me to come hither in the day time. Now in order to assure myself of your presence, I must take up my pen which will not lend wings to my thoughts, after my hot walk in the dog days. But if I keep silence longer, I fear you may take some jealous fancy and imagine Frau Christiane to be the cause, and that, instead of the moonlight, in which I stagger intoxicated with the beauty of nature, perhaps the moonlight sonata, which to be sure I have recently heard with fresh delight, has gone to my head. No, dear Wisdom, on this point you can be as much at ease as you were four years ago; nay, more so, for even your old and at that time not wholly to be rejected hypothesis, that your dear husband's extreme loneliness had made a fatal impression upon the unoccupied mind of our artist, has proved, on a nearer inspection of the facts and circumstances, entirely untenable. You must erase this conquest from the list of my victories, which thereby is considerably diminished. That we heard nothing of our friends for years, that they did not even inform us of their marriage and only remembered the old friendship a short time ago, arose from entirely different reasons--concerning which I have promised to keep silence, even to you, although to do so will be difficult enough. I have so accustomed myself to sharing everything with you, not keeping in my mind and heart even the smallest 'arrière-boutique,' as Montaigne calls it, closed to you, that I should have

preferred not to learn, the strange circumstances through which these two people have found each other, at the cost of being compelled to conceal them from you, my beloved keeper of the Great Seal, especially as I know that this time, too, we should have agreed in our judgment and feelings.

"Oh! dearest! the hour in which our old friend broke at last the seal of the dark secret he had kept so long, because he could not endure that there should be a mystery between us, the way in which he told the unspeakable secret, how he conquered hopeless despair by his deep, earnest love--never, never will the smallest syllable of this confession vanish from my memory. How these two mortals have battled for their happiness, nay how bravely they must still daily defend themselves against the ghosts of the past! Never have I heard a more touching story than the account of his ceaseless quest of the lost one, after he had at last found her in the most sequestered corner of the world, his unwearied persistency, which nothing could rebuff, to make her again accustomed to the light of day, the vital warmth of her profession and his faithful love. For the first time I have learned to thoroughly know this strange man, and understand how he was able to accomplish the tremendous task of saving for the second time, this apparently lost life. How much I should like to show you my old friend, as I know him, one of the best, noblest, and most unselfish heroes, I have ever met. For do not suppose that, blinded by his passion, without a struggle and only keeping the object of possessing her before his eyes--but enough, I'm on the way to say more than I am permitted to utter. Let this hint be sufficient for you, dear heart, and promise me never to allude to it again, nor even, if it's possible, to strive to discover what is concealed behind it. Have I not myself given you a beautiful example of how we can stifle even the most lawful curiosity, by not even inquiring what motives you could have for not accompanying me on this vacation's journey, and refraining at your request from all meditations upon whether the point in question was a grand cleaning festival, a new carpet in our study, or some other unsuspected and thoughtful expenditure of the traveling expenses you have saved?

"But to return to Mohr and his young happiness, I would never have believed it possible that he could have changed so much for the better, as during the last few years.

"He was waiting for me at the railway station, holding in his arms a little boy about three years old, who smiled brightly at me with his wise black eyes. Not until we were out of the crowd and the child could be placed without danger on his own feet, did his father have his arms at liberty to embrace me. Then we walked slowly and silently along the road that led toward the little city, Mohr kept his eyes steadily fixed upon his boy, and only now and then cast a side glance at me, as if he wanted to ask if I had ever seen such a child. 'You must know,' he said at last, 'he has no other nurse than I, and he will not feel the lack. At first Christiane did not believe I had the necessary qualifications for his attendant, and also thought I should probably have something better to do. But now she has discovered that this is my real vocation. We must take ourselves as we are. Your old friend, Heinrich Mohr, who used to imagine that he was something in himself, something out of the common order, a poet, a musician--the devil knows what--has now come to the knowledge, that he's only a transition point, an intermediate step between the Mohrs who were still more insignificant and commonplace, and this little Mohr, who will be greater than all of us, the head and flower of the whole stock. What in me was only impulse, desire, presentiment and desperation, will in him become fulfillment. You laugh, my dear fellow, '(I was not laughing at all)' but first you must learn to know him. To be sure he doesn't inherit from his papa alone; his best qualities may have descended to him from his mother: her strong will, to risk all for all. The elements of a great artist perhaps exist in me too; but criticism, conceit and suspicion kept them forever apart. Well, it is no disgrace to bow to a law of nature. Raphael's father was a miserable dauber, the elder Mozart played his part in the orchestra very badly, and Beethoven's papa too, was by no means a shining light. It's very possible that it was uncomfortable enough for these worthy men to produce nothing remarkable, till they perceived that they had the honor of being transition points, only the retorts as it were, in which nature brewed the elixir of life, which under the name of their sons were to rejuvenate and bless the world?

"While saying these words, he gazed at the little boy who was trotting along very quietly beside the gutter, eating a cake, with a look through whose tenderness gleamed a shade of respect, which would have been laughable, if it were not so touching to see it in our old friend.

"'What's his talent?' I asked at last.

"'We're not yet clear about it,' he answered gravely. 'Like every unusually gifted person he has more than one eminent talent, and we allow them all to develop together. His memory and his musical ear are wonderful. Besides, he has a power of language of which many a boy of six need not be ashamed, and his perception of form and color is beyond all belief. You think me one of those fathers who are crazed by blind partiality; I can't blame you for it, nor will I attack your unbelief with a succession of tricks to display his genius; we take care not to spoil so delicate and rich a nature by training it for a prodigy. As you see him there, eating his cake and bounding merrily about in the sunlight, we leave him entirely to himself, and my whole method of education consists in not telling or teaching him anything, until he asks for information. In ten years, we'll talk about him again.'

"'And Christiane?' I asked.

"'You'll not recognize her,' he said laughing softly, like a person already rejoicing in another's

anticipated astonishment. 'I know you've never understood why, from our first meeting, I didn't think her homely; you laughed at me when I said her face was only clouded by sorrow and calamity, and that when this dark varnish was removed a pleasing picture would appear. Well, "who laughs last laughs best." You'll see her and judge for yourself, whether the process of regeneration has not been thoroughly completed in her. It's no wonder either; for how she is appreciated, loved, honored! I may say the whole musical life of our city revolves around her. You've come just at the right time; the Cecilia Society she organized, gives an open air concert to-night; first "Winter and Spring" from the "Seasons" then a time for chat followed by some of Mendelssohn's quartettes. I make myself useful in my way, by playing accompaniments, distributing the parts, and often growling a little in baritone. With us, the women's voices are the best, Christiane's method of instruction has already produced its effect upon them. But we need tenors and basses. Addressing the participants at athletic sports, shooting matches, and workmen's picnics, ruins the voice; everybody thinks he shows his patriotism by shouting, and then can't control his tones when they are required for more delicate use. Well, we must put up with the shadows too. We're living in a provincial town.'

"All this was said with such a radiant face that I saw he would not have exchanged places with any band leader in Vienna or Berlin. I now noticed that the trick which was so peculiar to him, drawing his under lip awry and showing his white upper teeth, had entirely disappeared. He could laugh with his mouth wide open like a child.

"But the author of the comedy 'I am, I, and rely on myself' was still so much like himself, that he didn't ask a question about how I had fared, how my wife looks, and how our little city suits us. But this omission was most amply compensated for by Frau Christiane, who met us just outside the city, a few paces from her charming little house, which is situated among gardens and meadows just beyond the gate. After the first embarrassment always engendered by seeing old faces again, she seemed perfectly at ease, her first question was about you, then I was obliged to tell her about father and his marriage with Frau Valentin, and next of our neighbor Franzelius and his little wife, and so we were soon perfectly comfortable. My attention was attracted by her quiet, gentle manner, which had a shade of suppressed humility, especially when she turned toward her husband, for whose slightest gesture she seemed to be on the alert. Only when the conversation turned upon art, especially in the domain of music, the old harsh strength of our strange friend flashed out like fire beneath ashes. Meantime Mohr had brought a bottle of wine into the pretty honeysuckle covered arbor of their little garden, and now smoking a cigar, sat at the table, while his eyes constantly wandered from his wife to the little boy playing near. 'Did I say too much?' he asked triumphantly, when she was at last called away to give a singing lesson to the Burgermaster's daughter; I was not obliged to use any special self-constraint, not to disturb my old friend in his happy illusions; for the sunlight of happiness although it could not transform our shade loving plant into a blooming rose, has brightened the stern, gloomy face so much, that no one will ever fear it; often at one of her husband's droll ideas, or when the child came bounding up to her with a question, so sweet a smile flitted over her mouth, that one almost forgot her mustache. Her eyes were noticeable enough in old times and happiness has given them a soft, soul-full light. She dresses, so far as I understand such matters, by no means in a rustic fashion, but in extremely modest colors, and without any ornaments. That the people value her highly and know how to prize her talents, I had ample opportunity to notice in the evening at the concert, which all the city attended.

"Much might be told of this concert, but I was most glad to see how Mohr had altered; his satirical vein was entirely lacking, I'm still too weary from to-day's walk for a minute description, so I must reserve this genre picture for a verbal report, I'll only mention one episode, which shows the tender relations in which our friends stand toward each other. While Father Hayden was being played, in which Christiane did herself great credit, Mohr sat on a bench in the garden, with the boy beside him, who, after a liberal supply of fruit and bread and butter listened very quietly. It had grown tolerably late, and in the pause before the quartette began, the 'sand man' appeared. As the maid-servant was no where to be seen, Papa Mohr took the child in his arms and carried it home, where he stayed until he had put it to bed and given it into the charge of the negligent servant. When he again entered the garden, to enjoy the remainder of the programme, he stood still in astonishment and could scarcely believe his ears. Was that Mendelssohn? No. But what was it? It seemed so familiar--and yet--it could not be what he thought. Yet what else could it be? Yes, it was a quartette which he had himself composed years ago and locked up in a large box with other unsuccessful attempts, including the 'Sinfonia Ironica.' And now he heard it sung before the whole audience, and sung so well, that its conclusion was hailed with frantic applause and shouts of 'Da Capo,' although it had only appeared as a modest supplement to Hayden and Mendelssohn. Who would have suspected Frau Christiane to be capable of such a trick? And especially that, in reply to the numerous questions about the composer, she would be bold enough to name her own husband! But the applause now burst forth like a storm, and I could see how popular our old ci-devant mocker and man-hater was, among his fellow citizens. It was most charming of all, to see him approaching his wife, publicly embrace her and then scold her for having betrayed his youthful errors, while she took advantage of the successful stratagem to tell him what talents he really possessed, and what she had always admired and valued in him.

"This last however occurred when I was alone with them, for when the concert was over we had an after piece in the honey-suckle arbor. How we wished you were with us, my dear little wife! The surprise that awaits me at home, must be something very charming, if it's to

compensate for your absence that evening--

"I remained with them all the next day, and during this long time never once heard our friend utter the word 'envy,' in which he once so luxuriated. Balder was right, when, he said Mohr's envy was only a mutilated love. Since he has known the beautiful, healthful feeling in its full development, he has dropped his philosophy of envy, for the foreign element which still remained in his ennobled envy--that he did not feel the goodness, beauty, and loveliness in others to be his--disappeared as a matter of course, when he would have had to envy flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, in a dear child.

"They did not want to let me go so soon. But as the room they gave me faced the south, it was so unendurably hot at night that I woke in the morning with a dull headache, so I honestly and obstinately insisted that they should put themselves to no farther trouble, but let me go to the hotel. To this they objected, because such a change of quarters would excite so much comment in the little city, so we at last adopted the middle course, that I should walk through the mountains a few days alone and meet Heinrich here. He, too, has been ordered by his physician to take more exercise, but could never make up his mind to part from his boy, and even now I'm not quite sure of his keeping his promise. I shall wait for him until to-morrow evening; but I almost fear a letter will come instead, in which he will declare nocturnal pedestrian excursions with an old friend to be incompatible with the duties of a nurse.

"I'll now close this letter, dearest. It's just the hour when I like best to wander alone through a strange town. Evening has closed in, but the inhabitants, to save oil and candles, prefer to sit outside the doors a little longer and watch the last rays of light as they fade away. The school children, too, their tasks all completed, play merrily in the open air, while the mother brings the youngest, clad in its night gown, out to the father who is sitting on a bench; taking the little thing in his lap he shows it the moon, the high church tower, and the stork's nest on the town hall, delighted to see it listen and open its eyes. Some day this gazing wondering child will become a stern, practical man, eager in the race for gold, thinking little of fairy tales, except on Sunday mornings, when they will perhaps sometimes recur to his memory. But I believe that many will carry a breath of childhood into old age, and this is far more likely to be the case in villages than in large towns away from the accustomed surroundings and amid strange scenes. I've often noticed how, as one's memory of home grows fainter, we become more contented in strange places and in a frequent change of abode. For one is oftentimes completely overwhelmed by the mystery of existence, as, on a summer evening we look with earnestness into the blue ether and find our gaze riveted by the first twinkle of a star; in our absorption we may become almost incredulous as to the existence of our own homes. And sometimes when far away from those who are dear to us, though still surrounded by a human crowd, one feels that there is no tie to bind him to any place but that where at evening the fire is kindled upon his own hearthstone, and where, after the labors and toils of the day, he can rest in the sacred atmosphere of peace and perfect love. I'm often obliged to pause and draw back when I pass a bright window, behind which a group of people are sitting around a smoking dish, lest I should enter unbidden, and say: 'Good evening! Don't you know me? I'm your brother!'--Oh! dearest, those are poor fools, who say to themselves and others, 'we are strangers in the world.' Have we sprung from the lap of our mother earth and been nourished with her milk, and has our father, the sun, given light to our eyes and awakened our senses, only that we may wander about all our lives homeless waifs, with our heart-hunger unappeased? Only an idle, selfish, and perverse soul can turn reluctantly or arrogantly away from the pleasant place where it should live and labor, and which helpful toil should make so dear. And such hopeless people think, when the piece they perform becomes stupid and tiresome, and is hissed, that it is the fault of the scenes! To such should be said: 'Do your duty, play your part well, and these boards, which are your world, will not burn so quickly beneath your feet that when the need comes you cannot escape.'

"But whither am I wandering? Good night, my wife, dearest of human souls. When Mohr comes, I'll you where we decide to go. I hope to be able to persuade him that he owes you a visit. Believe me, if I were not ashamed to turn back so soon, I should be with you again to-morrow, or rather, as I do not see why I need be ashamed to find life dull and unprofitable without you--if to-morrow a letter arrives, instead of my friend, our doctor will shake his head in vain; for nothing shall prevent me from clasping you in my arms the following day.

"Edwin."

"Remember me to our neighbors, Frau Reginchen's ears must have burned of late; I have been obliged to answer so many questions about her and her little ones."

CHAPTER II.

Edwin had just finished the letter and risen from his seat, to take it himself to the post office,

when there was a knock at his door; a familiar knock, but one which he had not heard for years.

Before he had time to say "come in," the door opened, and in the dark passage appeared a round head with thin fair hair and a pair of gold spectacles. A portly, but active figure hastily entered. "It's he!" exclaimed the friends in a breath, and the next instant Marquard and Edwin were clasped in each others arms.

"Wonder of wonders!" cried Edwin, as he drew his friend nearer the window. "Have you taken up the study of animal magnetism, that you discover me here? True, you were always a sort of repertory for all valuable knowledge, but as I don't know a soul in this place, haven't been outside these four walls, or even written my name in the visitors' book--"

"The mystery will be solved in due time," interrupted Marquard with a grave face. "Come, let's sit down on this very thin couch and permit me to light one of my own cigars. I'm afraid I am not idealist enough, to find yours enduring. And now let's see and hear what these four years have made of you. You've not gained in flesh. Such a teacher of mathematics ought occasionally to pass beyond the rudiments of straight lines and angles. I, as you see, am approaching aldermanic proportions, and as Adeline is like-wise comfortably enlarging her natural boundaries, a consequence of our happy domestic life and the undisturbed harmony of souls--"

"Have you married her at last?"

"Not exactly according to form, but in point of fact it amounts to nearly the same thing. We've resolved never to part, unless it should seem advisable. Isn't the legitimate civil marriage merely a contract so long as the parties are suited, and doesn't Schiller say, 'beauty is freedom in necessity?' Well, that beauty exists in our alliance. We're both free but each finds it necessary to be with the other. The good creature has retired from the stage and adorns my loneliness with her housekeeping talents, besides secretly helping me in a scientific work."

"So the nightingale has also a talent for medicine?"

"Only the practical part of it. We're writing a cook book together, or rather a book on the art of eating. Brillat-Savarin is classical, it is true, but only a child of his time."

"And will yours allow you to devote yourself to such grave studies in another department? Certainly the words: 'How difficult it is even to attain the means by which we ascend to the source of things!' do not apply to you."

"Of course not; but just because, as a favorite women's doctor and happening to be first in this specialty, my time is very much occupied; I should not be able to finish the difficult task without the assistance of a co-worker so tasteful as Adeline. Well, you'll come and see us, it's high time. We'll take you into our laboratory, and you must bear witness--but first of all, what brought you here without your dear better-half?"

"Happy fellow," laughed Edwin, "who doesn't suspect what summer vacations mean to a poor pedagogue! Hitherto, I've always spent them in traveling with Leah, but this time mysterious and higher considerations forced me--"

"Must I congratulate you, my old friend? No shame-faced evasions with your physician! You'll make an excellent papa. It's a pity," he added in an undertone, "that uncle Balder is no longer here to see it."

Edwin shook his head. "I fear the point in question does not concern such important matters," said he, "or I should probably be admitted into the secret. To be sure, it might be possible; for who can thoroughly understand a woman! For instance, would you believe that this affectionate daughter, who when she left the hut on the lagune shed bitter tears because her father would be there alone, can't yet make up her mind to visit him, simply because he did the wisest thing he could, under the circumstances, and married his old friend, Frau Valentin?"

"So that's true!" exclaimed Marquard. "Adeline thought she had read it in the newspaper, but afterwards we could not find the sheet to make sure of the names, and of course they didn't send cards to us. Well, I believe they'll live as happily as two doves, content with their God, and good works will now flourish in partnership. But what does our Leah see to condemn in such a match, which was certainly made in heaven and which moreover is such a sensible arrangement; for where could the lonely old man find a better refuge, now that a huge tenement house has been built on the site of his Venetian palace, than under the protecting wings of his excellent old sweetheart?"

"That's just it," replied Edwin, "that touched a spot in his daughter's heart and she will hear no reasoning upon it. If the point in question had simply concerned a new mode of life, in which other considerations than her father's comfort had turned the scale, no one would have been more glad, than my good wife. But papa zaunkönig informed her of his decision in a letter which was certainly strange enough. The parts were exactly exchanged; the father addressed the daughter in the tone a good son or younger brother would use in informing a highly respected mother or sister of a marriage of which she would probably disapprove, but which, as an accomplished fact, must be accepted with the best grace possible. He knew his child; he knew that she watched with a deep-rooted jealousy, to see that her dead mother's image was not

supplanted. Her passionate love would not have rebelled against what is termed a sensible marriage with anyone except his old love; but throughout the letter, it was perfectly evident that a late blossom of their youthful love had unfolded, a joyous midsummer warmth had awakened in these two by no means aged souls, and that both the worthy people felt all the timidity and embarrassment of a real love. Frau Valentin's letter was also constrained, and in spite of their excuse--they had perceived it was God's will, and had yielded to his decree--it was easy to see that they had submitted with heartfelt joy to this same higher will. This did not escape the penetration of my little philosopher, and never was any letter of hers so tart as the reply to this news. Nay, although during the two years which have since elapsed, thanks to the truly Christian feeling that pervades the marriage, the daughter's feelings toward her new mother have softened and she has become almost reconciled--she still refuses to see her father in his new relations--! And yet there are people, who attempt to deny that women have their peculiar ethics!"

Both were silent for a time. It had grown perfectly dark, only the gold frames of the spectacles sometimes glittered, when the lighted cigar came near them. Suddenly Marquard said:

"Will you answer me a question, my lad. An indiscreet one, but I have my reasons for it--are you happy?"

"I don't think that question at all indiscreet when propounded by a friend," replied Edwin quietly. "But to answer it conscientiously, we must first understand what you mean by happiness. In the ordinary sense, of no wish remaining unfulfilled, and the absence of all oppressing care, I know only one happy couple amongst our acquaintance: our worthy tribune of the people and his little wife. Papa Feyertag has, as you know, opened his pocket so generously, that Franzel, who insisted upon moving to L. with me, was able to establish a very fine printing office. We have only to turn the corner to reach their house, and I needn't assure you that we're very neighborly. One can't find anything prettier than this little rosy, fair-haired mother, with her three red cheeked children--"

"Three? The marriage was only--"

"There's a pair of twins, now just two years old, exactly like their papa and already recognizable at a long distance as young tribunes of the people by their powerful voices. You ought to see our Franzel carry the little mob about, one on each arm and the third pick-a-pack, his bronzed face and the white teeth under his bushy beard fairly radiant with fatherly pride; and Frau Reginchen, when he's romped enough, pushes his shaggy hair back from his forehead and scolds him for making the boys still wilder than they are by nature, her eyes meantime sparkling with delight, I'm sure they never held conflicting opinions for half an hour; she can twist him around her little finger now as well as during their betrothal, in everything concerning household affairs, and too, she's clever enough not to meddle with things she does not understand--his business and theories for reforming the world. He's still strong in them, but we've silently agreed not to argue social questions, and what he does practically is very thorough. His care for his workmen is really exemplary, they all have a certain share of the profits--it's a sort of joint stock company, in which the individual stockholders give labor instead of money, a system, which depends solely upon the good will of the capitalist, and will be imitated only when all manufacturers become philanthropists like our Franzel. But here all have their share of the profits, and it's pleasant to see how they all cling to him from the foreman down to the youngest errand boy, idolize Frau Reginchen, and spoil the black-haired boys and little girl. And moreover the cobbler's daughter, whose father didn't trouble her with two many arts and sciences, has become a very clever little woman, who plays no bad part in the discussion of every day authors, provided the conversation doesn't go above Schiller. At least so Leah says; she still stands in as much awe of me as if I were the Holy Ghost incarnate, and avoids all literary topics in my presence. Nevertheless we're on very pleasant terms with each other; she calls me her God-father and I call her Frau God-mother; you ought to come and see our quiet life--although you could gather no new ideas for your gastronomical work."

"I am coming," said Marquard, "I certainly will! You've roused my appetite, I can tell you. But we've wandered a long distance from the main topic."

"Whether or not I am happy? You know it doesn't take much to satisfy an idealist. The world is what we make it, and I've good reasons to be very well satisfied with it. I've no occasion to be anxious about the ordinary wants of life, and have never regretted for a single hour, that I gave up the professorship to take a quiet subordinate position as teacher in a school. While imparting the precepts of Pythagoras, my metaphysical system has time to mature, and I needn't teach anything for which I can't be fully responsible. Ambition I never possessed. What I have not in myself, no one can give me; I never cared to have my own opinion of myself corroborated by a crowd of people whom I don't know and therefore can't respect. But I'm indebted to the little city for one thing which I thought superfluous in the capital, but have now learned to prize because it enriches and strengthens my existence: I've entered into the midst of a motley throng of human beings, and the hundred-fold contact with an apparently thoughtless reality has benefited not only the man, but the philosopher. You smile, you arrogant metropolitan! You can't imagine, that one's view of the world may become more comprehensive in the atmosphere of a little town. And yet man is everywhere the same, and such a little town is a retreat in which I can most easily insulate the experiment that slipped through my fingers in the great busy city. You would be surprised if I should give you examples of the psychological results I've obtained from my active and daily share in the interests of my worthy fellow citizens. What did I know of the genius *homo*

sapiens, when I lived in our tun and only allowed a few chosen specimens to approach me? Only from the average can pervading laws be discovered. But you'll find all this some day in my book, if I ever write it. But I'll say this--that nothing external more richly rewards the trouble, than, wherever we maybe or whatever people we may be associated with, to honestly devote ourselves to them and share with them the best we have. These worthy people who at first eyed me curiously, because I was wanting in those things which usually help to win popularity and neither visited their usual places of resort nor joined in their games of skittles, any more than Leah attended their coffee parties, now know, that despite all this, they have a very good friend in me. Now and then, on public occasions, I have asked permission to address them and found fresh confirmation of my old opinion, that no one can guide a crowd so easily as one who stands on a higher plane, if he has but the power of awakening the true manly spirit which sleeps in the breast of the lowest boor. Afterwards they have not unfrequently come to me as this spirit moved within them, but failed to find courage in its own strength. They would have elected me to the Chamber of Deputies, if I'd not positively forbidden it. *Basta!* You may think I imagine it a wonder to be Cæsar in a village. No, indeed, my dear fellow! Nay, I confess that it always costs me a special effort to do my fellow citizens these trifling services; for at the bottom of my heart I'm still the aristocrat whom only the old saying *noblesse oblige* can lure from his seclusion. I'm bound to few by the tie of affection, and whether that wouldn't break up too, if I should strike my tent and continue my journey--"

"Do you intend to resign your position?"

"No; but certain people, who can't bear to have a simple teacher of mathematics take the liberty of thinking and saying what doesn't suit their turn, may drive me to it. It's a very simple story; I delivered, before a sort of society for the education of workmen, which Franzelius of course instituted immediately upon coming to the city, and at which every week honorary as well as working members assemble, a lecture on Darwinism, relating purely to natural history; I was quite thoughtless of the consequences, which were nevertheless very striking. Our city pastor, my worthy colleague in the school, where he gives religious instruction, took it so much amiss, that he instigated the principal to suggest to me to send in my resignation. As I felt neither desire nor obligation to do so, a report has been sent to the authorities, the answer to which is still delayed. I'm awaiting it very calmly. I'm not in the way of my other colleagues, the principal is well disposed toward me and only yielded reluctantly to the authority of our spiritual shepherd; if any change should occur in my position, my opponent's victory is not to be envied, as the favor of young and old will accompany me in my exile. So you see I'm beginning to make a career, though at first in the sense of the rolling stone that gathers no moss. But motion refreshes the blood, and a child of the world finds his home everywhere."

"But your wife?"

"She'd undoubtedly find it much harder to part from our friends, than I. Reginchen is as dear to her heart as a sister. For the rest, we two are so well satisfied with each other's society, that we could not long lack anything if we kept each other."

"True," he continued after a pause, as Marquard thoughtfully brushed the ashes from his cigar, "one thing I do lack, or rather my dear wife. It's strange, I was very fond of children, and a marriage without the fulfillment of this purpose of life always seemed to me a very sorrowful thing. Now that I experience the sorrow, I see that the deficiency brings its own compensation. There's no third person between husband and wife to divert their love; they're always alone, everything remains as it was during the honeymoon, which extends to years. I only wish it for Leah's sake, since she knows my old fondness for children and can't look upon Reginchen's blessings without a sigh. For my part, I could spend my life with what I have, and the natural desire for offspring would gradually die out entirely. How few can boast of having a wife who is a constant novelty, and yet as indispensable as the oldest, most cherished habit! We are not always of one mind, like our neighbors; Leah's blood is not so light and her thoughts stir it, and then she has hours of hard secret struggle, and the conclusions at which she arrives her honesty forces her to defend. But it's all the prettier and more touching, when she regains her bright cheerful moods. I can't help laughing when she doubts whether she's the right wife for me, whether I should not have been happier with a fair haired child like my little Frau God-mother." Marquard had risen and was pacing up and down the room puffing violently at his cigar. "And the old love?" he said after a pause.

"Rusted out, in defiance of the proverb! It becomes more and more clear to me that the whole affair, the sudden mad passion, was only a symptom of my general condition at the time and was melted out of my blood with other useless stuff by the nervous fever. Since that time I've never uttered her name, and have heard and seen no more of her than if her husband's estates were in Sirius."

"I wish they were," muttered the physician between his teeth, stamping indignantly on the floor. "I meant to keep it from you," he continued, as he again threw himself on the sofa beside Edwin. "But since there'll be no danger to you if she comes to a bad end some day--"

"She? Do you know anything about her? Have you seen her again?"

"I had the honor of kissing the countess' hand a few hours ago. Nay, I can even tell you, we should have blindly passed each other here, if your old friend and patron, the striped waistcoat,

who was idling around before the house, had not seen you at the upper window and instantly recognized you."

"Little Jean? But how in the world--"

"You shall hear all. As I said before, I wished to keep it from you, as I didn't know what impression it might make upon you, to suddenly find yourself so near your old love. You know I've always had a great regard for your wife, and have thought that no one could suit you better. I hoped you'd be drawn toward each other by degrees and so regain your full health. But when you began in such a heels-overhead fashion and were so suddenly betrothed, I, as an experienced psychologist, couldn't help shaking my head. Such speedy cures are rarely permanent; they denote injury to some other organ. But the way in which you speak of your domestic happiness, reassures me! I don't think I risk anything, when I say, your old friend, in spite of her countess' coronet, has made a worse match, than if she had taken the head master, Edwin."

"Unhappy? Poor thing! Does he ill treat her?"

"There!" said Marquard, "after all it will be better for me to keep what I know to myself. It seems to me you can't yet, with the necessary objectivity--"

"Don't torture me with delays and evasions!" exclaimed Edwin. "How could I remain perfectly unmoved, when I heard that a creature once so dear to me has such a hard fate to endure? But I assure you, even if I heard it from her own lips, no other thought would enter my mind than that an unhappy woman was lamenting her sufferings and had claims upon my brotherly sympathy. The time when she could have bound me with a hair of her head and forced me to do her will, is gone forever."

"Well then, listen," replied the physician. "Perhaps, as pious people say, it's a dispensation of Providence, that I've found you here, since I've been able to do nothing myself."

"A fortnight ago, I received a letter from a Count ----, who invited me to his castle for a consultation. An address was enclosed, which left me in no doubt that he was the richest of the counts of the name, and the lady in question no other than our old friend. You'll understand that I was curious to see her again. Adeline, who is far too generous to be jealous, eagerly urged me to go. I had sent most of my patients to various springs, so I set off at once and reached the place on the third day."

"The count had sent a carriage to meet me at the station, as it was a two hour's ride to the castle which was situated in the heart of the mountains. But the drive didn't seem long; on the way I renewed another old acquaintance, that of our little Jean, who's grown taller since his unlucky drinking bout, but is not much more mature. The lad still stares at the world with the same zealous boyish eyes he had in Jägerstrasse. I tried to pump him, but his information never went beyond the external magnificence that surrounded his master and mistress. To judge from his story, there was no happier, more enviable or charitable creature on the face of the earth, than his lady, the countess, and as she, according to his account drove out daily, rode horseback, or took long walks, never sparing herself or uttering any complaint, there didn't seem to be the least occasion for having summoned so distinguished a physician as your old friend, from so great a distance to feel her pulse."

"The first conversation I held with her husband certainly made a great change in my opinion. I found your successful rival an entirely different man from what I had imagined, a person really needing pity, who finds no enjoyment in all he possesses, money, lands, a noble name, and a long line of ancestors, and who is not happy though in the prime of life and surrounded by the utmost splendor."

"The style of the house I can only term ducal! A magnificent castle, forests such as I've seen only in Russia, a four-in-hand of which no prince need be ashamed, a kitchen and cellar that considerably enlarged the horizon even of the author of the 'Art of Eating.' The ten days I spent in the castle gave me an idea of the enviableness of the genuine old nobility, living regardless of expense and not yet infected by the industrial spirit of our times."

"The count himself, who has grown up amid these surroundings, is a gentleman from head to foot, every inch a cavalier, a man who can talk admirably about hunting and the ballet, and from whom, without the smallest conscientious scruple, one can win a few hundred louis d'ors at whist. That's however probably the best thing to be had of him; for in other respects--but perhaps I'm unjust, I could not help continually comparing him with you and asking myself--without wishing to flatter you--in what way he'd have got the start of you, if you had both appeared before our princess on equal terms. He seemed to me like a beautifully carved, richly gilded old picture frame, containing a cheap, poorly colored lithograph. But, as I said before, my old prejudice in your favor may have played me a trick."

"If it's only not something of the same kind, a comparison which must result to the disadvantage of the man she has chosen, that is affecting our countess', I instantly said to myself. But I soon perceived that your old relations had not the slightest connection with the matter."

"In the first place, the count who made various confessions, such as are heard only by a physician or priest, did not give the slightest intimation that an older affection might be at the

bottom of her mysterious conduct. He took me directly to his study and there gave me a detailed account of the four years of his married life. He knew that she became his wife without love. She had not attempted to conceal the fact from him for a moment, and, madly in love with her, as he was and unfortunately is to this hour, contented himself with the thought that he was no more repulsive to her than other men, toward whom she usually showed a coldness of which he cheerfully bore his share. The old, oft verified consolation that 'love will come after marriage,' and 'there's no ice which a real fire can't ultimately melt,' helped him through the short period of betrothal. Then came the strangeness of her new surroundings, her struggle with all sorts of hostile elements in his family, which to be sure resulted in a brilliant victory for the young plebeian, but which did not exactly win her to greater tenderness. But to his astonishment, even after marriage, the statue did not grow warm in his arms. Probably the worthy nobleman lacked many qualities essential to a Pygmalion. Yet he assured me that, despite her inflexible coldness and reserve, he had treated her with the utmost affection and spared her in every way.

"But now comes the strangest part of the tale. A child was born, a bright boy, yet even this most powerful of all mediators did not succeed in breaking the ice. Nay, it actually seemed as if the much desired happy event only estranged the young wife still more. After the child's birth, the countess, although she continued to live under the same roof, effected an entire separation from her husband, locked herself up in her own rooms, which he was never permitted to enter, and only spoke to him at table, at large entertainments, and at hunting parties, in which she took the most enthusiastic delight.

"All his efforts to break through this unnatural seclusion were in vain. Nay, she even extended her aversion to the child, and usually left it entirely to the nurse. But when, at seven months it suddenly fell sick with any apparent cause, she didn't leave its bed day or night and was evidently deeply affected by its death.

"But the expectations of her husband and the old countess that she would now be softened and feel disposed to resume the old relations again, were not verified. Nay, she began to seclude herself still more and to adopt an even more capricious mode of life. This went so far that she turned day into night and night into day, and only very seldom, on some unusual occasion, though always present at the hunting parties, did she appear among the guests in the castle. At such times there was nothing noticeable in her manner, she was cordial and even gay, and a stranger would have had no suspicion that anything unusual was taking place. When the count's mother died, she attended the funeral with every sign of sincere sorrow and held out her hand to her husband for the first time in a year. But directly after the body was interred, she again disappeared in her own rooms and continued the old hermit life.

"I asked the count whether he had not himself questioned her concerning the cause of this singular seclusion. He replied that he had done so more than once, but she would not speak frankly, and only said she perceived that she had been very foolish to marry him. She could not and would not reproach him, but it would be better for both if he would consent to a separation. She would never change her mind, never submit to live with him as his wife again. She was sorry for him, but she couldn't help it.

"In this resolution she remained firm, and neither kind measures nor harsh produced any effect. After lavishing prayers and endearments, anger overpowered him. The thought of being made a fool of by a woman, to whose obedience he had the best claim, made his brain whirl. In the madness of his pain and anger he burst into savage threats and cursed the hour when he first saw her. She looked at him with a perfect calmness and only replied: 'you're right to curse my existence; I curse it, too. Put an end to this sad story and set me free.'

"But this he could not resolve to do. He could not banish the thought that time must aid him. To give her a chance for reflection and perhaps to accustom himself to do without her, he spent six months in traveling and led a tolerably gay life in Paris and Berlin, but his love was not weakened nor did he find the smallest change in her on his return; If there was any alteration, it was for the worse; she was even colder, sterner, and more reserved toward him and more dissatisfied with life. Yet her bodily health had never been better, her sleep, her looks, her pleasure in hunting and even in dancing, when, during the winter, she was sometimes invited to neighboring castles. Now, however, even strangers couldn't fail to notice, that in the midst of the gayest mood her features would become terribly rigid and stony, and she either turned her horse and dashed off home, or left her partner standing on the ball room floor, and without the slightest reason or excuse ordered her horses to be harnessed. There were a great many discussions and consultations about the matter; the family physician, an old and tolerably skillful man, with whom I speedily came to an understanding, shrugged his shoulders; one medical notability after another, upon being consulted, could not even obtain an interview, or, like the christian physician in the harem, be permitted to feel the beautiful patient's pulse through a hole in the wall; so matters were as hopeless as they well could be, and the fear that monomania or some serious derangement of the mind was imminent, was unfortunately only too well justified.

"A lady who had known the count in Berlin, and in whose family I had once been successful in curing a patient, mentioned my name to him. So I came to the castle, and when on the following day I sent in my name to the countess, simply as an old acquaintance, who had accidentally wandered here while on a journey and merely wished to present himself to her, I cherished the brightest hopes of penetrating the secret, since I was at least admitted, a favor which had been obstinately refused to all the other physicians who had been summoned.

"But I was very much mistaken. She received me as frankly and cordially as in Jägerstrasse, seemed to remember every incident of those days, down to the magical feast in the Pagoda, which was the last time I saw her. She even inquired about you; you were doubtless married and no longer lived in Berlin; then she wished to know what had happened to the other guests at our bacchanalian revel at Charlottenburg. I clearly perceived that she listened to my answers absently, not as if she were giving herself airs, like a great lady who wishes to awe a plebeian, but with an expression of profound weariness, numbness, and joylessness, such as I have seen in the first stages of mental disorder, or in the half lucid intervals of incurable lunatics. I can truly say, that rarely have I so earnestly desired to be a medical genius, which--between ourselves--I'm not. She's a beautiful creature, you've no idea what she has become; I can easily understand, that a man who has once possessed her, would rather die than consent to a separation. If I say this, who knows tolerably well what beautiful women are, and that in the end one gets tired of even the fairest, it means something. She probably perceived what an impression she made upon me, and that I asked how *she* had fared with real friendly solicitude. 'Dear Herr Doctor,' said she, suddenly rising as if to close the interview, 'I know why you're here. The count wishes to learn from you whether I'm still in possession of my five senses, or if I run any risk of losing one or more of them. Give yourself no anxiety about me, I'm as well as a fish in water, and what I lack to be able to enjoy my life as thoughtlessly as most other women, is not to be had from an apothecary or discovered anywhere between heaven and earth. The count has doubtless told you that I should like to go away from here, and be free again. If you could persuade him to consent to this, it would be the best thing you could do and I should be sincerely grateful to you. Besides, it's more for his sake than my own, that I should like to be separated from him. I pity him, as I should pity a living man bound to a corpse. Just feel how cold! She held out her hand to me; it was really cold enough to startle one. 'Yes, yes,' said she, 'it's always so; I wish all was over. But what's done can't be undone.'

"Then she talked of indifferent subjects until I took leave, and the two or three times that I afterwards saw her at dinner, she always wore the same expression, of immovable cold insensibility to every joy. During my stay at the castle, I fished for news like a member of the secret police, questioned all her servants, and even thrust my nose into things of a tolerably disagreeable nature. In vain. The only person who perhaps might tell me something, her waiting maid, is as silent as the grave. I'm just as wise as before, and when this afternoon I raised the beautiful hand to my lips in farewell, it was no whit warmer than at my first visit.

"The count, who has some business to do here, wanted to drive me to the railway station himself. I could not conceal from him that he would be merely throwing away his money, if he consulted any more of my colleagues. A slight hint I gave, that he might perhaps regret it if he insisted upon living under the same roof with her, that the sickness which was impending might be averted by leaving her entirely to herself, by a real separation, threw him into such a rage that I had great difficulty in even partially soothing him.

"He had confidence in me, and I was forced to promise to invent some pretext for commencing a correspondence with the countess, in order to keep myself in some degree conversant with her condition. But these are all useless expedients. I see clearly that there's but one hope of solving this strange enigma, and--in some way--discovering where we are. There's but one person who has any influence over her; it dawned upon me like an inspiration, as soon as I saw him again. This one person is--yourself! And now make up your mind, first, whether it's your duty to set this poor woman's head straight, which some crotchet has disturbed and bids fair to completely derange; secondly, whether you can trust yourself to undertake it without danger to yourself or a relapse into your old infatuation."

He had approached Edwin, and in spite of the gathering darkness, was trying to read his face. After a time, as no answer came, he continued. "But whatever you decide to do, you must do quickly. I've seen cases where a state of mind that apparently gave no cause for uneasiness, and resembled intellectual palsy rather than approaching insanity, would suddenly at some trifle, change to most violent frenzy. I think that you might then be unable to shake off the sense of a certain responsibility, if you should now say: 'she's dead to me, it's not my business to bring stranger's wives to their senses.' You see, Edwin, I'm as sure as I am of my own existence, that neither he nor she would tell any third person--no matter if the dignity and wisdom of a whole faculty were united in him--what the poor wife would probably confide to her old friend. The story about the child doesn't seem to me exactly straight, but no one except herself can give any explanation of it. Courage, Edwin! If she were in a burning house, you would not hesitate to carry her out, even at the of being a little singed. Well, it won't be so bad as that. What torments these poor, good, foolish creatures, whether Catholics or Protestants, invent! what secret vows, castigations, penances, and imaginary duties they impose upon themselves dragging their poor bodies painfully about, and torturing their fellow mortals! I could tell stories, of how I've now and then cured such a distorted mind by a few sound remarks, though I can't vie with you in logic. But here there's danger in delay. I shall set out for home to-night, but the count will return to the castle in time for supper; he has guests, some cousins and neighbors, with whom he's going to hunt to-morrow. If you decide to go, I'll tell him I've accidentally met a colleague here, who has fortunately appeared in the very nick of time, and who is an authority in psychiatry, and that he can't do better than to place the case in his hands. I know you've never seen each other, and little Jean respects you too much not to keep his mouth shut if I whisper a word in his ear, I hear the count's voice below. Shall I call him or not?"

Edwin rose. "I know it will be useless, perhaps even harmful," he said in a hollow tone. "I have power over her? She must then have changed very much. But no matter. As the case now stands, you're right; I should reproach myself bitterly if I should keep on my way and afterwards hear that some misfortune had happened. I'll only make one request, that you'll tell the count who I am, the same man who once loved his wife and whose brother--oh! Marquard, that's hardest of all! To be under the same roof with the man who was the cause of Balder's death!"

"For all that he's done to you or anybody else, he's now atoning in a purgatory as terrible as one could wish for his worst enemy," replied the physician. "I'm no hero of virtue, my lad, but I should like to singe the thin locks on the count's brow with my coals of fire. But you're right, we needn't be afraid to play with our cards on the table. If he refuses, we must try some other way. But from what I know of him, he's above the common fear of ghosts and will welcome with open arms any spectre that will aid him in regaining his wife."

He rushed out of the room, and Edwin remained alone, a prey to the most contradictory emotions.

CHAPTER III.

He hastily lighted a candle, took a small portfolio out of his traveling satchel and wrote a few lines to inform Mohr where he was to be found, in case his friend did not prefer to await his return, which he hoped would be speedy, at the hotel. "It would be best," he concluded, "for you to follow me at once, and take me away from the castle, where the duties of friendship and a vain hope of being useful, may perhaps detain me longer than I desire." He had just folded this note, to leave it in the hotel, and was looking at his letter to Leah, irresolute whether or not to open it and add a postscript, when he heard steps on the stairs and directly after Marquard entered with the count.

His first emotion was that of surprise, at seeing the very face he had imagined whenever he thought of his rival--the insipid regularity of the features, the haughty pose of the head, the hair already thin and streaked with grey, while a thick, carefully trimmed beard covered the cheeks and chin, the whole appearance indicating the scion of a noble house and the heir of large estates. But the bright light that fell upon his countenance revealed also traces of secret suffering, which weighed down the eyelids and compressed the lips. The painful suspense with which Edwin had awaited the man he had so long avoided, instantly disappeared. It cost him no effort to take the hand which his old antagonist frankly extended, and he returned its pressure without any feeling of bitterness.

"We both know enough of each other to meet, even at the first interview, as old acquaintances," said the count. "Our friend Doctor Marquard, has told you the sad circumstances which induced me to ask his advice. Unfortunately, he has been forced to confirm my fear that his science has no means of reaching this obstinate disease. In such cases we usually take refuge in all sorts of miraculous remedies, and I confess I'm not sufficiently free from superstition, to refuse to consult, if necessary, some old astrologist, or some woman who deals in herbs. But before proceeding to such extreme measures, I should like to try a better remedy. I know you were on very intimate terms with the countess before she became my wife. She told me at the time, that there was no man for whom she felt more esteem, nay reverence, than for yourself; perhaps for that very reason another man would inform anyone, rather than you, of his domestic unhappiness. But I believe you to be a man of honor, Herr Doctor, and therefore incapable of entering my house with selfish and malevolent joy to meet the woman who has not made your rival happy. Besides, my state of mind is such that I no longer care for myself, that I would risk everything to avert, if possible, the terrible misfortune that threatens my wife. I shall consider it a great proof of friendship, if you will go with me and after watching the patient for a time, give me your opinion of her. If you should succeed--" He paused and turned away. "However," he continued in a much more formal tone, "I've no excuse whatever for asking such a favor, and in case your time should not permit--"

"I'm entirely ready to go with you, Herr Count," replied Edwin. "But I repeat what I've already told my friend--I go without any delusion that I can exert any influence over the countess' mind. As in the old days, in spite of her great confidence, she remained a mystery to me, I fear that now, too, all my psychology will be baffled by the same problem. But precisely because I stand in such a peculiar relation toward you, you shall at least not be permitted to doubt my good will."

He took his hat and cane, passed the strap of his traveling satchel over his shoulder, and opened the door. The three men walked down stairs in silence side by side.

An elegant two seated hunting carriage was standing before the door of the hotel; the long limbed young man in a green livery embroidered with silver, who held the reins of the fiery horses which impatiently pawed the ground, fixed his round blue eyes with embarrassed delight on his old acquaintance, who nodded kindly to him as he came out of the house. Marquard was right, little Jean's body had grown, but the rosy beardless face remained unchanged. Edwin handed to the landlord for mailing, the letter he had written Leah, gave him the necessary information about Mohr's note, pressed Marquard's hand again and sprang into the carriage. The count followed, took the reins from Jean who sat behind, and waving his whip to the physician, spoke to the horses, which impatiently dashed forward with the light vehicle.

"You'll make allowance for me, and pardon me if I seem silent or abstracted," said the count, as soon as they had turned from the paved streets into the softer forest road. "I've two new horses, which I'm trying for the first time, and I must keep them well in hand. They're full blooded Trakehners, but still somewhat young and untrained. Do you take any interest in horses?"

"Yes, an interest, but I'm so ignorant that I should be laughed at by all connoisseurs. The Great Elector's steed on the long bridge is to me the crown of his race, and only now and then I find among brewer's horses a specimen, that distantly reminds me of this ideal."

"That breed is scarcely used now, except for certain purposes," replied the count gravely. "There's even a prejudice that muscular strength bears a necessary relation to coarseness. The capacity to use strength is the principal thing, and for that, thick fetlocks and broad chests are not always requisite. Ho! ho!"--he shouted, as the horse on the right did not know what to do with himself in his wanton caracoles. He made the beautiful animals walk for some distance, standing erect as he watched their pace with the eye of a connoisseur. When they had grown more quiet and yielded to his firm hand, he resumed his seat beside Edwin, and allowed them to trot.

Field after field, and forest after forest, tiny villages and lonely huts flitted past them; the air grew no cooler, but the earth grew darker, and the sky lighter. The horses dashed onward with their silent load; the deep stillness of the summer night enwrapped them; over the black tree tops hung the tender crescent of the moon, and now and then a flash of light lit up the firmament, as if from a distant thunder cloud; a dreamy, quiet mood stole over our friend, the subdued happiness of a half dormant soul; in such a state we do not take either joys or sorrows seriously and are scarcely surprised at the occurrence of the most fabulous things. For years he had not uttered Toinette's name; her image had become as dim in his memory as if she were no more real than a character in some book of fiction; and now he was driving toward her, who doubtless had as little expectation of such a meeting as he himself had entertained an hour ago. He wondered if he should find her so changed and why they fancied he would perform a miracle by acting upon her strange moods, he who felt that all the ties that had once bound him to her, were so utterly sundered.

He was surprised at the entire absence of anxiety with which he looked forward to the moment when he was to see her again. He rejoiced in this calmness. "If it had been an elementary power, to which I submitted in those days," he thought, "the poison would now seethe in my blood again. Though the iron be separated from the magnet a hundred years, it quickly becomes conscious of its approach. True, happiness has changed me much since then, so far as a man's nature can be changed and I am calmed and strengthened. What will Leah say, when I tell her about it!"

He could not forbear to wonder at the singular circumstances, which had decreed that the most unprejudiced witness of those past events, should be the very one to recognize him and thereby restore to his mistress her old friend. The old question of the connection between earthly destinies once more rose before his mind. "Is this an intentional exercise of some will that rules and guides our souls, or do we separate and meet again like the waves of the sea, which obey only the ebb and flow of the tide?"

Again he left these questions unsolved and became wholly absorbed in the enjoyment of the moment. His companion did not disturb him. The duties of a driver claimed his attention more and more, for the moon grew brighter and the fiery young animals often shied and reared at the sight of some, to them, mysterious object. For a time Edwin closed his eyes and enjoyed the cool night air which refreshed him like a bath, after the toilsome walk he had taken during the day. When, roused by a sudden jolt of the carriage, he again opened his eyes, he was amazed at the wondrous beauty of the scene. Before him, probably at the distance of a fifteen minutes drive, on a bold height appeared the battlements and pinnacles of a castle, to which a broad wide avenue led through the dark forests. The roofs glittered in the moonlight as if coated with silver, and when the wind moved the vanes, lines of light darted from their sharp edges like falling stars. All the windows seemed to be dark, no living thing seemed to be moving within; it was like some enchanted palace. But when the light carriage, despite the rising ground, had traversed the avenue through the forest at full speed, and entered the courtyard through a lofty portal, flanked by two griffens bearing coats of arms, there was a confusion of voices, mingled with the barking of dogs, lackeys bearing torches rushed out of the lofty and brilliantly lighted hall to meet the two gentlemen, a portly butler in a black coat and white cravat appeared at the carriage door and helped the stranger to descend, while the count threw the reins to a stable boy and said to the head groom, in excellent English, a few words about the first trial of the new horses. Then he too sprang out of the carriage and overtook his guest on the upper step.

"My dear Herr Doctor," said he, putting his arm through Edwin's with condescending familiarity, "I welcome you on the threshold of my home. I hope you may remain here some time, and only regret"--here he lowered his voice--"that I cannot present you to the countess to-day. She has entirely withdrawn from all our evening assemblies, and only occasionally appears at dinner. I hope the visit of an old friend may induce her to make an exception in his favor to-morrow. For to-day, you must be satisfied with masculine society. Have the gentlemen come down?" he asked, turning to the butler who, holding a silver candlestick, was preceding the gentlemen up the already brilliantly lighted marble staircase.

"Five minutes ago. Your Excellency."

"Then we'll not keep them waiting. But perhaps, Herr Doctor, before we sit down to supper, you'll wish to retire to your room a moment."

Edwin smiled. "I'm not able to make an elaborate toilette," he said glancing at his traveling satchel, which a servant was carrying after him. "You must apologize to your guests, Herr Count, for picking up a simple wayfarer and bringing him under your stately roof."

"No ceremony among friends," replied the count, still with the same immovably courteous face. "You'll find us too entirely *sans gêne*; some of my neighbors have ridden over in their hunting suits, as we have a deer hunt early to-morrow morning and I hope you'll give us the pleasure of your company on the occasion."

He did not wait for a reply, but approached the large folding doors, which were hastily thrown open by two footmen, and which admitted them to the broad, carpeted ante-room of the first story. With an easy, friendly gesture, the count invited Edwin to precede him, and they entered the lofty dining hall.

CHAPTER IV.

Several slender tawny greyhounds came bounding toward them and completed the illusion that they were entering a banqueting hall of the *rococo* times. The room was spacious and lofty, of an oblong shape, with rounded corners adorned in the richest style of the last century with gilded stucco-work and huge pier glasses which reflected the light of the candles in the large glass chandelier and the glittering silver on the table. At the other end of the apartment a glass door opened upon a balcony, and this, like the two windows on each side, afforded a view of the park, whose majestic trees towered above the long clipped hedges and arbors. Nothing recalled the present century except an elegant piano, at which a young man sat who failed to hear the entrance of the master of the house and his guest, amid the noise made by his dashing passages.

The others, who appeared to have been waiting some time, instantly turned toward the door, and one after another was greeted by the count and introduced to Edwin. Suddenly the musician paused, started up and with great cordiality, hurried toward the count. He was a handsome young man, in whom, despite his civilian's dress, the cavalry officer was recognizable at the first glance, and whom the count introduced as his cousin, Count Gaston. He seemed to feel perfectly at home, and even at the table, where with amicable familiarity he drew Edwin down by his side, almost wholly supported the conversation, which as usual turned upon women, horses, and hunting.

When the champagne, which was not spared, began to heat the brains and loosen the tongues of even the quieter members of the company, the young gentleman turned to his neighbor, who had hitherto been a silent listener, and said in a low tone:

"There! I've done my share by dint of friction, in putting some enthusiasm into these wooden images and now the champagne must keep it up. I hope, my dear sir, you don't suppose I enjoy this insipid gabble. But what would you have? See how my cousin, the count, sits at his own table with a face like the statue of the Commandant. If I don't victimize myself and talk nonsense, the supper will be as tiresome and silent as a funeral feast. So I must introduce subjects that amuse the gentlemen, even though they may be terribly out of taste. But now let's renew our acquaintance. Of course you don't remember our meeting a few years ago in Berlin, at the rooms of one of my intimate friends, young Baron L., to whom you were acting as private tutor, while he was preparing to pass his examination for one of the higher government offices. He's now Secretary of Legation at Constantinople, and I hope does honor to your teaching. I am still what I was then, a man who learns nothing in any school, except that of life. There must be such odd sticks! But I can tell you, I no longer sit quite at the bottom of the class in my school; for instance, I have long since left behind the tasks at which our worthy companions are perspiring.

You've been introduced to them all after the ridiculous fashion of murmuring a name. Allow me to make you better acquainted with individuals. My left hand neighbor, who is addressed as Herr Colonel, is, as you've doubtless already supposed from his prominent cheek bones and peculiar accent, of Slavonian descent; a Pole of the good old race of Oginsky, who, *as he says*, having been compelled through a disagreement with the Russian authorities, to enter the Austrian service, was promoted in the Italian war to the rank of colonel; then, *as he says*, honorably discharged in consequence of a wound in the foot. He has already stayed several months with my cousin, as, *so he says*, a civil office has been offered him in France, and he's only obliged to wait for his Polish papers before becoming a naturalized citizen of that country. As he's an excellent judge of horses, a tolerably good huntsman, and an adept in all games of chance, my cousin has no reason to doubt the existence of these papers, and I of course still less. His next neighbor, the elegant gentleman of uncertain age, uncertain glance, and very certain doubtful movements of the fingers, which suggest great skill in tricks with cards, is, to speak frankly, what we call in plain prose, a blackleg, a Parisian acquaintance of my cousin, whom he invited here and can't shake off again, much as I've urged him to do so. But he seems to have his reasons for handling this Chevalier de Marsan--the only person here with whom I never exchange a syllable--with gloved hands, while I would show him the door without ceremony. My dear doctor, there are more doubtful personages between heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy. A real antidote to this corrosive sublimate pill, which I am daily compelled to swallow, is the stout gentleman on the other side of my cousin, a plebeian owner of an ancient estate, who married the daughter of an immensely rich banker; his wife never appears among us, probably because he's ashamed of her manners, which are not exactly suited to a drawing room; but nevertheless, as you see, he's an excellent man, an admirable landlord, a great huntsman, and a lover of old wine and old stories, in short, the most appreciative of auditors for my witticisms. You've heard how he can laugh. I once made a bet that I could make him laugh till he rolled under the table, merely by telling stories of great eaters, and to be sure, at the end of an hour, he lay gasping on the floor; we were actually afraid of a fit of apoplexy. Beside this harmless mortal and directly opposite you, sit two no less worthy specimens of the creatures of God, who, however, can hardly be very proud of these, his images. Did you ever see two people so exactly alike? They look as if they'd just stepped out of Pletsch, don't they? The same short, fair hair, the same low brows, small noses, close cropped brushes on the upper lip, and solemn faces when everyone else is roaring with laughter, which proves them very dull of comprehension. When they stand up, you'll see that both are very tall men. Moreover, these same brothers, Thaddäus and Matthäus von der Wende are noblemen of a most ancient family. It's seldom that twins have so much fraternal affection. Each is perfectly satisfied with half the usual portion of common sense, and carefully guards against becoming wiser than the other. We call them the Siamese twins, although they're not united by means of any corporal bond, and of course there can be no question of an intellectual one. However, they're rich and well bred and never annoy anyone. Next comes a short, rather high shouldered gentleman about fifty, with a white tie and crafty, humble smile, who says little, eats a great deal, and hears everything. Don't get his ill will, he's a piece of old family furniture, and was the physician, confidant, etc., of the late countess; he is called Dr. Basler, and I'd as readily trust my person to his physic, as my reputation to his tongue. Beside him sits the steward, who'll join the hunting party to-morrow and always drinks with us the night before, and the silent gentleman on your other side is my cousin's private secretary, an honest, clever soul, but afflicted with an unfortunate hobby. He's trying to find the secret of perpetual motion. There, now! you know the people assembled within this ancient house--even to the crown jewel," he added with a sigh, "which unfortunately disdains to shine except on gala days."

"Are you speaking of the countess? I knew her several years ago, before her marriage."

"And have not seen her since? Then you'll not recognize her. I confess that upon first sight she made a great impression upon me. I was prejudiced against the marriage, which I thought was a rash step on the part of my dear cousin, after the style of his former *liaisons*. Unequal marriages always have their difficulties, although of course I'm sufficiently enlightened not to believe in 'blue blood.' But we see every day, how uncomfortable it is for people of position to receive into their circle a worthy little goose who feels 'honored' to live under the shadow of a pedigree centuries old, or a pretentious heiress, or any of the ordinary people whom it's all very well to love, but who are too good or too bad to marry. It's easiest to get along with actresses, opera singers--or for aught I care, ballet dancers. They at least possess style, *savoir faire*, self-possession, and know us well enough not to think us wholly unlike other human beings. But a ballet master's daughter from a little provincial town--I didn't hear of the princely paternity until afterwards--I confess I was furious. I love this family seat, and have enjoyed spending a few months of every year here, away from the gayety of the capital. Now, I thought, I should be compelled to see a *roturière* do the honors. But after the first interview my feelings were entirely changed. Whoever her mother may have been, she at least didn't belie the father's blood. And yet--at that time she was but in the bud compared to the centifolia into which she has since expanded. Pardon me if I threaten to become poetical. Between ourselves--or even not between ourselves, since it's public talk--my unfortunate passion for my beautiful cousin, which is as hopeless as if I were in love with the Venus of Milo, has had so great an influence upon the development of my character, that I can truly say I'm no more like the man you met at little Baron L's., than an Ionic column is like a hedge pole."

"Your poetic fervor, Herr Count, has at least the merit of a certain impressiveness of style. But in what consists, if I may ask--"

"You're making sport of me, my honored sir. I still seem to you a frivolous nobleman, a child of the world, with whom a grave man of your stamp can at the utmost only chat away an hour at table. But learn to know me better. This lady first opened my eyes to the fact that the real charm of life consists in something forever unattainable, a yearning that is ever unfulfilled. Are you familiar with Richard Wagner's music? What I've just said of life he has striven to suggest in art. For in what does the secret of melody consist? Take Mozart, Glück, the Italian composers--there everything is complete, every piece has its beginning, its middle and its end, exactly like ordinary love affairs. We are allured, we enjoy, and we grow weary--*voilà tout*, and if the music or the girl is beautiful, after a time we're again allured--a new aria, a new ecstasy--and so on indefinitely till the world tires us and our hair grows grey. This is the usual course of life and art. But now think of a hopeless passion, such as I've felt for years. I feel the same that I hear when I listen to Tristram and Yseult--eternal longing, yearning and sighing, never repose and satisfaction, a mere analysis of dissonances, and withal a tumult of ecstasy in all the instruments, in which at last, as in a dream of love, sight and hearing disappear and we're fairly beside ourselves with restless longing, infinite melody, and voluptuous exhaustion. This is the secret of the success this great man has obtained--emotion increased to the utter exhaustion of all strength and constantly subduing the poor, coarse senses--appetite continually excited without being satisfied in the usual way--a sort of pathetic cancan, a musical hasheesh intoxication. And even in the choice of the text, the moral qualities of the characters, what consummate art is shown in the avoidance of everything palpable, simple, and true to nature; everything of which the ordinary human mind can form some distinct conception! Take Don Giovanni--there you know exactly where you are. From the peasant to the nobleman, from the light minded peasant girl to the noble lady--the characters are perfectly natural, people with flesh and bones, and red blood in their veins. I know them as well as if I'd lived in the same house with them. The characters of Wagner's music, on the contrary--why you might see the same opera ten times and be no whit wiser about these swan knights, gods, and flying Dutchmen, than at the first representation. I call this boundless characterization, and it supplements the boundless melody. And to enjoy such an endless masterpiece, and in the meantime to brood over an endless passion, the one as hopeless and alluring as the other--"

The conversation, which also threatened to become "boundless," was here interrupted by the master of the house, who rose, bowed to his guests, and with a courteous wave of the hand invited them to follow him into the little drawing room adjoining the dining hall. Here there were several card tables, a magnificent silver bowl containing punch, several open boxes of cigars, and other paraphernalia for smoking. While the count, with the Polish colonel and French chevalier, were preparing to begin a game of hazard, in which no one else seemed disposed to join, the fat landed proprietor became absorbed in a conversation on agriculture with the steward, now and then asking the silent secretary for his opinion, which the latter always gave with the same grave bend of the head, often refilling his glass from the silver bowl. The inseparable brothers Thaddäus and Matthäus had stationed themselves behind the card players and gravely watched the alternations of luck. Count Gaston had returned to the dining hall and seated himself at the piano, evidently in the hope that his neighbor at table would follow and allow him to give a musical commentary on his knowledge of art and life. But Edwin was compelled to forego this instructive pleasure; for the little man with the high shoulders and clever old face, whom Gaston had introduced as the family physician, approached him and asked in his low courteous voice, if he was not the son of one of his college classmates who had suddenly abandoned the profession of law to marry a very beautiful wife. He had been struck by the resemblance before he heard the name. When Edwin answered in the affirmative, the little man became very confidential, and after inquiring very particularly about his old friend, acquainted the son with his own circumstances.

When a student of theology, somewhat advanced in life, he had entered the household to assist in educating the young count, who was then about six years old. The countess, already a widow, had taken a fancy to the clever man, who was better versed in every other department than that of theology--a fancy, which in spite of the tutor's insignificant appearance, seemed to have ripened into a still warmer feeling. Not a syllable on the part of the discreet speaker, only a peculiar glance from his piercing eyes conveyed this inference. As his prospect of advancement in his real profession became poorer and poorer, an old predilection for physical science obtained a stronger hold upon his mind; the idea of going to Berlin occurred to him, and he studied anatomy there for several years, absorbed all sorts of surgical knowledge, and at last, as the countess would not consent to dispense with his services any longer, returned to the castle with the title of doctor somewhat doubtfully obtained, but a most undoubted salary as physician-in-ordinary, as his former pupil had left home some time before to complete his education by foreign travel.

He had understood the art of maintaining his position, even after the death of his patroness; he had sustained it principally it appeared, by a marriage with the countess' by no means youthful waiting maid and *confidante*. He spoke of this union with a lofty and sarcastic smile, that like many other things in the clever man, greatly disgusted Edwin. The gentleman seemed to perceive the impression his confidential communications were making on his hearer. "My dear Herr Doctor," said he, "you're still a young man, and have always been independent. You can scarcely imagine how the habit of accommodating one's self to others, and not being over rigorous, will in time degrade a man who originally is by no means a scoundrel. Ah me! when I think of the days when, with your dead father, I still worked toward our so-called ideals! Yet he died a bookkeeper, and I've written prescriptions in which I felt no faith. The longer one lives, the more plainly one perceives that there are very few mortals so happy as never to be placed in a

false position, and that since it's a man's duty to preserve his life, there's but a single weakness that dishonors him: to believe what is false to be true. A pastor who assumes the duties of his parish a disbeliever in revealed religion, and gradually allows the voice of reason to grow weaker and ends by accepting the tenets of the faith he preaches, or a physician who begins the practice of his profession by disbelief in his own powers and ends by using his salves and plasters with a look of grave importance not wholly assumed--they falsify themselves and are utterly contemptible. But he, who in a world that is only too willing to be cheated, does not befool honest individuals, but swindles men in the gross, and meantime is ready at any moment, like the Roman augur, to laugh in unison with other clever men, seems to me to play his part as a weak mortal very tolerably. There was a famous Berlin doctor here yesterday, Herr Marquard, who's perhaps known to you by reputation. He performs on a large scale, what I practice here on a small one, and the fact of his being more learned is rather troublesome to him than otherwise, since each individual case gives him scores of things to reflect upon. But he's a clever man, and after the first fifteen minutes we no longer tried to impose upon each other. The gentleman was no more successful with the young countess than I, but she didn't make him feel her contempt so keenly as she did my insignificant self. Well, as you see, my back is naturally more bent than my colleague's. I can take more on my high shoulders."

He laughed softly, but seemed surprised when Edwin's only reply to his extreme outspokenness was a curt: "Every one is entitled to his own opinions!" During the doctor's cautiously whispered speech, our friend had glanced from one member of the company to the other and said to himself: "These are the people with whose companionship she has been obliged to be satisfied for four long years!" The thought aroused within him an unspeakable sense of oppression, sorrow, and indignation. He took advantage of a pause in the card playing, to approach the count, and pleading that he was fatigued by his pedestrian tour, to take leave of him for the night. The count looked at him absently a moment, as if he were some stranger whose face he could not instantly recall, then pressed his hand with marked cordiality and apologized for having enjoyed so little of his society that evening. He hoped to make up for the loss on the morrow. Then he motioned the butler to show the guest to his room, and returned to his game, in which fortune, to judge from the piles of gold before his companions, turned her back on him as usual.

CHAPTER V.

The room to which Edwin was conducted, was situated in a wing of some considerable length, a modern addition to the old castle, which had completely destroyed the symmetry of the rear of the edifice. The windows looked out upon the park, and on the other side a small staircase led down into the courtyard, which was surrounded by domestic offices, so that from thence the apartments in this one story wing could be reached without using the stairs and corridors of the castle.

The sun must have found free admittance to Edwin's room all day, for an oppressive atmosphere greeted him, which was not improved even after he had thrown both windows wide open. But under any circumstances, it would have been long ere he could have attempted to go to sleep. The events of the day and the anticipation of the morrow quickened his pulses. He went to the window and gazed out into the garden, where the lofty jet of a fountain fell into a basin lined with shells. The windows and balcony of the dining hall projected in softly rounded lines from the facade, now but dimly illuminated by a moon that was about to sink below the horizon. The remainder of the edifice lay in shadow, but in the other wing of the castle two lofty windows in the second story were brightly lighted. He did not doubt for a moment that *she* occupied them. How many evenings he had gazed up at her windows in Jägerstrasse; now he found her here, once more in the count's rooms, this time of her own free will, and yet--

Voices in the corridor aroused him from the reverie into which this comparison had thrown him. The other guests were retiring to their rooms; Edwin distinctly recognized the different voices as they bade each other good night, and learned by the uniform double step, that the brothers Thaddäus and Matthäus occupied the room on his right, while that on his left was assigned to the fat landed proprietor. His right hand neighbors were perfectly quiet, and if their thoughts were as much alike as their faces, they could not have profited by any exchange. The stout gentleman was more troublesome. After spending half an hour in undressing, during which he whistled, muttered to himself, and several times, as if recollecting some story he had heard in the evening, burst into a roar of laughter, he at last threw himself on his bed so heavily, that it creakingly threatened to break under the burden, and almost instantly began to snore so persistently, and in such a variety of tones, that Edwin, who had been about to undress, renounced all idea of doing so and determined to spend the night in an arm-chair at the open window.

But even this became at last unendurable, and moreover the moist breath of the fountain allured him out into the silent night. He left the room without his hat and soon descended the little staircase and opened the door, which he found fastened with only a light bolt.

The courtyard lay as silent and deserted in the faint glimmering moonlight, as the garden on the opposite side. In order to reach the latter, he was obliged to pass around the whole wing, the stables, and the servant's rooms. As he glided by the little windows, he saw a dim light twinkling in one and involuntarily paused before it. He could look into a narrow chamber, where a young girl was sleeping, not in her bed, but on a stool before a low table, with her head leaning against the wall. A lantern beside her revealed her round, pretty face and graceful figure. She did not seem to have fallen asleep over her work, but while waiting for something or some one. The step pausing before her window roused her. She started up, hastily pushed her hair back from her forehead, and exclaimed as if still half asleep: "Is it you, Your Excellency?" Suddenly seeming to distinguish the strange face, she uttered a low exclamation, and upset the lantern. Then all was still.

Edwin walked on, wondering which of his table companions was the happy man expected. But when he passed through the courtyard gate into the park, all these thoughts vanished, and the magic of the silent night took complete possession of his senses.

He rested for some time on a bench near the fountain, cooling his hot brow in the spray that filled the air around him; then walked aimlessly down the principal avenue, and at last plunged into the more secluded portions of the park, where only a faint glimmer of moonlight pierced through the branches of the tall trees. Neatly kept paths ran in various directions, here and there stood a bench, a summer house, an umbrella-like tent, all tokens that the wanderer was not in the wild forest. Even the stream he now found, flowed between low, regularly formed banks, and was crossed at intervals by small bridges. Edwin turned into the narrow gravel walk beside the noiseless water, but the brook suddenly made a wide curve and ran under a high palisade, which surrounded a pond. At this spot the woods were less dense, and the stars were mirrored in the smooth surface of the little lake. Edwin walked around the enclosure, hoping to find an entrance. He thought of a bath here was tempting, and he saw at the end of the pond, under some tall shrubbery, a little building that was evidently used for this purpose. But a small entrance gate, which after some search he at last found, was securely locked, and he was about to give up his intention and return to the path, when he perceived a place in the palisade where the stakes stood so far apart that a deer, in case of necessity, could pass through. Urged on by his desire to bathe, he endeavored to widen the hole, and at last with some difficulty, succeeded in forcing his way through the opening.

He now went directly to the little building, but found it locked. The shore here, which was overgrown with bushes and marshy plants, was not suitable for bathing, but the opposite side, where a meadow sloped gently down to the water, seemed very well adapted to the purpose, and he bent his steps toward it. A feeling of strange delight stole over him, as he walked on through the soft night air, beside the still, dark water, from which no sound was heard save the melancholy croaking of a frog. A few tall trees stood at the end of the little lake, and some low bushes clustered around their roots. He determined to undress behind this natural screen.

But he had not even commenced, when he saw on the opposite shore dark figures approaching along the path by which he himself had come. As they neared the palisade, he also heard low voices, which grew more audible as they reached the little gate. Directly after a key rattled in the lock, and he saw two muffled figures enter the enclosure, which was lighted by the moonbeams--female figures wrapped in long black cloaks with hoods--who, after securing the gate behind them, turned toward the little bathing house.

He fairly gasped for breath, and began to consider whether he should have time and opportunity to retreat unobserved through the opening in the fence. But this seemed to be a dangerous venture. From the spot where he stood, to the low bushes that grew along the enclosure, there was not a tree or shrub to conceal him. And if he should be discovered--in what a light would his nocturnal entrance into this carefully guarded precinct appear!

But before he could think of any other expedient, all time for reflection was over. The door of the bathing house was opened and a slender white figure, whose unbound hair fell over her arms and shoulders, appeared on the upper step of the little flight of stairs that led into the lake. She raised her head and looked up for a moment toward the night sky, which had become slightly overcast, then let the bathing cloak wrapped around her fall, and stooped to the water to wet her forehead and breast, the next instant she sprang down the steps, disappeared a few seconds and then, shaking her dripping locks, rose to the surface.

Her companion appeared at the doorway and called out to her, Edwin could not distinguish her words but the bather replied in a smothered voice. Then both were silent. The swimmer divided the water with long, steady strokes, at intervals raising her head and shoulders above the surface to shake back the thick hair from her brow. Her face looked dazzling white in the dim light of the setting moon, but the middle of the pond, to which she had swum, was too far from the trees on the meadow, for any one standing there to obtain a distinct view of her features. Thus the mysterious nixie swam up and down the lake ten or twelve times, in the profoundest silence. Her companion had retired to the little house, and none but she seemed to be breathing in the forest solitude. Not a zephyr stirred the surface of the pond, not a leaf fell from the trees;

the croaking of the frog had ceased; only at intervals, when the swimmer made a quick turn the water rippled audibly and the rushes along the shore swayed to and fro.

At last she seemed to grow weary, and lying on her back, floated for a time in a circle, so that only a little of the pale face appeared above the water. While so doing she came so near the shore, that the watcher behind the boughs could see the delicate white outline of the profile relieved against the dark water, and distinctly perceived how the eyes, raised quietly toward the night heavens, flashed with a peculiar light.

He had not doubted from the first moment the identity of the swimmer, and his heart leaped into his throat, as he recognized again the never to be forgotten face.

Finally as if the lake wished to draw the motionless figure down into its depths, the head sank lower and lower in the noiseless waves, as if resting on the softest pillows. At last the water rushed and whirled around the sinking form; she hastily turned and with powerful strokes swam back toward the steps.

Her companion was waiting, holding in her hands a large white linen cloak, which she threw over the swimmer as she ascended the stairs. The next moment both disappeared within the little house. The door, it is true, remained half open, but in the darkness it was impossible to distinguish anything within.

Ten minutes more elapsed, then the two muffled figures again appeared and proceeding to the gate of the enclosure, opened it, relocked it, and then retired along the foot path by which they had come.

A long time passed ere the secret witness of this scene left the spot through the hole in the enclosure of the pond. As soon as he found himself alone, he had instantly plunged into the waves, but it scarcely calmed the strange tumult in his blood. As the rising night-wind now tossed his wet hair and blew against his breast, it seemed as if instead of cooling him, it was trying to fan the glimmering sparks in the ashes of his memory.

He started at the thought and involuntarily paused, as something warned him not to return to the castle. "No," he said to himself, "that would be too cowardly, too pitiful. Four years, four such happy years--could I again be the old defenceless fool? And all for a pair of white arms and two nixie eyes? What power would man have over his own soul if the forces of nature could never be successfully battled against? No, brave heart, we will not evade the struggle."

He returned to the courtyard gate, after a long stroll in the park, which had thoroughly exhausted him. It was about two o'clock in the morning; the light in the countess' rooms was extinguished. Just as he was about to enter, he saw a man step cautiously out of the door of the room where the young girl slept and linger on the threshold a moment, as if to bid some one farewell. The doorway was in the shadow and the moon had set, yet as the late visitor now hurried past the buildings with elastic steps and then cautiously groped his way to the wing, Edwin distinctly recognized young Count Gaston; so the "endless yearning" which ennobled him, did not seem to prevent him from condescending to adventures which *had* a beginning, a middle, and an end.

CHAPTER VI.

The noise Edwin's next neighbor, the fat landed proprietor, made in preparing for the hunt, roused our friend early the next morning from a sound sleep. He was obliged to reflect a moment to remember where he was, and that the events of the previous day had not been mere dreams; then he hastily threw on his clothes and followed the servant who came to ask if he could be of any assistance, into the great hall on the ground floor, where the breakfast table was laid.

It was about seven o'clock; the day was dull and cloudy, and a damp wind indicated rain. But the cheerful bustle in the courtyard, the noise of horses and dogs, the shouts and exclamations of huntsmen and servants prevented any feeling of depression from seizing the guests. Besides the remainder of the company who gradually assembled in the hall, congratulated each other on the excellent hunting weather which had mitigated the heat of the preceding day. The chevalier alone begged to be excused from taking any share in the day's entertainment. "The only hunting he likes," whispered Count Gaston to Edwin, "is the pursuit of yellow gold."

The Polish colonel, on the contrary, was full of sportsmanlike enthusiasm, and related with the utmost seriousness, incredible stories, at which the fat landed proprietor burst into roars of

laughter; but the brothers von der Wende did not seem any wider awake in the morning, than they had appeared the preceding evening.

Neither the little doctor, nor any of the other household officers appeared; but to make amends a plain old man with thin parchment-like features and calm grey eyes arrived, and joined the gentlemen but without sharing in the breakfast. Gaston introduced him to Edwin as the head ranger. A slight curl of the corners of the mouth under the heavy yellow moustache, told our friend what a correct estimation of himself as an amateur sportsman, had been formed by this old master of the noble game.

Their host appeared at last, greeted every one with monosyllabic cordiality, and then approached the stranger.

"I thank you, Herr Doctor," said he, "for giving me the pleasure of your company on our hunt, though you told me yesterday you were no sportsman. You've only to say whether you'll accompany us on horseback, or whether you prefer to drive in a light carriage over the beautiful road that leads through the forest to the ranger's house, which is the general *rendezvous* and where, after the hunt is over, lunch will be served."

"Unless you happen to have in your stable a descendant of Gellert's grey, I must decide in favor of the carriage," replied Edwin smiling. The count nodded carelessly, leaving it uncertain whether his knowledge of horses extended back so far, and gave an order to the groom. He seemed even more absent minded and gloomy than on the evening before, busied himself in adjusting his hunting suit, and from time to time glanced at his watch. "It's getting late," he said to the head ranger, who had risen and was quietly awaiting his master's orders. "The countess doesn't usually keep us waiting."

At this moment the butler appeared at the door, and said: "Her ladyship is descending."

"*Eh bien*, gentlemen, if you please, we'll set out, and good luck to our sport."

He hastily led the way into the ante-room, followed by the rest of the company. In spite of the cloudy morning, the staircase was light enough to make it easy to distinguish faces, even on the landing above. Edwin was the last who entered the hall; he trembled and was forced to pause on the threshold and close his eyes; everything was whirling around him. When he opened them again, he saw a slender female figure descending the broad marble steps, holding the train of her green velvet dress under her left arm, and resting her right hand lightly on the banister. Count Gaston was walking beside her, and a huntsman, holding his plumed hat in his hand, followed. She wore a little green velvet cap with a long grey veil, and her hair was simply dressed in wide braids. All this Edwin could observe at leisure, as she was talking to her companion and thus kept her head averted. She now reached the lower landing and with a graceful movement turned toward her husband, who welcomed her with knightly courtesy. She nodded a good morning to him and her face was quite devoid of expression as she raised her hand to her hunting cap to salute the rest of the party. At this moment her foot caught in the folds of her riding habit, she stumbled, turned pale, and with a gesture of alarm and a half suppressed cry fell back into the arms of Gaston and the huntsman, who had hastily sprung forward.

She could not have hurt herself seriously, yet it was at least five minutes, ere, with the assistance of the two men, she again stood erect, with a face whose ghostly pallor seemed scarcely warranted by the little fright she had had. The other guests had rushed up to offer their very unnecessary services, and Edwin and the head ranger alone remained in their former places.

"It's nothing," they now heard the countess say. "I slipped and grew dizzy for a moment. I thank you, gentlemen."

She bowed with a winning smile to the company and then, leaning on Gaston's arm, slowly descended the rest of the stairs. When they approached the main entrance to the castle, beside which Edwin was standing, she started as if she could not believe her eyes.

"I have the pleasure of presenting to you an old acquaintance, my dear wife," said the count--"the Herr Doctor Edwin, who has been our guest since yesterday; an accidental meeting at the railway station--he's taking a little pedestrian tour--I knew it would give you pleasure."

She did not answer immediately; her eyes were fixed upon Edwin but her expression was undefinable. "Is it really you?" she said at last, suddenly recalling her self-control. "It's delightful to see you again. I thank you," she continued turning to her husband. "But why did you wait until today--"

"It was late in the evening when we arrived. You don't usually appear at that hour."

"True," she answered with an absent smile. "However, I might perhaps have made an exception for the sake of an old acquaintance. You're very welcome, Herr Doctor, I hope you'll remain our guest for some time."

She had removed her glove and now held out her hand to Edwin, who, stammering a few incoherent words, pressed his lips upon it in great embarrassment. Then she turned to the other

gentlemen, addressing a few courteous words to each. It was impossible to discover whether the sight of her old friend had made any deep impression upon her. But Edwin couldn't take his eyes from her face. When Count Gaston passed him and whispered: "Well? Did I say too much?" his only answer was a forced smile. He was ashamed of himself when he thought how stiff and ill at ease he must appear, not to others but in her eyes. But there seemed to be a spell upon him.

She had walked out to the flight of steps which led down into the courtyard, where the head groom was holding the bridle of a beautiful English horse which wore a lady's saddle. When it saw its mistress approaching, it turned its head toward her with a joyful neigh and impatiently pawed the ground. The countess paused a moment, patted the animal's neck and let it take a piece of sugar out of her hand. Then she prepared to mount, but when her foot was already in the stirrup, she drew back again.

"I see I can't ride to-day," she said carelessly. "My foot is still lame from the mis-step I made."

"If that's the case," replied the count, "don't tax it. The stag will lead us a long distance to-day; it's the old one we chased last year, but which finally escaped. I've ordered the hunting carriage for the Herr Doctor. Perhaps it will be pleasant for you--"

"Certainly," she carelessly interrupted, without looking at Edwin. "We can drive to the ranger's house together. I'll take Jean with me."

The lad, evidently proud of this preference, stepped forward from the crowd of footmen, hurried toward the carriage, which stood a little apart, behind the saddle horses and hounds, sprang on the box, and taking the reins drove skillfully through the groups of huntsmen and idle grooms to the steps.

"You shall witness my skill as a charioteer," said the countess in a jesting tone to Edwin, who had hastily approached. "Don't be afraid; I know how responsible science would hold me if I should upset one of her votaries." Then she entered the carriage and took the reins and whip; Edwin followed her, and urging on the beautiful animals she guided the light carriage through the gate of the courtyard into the wide forest avenue.

Her attention seemed to be entirely occupied with the horses; for the first ten minutes at least she did not turn her eyes away from them or utter a word. "How beautiful this forest is," said Edwin at last. She smiled and then nodded gravely, but was still silent. She evidently had not heard what he said. So he had plenty of leisure to watch her, and was compelled to acknowledge that her beauty had really gained some mysterious charm. The face was longer, the nose seemed to have lengthened and the eyes to have grown larger and darker, but her smile was no longer the same. It was not that strangely wearied sad smile, that appears when we are too proud to show we have cause to weep, but something far more mournful; a strange, fierce, implacable expression hovered around the lips, the expression that a face might wear after a heavy life storm in which every hope has perished, or when madness is approaching. Edwin was overwhelmed with an emotion of such deep sorrow, that after his fruitless attempt to break the ice, he remained perfectly silent. The air was still and oppressive, a few solitary drops fell, but there was no steady rain; not a bird moved in the forest, no human being met them; only from the distance they occasionally heard sounds from the hunting party, the barking of a dog and the thud of horses' hoofs, which at last died away in the forest.

The road led through the village at the foot of the mountain. Peasant women with their children stood in the doorways as they passed, and eagerly greeted the young countess. A very young woman with a baby stepped directly before them. Toinette stopped a moment, lifted the rosy-cheeked little creature into the carriage, kissed it and asked the mother various questions concerning it. When she gave it back to her again, a crowd of village children had collected, who all held out their little hands and cried good morning. The countess gave the oldest a handful of shining silver. "You must divide it, Hans," said she. "Give something to each. But you must be good and go to school regularly." The mothers came forward and thanked her in the name of the little people. The next moment the horses moved forward again, and they left the village behind them.

"They love you very dearly here," said Edwin.

"I can't help it," she replied. "It's easy to seem like a divinity to these poor people, if we merely treat them kindly. But if the gods have no other happiness than that of being idolized, they're really not to be envied."

Then they were both silent again. They had left the wide highway and turned into a narrower road, where the carriage rolled noiselessly over the soft earth. Meantime the sky had grown darker, and a fine warm summer rain was beginning to sprinkle their faces. Suddenly Toinette stopped the horses.

"If it will be agreeable to you," said she, "let's get out and walk a little way on foot. We shall reach the ranger's house too early even then."

He sprang out and offered her his arm, which she only touched with the tips of her fingers. Jean, who was holding the reins, asked if the countess would like an umbrella. "Why?" she asked. "It's scarcely raining at all. Or yes, take it out of the case, the Herr Doctor will be kind enough to

open it."

"May I offer you my arm, Countess?" said Edwin.

Again she did not seem to hear him, but stood gazing into the dark, silent forest, as if lost in thought. Then she shook back her hair--Edwin involuntarily thought of the scene in the park the night before--and took his arm. "Come," she said quietly. "Open the umbrella. Doesn't this remind you of something? Haven't we walked together in the rain before? To be sure, it was a long time ago, a whole life lies between. Don't you think I have altered very much?"

"Certainly. You've accomplished the seemingly impossible; you have become yet more beautiful."

She looked at him quietly, almost sternly. "Promise me not to say such a thing again. It doesn't become you, and it wounds me. And don't address me as 'countess.' I don't know whether I can still venture to call you 'dear friend' as in old times; but I shouldn't like to have you treat me precisely the same as an ordinary acquaintance. No, I've grown old, much older than you suppose, so old that I often think I've outlived myself, and you must perceive that too. But we won't talk about that. Only tell me, why did you come here? I knew you would come sometime; if I'd not been sure of it, who knows whether I should still be alive! And yet it took me by surprise; for I could never imagine what was to bring you to me again, after all that--"

She hesitated. He frankly told her of his interview with Marquard, and that his old interest in her had been vividly awakened by the news that she was only separated from him by a two hours' drive.

"No, no," she said as if to herself, "that was not it, you don't tell me all. But as you please; I am weaned from wishing to know things that are concealed from me. They're rarely pleasant. The more we get to the bottom of people and things, the uglier they seem to us. Enough, you're here, and I'm delighted to see you again, though at first I was as much startled as if your ghost had appeared. More than once--on lonely walks and in large assemblies--I've fancied I saw you just as you stood in the hall below me, but it was only a freak of memory. You've not changed in the least. If I could only forget these four years a moment, I could fancy we were again walking beside the carp pond and I was telling you Toinette Marchand's story. Those were pleasant times." Then suddenly adopting a totally different tone, she continued:

"I heard you were married. Your wife was one of your old pupils. Have you any children? No? That's a pity. Although, if nothing else is wanting--! Tell me about your wife. But no, what can be learned from a description? one can merely mention traits of character. One's real nature is indescribable. You must bring her to me some day, will you?" He nodded silently; but he knew that he should never do so.

"You've had a child and lost it," he said after a pause. "How much you must have suffered!" She suddenly stopped and let his arm fall.

"*More than any human being suspects!*" she said with great emphasis, laying a stress upon every syllable. "Let's say nothing about it. And yet, why may I not speak of it to you, the only person I know who can even understand what that anguish was, and also the only one who will not be cruel enough to say: 'it served you right,' and you would have more reason to say so than any other human being!"

She cast a backward glance toward the carriage, which was moving slowly along about twenty paces behind them.

"Please shut the umbrella," she said in a low tone. "I'm so warm, the damp air does me good. Dear friend, how often I've wished to be able to talk with you so. I thought everything would then be easier. Although in my hardest trials I should not have been able to show myself, even to you, exactly as I was. I did not like to confess the truth to myself; I dreaded to look in the glass, as if it were written on my brow and I must die of shame if I read it. Now--when everything is past--even the guilt, which I could not help--I only think of it all as a great misfortune, the greatest that can befall a woman. You said I must have suffered deeply when the child died. What will you think of me, when I tell you--that I suffered as long as it lived, and ceased to suffer when I lost it!"

"It sounds horrible, does it not? And yet it is literally true. You'll think me an unnatural mother, and you're right. But can I help it, that I was born with this unnatural disposition, that everything which makes others happy becomes a torture to me?"

"You're silent, dear friend. But what could you say? We should draw a veil over that which is contrary to nature, and turn away. You were also silent, in the olden time when I informed you through Balder, why I must unfortunately live my life an exceptional creature; an unhappy variety of the species. At first your silence wounded me deeply; I thought, a friend ought not to make us suffer so keenly for what is not our fault. Afterwards I saw that you were right to act as the heavenly powers:

"Then leave him to his punishment,
Vengeance for ev'ry earthly sin is sent."

"You remember the reading? 'the sins of the parents upon the children unto the third and fourth generations'?"

He stood still. "I don't understand a single word you're saying, my dear friend. What? You sent by Balder--but do you not know that the conversation he had with you, or rather with the count, was the last that he ever held? And you told him--what? What, for God's sake?"

He had seized her hand and pressed it violently. "Toinette, speak, tell me all. What is done and cannot be undone will at least be more endurable if it is purged of all which the rude hand of malicious chance may have mingled with it. You've misunderstood me; I now learn this for the first time, and I have also misunderstood you. Speak, speak--what thread did death sever, that would have guided us out of the labyrinth into the right path?"

She shook her head. "Who knows? even if my message had reached you, you would not have solved the problem! Of what use would it be? Can a heart incapable of love become more lovable if you learn that it has very natural reasons for being contrary to nature? A whim, a fit of obstinacy, a childish caprice--a refractory character like Katharine the shrew is not hopeless, since we need not once for all make a cross against it and go our way. But the child of a forced love, the fruit of a girl's bartered life--what can be hoped for, what aid can avail in such a case?"

"And this--this is what I should have learned if my poor Balder had survived that day. Oh! eternal Gods!"

"Yes indeed," she nodded with a bitter smile. "I thought you would have taken pity on the poor monster and have borne with her for a time. I hoped so for three days. Then, as I said, I thought: 'he's right'--and came here with the old countess."

"Horrible!" he exclaimed, wiping his brow, on which drops of cold perspiration were standing. "And so I--none other than myself--blind and unsuspecting as I was--and your letter, which I did not understand--the three days respite--"

"Calm yourself, my friend. It's not your fault; the threads of fate were too delicately spun. Even if you had come, who knows whether I might not still be here? True, if I had known then, what I know now--"

"What, Toinette, what!"

She hesitated a moment, then with closed eyes and her delicate brows contracted in an expression almost threatening in its sternness, said slowly and softly: "That my womanly nature would some day awake, that the hour would come when, like every other lonely creature I should long for a happy love--and that I then should belong to a man, of whom my soul knows nothing, and who would force me to drain to the dregs the sorrowful cup that broke my mother's heart!" She sank down upon a moss covered stone beside the road, and buried her face in her hands.

Edwin stood before her; he did not feel the rain, which now began to fall in heavy drops, did not pick up her gloves, which had slipped from her lap and lay on the wet ground; he made no reply to little Jean's question whether he should close the carriage, except to wave the intruder away with his hand. All his thoughts were absorbed in the one emotion of pity he felt for the woman once so deeply loved, who across the gulf of years had suddenly once more approached so near him, as if naught had even come between them.

"My poor dear friend," he faltered at last, "be calm, compose yourself, you're no longer alone. I am here, I--" His voice died away. How false and powerless was everything he could say. Toinette suddenly rose, shook back her hair, as we do when reminded that we must hold up our heads, and said with a forced smile:

"I believe we're getting wet. The little discomforts of life have their use; they cause annoyance and compel a division even in the midst of great sorrow. Give me your arm again, and open the umbrella. Ten paces farther on is a beech wood, where the foliage is so thick that we might quietly await a deluge. To be sure, my velvet dress is ruined, and I'm not yet 'duchess' enough not to regret it. However, it can be replaced. If there were nothing else--but come, come, you're standing as still as a statue."

He mechanically obeyed, surprised at the sudden change in her expression, and they walked on a short distance farther. "Yes, indeed," she said as if to herself, "in other things too, I might take my present equals in rank for a pattern. It's very bad style to have any feelings at all, especially to speak of them, and to trouble old friends with them. But you must be lenient. I exhausted these aristocratic expedients long ago; pride is a weapon, but a two edged sword, as it were, a shield that pierces the arm with its sharp edges. Now my heart, which is not thoroughly aristocratic, has run away with me again. And for what do we have friends, except to abuse them? But we'll be sensible and talk of more cheerful things. Your friend Marquard, for instance, what do you really think of him? He has such contradictory traits of character, that he resembles people with one blue and one black eye, we never know which is of the right color. So he too in the same moment is grave and frivolous, honest and not to be trusted. A singular combination."

Edwin made no reply, he did not seem to have heard what she said. After a long pause, during which he had gazed intently into vacancy, he suddenly exclaimed: "And the child--your child? If

your womanly nature awoke too late, were you not a mother soon enough to at least find consolation in that?"

"Oh! my friend," she replied, relapsing into her former tone, "these are strange, sad mysteries. This child--I might perhaps have been able to reconcile myself to the way in which I became its mother, but unfortunately it looked so much like its father that it reminded me with a thrill of horror, at what a price I had obtained it. Pray spare me the memory of the time when, each day, I asked myself whether I could endure to remain longer in this world! There are mothers who care little for their children and would rather dance or flirt, than be troubled with the charge of them. I--with my freshly aroused need of loving, of pressing something close to my heart--rose every day with the resolve to live only for the child; but when I approached its cradle and saw its delicate, cold, aristocratic little face, with the eyelids often half closed like its father's--I could not overcome my repugnance, could not hug and kiss it, rejoice in its innocent voice and baby ways. I sat beside it as if petrified, and it seemed as if I could read my doom in its features, as if the silent little mouth said: 'Mother; why have you done this, why have you sold yourself, profaned yourself without love? Now I shall atone for your sin, as you did for that of your mother, who at least did not commit it of her own free will.' And then, when it died, and I saw it lying before me in the coffin, with the haughty pale little lips distorted, the eyes so pitifully sunken--oh! my friend, it was strange that I did not fall lifeless beside it. Do you know how terrible it is, when a dead body seems to say: 'I've died to make room for you, we two cannot exist and breathe the same air?' No more! Oh! it drives me mad--even now, when I think of it for a single moment."

He felt how wearily she tottered on by his side, leaning heavily on his arm; for a moment it seemed as if she were unable to stand erect; her eyes closed, and her lips parted like one fainting. But the emotion soon passed away. She drew a long breath, paused and looked at him with a calm but sorrowful face.

"No doubt you remember," she began, "how on our excursion to Charlottenburg we were engaged in a similar grave conversation, and how I, in my inexperience, said it would not be difficult for a person to give up the business of life, if he could not pay his expenses or became totally bankrupt? You almost agreed, but adopted a different phraseology and replied: 'that when we could neither be useful nor give pleasure to ourselves or others, we might be permitted to leave our post.' Well, I've advanced successfully so far that, without boasting, I may be permitted to include myself among these chosen few. I could leave a legacy to the village children, the only persons to whom I can sometimes give pleasure, and the others who would perhaps miss me for three days after the last honors were paid to my remains, must become accustomed to it. But you see, dear friend, the most annoying part of misfortune is, that it makes even a brave soul weak and womanish. Day follows day, each adds its own contribution to the burden we bear, our shoulders grow hard, and the heart becomes callous. How often I've thought of Hamlet's soliloquy. But though he studied philosophy at Wittenberg, and I've only received a few lessons from you--I know better than he how the 'native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' It's 'just the fear of something after death;' what makes us cowardly, is the fear that the most delightful portion of the feast of life will come after we have left the hall to sleep away all weariness and sorrow. Perhaps it is childish, but I never rise in the morning without hoping for some unexpected event that might deliver me. There are countless pleasures on earth--am I the only person to whom none are allotted? Must I alone never say--now I can die in peace, for I know why I have lived?' Well to-day I'm glad that I didn't lose patience, but lived on, though every evening found the hope of the morning withered and dead. To-day I rose with a heavier heart than ever, and only determined to join the hunting party because I said to myself: 'sometime your horse will have more sense than you have courage, and will throw you off and break your neck.' And then I saw you--or your ghost, as I at first thought--standing among the people who have acted as mutes in the farce of my life; then I at last felt that for which I have always longed, a joy, a great, strong, real joy--only at first it was too strong and overcame me. I'm entirely out of practice in being happy."

"My poor friend," said Edwin deeply agitated, "you will, you must get into practice again. How happy I should be, if I could only succeed in reconciling you to your life? True, I'm still too much of a stranger here to fully understand the circumstances in which you are placed; but my short acquaintance with your husband has disclosed nothing which should make your estrangement irreconcilable. You know, and even the greatest stranger must see, what a deep grief it is to him that he has lost you, though you are his wife. He seems--whatever else he may lack--to be a gentleman, whom only the false and shallow education of his class has prevented from making something more of himself. I should think, if you only desired it that for a fond glance, a kind word from you he would do the most unprecedented things. Can you blame him for surrounding himself with such society, if you deny him yours? Perhaps the very bitterness that has come between you, has served to sink him into a still lower depth. Now you've only to give him your little finger, and I think you could lead him a long distance up the heights, so high that these 'mutes' could not climb after you."

"Are you in earnest?" she asked looking quietly at him. "But why shouldn't you believe all this. You've not lived with this man. Did I know, myself, four years ago, that nothing is more hopeless than what you call a gentleman? To be sure, in your sense, as you and your friends are--where the inability to do anything unworthy arises from your nature and the honest desire not to mar humanity--! But where the point in question is only not to offend his consciousness of rank--oh! my dear friend, I could tell you something that would arouse your indignation, and yet to do it

was not derogatory to the honor of a certain 'gentleman.' No, no, it's very noble in you to persuade me to do what is kind, but I'm very sorry I can make no use of your good advice. When the hand has been cut off, you can't heal the stump with a blister. That cut has severed the joint. Such a mutilated relation--"

At this moment they heard the beat of a horse's hoofs on the forest road behind them, and, looked back to distinguish the rider, who was approaching at a rapid trot. "Who's that!" said Toinette, "the doctor? I'll wager he's following us, because he'll have no rest till he discovers on what terms we stand toward each other. He's no gentleman, and has never made any pretensions to being one. His highest idea, his ambition, and his god, is prudence, which, of course, turns around no other point than his own miserable advantage. He instantly sees the weakest side of every man just as in his capacity of doctor, he searches for the seat of disease, and treats him accordingly. Of course he hates me; for physically I'm in such perfect health, that his skill is lost upon me, and whatever else I lack, is inaccessible to his diagnosis, while he knows I see through him. Beware of him. Even his frankness is only cunning calculation. Well, Doctor," she called to the approaching horseman, "have you decided to join the hunt after all? You'll just be in at the death."

The rider, with a powerful hand, checked his steaming horse directly before the countess and respectfully raising his oddly shaped broad-brimmed hat, answered: "Her Excellency is fond of joking. I'm known to have an aversion to the shedding of blood, except in my trade. My motive for riding my brown horse out of breath is a diplomatic mission, on which no one but myself sent me, but which, as a loyal servant to my employers, I must discharge."

"To the point. Doctor, to the point! You're interrupting a very interesting conversation. So--?"

"Then I almost regret having undertaken the mission," replied the little man with an imperceptible expression of sarcastic mischief hovering around his withered lips. "Their Highnesses the Prince and Princess, with a train of followers of high and low degree, arrived an hour ago on their way to Italy, whither His Highness Prince Batároff accompanies them. They greatly regretted not finding the family at home but as they intend to spend the night at the castle, strictly forbade that any messenger should be sent to the ranger's house to announce their arrival. The princess instantly retired to the room she occupied on her previous visits, and the distinguished gentlemen will amuse themselves by shooting at a target, as they're too tired to follow the hunt. I thought therefore the countess might perhaps desire to receive the news at once. If I was mistaken, it's the same as if I'd said nothing. No one at the castle knows what road I took."

A slight shadow had darkened Toinette's beautiful face. "Why to-day!" she murmured to herself, then with a slight bend of her head to the officious messenger, she added aloud: "Very well, Doctor, I thank you. Ride on to the ranger's house, but let your horse have time to breathe. It's not at all necessary for you to overtake the hunting party, until the gentlemen have had time to breakfast quietly; do you understand? With me, of course, it's rather a different matter. I shall return immediately. Adieu, Doctor. You've again shown what a diplomat is lost in you; perhaps Prince Batároff can help you to a career in Russia. I'll recommend you to him."

The little gentleman bowed with a constrained smile, evidently not feeling exactly flattered, as he probably detected an under current of meaning in the words, then for the first time greeted Edwin with a wave of the hand, and, as his horse was already moving forward, drew his hat again over his high forehead, which despite the rain, he had bared.

The countess stood a moment lost in thought. Not until the doctor, whose horse had proceeded on a walk, had ridden a long distance into the forest, did she suddenly look up. "Yes," she said, "we're still here!" Then turning to Edwin with a bitter smile: "do you see how difficult it is for me to get into practice in the art of being happy? I'm not even allowed half a day with an old friend. Perhaps it's best not to accustom myself again to a kindly voice. My aristocratic sister-in-law--but you are not yet aware that the prince is my brother; I mean my father's son, though of course that is a profound family secret, which however everybody knows. I'm very fond of this brother, and on closer acquaintance confess I felt ashamed of the by no means flattering description I gave you of my princely admirer. You'll see that he's a thoroughly manly gentleman; dear me, he might become still more, but the cares of government his little wife imposes upon him, give him no time. I ought to say nothing about this phoenix, but put you to the test at once, though to be sure if she only stays one day, she'll bewitch you and give no time for the disenchantment which would surely ensue in the following twenty-four hours. Her character consists in having none at all and in knowing the fact; therefore every day she tries, with great expenditure of theatrical talent, to support a totally different *rôle*; to-day the artless, to-morrow the sentimental, the day after the heroic, always in every character a lovely little princess, spoiled by happiness and the world. My poor brother, who has some of my taste for the genuine, not only in luxury but in his intercourse with society, of course doesn't like these continual changes and deceptive appearances, and would even be unhappy if the charming fair-haired little juggler hadn't made him madly in love with her. Besides, there's yet another bond between them: in their leisure hours, between dinner and the theatre, both study theology. Nothing is more comical than to hear this child, amid the usual prattle of the drawing room, uttering long perorations about Calvinism and the guardianship of the Lord. You must broach the subject, it's worth the trouble. She's given me up, after long efforts at conversion. I made no secret of my godlessness and afterwards regretted it. How is she to understand why I repel with loathing and

horror the thought that all I suffer is the work of an omniscient, omnipotent, and yet all merciful Father? If the elements of my nature, which debar me from happiness, have been found and united by a great blind dispensation of the course of the world, and I must go to ruin under this evil combination--it's a disagreeable, but not an unendurable thought. But a God-father, who, *de coeur leger*, or out of pedagogical wisdom, makes an unhappy creature like me wander about so sadly between heaven and earth, that he may afterwards, to make up for lost time, allow me some gratification in eternity--no, dear friend, all the aristocratic and plebeian theology in the world can't make this theory plausible to me. But come, we'll get into the carriage; I mustn't keep my guests waiting. The prohibition to inform us, was of course only a pretense. If we didn't come, they'd be very much vexed, as they would not believe any well trained servants would heed such a command."

With these words, she walked rapidly toward the carriage, which Jean had already turned, and without waiting for Edwin's assistance, sprang lightly in. The latter remained standing beside the door.

"Don't be angry with me, dearest friend," he said in a voice trembling with emotion, "but I feel utterly unable to return with you now, to see strangers and unite in the light conversation of general society. Allow me to take leave of you for a few hours. It's an old uncivil habit, that only in complete solitude can I hear what my poor soul says to me on some occasions. The forest is so beautiful, and the rain has ceased; I'll wander hap-hazard through the thickets. This evening at any rate I'll be with you, in case you need me."

"I'll impose no restrictions upon your liberty," replied the beautiful woman, without turning her eyes from her horses' heads. "You're right to avoid what's contrary to your nature and happy in being able to do so! But you'll compensate me for these lost hours to-morrow--day after to-morrow--the whole week. No; no objections! You want to restore me to the old habit of being happy, and it will not be done so very quickly. I've forgotten too much. Adieu, dear friend,--until this evening!"

She cracked the whip Jean had handed to her, the tall lad in the green and silver livery sprang into the back seat, and away dashed the light carriage, as if the horses wished to doubly indemnify themselves for the unwelcome rest.

Edwin stood still a long time watching the flutter of Toinette's grey veil, then with a heavy sigh, turned away and plunged into the network of paths leading from the high road.

CHAPTER VII.

So deep a silence reigned here, that when he paused, he fancied he could hear the sap rising through the trunks of the trees. The wind, which had brought the rain, had changed, the brightest summer sky arched over the cool forest. From the thicket of pines, a narrow path wound through large tracts of hilly beech woods, past which the hunt had rushed at so great a distance that the deer and hares had not been startled from their repose, and let the lonely pedestrian pass by with more curiosity than fear. But he scarcely disturbed them by a glance; his gaze was turned inward; he was questioning his own heart, yesterday so peaceful, and now agitated by a wild horde of painful thoughts.

He understood this impetuous heart well enough not to deceive himself a moment as regarded the nature of the storm within. So fixed was his habit of taking seriously everything he felt, and his honest endeavor never to spare or palliate anything pernicious in his nature, that even midst the indescribable confusion into which the last hour had plunged him, he said steadfastly to himself as soon as he was alone: "You're lost, if you remain." He felt, with deep horror, how all that four years of the deepest, purest happiness had done to stifle the memory of his old struggles, was baffled in a single moment. He did not deceive himself about the matter, it was not commiseration for his friend's cheerless fate that burned so passionately in his soul. If he had found her radiant in happiness, pride and love, he would have felt no differently.

But to know she was unhappy and that in suffering this misery she had become a true woman, loving and needing love, that she clung to him and to his firm soul--as she thought it--as to a last stronghold, fanned the flames within him, and broke his resolute will.

What he owed himself, himself and his pure, faithful, noble wife, rose so clearly in his mind amid all the confusion, that without shame, and in the firm conviction that nothing could avail against his final victory over these dark powers, he repeated Leah's name. He spoke to her as if she were walking beside him, as if he were telling her about his condition. "No, child," said he,

"fear nothing for either of us. We shall never part, never, never! Only have patience with me; the elements are let loose and playing foot-ball with my heart. But such a heart, child, which you have taken in your keeping and drawn to you--no, it will not be thus played with long. If it is painful, dearest, this storm, this rending and tearing within--it will pass away, I hope, without your perceiving it. It's not true that we are helpless drops of water in the sea of passions. We can recollect ourselves, cling fast to what is right and good, like a mussel to the cliff from which no surge can tear it. To be sure, the cliff might totter, but the happiness we have found together is imperishable and I will cling to it. And yet--can it be the same as of old, if we are forced to remember how unhappy this poor woman will always be?"--

He lost himself in a dull reverie over the thought of what might be, if he had no duties, and need not consider any one except the woman who had clutched his hand like a person sinking in a bottomless gulf. If he had only found her so four years ago!

Leah's image grew dim, he saw at this moment only the form of his first, lost love, as he had now found her again--a shudder ran through his frame, as he still felt the pressure of her hand on his arm, and thought of the dark lustre of her eyes and those lips which he had only once kissed on that drive through the moonlight. He smiled in the midst of his horror, and yet he could scarcely breathe, so heavily did the sultry atmosphere weigh upon his breast; without knowing what he did, he repeated two lines of one of Rückert's poems:

The taper's dim and flickering light
She has re-kindled with her smile--

So in happy wretchedness, forgetting where he was, he staggered through the dense forest. He felt as if he were wandering through a region far away from the world, where every thing that binds and separates human beings, all strictly drawn lines of duty, were abolished and overgrown by the wild luxuriance of the powers of nature, where a poor mortal wanders aimlessly about, and so long as he remains in the enchanted wilderness must give himself up to the sweet torture of hidden fires.

Several shots, which echoed in the distance, and the strange whining yelp of the hounds suddenly roused him from this bewilderment. He perceived that he was in danger of approaching within range of the hunt. For one moment he thought how little was needed to reduce the conflict in his mind to peace; a stray bullet--and all would be over. But he felt no temptation to provoke this solution, far less could he resolve to follow the track of human beings. He hastily bent his steps in the opposite direction and then once more allowed his movements to be directed by chance.

He had probably wandered to and fro for about an hour, when he entered one of the numerous paths only wide enough to permit the passage of the wood cutters' carts which intersected the forest in straight lines. He was about to cross it, and to plunge into the thicket on the opposite side, when a strange procession, approaching at a measured pace scarcely a gun shot from the spot, made him pause, in spite of his desire to shun the presence of man. First rode the little high shouldered doctor, holding an eager conversation with a huntsman who walked beside him. Behind them four peasants, who seemed to have been acting as beaters, carried a litter, on which, lying upon coverlets hastily rolled up into cushions, a stout figure was stretched, the upper part of the body, despite the uncomfortable position, in constant motion, the head turning first to the right and then to the left, and the arms employed in eager gesticulation. The rear of the train was closed by two horsemen, dressed exactly alike and mounted on horses of the same color, in whom Edwin already recognized the brothers Thaddäus and Matthäus von der Wende. They seemed, as usual, to be perfectly silent, but hung their heads sorrowfully, and in their wonderful resemblance to each other looked still more comical on horseback than on foot.

When the caravan had approached still nearer, Edwin saw that the shapeless struggling mass, under which the bearers gasped, was his neighbor of the preceding night, the fat landed-proprietor. The jovial gentleman who, in spite of a wide bandage around his left foot, was in excellent spirits and from time to time broke the deep silence of the forest with his roars of laughter, now turned on his couch, recognized the pedestrian and calling him by name, nodded kindly and beckoned him to approach. The bearers were very glad to set down the litter while Edwin listened to the story of the accident, which the stout gentleman related with much humor. He had taken his position under a large beech on the edge of an opening in the forest. The twin brothers, who even in hunting were inseparables, had posted themselves on the opposite side. As the wounded stag, with a sudden turn dashed through the glade, two shots suddenly echoed from that other side; the brothers, who in their zeal for the chase had failed to remember the position of their fellow huntsman, hit him instead of the stag. Whether he owed the bullet in his leg to Matthäus or Thaddäus would remain undecided till the day of judgment. As faithful twins, they had both taken deeply to heart the Christian blood that had been spilled, and he was now vainly endeavoring to console them for an accident which was really not worth mentioning. "The only person who's a gainer by the affair is yourself, Herr Doctor," he concluded with a pleasant laugh. "You'll be shown to another room in the castle, where you'll be no farther molested by my nightly snores, for the physician-in-ordinary will need to watch lest fever should set in, and will meantime take up his quarters in your room. But such a tough old skin as mine is not so sensitive, that one need make any special fuss about a little hole in the leg. If it should grow worse, I'll call

you to my assistance, honored sir. You deal, I hear, in philosophy; that must be good medicine for a man when he's obliged to lie still, and is fairly beside himself for weariness two weeks before the rye harvest. Ha! ha! ha! And tally-ho!"

He shook Edwin cordially by the hand, and the procession again moved on.

The little doctor now allowed the litter and the melancholy couple that brought up the rear to precede him, and pausing watched the procession for a time; then with a cunning twinkle in his eyes dismounted. "I'll overtake them," he said joining Edwin, and allowing his docile animal to crop the fresh grasses along the edge of the path. "I'm very glad to have met you here, Herr Doctor; I've something to communicate which it's unnecessary for other ears to hear, and here we're quite alone. I see by the direction you were taking, that you're not in a hurry. If it suits your pleasure, we'll stroll comfortably along the road; I'll not detain you long from pursuing your fancy for untrodden paths."

"As you please," replied Edwin dryly, making no attempt to conceal how little he desired the companionship forced upon him.

But the little doctor pretended not to notice his reluctance. He was silent for a time and seemed to be considering how most skillfully to begin his disclosures.

"Honored Herr Doctor," he said at last, "or perhaps in memory of your father, I may be permitted to say my dear friend; pardon me if I speak to you of a perhaps extremely uninteresting person--my own insignificant self. You should know--and in spite of our recent acquaintance, have doubtless already noticed--that the foundation of my character is frankness and honesty. Clever men soon learn that it's not worth their while to play a part; *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. But unfortunately in the universal masquerade people perform together, it's difficult for the very persons who go unmasked to make others believe that they show their own countenances. 'Take off your nose, Herr Doctor!'--'But, Madame, I assure you it grows on my face'--'Who will believe that? You're much too cunning a fox, when your profession compels you to thrust your nose into everything, to use your own for the purpose.' This is what we're told, my honored friend, and no matter how much it nettles the real nose to be taken for *papier maché*, nobody pities it. People compassionate only the simple, and God knows they don't need it for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

He sighed and took from a small gold box, which looked as if it might be a present from the late countess, a pinch of snuff, as if he wanted to console his nose for its sad destiny of being misunderstood.

"You now perceive," he continued, as Edwin obstinately remained silent, "that nothing can be more offensive to a man whose principal maxim is frankness and honesty, than to have those whose opinions he values believe him an intriguer. They thereby imply either that they don't think it worth while to understand his character, or consider him too pitiful a wight to venture to show himself as God created him. This mortification, I must confess, is not a new experience to me, but old as I am I can't yet summon up sufficient philosophy to endure it with composure. So long as my patroness, the count's mother, lived, I was now and then compelled to submit to humiliations, and forced to see that I was considered an insignificant though useful man, a harmless domestic animal, fed at the general crib. Since the young countess came into the house--you, my friend, as I know, have long been attached to her, of course in a very beautiful, intellectual relation, far beyond all suspicion. But for that very reason, I think you'll be just the person to do me a real service with the noble lady, whom no one can more sincerely respect than I."

Edwin looked keenly at the little man. He really could not decide, whether his quiet respectful demeanor was a mask or the outward expression of his "frankness and honesty." "I'm curious to learn in what this service can consist," said he.

"It's a very simple matter, my dear fellow, merely to aid the countess in forming a somewhat better opinion of her most obedient servant; nothing exaggerated, only mere fairness and justice. The countess, as you've perceived, treats me with an aversion which, in the presence of a third person, is concealed behind the veil of sarcastic courtesy. If she meets me alone, even under the most favorable circumstances, I'm an object on which to vent her displeasure, or I see her charming little foot make a movement as if it longed to crush some worm or reptile, and only refrained in order that the sole of the dainty shoe might not be soiled. You'll admit, that for a man of my years this is not exactly pleasant."

"But have you understood her aright? Why should she feel such a passionate dislike to--"

"To a harmless domestic animal? Ha! ha! Because even the most innocent creatures are made responsible for--hm! You understand me--I won't say too much; but that the flower of mutual happiness, *felicitas pratensis*, does not flourish on the soil of this marriage, but is robbed of air and light by all sorts of weeds, can scarcely--as I've seen you engaged in the most confidential conversation with Her Excellency--have escaped your notice."

A deep flush crimsoned Edwin's face, and he was on the point of sending the insolent spy about his business with a sharp answer, when the thought of how unwise it would be to give the

wily diplomat a direct refusal, restrained him. "Perhaps you're mistaken in regard to the degree of confidence the countess bestows upon me," he answered dryly.

"Well, well, let that pass," laughed the little doctor, pausing a moment beside his horse, which was quietly grazing. "I'll do no violence to your discretion, heaven forbid! But I--you may think what you please of it--must unbosom myself entirely, that my old friend's son may see my hands are clean. I know why the countess hates me; she has not left me in doubt. You see, my worthy friend, ever since the child was born--you understand me--since that time the marriage has been practically the same as cancelled. Why so? Perhaps you know more about it than I. And between ourselves, what concern is it of mine? I didn't make the match; if it doesn't turn out happily, why should I concern myself about it? But it's not to be expected that my former pupil and present lord and master, the count, would take the matter so phlegmatically. He asked me to discover the reason of his wife's sudden dislike, which increased till she retired into convent-like seclusion. He asked *me*, why I had never even had the honor of feeling my beautiful mistress' pulse; at the utmost she might consult me if one of her waiting maids had a sore finger; for she seemed to have formed an unfavorable opinion of me at our first meeting. So nothing could be done by me. Besides, I was convinced that no physical cause lay at the bottom of her strange antipathy to her husband. What could it be? You've seen him. He may not be quite so irresistible as he considers himself; but as she didn't always dislike him--in short, the matter seemed to belong to some other province than medicine. But we advanced no farther than this. I counseled patience. But at thirty years of age, when a man is madly in love, and moreover accustomed to have his orders obeyed on his own domain, from his mother down to the youngest groom--you understand that patience could not last long. There were scenes, touching and brutal; for several months, every day brought different weather, as sunshine or storm was tried to dispel the unapproachable virtue in which this singular being enwrapped herself. At last--this I have partly from the count himself, partly from the maid, a person who would allow herself to be hacked into kindling wood for her mistress--he seized upon a perfectly desperate expedient, from which any sensible person who had any knowledge of this lady's character would have dissuaded him; he attempted to give her, in a cup of tea, a sort of love potion, whose principal ingredient was morphine, in order--you understand--that old heathen Morpheus, has already performed a great many just such services--but this time it seems he conducted the matter awkwardly--and in short the plan failed and everything was spoiled."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Edwin. "This--this is certainly--"

"Had you no suspicion of it?"

"What woman would relate such an affair, even to a mother or sister? My God! what a man."

"Hm!" said the little doctor, looking him sharply in the face, "they're human, and human actions are after their style. However, I think you judge the count too harshly. You, as a platonic admirer, and the countess' friend and adviser, can probably not imagine how a man feels, who calls such a treasure his own, and yet knows it to be secluded in a tower with seven gates, to which he has not the key. If, armed with a rude club, he tries to burst the bolts--but we won't argue about it. It's certain that, when he once suggested the idea, I firmly advised him not to adopt it, merely on account of its doubtfulness and the small probability of success. But you see, my friend, that's just what she will not believe, though the count himself bore witness in my behalf. She says such a disgraceful idea could never have originated in the brain of a gentleman, with some sense of honor, who did not wish to degrade his own wife to the level of a common wench. The plan and its execution must have been suggested by some officious subordinate fiend, and this shameful, and, with all his diabolical cunning, very stupid devil, could be no one else than poor Doctor Basler, who in his over-wisdom and in obedience to his master's commands, was quite capable of playing a trick as simple as it was disgraceful."

He sighed, and as if in a fit of moral indignation, struck at the blackberry bushes that grew on the edge of the forest. Suddenly he paused, drew the bridle tight so that his horse was checked and stood still, and said in his frankest tone: "There now, I've unburdened my heart. The rest will follow as a matter of course. I'm an old man, and it's not a consoling prospect, that on the next equally innocent occasion, the noble lady's aversion will develop into open hatred and revenge and she may insist upon sending me out of the house. I've become accustomed to living here and should cut a poor figure out in the world. For although I can't be driven from the door like a dog--certain old obligations will not permit that--the gods know how I should fare. And this lady, strange as it sounds, still has unlimited power over my former pupil. I believe, if she made it the price of reconciliation, that I should be drowned in a cask of Burgundy, I should hardly escape with my life, in spite of the fact that we live in the nineteenth century. So it would be kind and friendly in you, my dear sir, if you would reason the countess out of this insane prejudice against me. Good Heavens, I don't ask much; I've seen my best days; but in return for the frankness and honesty with which I've always treated her, to be taken for a venal scoundrel, a miserable wretch capable of being hired for every secret deed of villainy, like a foreign bravo, you must confess, is rather too much, and may well make the blood seethe in the veins of an honorable man."

The last words were spoken from the saddle into which he had again mounted. He seemed to take Edwin's silence for the assent which, in such cases, is a matter of course among "men of honor." "I rely upon you entirely," he cried, putting spurs to his little horse, "and am of course ready to perform any service in return. Who knows whether the harmless domestic animal, who signs himself Doctor Basler, may not yet be useful; *homo sum, nihil humani*--that's always the

refrain."

He waved his hat with a familiar twinkle in his eyes, spurred on his horse, and trotted rapidly after the procession, which was already considerably in advance.

Edwin was glad that they had parted so quickly. He could not have much longer refrained from repaying his new friend's "frankness and honesty" in the same coin, informing him that he felt entirely unable to play the expected *rôle* of mediator. His heart burned, his tongue was bitter with loathing and suppressed indignation. He now clearly perceived that there was no longer anything to hope for, the breach could not be healed. But then what remained for *him* to do, what had he to accomplish here? And yet--how could he tear himself away, leave her to herself, after he had learned how entirely she was right in believing her life by this man's side a lost existence?

He again plunged into the forest and wandered about a long time through the loneliest portions of the woods, a slave to the greatest mental torture he had ever experienced, until at last he could think no longer, because of exhaustion and over excitement. Toward noon he found himself near a handsome farm-house, which stood in a secluded spot beside a foundry. Here he obtained some food and asked for a quiet spot to rest. He was shown into a large barn, where he threw himself down on the freshly threshed straw. Ere long nature asserted its right to a recompense for the previous wakeful night. He fell asleep, and the sun had already sunk behind the hills, when the farm laborers returning from their work roused the wearied man from his dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

Edwin's first thought was that his long nap had fortunately debarred him from dining at the castle with the aristocratic visitors. He hoped also to evade them in the evening, and was therefore unpleasantly surprised when he learned that all his wanderings had only led him around the castle in a circle, and that he merely needed to cross a hill to find himself at the gate in the rear of the park. He submitted to his fate, allowed a day laborer's barefooted child to show him the way, and reached the entrance just in time to see the last rays of sunset reflected from the copper roof of the little corner tower.

He tried to slip unobserved into his room by the staircase that led from the courtyard into the wing, but a footman, who seemed to have been waiting for him, reminded him of the accident which had befallen his neighbor in the adjoining apartment, and apologized for having removed his luggage during his absence to a room in the upper story of the main building--a beautiful front room, which Her Excellency the countess said would undoubtedly please the Herr Doctor. But Edwin was perfectly indifferent as to where he was lodged, when, on entering his apartment he approached the high bay-window and saw outspread before him in the calm twilight, the peaceful forest, the broad fields, and tender hued sky arching over them, he felt for the first time that day, lighthearted and at ease, and the heavy atmosphere of anxious thought melted away. The servant lighted the candles on the pier table, asked if he had any orders to give and then left the room with the remark that dinner would be served in half an hour. Their Highnesses had wished to wait till the Herr Count returned from hunting.

Edwin nodded absently. He was still undecided as to what he ought to do. Instead of the oppressive fear of his own weakness which had driven him all day through the forest, an eager desire had arisen to see Toinette again, to hear the voice that made the inmost chords of his being tremble, and to feel her glance once more rest upon him. It seemed to him as if he should now be strong enough to play with the fire, but the presence of strangers, of whom he must take cognizance, annoyed him.

On the dainty table with gilded rococo feet, he had found his traveling satchel, and mechanically began to unpack the contents. His portfolio fell into his hand. He remembered the letter he had written to Leah twenty-four hours before, and in what an unsuspecting mood! Then he considered whether it would not be well to inform her immediately of the events that had occurred, that the hardest part of the story might have been told when he saw her again. He felt that he possessed at least sufficient courage to attempt it, and had already taken out his writing materials, when some one knocked at the door and Count Gaston, attired in a very elegant black dress suit, entered with his usual cordial impetuosity.

"Writing, Doctor?" he exclaimed laughing. "What? great thoughts came to you in the forest to-day, that must be put on paper at once? You men of science are enviable mortals. One of us, in order to methodically exercise his vocation of enjoying life, requires such a complicated apparatus; carriages for conveying kitchen utensils, baskets of wine, a piano, Havana cigars, fair

women, and various other necessities. You, on the contrary, wander through a wilderness, in which nothing grows except beech acorns, oaks, and fir cones, and return home, fully satisfied 'with your load of immortal thoughts,' as Lenau says. I deeply regret that I must disturb you in this intellectual revelry, to take you away to much more material enjoyment. Dinner will be served in fifteen minutes, the beautiful princess is very anxious to make your acquaintance, and if you want to dress--"

"I am already attired in the dress of a philosopher," interrupted Edwin smiling, "who as you say must manage to do without complicated apparatus; *omnia sua secum portans*. If the beautiful princess will be satisfied--"

"Of course, my dear fellow. The point in question is only whether it may not be a little embarrassing for *you*. To be sure, everybody wears the uniform of his profession, and besides in traveling--for the rest, my whole wardrobe and valet are at your disposal, in case you prefer--"

"Thank you, my dear count. You really remind me just at the right time, of the duty which, on occasions of ceremony we owe the house whose hospitality we enjoy. A queer fellow and cynic is in his proper place in his tun, but the contrast between a vagrant's dress and these magnificent apartments would make even Father Diogenes, if he possessed any sense of harmony--"

"Why, my honored friend, you entirely misunderstand me. I'd not the most distant intention--no, you must--you can in no case--"

"Yet allow me, my dear count, to pursue what I think the most sensible course, especially as I've not the slightest appetite, for I took my dinner at a farm house. Besides, if these noble guests intend to remain so short a time, the presence of a total stranger--"

"You'll expose me to the anger of my adored cousin!" cried Gaston with comical pathos. "Do me the favor not to be proud or obstinate. You must know our party has already dwindled considerably. The twin murderers, Thaddäus and Matthäus, have locked themselves up and are atoning for their attempt on our fat neighbor's life, with Rhine wine and truffle pâtés. Oginsky, on hearing that Prince Batároff was to make one of our party, was suddenly seized with such a violent headache that he went to bed at once. Between ourselves, he probably fears that this Russian knows his antecedents better than my dear cousin, whose eyes I hope may be opened by this sudden headache. Therefore no one is left to pay court to the charming princess, except the chevalier, who is usually as silent in the society of ladies belonging to the great world as he's talkative in the presence of the *demi monde*, and I, who with the best intentions, whenever the object of my hopeless love is present, have no other goddess beside her. Take into consideration the singular mood of the master of the house, and that the young prince is no brilliant talker, and you'll see the party will be a very dull one, and all the blame will fall on my unfortunate self. Dear Doctor, be noble, be sublime, come down with me just as you are. Otherwise I'll conjure up all the powers of heaven and hell, and induce the mistress of the castle to come in person to coax you away from your inkstand. Can that alone satisfy your pride, or will you say even to this divine vision: 'Be kind enough not to stand in my light, Countess.'"

Edwin could not help laughing.

"You laugh!" exclaimed the gay young fellow. "That is, you'll yield. That's the secret of all victories over the obdurate of both sexes; it's only necessary to make them laugh. Oh! my proud, grave cousin! If the brightest fire of my wit had ever allured anything more than a gracious smile to her lips! But now come down to where you're eagerly awaited. Only take care that you're not converted by the blue eyes of the innocent high-born missionary. There's more joy in heaven over one philosopher that repenteth, than over ninety and nine frivolous children of the world of my stamp."

Still talking in the same strain, he seized Edwin by the arm, scarcely gave him time to wash his hands, and then dragged him along the brilliantly lighted corridors and down the broad carpeted steps of the marble staircase.

When they entered the little *salon* adjoining the dining hall, the master of the house hastened toward them, greeted Edwin with his stereotyped cordiality, and apologized for not having been able to see his guest all day. The hunting party, from which he had unfortunately missed him at the rendezvous, and his duties toward his new visitors, had occupied all his time. Edwin bowed absently. His eyes were wandering toward the new faces which he saw by the flickering light of the wax candles. The tall, broad shouldered gentleman with the bald head and long blond beard, who had been talking to the chevalier by the window, and now cast a cold glance from his narrow grey eyes at the new comer, was undoubtedly the Russian prince. On the blue silk sofa, beside the countess, who had exchanged her velvet riding habit for a heavy black satin dress, sat a little, dainty, fair-haired creature in a most tasteful fanciful toilette, who, seen from behind, looked like a half grown girl. When, as the count introduced Edwin to her, she turned and raised a pair of laughing blue eyes to his, he could easily understand that this fairy-like vision must exercise no little power in converting unbelievers. Now, to be sure, beside the far nobler beauty of the mistress of the house, the danger even to such a butterfly heart as that of the young count, was not irresistible. Only her own husband, a handsome young man with a delicate, thoughtful face, whose family resemblance to the countess could not escape notice, seemed to be perpetually under the spell of those childish blue eyes. At least his own constantly turned toward them, and

in the midst of his conversation with others, he often paused to address some trivial question to his wife. He held out his hand to Edwin in the most cordial manner, saying that he had already heard a great deal about him and rejoiced in the fortunate accident, which had at last procured him the pleasure of his acquaintance. Toinette nodded to him with a strange smile, whose meaning a third person would scarcely have guessed, but the young princess received him with special graciousness, instantly proffered him the empty seat beside her, and with all the coquetry of a spoiled child made no concealment of the fact that she intended to fascinate him as speedily as possible.

"You must stay with me a little while, Herr Doctor," she said stroking the smooth head of one of the slender, tawny hounds, with her delicate white hand, on which sparkled several beautiful rings. "Do you know that I've scarcely ever, in all my life, been so curious about a new acquaintance? You're the first live philosopher I ever saw. I've always wanted--and perhaps dreaded a little--to know one, and now--"

"Now you see a very commonplace mortal, without cloven feet, even without gloves, in which he could conceal his satanic claws, and who only differs from other people in venturing, under the pressure of necessity, to enter this noble society in the modest garb of a traveler on a pedestrian tour."

"Whether you seem so commonplace to me," replied the beautiful blonde, shaking back her curls and casting a laughing glance at her husband, "is a doubtful question, which we'll not discuss here. Enough, you have completely undeceived me."

"And what idea had you formed of a philosopher, Princess?"

"I had always imagined an elderly, yellow, thin man, with piercing black eyes and scornfully compressed lips--something after the style of Voltaire--a man in whose presence a cold shudder runs through one's frame, and who rubs his hands with a gloomy laugh, partly from malicious pleasure that he has deprived so many good, simple people of the salvation of their souls, and partly because he himself is freezing."

"I can assure you, Your Highness, that I find both the temperature of this drawing room and the world outside perfectly comfortable."

"That's just what I perceived at once, and what greatly surprised me. Perhaps, however, you're only a good actor, or don't you really shiver?"

"So far as I'm aware," replied Edwin smiling, "philosophers have just as warm red blood as other mammiferous animals. What made you suppose, Madame, that we belonged to the amphibious?"

"Your relationship to the serpent, whose evil business you continue. Or do you do something besides persuading the poor children of God, that they may eat of the tree of knowledge, although you know the punishment that will follow--the loss of Paradise."

"And are you so certain, that our first parents felt warmer and happier and more comfortable in the perpetual sunlight, than when they ate their bread in the sweat of their brow? However this question is difficult to decide and fortunately no longer comes under consideration. We're not in Eden now, we must seek some compensation for the sunny ignorance we've lost, and so far as my experience goes, Your Highness, among the various means of keeping warm, the possession of a genuine, honest philosophy is not the worst."

"What? You assert that reason can warm? A wisdom in which the heart has no share--"

"And who told you that we conduct our business in such a divided manner? The head having nothing to do with the affairs of the heart, and the heart never venturing to suggest anything to the head? But, to be sure, I forgot that Your Highness is engaged in deep theological studies. For two thousand years we've been exposed to calumnies from that quarter, which is not always easy to accept patiently, at least from a beautiful mouth. However, didn't the Christian martyrs quietly accept taunts and misrepresentation, without having the warmth of their blood called in question?"

"You wrong me, Herr Doctor," she answered; casting down her eyes with a bewitching blush; "I'm a simple, unlearned woman, who's only glad that, 'when clever men talk she can understand what they mean.' Ask my dear friend, the countess. She'll bear witness that I am very unskillful in making converts. One who thinks only with the heart, must at least have so full a heart, that it will overflow of its own accord, as a vessel of mercy, which cannot contain its wealth and must impart a portion to other thirsty souls. But I'm more and more convinced that words are no keys to heaven, that true theology doesn't consist in arguments about dogmas. Even the profound revelations of the mystic--"

"Have you ventured into these abysses?" exclaimed Edwin.

"With a competent guide," smiled the beautiful woman, gracefully waving her fan to and fro, "with a carefully tested safety lamp as a protection--why not? It is so interesting, the secret terror which seizes us when we see in the dim light of these deep ravines and caves, as in an artificial

mine, strange stalactites and the glimmer of metal and have a suspicion of the treasures that may yet be concealed. One returns to the bright daylight so willingly. You must not think me a hypocrite. On the contrary, since I've gazed into the depths, I look at all worldly pleasures with more grateful eyes as a gift of our Creator, and rejoice that I can still be so childish, much more childish and even more thoughtless than my dear friend here, who is ten weeks younger than I, and has confessed that she neither prays nor holds any intercourse with her God. Isn't it true, Toinette, am I unfit to be a Moravian?"

"Who knows, dear Alexine?" replied Toinette, who during all this time seemed to have only half listened to Gaston's eager whispers. "By way of a change, in order to experience this emotion also, and if the right spiritual guide should appear with a *differently* constructed safety lamp--"

"Horrible!" exclaimed the little blonde beauty, giving her neighbor a light tap with her fan. "Don't believe a word of it, Herr Doctor. The countess only slanders me so maliciously, because she has taken a perfectly causeless prejudice against the vicar who accompanies me, and who certainly has had a great deal to do with the present direction of my mind. You'll make his acquaintance, and shall then decide whether he deserves this aversion."

"To be made umpire on such a critical subject, whereby I must in any case forfeit the favor of one of two noble ladies--"

"Is a martyrdom in the service of truth, which a philosopher cannot escape. The vicar has a few letters to write; he is, even in worldly things, my--our trusted counsellor. But I hope, in the course of the evening--"

At this moment the folding doors of the dining hall were thrown open, the butler in full gala dress appeared on the threshold with a silent bow, the master of the house offered his arm to the princess, the prince to his sister, and the remainder of the party followed the two couples without any formality.

Edwin was seated at table next to the chevalier, who eat and drank with the appetite of a shipwrecked mariner, and at intervals carried on a monosyllabic conversation in French with the young count, taking not the slightest notice of his other neighbor. The place on Edwin's left was apparently reserved for the chaplain of the princely household. Our friend was therefore entirely alone and heartily glad to be so. He saw behind the large silver epergne, filled with a superb bouquet of red and yellow roses, Toinette's beautiful face, mysterious dark eyes, and snowy neck, over which clustered her soft brown curls; her stately, yet pliant figure leaned quietly back in her chair, as she allowed dish after dish to pass untouched. Beside her sat the fair-haired princess, who talked continually in her sprightly fashion, laughed, ate and drank in the most coquettish manner, and more and more resembled a waiting maid who has put on fine clothes and is skillfully imitating the manners of a great lady.

She was eagerly endeavoring to persuade the count and countess, that they could do nothing wiser than to make up their minds to accompany her to Italy, and described so drolly the pleasures of a journey with hundreds of adventures, attacks by *banditti*, miserable inns in which there would be no accommodations for so large a company, and finally a solemn audience with the Holy Father, in which she would assert that among Protestants, kissing the slipper^[9] was the husband's business, that even Toinette joined in the laugh she excited, though she remained firm in her refusal. Traveling did not agree with her nerves, she said quietly. Her husband had eagerly agreed with the princess and spoken more enthusiastically than was his habit, of former journeys through the countries of the South. When he heard his wife decline so positively a deep shadow darkened his brow; he turned suddenly pale, twisted his moustache, and became perfectly silent.

"You ought not to give your final answer yet, Countess," said the Russian guest, as he passed the fat fingers of his well kept hand through his long beard. A certain nervous twitching of the brow was perceptible as he spoke, while his little eyes completely disappeared in the broad face, and the huge bald head bore an unpleasant resemblance to a skull. "Princess Sascha has shown you the romantic side of the plan. Now look at it also from the classical, artistic point. It would be a ridiculous affectation for me not to confess with frankness that you couldn't have a better cicerone in the museums and churches, villas and ruins, than my humble self, or, as the Italians say, *il povero Signor me*. This is my sixth visit to Italy. To be sure, I can't show you many things that delighted me on my first five journeys, for the simple reason that I've taken them to my own home. *Que voulez-vous?* We're considered Northern barbarians, always in search of booty. A man must not be better than his reputation. But some things still remain which are worth seeing, and as for your nerves, Countess--perhaps there's but one effectual remedy for sufferings such as yours: the magnetic fluid of art. I offer myself as your artistic physician-in ordinary, and will guarantee a cure."

"And who tells you. Prince Batároff, that I've not already tried this remedy in Germany, and without success?"

"In Germany? Art in Germany? Unless you're speaking of music, which is one domain of the German nature, or gymnastics--"

"I always supposed the Dresden gallery, which we studied for a fortnight on our wedding tour, possessed some works of art for which Italy might envy us, and the museums of Berlin, Vienna,

Munich--"

"Don't mention those wretched forcing houses, in which I always feel suffocated by the artificial heat with which, with scientific zeal, the worthy Germans endeavor to correct their natural want of artistic perception! My nerves, thank God, are as strong as I wish yours were, but I really believe they would fail till I should be attacked by hysteria, if I were compelled to spend two hours a day for a fortnight in one of your national museums. Once, when on the coast of Finland, I entered a hut--it was during one of those storms when the meanest roof is welcome--and found the fisherman's family gathered round a box they had just saved from a stranded ship. It contained some great lady's jewels and dresses, which had suffered little damage, and now, seen in the hands and by the light of the dim oil lamp of these worthy half-idiots, were about as much out of place as are the Titians, Rubens, Correggios, and Raphaels in your dear German cities, watched by pedants, gaped at by snobs, and only separated by a thin roof from the grey dull sky, which they suit as well as the Brussels laces in that stranded chest suited the smoky atmosphere of a Finnish fisherman's hut."

"You're mounted on your hobby again," said Toinette's brother, with a subtle smile. "And you'll right; he who wishes to understand artists, must go to the land of artists. But you forget one thing; if art is not indigenous in our colder zone--ought we to abandon the hope that by long and affectionate care it will at last become acclimated? Who knows what we lack? That we do not, in our need, tamely submit with folded arms, is no reproach to us, and when I look at German artists--"

"German artists? I implore you, my dear Prince, in the names of the great masters, not to give these wretched bunglers so proud a name! But no, I wrong them. They're no bunglers, but rather very skillful mechanics or artisans, who have learned all the rules of their trade, and feel a pride in their guild. German artists! I know them. There was one, the most ridiculous bungler in the world, a certain König, whom his colleagues called the zaunkönig, because he exhibited old hedges or fences adorned with a few weeds, as landscapes. I made a wager with a connoisseur and enthusiast, our worthy Baron L., that this poor devil, who, in the wrath of God, was condemned to daub in colors, would joyfully renounce 'art,' if any one would buy his poor talent, I mean give him enough to live upon, on condition that he would no longer paint."

"And did you win?"

"No, I lost, my dear fellow, and it served me right; I ought to have known these German dreamers and idealists better. Just think, Countess, the man discovered that an experiment was being tried upon him, his 'artist' pride awoke, and he acted as if life would not be worth the having if he could not daily daub at his wooden landscapes; he wrote me an impertinent note, throwing my favors at my feet--the title of court painter, salary, future support, and even the whole sum he had already received. I lost my bet, but Germany regained an artist, and with him one fool the more."

Gaston laughed loudly and began to interpret the story to the chevalier, who had not understood a word. The beautiful princess, who had joined in the laugh, was just turning to Toinette to continue the conversation about the journey to Italy, when Edwin's voice interrupted her.

"I must beg you, Prince," he said with quiet emphasis, "to speak somewhat more respectfully of the artist whom you choose to call a fool. I have the happiness of being a son-in-law of that worthy gentleman, and am therefore in a position to be able to form a more correct opinion of his character and the motives of his conduct. It was not wounded vanity that induced him to give up the pension which condemned him to idleness. No one can have a more modest opinion of him, perceive his deficiencies more clearly, than he himself. But as he's in nobody's way when he paints his unassuming little pictures, he has probably no reason to be ashamed of this innocent passion, which is certainly as worthy of honor as many a so-called 'noble passion,' and it was only a foolish mistake on the good man's part that your offer was taken seriously. Yet why should not a great man amuse himself by taking an affectionate interest in a little man? My dear father-in-law thinks far too well of humankind to suspect that he was the object of a contemptuous jest, made the subject of an experiment, such as Your Highness might perhaps venture to try with your serfs. That he did not decline this honor too courteously, is scarcely reprehensible in a man, who is no fool. I, myself, was the person, who as soon as I entered into the relation of a son, opened the old man's eyes and thereby contributed to make you lose your bet."

A death-like silence followed these words, and for several seconds nothing was heard but the chevalier's low whisper to Gaston: "*Qu'est ce qu'il a dit, que le prince fronce si furieusement les sourcils?*" But he received no answer.

While Edwin, with his eyes fixed steadily upon the prince, was awaiting his reply, a new guest had entered the hall with noiseless steps and had reached the empty chair beside Edwin. The latter now turned toward him, and suddenly started up as if a thunder bolt had fallen.

Lorinser stood before him.

Not a feature of his face had altered since Edwin had seen him last, only the carriage of the head had become a little bolder, and the glance, which still as of old sought the ground or

scanned the ceiling in preference, now sometimes rested upon the person who confronted him. Such was the case at this moment, when he would have had good reason to cast down his eyes. He regarded his neighbor with a perfectly calm, courteous smile, as if inviting him to keep his seat and not trouble himself to make room for him. He was attired in faultless evening dress, and only his noiseless entrance recalled the poor candidat, who years ago had glided along such manifold crooked paths.

None of the guests, not even the mistress of the house, who during the last scene had not turned her eyes from the speaker, noticed anything unusual in Edwin's hasty movement.

"Allow me to introduce the gentlemen to each other," said the princess, glad of an interruption to the embarrassing scene; "Herr Vicar Lorenzen--"

"No introduction is necessary, Princess," interrupted Edwin with a trembling voice. "This gentleman, although he seems about to deny it, is only too well known to me; so well known in fact, that I'll give up my place in this circle to him, without farther ceremony, and take leave of the company for to-day."

"But Doctor!" cried Gaston, who had no idea of the cause of this strange scene, "the philosophy which, without striking a single blow, leaves the field to theology--"

"If my innocent remarks about German artists in general and your father-in-law in particular, which were not intended to give offence, are driving you away, I'm perfectly ready to make the *amende honorable*," said Prince Batároff, as he quietly stroked his beard and glanced at the countess. "You have a tongue like a sword, Herr Doctor, and I should think, after you've so bravely parried my assault, we might conclude an honorable peace."

"I thank you for your friendly words, Prince," replied Edwin, "and accept the peace unreservedly. If, nevertheless, I leave the table, it is because it goes against my nature to sit beside a person whom I believe--about whom I have my own opinion. Pray do not take this little weakness amiss. It will only serve to show the princess how unfounded was her supposition that a man must always possess cool blood to be a philosopher." He cast a glance of icy scorn at Lorinser, and bowed to the remainder of the party, carefully avoiding the countess' eyes.

"*C'est drôle!*" said Batároff, and he whispered something in the ear of the princess. She did not seem to hear it. Her laughing face had suddenly grown rigid with terror and was suffused with a crimson flush. The master of the house rose.

"Herr Doctor," said he in an irritated tone.

"Will the Herr Count permit *me* to ask this gentleman to explain why he insults a peaceful guest of this noble house?" interrupted Lorinser without the slightest token of agitation; "unless a sudden attack of madness--"

"Unfortunately, I have still perfect control of my senses," replied Edwin cuttingly, "and no one can more deeply regret that in return for the hospitality which I have enjoyed in this house, I am placed in a situation which compels me to cause such an unpleasant scene. But no obligations of courtesy or etiquette can induce me to sit quietly beside a person, whom I have good reasons for thinking anything but a man of honor. Again I beg the master of the house and his noble guests to pardon me; but there are instincts of the blood stronger than any training. One who has a natural aversion to a toad or a snake must leave the spot that such a reptile makes unendurable; in doing this, however, I have no desire to offend any one who rejoices in stronger nerves. Look me in the face, Herr--Vicar. Your brazen front was well known to me in the days, when as Candidat Lorinser--"

"You wish to reproach me for having restored my name to the original form used in my family before they left Denmark--"

"I don't grudge you any name and title you wish to adopt. If you could efface the rest of your past as quickly--"

"Judge not, that ye be not judged," interrupted Lorinser, with immovable calmness and unction. With the exception of a slight quivering of the nostrils, not a feature of the pale but singularly imposing countenance betrayed any special agitation.

"I appeal," he continued, "to my honored mistress the princess--that I have never pretended to be a sinless man; the earth has never contained but one such, and his disciples should remember that they are all sinners and lack the renown which before God--"

"This is the introduction to a sermon, Herr Vicar," said Edwin; "I will not interrupt and prevent you from edifying your congregation. But as I am not a member I shall have the honor of taking leave of the company, and bidding them all good night."

He bowed to the countess and left the hall, before any of the party recovered from their surprise.

CHAPTER IX.

Edwin was scarcely in his room, to which a footman with a very bewildered expression, had lighted him, when his excitement passed away and bitter indignation and wrath took possession of him. He experienced the gnawing discomfort which seizes upon everyone, when, while he does not regret having yielded to a noble impulse, he must curse the circumstances which forced him to disturb a social circle with his righteous anger. He was a guest and had quarrelled with another guest of the house, a house governed by the rules of society, which as far as possible stifles all natural sounds, smothered to a malicious whisper the cry of indignation, and give vent to an implacable hatred, not in the presence of ladies, but only in some lonely spot before two male witnesses. He must have appeared like a man without education or courtesy, a moralizing pedant. True, there were no means of justifying himself--even to the most frivolous of these children of the world--for his inability to breathe the same air with this man. But could he use an expedient, which would have compelled him to expose the secret, the honor of his friend? No; he must now submit to the consequences of his action, and no matter how much he reflected upon the affair, he could think of no other course which he could have pursued, without lowering himself in his own eyes. He felt that he could do exactly the same thing again in a similar event. So in the midst of all his annoyance, he experienced the satisfaction of having been faithful to himself, and began to reflect more calmly what course he should now pursue.

He could remain in the castle no longer. Even if he could be sure of not meeting Lorinser again, he thought it his duty to aid the master of the house, in causing the strange scene in which he played a principal part to be forgotten as quickly as possible; this could be most effectually done by the departure of the disturber of the peace, and moreover Edwin wished to avoid any farther discussion of the matter. Let them scoff at him and talk behind his back as they chose, let the enemy who remained behind reap all the advantage from having kept the field--what did he care? The one person, whose opinion he valued, would not misunderstand him; that he knew, that, the last glance with which she followed his retreating figure, had told him.

But had he come to the castle to chastise a worthless scoundrel, and might he now leave feeling that his business had been well performed? Could he leave her who had confessed that she had no friend but him, who in the greatest complication of her fate, grasped his hand in despairing terror? he was helpless to aid her it was true, but she had appealed to him with the certainty that at least she would be compelled no longer to bear her burden unaided by human help or sympathy. If he suddenly failed her again, would it not sunder the last tie that bound her to life? And yet, how could he hope to afford her any real assistance? He scarcely knew how to help himself in the violent conflict of feelings which her presence had aroused. He sat down on the sofa before the little gilt table and buried his face in his hands.

A discreet knock roused him from this profitless reverie. At his "who is there?" the little physician entered, with many apologies for disturbing him at so late an hour. The great interest he felt in his old friend's son had brought him there; he had received through the servants who were greatly alarmed by the unprecedented scene, a confused report of what had occurred, and thought he would not be charged with indiscreet curiosity, if he applied to the right quarter at once. He now, unasked, related that after Edwin had left the hall, Lorinser had made a full confession and thereby completely regained his former position. An old affair with a young girl, in whom Edwin had been likewise deeply interested, was the cause of this mortal hatred. Disappointed love had induced the poor creature, whom in spite of the most sincere affection he could not resolve to marry and be faithless to higher aims, to attempt to commit suicide. Fortunately she was saved; but all the blame for the act had been laid on his shoulders--in, short, it was a regular romance, and he seemed to have related it very well. At least when he closed, the beautiful princess' eyes were full of tears, and Count Gaston cordially shook hands with him. In the opinion of these men of the world, it was of course rather a credit to the pious gentleman that, in spite of his theological wisdom, he too had had his *bonnes fortunes* and such a romantic adventure into the bargain.

Edwin laughed fiercely.

"My dear friend," continued the little man with a crafty face, which vainly endeavored to wear an expression of friendly sympathy, "I understand your feelings as indeed every one does, even the vicar, who as he has repeatedly declared, cherishes no ill will toward you notwithstanding your violent conduct."

"Indeed? Does the worthy man forgive me? Well, that *is* ludicrous!"

"He praised you most warmly and apologized for your extraordinary conduct. If he had known at that time, that you cherished an unrequited love for the unfortunate girl, who lived in the same house--"

"My worthy patron," interrupted Edwin rising, "I'm really very grateful to you, uncommonly grateful for your friendly communications. But as my feelings, although you assure me you understand them, are still misapprehended, and as I have my own reasons for not expressing my opinion of the Herr Vicar's romance with the 'frankness and honesty' which you take for your motto, I should consider it a favor if you would leave me to myself and return to your patient. If, however, you should find occasion, you may assure all who have admired the narrators talent, that not only his style, but his inventive faculty also is yet to be equalled; in a word, that no more shameless liar ever existed than this fox in the sheep-skin of humility. And now I'll wish you as good a night's rest as I trust to obtain for myself."

While uttering these words, he had accompanied the bewildered little man to the door, opened it with a trembling hand, and closed it by no means gently behind him. He was in a tumult of excitement, the blood throbbed wildly in his temples, another moment and it would have been impossible for him to have suppressed his indignation. He would have poured forth all the bitterness of which his heart was full upon the wretched sneak whose face, with its friendly simper, put him fairly beside himself.

As soon as he was alone, his oppressed heart found relief in a loud, scornful laugh. Then he went to the dressing table which stood beside the silk canopied bed and drank a glass of water. By degrees his blood grew calm. He went to the lofty bay-window, threw it wide open, and let the pure night air fan his hot brow. "Am I not a fool?" he said to himself, "to allow myself to be so much excited by that which was only natural, and to be expected? Should it vex or humiliate me to be the loser in a contest with such a master of hypocrisy? And ought I to grudge the miserable knave, who has nothing better, this victory and its costly trophies--a princess' tears and the pressure of a count's hand? Fie upon me for allowing myself to be so overpowered with disgust. I'm really indebted to this noble tale-bearer, for opening my eyes to the true state of affairs. But away--away--away from here, before the moon has disappeared behind the forest!"

He went back to the little table, opened his portfolio and commenced a note to the count. After the disturbance of the peace of the household, he wrote, of which he had unfortunately been the cause, he thought it his duty to his host, as well as to the rest of the guests, to continue no longer to be a recipient of the hospitality which had been so kindly offered to him. He regretted that consideration for others prevented him from giving explanations which, although his conduct might appear an offence against etiquette, would justify it in every other respect. As for the cause which had brought him here, he was fully convinced that he had no power to undo what had been done and effect a reconciliation. Perhaps, he concluded, time, which works so many wonders, may bring about what at present the count positively refuses to think of, and make a separation between two incompatible natures, appear the only means of safety.

He had just sealed the note and was writing the address, when there was another knock at his door. "Come in!" he exclaimed indignantly, for the thought darted through his mind that the count might come to see him in person and thereby render useless the letter, which would have spared him any verbal explanations; then the door opened and Toinette entered.

"Is it you?" he exclaimed rushing toward her. "Do you come to me?"

She threw back the dark shawl she had wrapped around her, and he saw that she wore a simple dress and had laid aside all her jewelry.

"I could not help coming to you," she said in her usual tone. "I wanted to speak to you, and you--you're going away; I knew it, before seeing the letter upon your table. You would have gone without bidding me farewell. Would you not?"

"Perhaps it would have been the best course," he replied, clasping her hand, which hung loosely by her side. "Tell me yourself, my dear friend, have we ought to hope for, from any words we might exchange? Fate does not turn for words. And yet I could hardly have made up my mind to leave without a word. I intended to have gone to the farm house on the other side of the forest, and from there to have sent you a note, to say I would wait to hear from you in case you had any commissions for me. But you have anticipated me. Are we not in danger of interruption here?"

"What does it matter?" she replied with a gesture expressive of the most utter indifference, as she seated herself on the sofa. "You mean, will it not compromise me to make you a visit by night? Perhaps so. But that's unfortunately not sufficient cause for separation. Otherwise I should not have waited till I could visit a friend. The first person I chanced to meet would have suited my purpose, the chevalier, or our dear cousin Gaston, for instance, if I could break the chain so easily." Then glancing at the letter, she added: "What did you write to him?"

"Do you wish to read it? It's at your service."

"No; it makes no difference. You're going away--that says all--and I--I must stay here."

He looked at her as she uttered these words in an expressionless tone, as if only talking to herself. Her dilated eyes were fixed in a terrified gaze, on the candles burning in the silver candlesticks as if her life were fading and she was striving to rekindle the glimmering spark by these tiny flames. Her face was colorless, but inexpressibly attractive in its utter self-forgetfulness, which made the beautiful woman seem like a helpless child that, frightened by the

dread of ghosts, files to some brilliantly lighted room and gazes straight at the lamp, that it may see no spectral faces to right or left.

"What really brings me here," she said after a pause, "is a question I wanted to ask you, but mind, I'm speaking to the philosopher, and not to the friend of former days."

"Of *former* days?"

"Let me go on. I want to ask you whether there is any justice on earth. Or no, you need not answer. It's perfectly evident that gifts are differently apportioned among men. That there is no justice, even in heaven--not even according to the representations of religious people--is also unquestionable, else what would become of the doctrine of election? 'Many are called, but few chosen.' For why did not the 'so-called gods,' of whom your friend spoke that day of long ago, endow all their creatures equally, if they had the power to be just? Intentional partiality, voluntary malice--no, that would be too fiendish. But now tell me, why must we endure degradation, neglect, to better the condition of the children of happiness, yes, even expulsion into bad company--such as you've found beneath this roof? Is not self-defence in mortal peril allowable? To help ourselves I mean, when one is wretched, disinherited, starving perhaps, and full dishes are carried past him? Or do you think it a sin to break one of the ten commandments under any circumstances? What? Are the gifts, powers, and happiness of men to be different, and yet must they have but one rule for their actions? Is the fainting beggar who plucks an apple from a stranger's tree, as great a thief, as a man who has plenty to eat and breaks into a treasury? Answer! Why may we not philosophize a little as usual? You would find me a better pupil now, for I've gone through the primary school and learned all the absurdities of this great world by heart--yes indeed, by *heart*, and it ached enough at the task."

"Dearest friend," he replied, "if you knew how *my* heart aches, aches till it's ready to burst, you would ask no philosophy from me. When I see and hear you, I have enough to do, not to give utterance to the fiercest cry of woe that ever burst from the lips of a thinking mortal. What could I say to you--except the most pitiful commonplaces. You question me about the mystery of life. The clue to it, which one and another fancies he has found, is but a new enigma; and it is equally mysterious that there should be men who are forced to rack their brains about this mystery until their hearts break, while others have never a sleepless moment, but await the solution as patiently as the answer to a charade which is to appear 'in our next number.' Meantime it is ordered--or we must see to it ourselves--that life and its work, thoughtless everyday work, withdraws us from our agitating search for the solution to the riddle. Dear Toinette--"

"I know what you're going to say," she quickly interrupted. "My idleness is the cause of all my sorrows. If I had something to do, I should not have time to ponder four and twenty hours a day over what I most lack. Is not that what you were about to say? To establish a child's school or hospital, make clothes for deaf mutes, or in my old age strive to cultivate a talent for painting or playing on the piano--all I these would be delightful occupations! But I'm not affectionate enough for one, or vain enough for the other. I don't love human beings, my friend, I mean abstract human beings, mankind. And yet, I know now that my only talent would have been love; but the love I mean, is love for one man and that man's children, and because I learned this too late--I must go to ruin--to ruin."

"But no," she suddenly exclaimed, and a passionate flush crimsoned her cheeks as she pushed the table aside and rose from the sofa. "I will not go to ruin, will not yield the right of self-defence and suffer my claim to happiness to be wrested from me, as it is from every disinherited soul. Words are of no avail against the decrees of fate, didn't you say so, Edwin? You're right, we must act, if we desire to win the respect of the 'so-called gods;' therefore I've come to you, my friend. Do not look at me so! You know what has brought me here, even if a wretched remnant of cowardice does not suffer me to express it. Be merciful, spare me, and tell me that you know all and will not thrust me from the only place where I can find happiness--your heart, Edwin!"

"Toinette!" he exclaimed--but he could say no more. She had thrown herself into his arms and hidden her streaming eyes, her glowing lips upon his breast.

"Calm yourself!" he ventured to murmur in her ear after a long pause, his lips touching her hair; suddenly she raised her head, and her face wore an expression of such blended happiness and anguish, that all his strength failed. "This is too much!" he faltered. "Spare me! You do not know what I have suffered!"

"I do know," she whispered amid her kisses. "I knew it in the first hour we were together--you're still mine, as you have ever been--you're mine, mine--as I've been your's, ever since I became a woman."

At this moment the clock in the old castle tower slowly struck twelve. A shudder ran through the frame of the man who clasped to his heart the woman who had been the object of his first love. It seemed as if a cold spectral hand was passing over his heart, quenching the fierce glow that threatened to destroy him. He released his lips from hers, and gently pushed away the slight figure that clung to his breast. "What have we done?" he exclaimed, retreating a step and averting his eyes.

"We have drunk when we were thirsty," said the impassioned woman, without lowering her

glance. "Oh! it was but a drop on the hot stone! Why do you no longer look into my eyes, Edwin? Are you ashamed that you still love me, because in the old days I was childish and cold, and knew not what I did? The curse was still upon me, the curse of my birth, for which I've had to atone through all these years of suffering, to become at last another creature, a happy creature, new born through your love, Edwin! When I first saw you, early this morning, my heart received a blow that burst the lid of the coffin in which it was buried; and in the forest, how your every word, your glance, the pressure of your hand said to me: 'what are four years to a feeling that's eternal? I'm the same man, whom once you made miserable, but now all will be well again, since my happiness is yours.' Look into my eyes, Edwin, and tell me, if you can, that I have deceived myself!"

She had approached him and taken his hand. He did not withdraw it, but the glance that met hers was now so sad that she shrank back and let it fall.

"You have seen aright, my poor friend," he said in a hollow tone. "I *am* the same man, whom you made miserable. Yet nevertheless you have deceived yourself. What is now my happiness cannot be yours. Don't you know it? Have you entirely forgotten that I no longer belong to myself? My life is bound to another, and this other is dearer, should be dearer to me than my own existence."

"I know it," she replied, as she approached the little table and quietly rested both hands upon it. "But if it's true that this woman, to whom in an outburst of pride and anger you gave your hand, really loves you, will she be able to endure the sorrow, when she sees that she alone stands in the way of your happiness? I, if placed in such a situation, would rather die than assert a light which I had obtained in an unguarded moment, and which had at last become a sin against the claim of nature."

He gravely shook his head. "Listen to me," he said. "Sit down there, my beloved friend, and let us honestly endeavor to find some way out of this labyrinth. It would be easier for you to understand me, if you knew the woman whose life is so firmly bound to mine that nothing can separate us, not even what you call the claim of nature. She knows all. I've concealed nothing of what I suffered through you--"

"And you will be silent *now*?"

"I should not wish to be so, even if I could. There's no one on earth, since I lost my brother, who is so well acquainted with my every thought, every emotion of my heart. She's really my other self, my better self, far gentler, stronger, and more self-sacrificing than I, and I can never think of what I owe her during these years, without wondering at my own levity, that I do not feel oppressed by these debts, nay that I often imagine I can repay them daily with interest. If you knew this loving, lovely creature--"

"Spare me the embarrassment of knowing her now through your description. I will go, I see I have too long--"

"No, not so, you must not go so! You must hear me out, Toinette. This will perhaps be the last conversation we shall ever hold. Shall we make the wound this parting will cause still more painful by petty irritation? What I've told you is literally true. But if I love this woman as my better self, I feel for the first time at this moment--no, since early this morning--that no matter how we may estimate self-love, it cannot become a passion, an intoxication, a rapture of mingled happiness and misery. Oh! passion! which you call the claim of nature; I call it fate! It will be long ere the tempest will be laid which your kiss has roused in my soul. Now do you see that you have no reason to be ashamed of that caress? Nature has asserted its claim, fate has had its way; that's nothing of which mortals need be ashamed. But now the will must assert its power, we must open our eyes and question whither blind passion will lead us--say 'Halt!' to its further progress, and do our duty, no matter what it costs us. Don't you think so too my brave friend?"

He waited for her assent, for a glance which would tell him that she agreed with him. But she was looking steadily at her clasped hands, which rested quietly on her lap, and only after a long pause said as if to herself:

"The game's unequal. However--*va banque!*"

"What do you mean, Toinette?" he replied. "Do you wish to imply, that I shall return to what has hitherto formed my happiness, and find it as before, and that you will remain on the verge of the abyss? But now answer me one question--should I offer you my hand on the spot with the intention even at the price of my self-respect to lead you out of this house of gilded misery, do you believe that a man who had sacrificed for you his most sacred possessions, his duty, the proud consciousness of self-respect, the faith he had sworn to his better self in the person of a high hearted woman--"

"Hush!" she hastily interrupted. "It's needless to say more. Your admirably wise words torture me. Your talk of passion is but a form of words. You reason, you moralize, you think of a future in which you may repent of what you've done for me. But I, Oh! God--I've nothing but this hour, no consciousness of what may come, or of what has been! You're here with me, and the world beyond, all others beside ourselves, everything which you call sin and fate and duty and remorse--"

-I know not. I am conscious only of this: that you're the only man on whose breast my restless heart has tasted the bliss of one moment's repose--never, never to taste it again, and he stands and philosophizes, while I--am dying!"

Her eyes, which became gloomily fixed upon vacancy, suddenly overflowed with tears, she convulsively pressed her hands to her face and burst into uncontrollable sobs.

"Toinette!" he exclaimed, "by all the saints, you wrong me. I--if you suspected what a superhuman battle I am fighting, what torture that moment in which you tasted repose has conjured up for me--Toinette, be merciful--spare me--let us help each other, instead of aiding each other to be wretched. No one else will help us. We have no belief in the eternal torments of hell, in an avenging God, or a redeeming Saviour. But we know what is right, Toinette, we know that all the bliss of love's greatest rapture would become a poison, if bought with the heart's blood of others whom we were compelled to sacrifice. We look for no eternity, in which to atone for the sins of the present. We can only be honest and brave and good here upon earth, and we will be, my poor love, for you have an heroic soul, which can find its real happiness only in refusing to be bowed by any fate, and in conquering or dying in the conflict."

He paused, and bending over her laid his hand upon her head, as in the old days he had stroked Balder's curls. Suddenly she started, her tearful eyes wandered around the room in bewilderment, and she said hastily: "Do you hear nothing? Steps are approaching along the corridor. Who can it be? but no matter! What is to come, may come--"

There was a low knock at the door, then it was quickly but cautiously opened, though only wide enough to enable some person to speak. "The Herr Count is coming up the stairs," said a woman's voice. "I think he is on his way here."

"Very well, Rose," replied the countess, hastily wiping her eyes. "Come in and sit down yonder. This is the only person who is faithful to me," she continued turning to Edwin, as a tall, homely, pock-marked woman entered, and without even casting a curious glance at the pair, seated herself in the chair beside the bed. "If I had not had Rose, to whom I can tell everything--how do you know the count is coming here, Rose?"

"I don't know, but I'm almost sure of it. The rest of the company went to their rooms half an hour ago. The Herr Count remained alone in the blue drawing room, I could see him from your chamber, standing at the window. His Excellency's rooms were dark, and besides he never comes up here at this hour. Only the Herr Doctor's apartment was lighted. I saw the Herr Count look up here--then he suddenly drew back--I thought he might perhaps have something to say to the Herr Doctor. There, hark! Don't you hear him now?"

All listened silently. A hesitating step approached over the carpeted floor of the lofty, vaulted corridor, paused as if irresolute, and then approached Edwin's room.

"What shall we say to him?" whispered Edwin.

"Nothing. He would not understand the truth. Don't you say a word to him; I know how he must be addressed."

The next moment there was a knock at the door, and the count entered.

CHAPTER X.

His first glance fell upon Toinette, who sat on the sofa in the full light of the candles. Evidently surprised, but without losing his self-control, he paused on the threshold and looked at the two others with an inquiring glance.

"I'm disturbing you," he said coldly. "I saw you still had a light in your room, Herr Doctor, and wanted to say a few words to you. If I'd been aware, that I should not find you alone--"

"You interrupt our conversation just at the right time," said Toinette calmly, without avoiding her husband's glance. "We've been philosophizing a little, as we used to do in old times; there's no end to that, especially when people look at things from such different points of view. Rose almost fell asleep over it. We'll have another argument to-morrow, dear friend. I think I shall finally convince and overpower you. My best troops are yet to be brought into the field."

"Let us conclude a truce," said Edwin with a painful effort. "Really, Countess, another such victory, and my cause will be lost."

"No, no, Doctor, you won't escape so. Do you know that he means to leave us early to-morrow morning? I shall make you responsible for his stay. And now good night. I won't trouble the gentlemen to escort me to my room. Come, Rose, it's time to go to sleep, and we have still to hold a council about my toilette."

She rose hastily, held out her hand to Edwin not daring to raise her eyes to his, nodded to her husband and left the room with her faithful maid. The two men stood face to face for a moment in silence.

"Is it true that you're going?" said the count at last.

"You see I had already taken leave of you," replied Edwin, pointing to the letter, which still lay on the table. "I thought I should do you a favor by avoiding any verbal explanation, in relation to a matter which is painful both to you and to myself, and unfortunately hopeless also."

"So you, too, think we must fear--" He pointed to his forehead.

Edwin was silent. He was reflecting, whether a tacit agreement might not perhaps afford a means of escape. He rejected the subterfuge.

"You have appealed to my old friendship for your wife, Herr Count," said he. "I owe it to her, and to yourself, to tell the truth; how matters have reached this point, and what share wrong and misfortune have played, I cannot and will not attempt to decide. But in the present condition of affairs, I see but one means of salvation--to restore her freedom. Misfortune is inevitable, if this state of things continues--not the one you or the doctors fear: I've never seen a clearer brain or more gloomy soul than the countess has. She'll not lose her reason, but probably with entire deliberation go to destruction."

"You mean, Doctor--she might--"

"I know that she has never particularly loved life, that she hates it now, and that it will not require much to burst the overloaded vessel. I shall leave this house early to-morrow morning, Herr Count. My presence can avail nothing, prevent nothing. But once more I entreat you to make a hasty, strong, and noble resolution, consent to a separation, if you wish to preserve this precious life. This is the only way of rescuing what still remains to be saved. Perhaps the future will voluntarily restore what you can no longer hold by force."

The count had approached the window, and with folded arms was gazing out into the night. Suddenly he turned, so that the candle light fell full upon his deeply flushed face.

"I'm very grateful to you, Herr Doctor," he said with icy coldness, "for having communicated to me your--of course humble--opinion. In regard to what I ought to do or leave undone, you'll permit me to consult my own wishes, and decline friendly suggestions with my best thanks. For the rest, I regret that you have reasons for leaving my house to-morrow, but as I cannot boast of so old a friendship with you as the countess, it would be indiscreet to inquire into these motives in order perhaps to set them aside. I wish you a pleasant journey. A carriage will be ready to convey you to the railway station at any hour you may desire. Once more accept my most sincere thanks for the delay I have caused you, and if you should ever come into this neighborhood again--" He bowed carelessly to Edwin, whose tongue seemed paralysed, and with a calm smile and patronizing wave of the hand left the room.

"And this is the end!" burst from the oppressed heart of the man who was left alone. He went to the table, took the note and tore it into tiny fragments. A feeling of bitter sorrow, in which all thought of the past and future were merged, overwhelmed him, his mind seemed to be in a dull stupor, a heavyweight rested on his breast, which he tried to throw off by long panting sighs; he took no note of time; not until the clock struck two did he rouse himself from this bewilderment, and remember that for more than an hour he had been standing in the same spot, gazing at the same figure on the silk tapestry. His limbs had grown stiff, and his joints ached as he walked toward his bed. He threw himself on the silk coverlid, still in his clothes, which he no longer thought it worth while to remove, and closed his eyes. The candles were still burning, and the moon shone so brightly into the window, that sleep refused to visit his eyelids. As if he were haunted by the illusions of fever, voices echoed in his ear Toinette's passionate confessions, his own wise answers, which had had so little power over his own heart, and the count's cold, formal words, which whenever they recurred to his memory sent the hot blood to his brow. Moreover, a faint perfume of violets surrounded him, which recalled the moment when her curls had rested on his breast; he fancied he felt her glowing lips press his, her tears on his cheek, her exquisite form in his arms, clinging to him as a shipwrecked sailor stretches out his arms toward the land.

"This is too much!" he faltered--"I would that daylight were here and I were a thousand miles away!"

Suddenly the candles flickered and expired. He started up, and saw the first grey light of morning creeping over the trees. "It's time," said he, "quite time! This is not a house in which I can sleep."

He dipped his face in the wash basin, rubbed his cheeks and temples till the last lingering odor of violets had been washed away, then with trembling hands seized his traveling satchel,

threw the strap over his shoulder, and left the room.

No one met him as he passed along the dark corridors and down the wide staircase. Beside the main entrance was the room occupied by the porter, who slept with his door open and looked up in alarm when he saw a guest standing equipped for travel so early in the morning. The thaler he felt in his hand only partially enlightened him, he nodded sleepily when Edwin told him to give his compliments to his master and to say to him that he had set out before daybreak, because he preferred to walk in the cool of the morning. The man then opened the little side door adjoining the main entrance and took leave of the departing guest with an awkward bow.

The dogs barked as Edwin crossed the wide courtyard, but he met no human being. Outside were the dark woods, veiled by the light transparent haze of early dawn, and a heavy dew was beginning to fall. Like a flying criminal who avoids the highways, Edwin turned and plunged into the dense shadow of a side path. The burden that would not suffer him to breathe freely still rested on his heart, but his senses were cooled by the fresh air of the forest, and his rapid pace did him good. At last he came to a spot which he remembered to have visited the day before. In a field appeared the solitary farm house, with its steep gable roof and an open barn by the road side tempted him to rest a moment. The floor was covered with sheaves, and the air full of the strong odor of the fresh wheat. He threw himself down in the first corner, and although he intended to remain awake in order to be far on his way when the sun rose, the many exciting scenes of the previous day made sleep overpower him irresistibly.

The farmer's servants found him there, when a few hours later they came to commence their work. But as they remembered having seen him the day before, and as he had liberally rewarded the boy who had shown him the way, they glided softly out to let him sleep a little longer, wondering among themselves that a gentleman who was a guest at the castle, should prefer a couch of straw. When the sun had risen higher, the farmer himself came to the barn, this time determined to wake the stranger. The countess' maid had come to ask whether the gentleman who had been there yesterday had not called again. He had suddenly disappeared from the castle, and she had a message for him.

When the sleeper started up, the girl was standing with her back to the light, which entered through the barn door, and had a thick veil over her face. Edwin drew back. At the first glance, still under the influence of his dream, he fancied that he saw before him the woman from whom he had resolved to fly. Her voice first undeceived him.

"The countess wishes you a pleasant journey, regrets that the Herr Doctor did not take leave of her himself, and begs him to read the letter she sends, as it contains a commission which is of great importance to her."

"Does she want an answer?"

The faithful girl shook her head, declined almost with an air of offence the money he tried to press upon her, and instantly left the barn.

No sooner was Edwin alone, than he read the following lines, which were hastily scrawled with a pencil.

"You've gone, you fly from me, I expected nothing different. But you'll come back, I know, and then you will never leave me again. Edwin! What a night! What a fate! I've examined my own hearty mentally reviewed all your cruel, honest words--all are right--but here power overcomes right. We belong to each other, Edwin, we were created for each other from the beginning; how else would it have been possible for your love to continue despite our separation, and me tardy, sorrowful recognition that you're the only man, to whom I owe all I have and am,--all; honor, life, soul, and body. You're going now, Edwin. You'll try to forget me. Do so! You must first learn that all resistance is unavailing, that when you do yield, you may submit to the superior power of Nature without a murmur, without remorse. Then we'll be happy, my beloved--I will make you happy. Oh! I'm so rich; my treasure was only buried, evil spirits guarded the spot. But I know the word that will break the spell--and it will be yours, and I shall know wherefore I live. Till then farewell, unless it be a mockery to say it; for how can you fare well when you may not clasp me to your breast. As for me I have become accustomed to the pain of your absence; I have spent four years in this seeming death, and only lived two moments--on your heart. But let us not torture ourselves--don't be too long--we've so much lost time to retrieve. When you come I shall have arranged all, the place of our refuge, the way to reach it, everything except how it will seem when you are free and mine, and tell me that you love me;--there my thoughts fail!--"

"INETTE."

The sun is high in the heavens, as a traveler walks along the road which leads from the railway station to the count's castle. The stalwart figure of our old friend, Heinrich Mohr, is recognizable at the first glance; the bold face and shapely cut nose we remember but not the cheerful expression that hovers around the lips and forms so striking a contrast to the scornful defiance which once marked the mouth.

He arrived by the early morning train, and on receiving Edwin's note, which he found awaiting him, instantly set off on foot in order to reach the castle before the heat of noon. As hat in hand,

he walks along the little foot path beside the highway, whistling and looking up into the overhanging foliage, he seems a type of perfect strength and happiness. And yet something is apparently lacking. Suddenly pausing he draws forth a pocket book, in which is pasted the photograph of a little boy not quite three years old, with a grave earnest face, and gazes at it as intently as if it were a map of the country which he carried to guide him on his way. And in fact this child's face has shown him the way to a happy, peaceful life.

Just as he closes the pocket book, he sees some one approaching him. "Edwin!" he calls. "Gracious Heaven, how do you chance to be here? You look as if you'd just risen from the grave. Eternal Gods! What has happened?"

Edwin paused. Mohr saw him move his lips without emitting a sound; then he tried to smile, but he only accomplished a sorrowful distortion of the face. He looked as pale as if he had not a drop of blood in his veins, his eyes were sunken, and his hat was thrust far back on his head.

"Heinrich!" he gasped at last, with a violent effort, "it's well that I have met you--I--I don't know what might have happened--it was too much at once."

"But man, speak, tell me--where--what has occurred--have you seen a ghost?"

"You've said it, Heinz--and it will not leave me in peace. Listen, but don't tell any one; I'm the old Tannhäuser and come straight from--"

His voice failed, his eyes suddenly closed, his knees trembled, and if Mohr had not hastily sprung forward, his head would have struck the trunk of a oak which stood close to the road.

At this moment a traveling carriage, piled with luggage and drawn by four handsome horses from the count's stable, passed them. The fair-haired princess was leaning back on the cushions beside Prince Batároff, the young prince occupied the front seat, and beside him, laughing and talking in the gayest manner, was Lorinser.

The travelers' servants, a maid and two valets, followed in a light hunting carriage, engaged in eager conversation, while a bottle of wine from the castle cellar circulated freely between them and the count's groom, who was driving.

No one in either carriage noticed the group on the foot path, or heard Mohr's call to stop and take in the fainting man. Not until they had passed, did Mohr, who looked after them cursing the cold hearts of aristocrats, see the face of his mortal enemy. The blood froze in his veins, and he let his friend fall from his arms as if about to rush after the carriage. Then he suddenly regained his composure.

"Drive on," he murmured. "That devil's no longer to be feared. We have here to deal with other powers of darkness!"

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

Three or four hour's ride by rail from the scene of these incidents is situated the little Thuringian city where Edwin had become a teacher of mathematics and Franzelius had founded his printing office. The house for whose purchase Papa Feyertag had advanced his son-in-law a considerable sum, stood on the principal street, and the unpretending old front bore a striking resemblance to a proof sheet stained with printer's ink and scrawled over with various marks and dashes. Only the sign over the door, was new, and bore in white letters on a black ground the inscription: "Printing done by Reinhold Franzelius." It was an old one story frame buildings with, a tile roof blackened by age and as high as the house itself, and it contained, besides the work

shop, a number of chambers for the journeymen, and store rooms for paper and other articles. On entering the house, the door to the left bore the sign "office," and to the right was the entrance to the composing room, from which a narrow passage led into the back building, where the presses were.

In the upper story, in a plainly furnished but spacious sitting room, sat two women, in whom we recognize the fair-haired Reginchen from Dorotheenstrasse, now Frau Franzelius, and the zaunkönig's daughter, now Frau Doctor Edwin. The years that have elapsed have not passed over the heads of either without leaving their traces, but the changes show to the advantage of both. When we last saw Leah, she was lying on the green sofa in the family sitting room at the 'Venetian palace,' with haggard cheeks paled by hopeless passion, and we were only permitted to see how the expiring spark of her young existence was rekindled by the touch of love. Since that time her life has expanded into a quiet, soul-full beauty, which is not striking at the first glance, but soon shows the more thoughtful observer that there must be something unusual about the young wife. She still wears her hair as she did in the days of her girlhood, wound in heavy braids about her head, and fastened behind with two silver pins, almost in the style of the peasant girls of Rome or Albano. The delicate, softly rounded oval face has grown fuller, and no longer wears a sickly pallor, but the complexion is still of alabaster whiteness, so that the eyes, which are her most beautiful feature, glow with a still darker lustre. It would be difficult to say what was most attractive in the countenance, the quick intelligence of the eyes, or the sweet gentleness expressed in the curves of the full lips. Even her figure has gained an added charm, although her matronly dignity makes it more perceptible than ever that the grand outlines of the head would have better suited a prouder figure. But when she is seated this is not noticeable, especially when she laughs, when the thoughtful eyes and kindly mouth harmonize so perfectly, that no one could desire any alteration in the young wife's appearance.

Reginchen, who sits beside her in a light flowered calico dress, with her fair hair brushed plainly under an almost coquettish little white cap, has also perceptibly gained in beauty and fullness of figure, nay her form, once as slender as a swallow's seems disposed to *embonpoint*. But the round, childish face, on the contrary, has elongated, the rapid merry upward glance of the blue eyes is changed for an expression of quiet cheerfulness, only sometimes darkened by a slight cloud, when the noise made by the two little black haired boys grows too loud, or one or both, in playing with a large brown rocking horse, stumbles over his brother's legs. These two little fellows, now just three years old, are the famous twins, Edwin and Balder, whom Reginchen gave her Reinhold in the first year of their marriage. They are, as Edwin has already told Marquard, ridiculously like their father, grave, black eyed, white-teethed little prodigies, with voices which really afford a most favorable augury for the future of the young tribunes of the people, who despite their turbulent, unruly conduct, are the kindest hearted little fellows in the world, and cling to their mother in particular with such wild, jealous tenderness, that when both fall upon her at once, Reginchen is in considerable danger of being strangled and suffocated by her own children. Totally unlike these comical miniature editions of their father, is the youngest child, a delicate, quiet, fair-haired little girl about a year old, still a nursling, and whose presence a blind man would scarcely notice. The father declared her Balder's living image, and racked his brains for a long time to try whether this child, whom he loves with special tenderness, could not be given some name which would likewise recall his never to be forgotten friend. But Reginchen, willingly as she indulges her Reinhold's every wish, had a decided objection to Baldriane or Waltharia, and insisted that this tender spring blossom should bear her grandmother's honest name, Friederike, to which, since Reginchen, as the true daughter of a shoemaker, and knows how to put down her little foot at times, he made no objection.

When Leah, as was her daily habit during Edwin's absence, came at twilight to see her friend and neighbor, the latter had just nursed the child and was holding it quietly in her lap, where it was falling asleep.

"Excuse me if I remain seated," she said in a low voice, though the two young bawlers, the twins, had no respect for their little sister's slumber. "Riekchen is just going to sleep; I can lay her in the cradle in a few minutes. I'm so glad you've come. We should have sent for you to-day at any rate. Father's here; he arrived unexpectedly without any other reason than because he couldn't live any longer without seeing the two boys. He scarcely looked at Riekchen--to be sure, it will be a long time," she continued with a low laugh, "before the dear child is old enough for the 'explosive effect' father's always talking about. He asked about you, too, and wanted to go at once to give you a message from your parents, but he began to talk to my Reinhold in the old strain about progress and the welfare of the people, and they didn't stop till it grew dark, and as it's Sunday evening Reinhold took him to the workmen's union. There, now she's asleep, now the pet can be put down. Have you shaken hands with Aunt Leah, boys? They look horribly. Their father brought home some chocolate cigars, and its no use to wash them. Will you keep quiet, you little good for nothings?"

Little Edwin, after hastily shaking hands with Leah, had climbed on the sofa, clasped both arms around his mother's neck, rumpled her cap, and pressed his curly black head against her's, playing all sorts of tricks and stammering loving words in his broken language. Balder was also endeavoring to climb up the other side of the sofa, so that the sleeping child opened her large blue eyes again and stared with a frightened gaze at the black kobold. Leah could not help laughing, and hastily went forward to take the sweet little thing in her arms. The maid-servant was called in to assist, and her powerful arms at last succeeded in pulling the wild twins away

from their mother and out of the room.

"They'll kill me!" exclaimed Reginchen in comic despair, as Leah re-entered. "Reinhold might manage them, but he only laughs instead of helping me. And I, with the best intentions--but sit down, dearest, and let's talk to each other a little while. You can't imagine how much trouble it costs me to get a half hour to myself. How often I envy you your quiet house, and you have the whole day to read and write and think. I, with our great household, and the care of all the workmen, to whom I fill a mother's place--isn't it comical," she laughed, fastening her cap straight again, "to look at me and think what I used to be, and what I am now. It would be a sin to complain, but I'm sorry for one thing--that there's no chance of my husband's teaching me anything, as I am always begging him to do. But in the evening, when I have him an hour to myself and might read and learn something, my eyes close, and the finest poem or novel is not half as delightful as my bed. When I complain of this to Reinhold, he laughs at me. He thinks I'm well educated enough; he's still so much in love, that he doesn't see my deficiencies. But when I get to be an old woman and sit with my old husband, and can scarcely understand half the things he's thinking and writing--well, it will be his own fault, so he can't complain. I only speak of it, because it always gives me a pang when you find me so among the children--and I can't divide any of the blessing with you. But you see every joy has its thorns, even that which seems most enviable. You, as a compensation, live alone with your husband, and he tells you everything he thinks, and you two are so completely one all day long that you needn't desire anything else. Ain't I right, dearest?"

She had nestled close to her silent friend, who listened with a peculiar, almost triumphant smile. "You're a little hypocrite," she now said, taking Reginchen's face between her hands and pressing a hasty kiss upon her brow. "You know very well, how I feel beside you--and because you've a kind heart and love me, want to make me believe you'd sell your three children for the title of Doctor, you wicked mother. But just because you were only acting, and I, with all my culture, am not so skillful in hypocrisy as you--you cunning child of nature--come, let me whisper something in your ear, that no one has yet heard--not even he who has the best right to hear it--and you must also promise me that not a soul shall know it, not even he from whom you usually have no secrets. Your hand upon it, Ginchen!"

She held out her hand for her friend to clasp; but the wife and mother started up with a cry of joy, that vividly recalled the little house swallow of former days, exclaiming: "Is it true? Are you sure? Oh! dear, dearest Leah--" and she threw her arms around her neck in a tumult of the most enthusiastic delight; "let me kiss and hug and congratulate you, and no seven seals shall close my mouth, since I guessed it before you said a word, and besides how could I conceal it? Reinhold always says he reads my face better than a page printed in the clearest type, the tease! and now your father and mother--everything will be well again, and I take back every word I just said, merely to drive away your longing. No! without a child--all the learning of a whole library couldn't make me happy, or you either, dearest, and because I knew that, I've always half grudged myself my own happiness, and often--God forgive me the sin--thought whether it wouldn't be better, if we didn't live in the same city; that's all my wickedness, and now I'll keep still and you shall punish me soundly for my deceit, and then let me kiss you for the good news. Merciful Heavens, what will Edwin say!"

During this enthusiastic outburst of joy she had been dancing about the room like a crazy person, and now suddenly sat down in Leah's lap, threw her arms around her, and humbly bent her head, as if expecting the chastisement would be given in good earnest. Leah bent toward her. "You're a sweet child," she said, secretly drying her tearful eyes in Reginchen's hair. "Come, be sensible. And I'm entirely in earnest about keeping the matter a secret. Who knows whether I may not be disappointed? Have I not twice cherished the hope, only to be doubly unhappy? That's why Edwin must know nothing about it until I'm perfectly sure. Oh! darling, I'll never, never forget that you have rejoiced with me. It seems as if I had discovered to-day, for the first time, that you really love me, and what a precious treasure you are. The man would not deserve you at all, who would question of the books you had read or the subjects you were able to discuss."

They held each other in a close embrace, and then with all the unwearied energy of a woman's fancy, Reginchen began to picture the happy future Leah might now expect. But she insisted that she should be required to keep the secret from her Reinhold only so long as Edwin himself knew nothing of it. She asked when he would return. Since the arrival of the letter Edwin had written at the hotel, which was now four days old, Leah had not heard from him, and therefore concluded he would not remain much longer away. "This is the first time," said she, "that we've been separated so many days, and I know that if he didn't consider it necessary for his health, he wouldn't have stayed half so long."

"But it's strange he doesn't write oftener," said Reginchen. "When my Reinhold has to go to Leipsic on business, I get half a dozen letters from him. You must train your husband better. Besides writing's his trade."

"You don't know him, dearest. Precisely because he's in the habit of telling me everything, it's hard for him to communicate with me, even an hour every day, by his pen. He feels a sort of defiance against the separation. He won't learn to be satisfied with a little, and if he can't have all, prefers to get nothing."

"It may be so," replied her friend. "Besides, it always seems to me as if you two really didn't

need to speak to each other at all, but exchanged your thoughts without the aid of words. But only let little Leah come, and she'll give you some entirely new thoughts. Reinhold's letters and mine contain nothing but anecdotes about the children; if any one else should read them, he would laugh at us. But we're perfectly serious."

Steps ascending the staircase interrupted these confidential outpourings. The father-in-law and son-in-law, who had returned from the workmen's meeting, entered, Franzelius exactly the same as in the old days, only thanks to his little wife, with hair somewhat more smoothly brushed and cravat more evenly tied, while the black eyes under the bushy brows beamed with a quiet, almost shy expression of love and happiness, which he owed to the same little wife also. Papa Feyertag, on the contrary, was scarcely recognizable. The once benevolent face, with its smile of superiority, had assumed a strangely eager, excited expression, which together with a half grown grey moustache rendered it by no means attractive. Instead of the neat, quiet dress which he was in the habit of wearing on Sundays in his shop, his short, thick set figure was clad in the fashionable garb of a tourist, a mustard colored shade of cloth, variegated with little points and dots from head to foot, and in addition a ridiculous little hat with a blue ribbon. He was heated, and seemed to break off an angry conversation with his son-in-law as he perceived the visitor. Reginchen cast a hasty glance at her husband, which the latter answered with a slight shrug of the shoulders, but when a lamp was brought in and the simple supper placed upon the table, the cheerful mood that usually reigned in the household soon returned, and even the old gentleman became more good natured. He told Leah that his wife, who had never been farther from Berlin than Potsdam or the Müggelsee, had this time also obstinately refused to visit her daughter in her own house. She declared she could not eat anything that was not cooked in Berlin water, and during the one night she spent at Potsdam, she had been unable to close her eyes, because there were no good beds out of Berlin. "What's to be done, dear Frau Doctorin? Women are women. I tried to conquer her by rousing her jealousy, and threatened to persuade the Frau Professorin, I mean Madame König, your step-mother, to come with me, as your father unfortunately cannot stir from home on account of his gout. She knows I think your mother a very beautiful lady, in spite of her forty-five years, and we're always joking together. But she also knew very well, that it was only a joke, for that young couple--your parents I mean--can't be so easily separated. They gave me the kindest messages for you, and asked why you didn't come to Berlin. After all, you owe it to your parents to do so, and you might be so comfortable in their new house."

"A teacher of mathematics, who has learned how to calculate and has opportunities in abundance for doing so, doesn't find it as easy to travel, as a house-owner in the capital," replied Leah with a faint blush. "Besides Edwin needs his vacations to regain his strength, and Berlin, as he always says, is a great human mill, where one is ground to powder in a fortnight."

"Why, he lived there more than fourteen years, and was always well," said the old man. "But every one to his taste." He, for instance, could not endure to stay six months in such a little place as this town, where his children lived. He should feel like a great pike that had wandered into stagnant water and could not find its way back to the flowing river again. "The future, dear Frau Doctorin," he continued, "belongs to the great cities; smaller ones are dying out. I shall not live to see the day--but you and my children may perhaps do so, at any rate the little ones sleeping yonder--when Germany will have no cities nearer to each other than fifty miles; but then to be sure each will be a city indeed, containing at least eight hundred thousand inhabitants, without counting the suburbs. The culture which the present time demands of men, is not possible to be attained without great means and the arts and sciences can be properly fostered only in the great centres of commerce. I heard a lecture delivered before our society," he continued, "which will soon appear in print. I will send you a copy as soon as it is published."

"And where's the bread and meat for the great cities to come from, dear father?" asked Franzelius, who had been silently listening, and meantime making great havoc in these two articles, which his wife had set before him.

"That's the business of the railroads," replied the shoemaker, without the slightest embarrassment. "The country people, or rather the members of the great rural industrial societies, will go out every morning through the open country, till the fields, attend to the cattle, and return by rail in the evening to the city, which they'll reach in time to witness William Tell or hear Lucca. Why should these worthy people be forever excluded from all education and culture, merely because hitherto no theatres, concerts, and universities have existed in the villages?"

"They'll have to stay in the country over night very often during the haying season," Franzelius dryly remarked.

The old man cast a side glance at him, to see if he were in jest or earnest, but no satirical lines were to be discovered in his son-in-law's open, honest face. Nevertheless the old apostle of progress, evidently irritated, relapsed into silence, and it was long ere Leah could succeed in restoring him to his former cheerful mood. She told him of Heinrich Mohr's happy marriage and fatherly pride, and asked about Reginchen's brother, who was also married and had obtained an excellent position in Russia, as engineer of a new railroad. At intervals her eyes sometimes met those of the little fair-haired wife, twinkling merrily with joy over the secret so recently disclosed, as if they wanted to ask: "what's all this chatter to the great news we both know of?"

When the clock struck nine, in spite of Reginchen's remonstrances, Leah prepared for her departure. She knew that the members of the household retired early and rose betimes. When

she was about to shake hands with Herr Feyertag also, he declared he would not be refused the pleasure of escorting her home. "It's only around the corner," said Leah, "and this is such a small town, that the streets are perfectly safe at night without masculine protection." But the old man would not be denied. He seized his little hat with the blue ribbon, patted his daughter on the back, and shook hands with his son-in-law somewhat formally. They need not wait up for him, he said. He could not retire so early, and would stroll about in search of adventure.

When they found themselves in the street and about twenty paces from the house, the singular man suddenly stopped short and said to his companion:

"You've probably perceived, Frau Doctorin, that I have something on my mind. Do you know the real object of my coming here? It was not, as my daughter thinks, on account of the two black haired boys, though I love the little fellows well enough to eat them, but because of a dream. You see, a short time ago, I came home rather late from one of our meetings, where there had been some very good speeches, and fretted before I fell asleep, because I was always obliged to hold my tongue, since, as my friend the assessor says, I've taken rather a passive than an active part in education. 'Well,' I thought, 'every one has not the gift of being a great orator, and he who makes comfortable boots for people does his share toward healthful progress.' Just then I fell asleep, and just imagine what I dreamed. I was standing out of doors on the parade ground, and suddenly I saw something dark coming toward me, moving in regular rank and file, and making a great deal of dust; but the columns were very low, not more than two feet above the ground. As it drew nearer, what did I see? Nothing but boots and shoes, regularly divided into regiments, like an army, according to the various styles; jackboots, dancing shoes, slippers, spatter-dashes, in short everything that has ever been manufactured in a shoe-maker's shop, and in fact, as I instantly recognized by the shape and workmanship, in my own. Now I knew at once, without being told by any one, that these were the boots and shoes which had passed through my hands since the time I was apprenticed; the collected work, so to speak, of my life. 'Now,' a voice seemed to say, 'you can see what you've accomplished in this world, and whether you've any right to imagine you've been of any special aid to progress.' I tell you, Frau Doctorin, it was horrible to see how the little black army, exactly like the roaches and beetles on a kitchen hearth, thronged past me into the Thiergarten and through the Brandenbourg-Gate--mere feet without any bodies--and I stood there like a beaten cur, covering my face with my hands, and at last, in spite of my horror, unable to keep from laughing aloud which awoke me.

"When I told the dream to my wife, she only said in her quiet way: 'Now you see what comes of your stupid fancies, Feyertag. The vision means nothing but: "Cobbler stick to your last!"' I made no reply, I know how limited her views are, and women are women. But I've made a firm resolution to have nothing more to do with shoe-making. The rest of my life I will devote to higher purposes, caring for the head instead of the feet, helping those whom people try to stretch on the same last till they get moral corns--I mean grow stupid--and to getting the air, which is called freedom of thought. I instantly said to myself: 'your son-in-law is just the right man to aid you. You must get him, and then set off on a journey; he has the tongue, you the money, like Moses and Aaron, and then you can visit the various workmen's societies and every-where provide for true culture and enlightenment.' But would you believe that the man, who formerly made such fine speeches, and wrote articles on every conceivable subject, can't be induced to move in the matter. When I explained my plan to him to-day, he looked at me very quietly, and only said: 'That's all very fine, father, but I can't help you; my business will not permit me to go wandering about the world.' And in the evening he took me to a workman's society he has established here, where every thing was quiet and orderly, it must be admitted, but where there was no display of rhetoric at all. Reinhold had brought a book written by a certain Buckle, about civilization and the history of the world and such things. But it was terribly prosy and circumstantial, there was not a trace of vital questions, points of view, and humane learning, and much of it was incomprehensible to me, so that I wondered they all listened so quietly, as if to a sermon. When the reading was over, I thought: 'Surely Feyertag, you ought to open the horizon of the capital to these provincial people, and I began very fluently to make a speech; for my friend, the assessor, had said something like it day before yesterday, and I've long been familiar with rhetorical tricks and practice them every day before my apprentices in the work-shop. I only lacked courage in Berlin. But do you suppose it made any impression on these country block-heads? Neither the absolute and the ablative nor realism had the slightest effect--I might as well have talked to the walls! Of course, in such stagnant water, people have no idea what the stream of the spirit of the age, and purpose, and representation, and the French Revolution, and self-government--you know what I mean, Frau Doctorin. But these narrow minds! When I concluded and asked whether any one wished to discuss the matter, only one man rose; he said he had not understood me, I must explain what I meant more clearly. But Reinhold looked at his watch and said it was too late for this evening; they could return to the subject at the next meeting. But I clearly saw that he only wanted to prevent me from interfering with his Buckle's civilization, and therefore closed the meeting. He has grown narrow-minded, Frau Doctorin, his wife and children and his business--everything else is a matter of indifference to him. He didn't tell me as plainly as my old wife did, but it amounted to the same thing--I'd better stick to my last."

"It's your own fault, Herr Feyertag," replied Leah smiling, while the old man took a pinch of snuff from his little box. "Why did you make our friend so happy, by giving him the most charming wife in the world, so that he's now far too well satisfied with his own little family circle, to think of roaming about the world. Stay a few weeks here and see how he provides, not only for himself, but for all who share his labor, and you'll surely no longer be angry with him because he

wants to stick to his last."

Herr Feyertag's only reply was a shake of the head. Meantime they had reached Leah's home, a low one story house in a side street, where there was not even a light burning. The maid-servant had heard them coming, and appeared at the door with a little lamp.

"When will your husband come back?" asked the old man sighing. "He, I hope, will understand me, and make the matter clear to Reinhold, too."

"I'm expecting him very soon. But you must come and see me to-morrow at any rate, and we'll discuss this subject farther. Believe me, dear Herr Feyertag, you'll not accomplish much with Edwin either. We're so happy in our narrow sphere, and he in particular, feels that without moving from this place, he can influence the whole world--I doubt very much whether he'll approve or support your plan. However--I won't prejudice him though. Good night."

She cordially shook hands with him, and then entered the house, while the disappointed shoemaker, drawing the hat with the blue ribbon low over his brow, walked back muttering and gesticulating to the main street, to find at some ale house more appreciative souls.

CHAPTER II.

The ground floor of the house where Edwin and Leah had lived four years, was arranged in the simplest manner; three little rooms and a chamber for the maid-servant, or, as Edwin said, no longer one tun but three small ones and a band-box. The room looking out upon the street, however, had two large windows; one was occupied by Edwin's desk, the other by the artist's table from the Venetian palace. The old furniture had also been brought to the little town, the book-case with the two busts, the green sofa on which Leah had rested when she gave Edwin her hand, over it the two engravings of Raphael's pictures, which had hung above the brothers' beds, and close by, on a pedestal, a cast of the bust of Leah's mother. The only new thing was a harmonium, a bridal present from Frau Valentin, who knew how Edwin loved music. As he cared less for master pieces and their perfect execution, than for the elementary magic of harmony, Leah's art was sufficient to conjure this spell from the full toned instrument.

The other art, of which she was mistress, she had eagerly cultivated. She had no lack of time, she said with a sorrowful smile. Edwin, even during his most arduous mental labor, liked to have her in the same room, quietly occupied with her painting, often for hours exchanging only a glance; or he stood behind her chair, looked silently at her work and gently smoothed her dark hair, as he used to stroke Balder's fair mane. Then she would glance smilingly up into his face, until he bent over her and kissed her lips. He said her presence helped him to think. Certain subtle psychological revelations would never have come to him, but for this quiet enlarging and supplementing of his nature through his other self. Frequently he was not even conscious of her presence in any other way than as his right hand while writing was aware that the left rested upon the paper. And yet the sheet would often become displaced, if both hands did not share in the work.

As she now returned to the cosy room, and after sending the maid-servant to-bed, sat down in her "inspiration corner," as Edwin called one end of the sofa (the little lamp burned brightly on the table before her, illuminating the profile of Demosthenes on the bookcase, the writing desk so long without a master, and all the other witnesses of their bright young happiness) for the first time she was overpowered by the consciousness that many things would soon be changed, that when the young life under her heart looked forth into the world with two bright eyes and gave utterance to its joys and sorrows, this room, where silent thoughts and lovely flowers peacefully unfolded side by side, could no longer be her one and all. She thought of the words with which Edwin had tried to console his childless wife, how he had said that two people in their situation lived in a state of perpetual betrothal, and that any third person, even were it their own child, at first came between them like a stranger. "No," she said to herself, "it's a part of ourselves too, it's only like a mirror, wherein we see both our faces melted into one. Besides, he didn't mean it seriously, it was only before he knew--"

She now became absorbed in thinking how everything would be, how she would manage to always remain near Edwin, without disturbing him by the little sprawling screaming creature, and whenever she thought with secret terror of the two unruly black haired twins, from whom no corner of her friend's large house was secure, she consoled herself with the memory of quiet, fair-haired little Riekchen, beside whom one might solve the most difficult mathematical problems undisturbed. It would have fair hair, she thought, smiling in blissful anticipation, it must resemble Edwin feature for feature, possess the same beautiful blue eyes, the same grave

brow. Now her thoughts wandered from the little stranger to him whom she knew as well, nay better than herself, and as with all the powers of her soul she conjured up his image to the smallest detail, a passionate longing suddenly overpowered her, a painful sense of loneliness, mingled with such an enthusiastic admiration of the beloved, that she started up and paced to and fro in a sort of ecstasy, connecting his name with loving, tender words, such as she had never addressed to him in person. She suddenly thought it a sin that when he was with her, she had maintained such a strange reserve, and never allowed herself to frankly show him the inmost depths of her heart. "He doesn't know how I idolize him," she said to herself. "I know it very well, I knew it from the beginning, but I'm always afraid of myself--and of him too. His love did not exist like mine, from the first hour of our meeting, it has grown by degrees, perhaps I should have startled him, if I had shown how the flames were blazing in my soul. But it's wrong, he shall know of it when he comes back. There's always too much philosophy between us--love is folly--happy nonsense--laughing and weeping without sense or reason. That's the way I've always loved him, to the disappearance and forgetfulness of all reason, and he--he began differently, my few good traits, my little share of cleverness attracted him. It was enough at that time--he gave me what he had, and in my utter poverty it was an untold treasure. But when he comes back, then he shall see what a foolishly happy, loving wife he has in me--my beloved husband, my one and all, my Lord and my God, my life and my world--"

Thus her rapturous longing found utterance in low confused murmurs, while she wandered about the room, now taking in her hand the pen with which he had written, and then with a caressing gesture stroking the book that still lay open on his desk. Her temples throbbed feverishly, she opened a window and leaned out into the dark street, where every thing was asleep, except a kitten gliding over the stone door sill.

But who was approaching from the main street? Two men walking arm in arm, and carrying canes and traveling satchels? And now she distinctly heard the words: "You see, my boy, your little wife has not yet gone to rest--mock widows never retire early--you've horrible pavements, and the gas apparently relies upon receiving a little voluntary assistance from the light of cigars. Is it much farther?"

"Heinrich," replied another voice, which thrilled the heart of the listener at the window, "it would be better for us to go back and I'll spend the night with you at the hotel. It's so late--so unexpected--I know her--she won't close her eyes all night--and I--I am so utterly exhausted--"

"Edwin!" cried a joyous voice from the only lighted window in the dark street. The pedestrian involuntarily paused and grasped his friend's arm with a convulsive pressure. "She's awake," he said hastily in an undertone, "she has heard us, so it can't be helped! Not a word this evening, do you hear? Poor darling, it will come soon enough; is that you, Leah?" he now exclaimed, suddenly quickening his pace. "There, child, now you see what you've done with your promised surprise. I wanted to be generous, too, and as I could think of nothing else, decided that the best surprise would be myself. Good Evening, dearest!" and he took both hands, which she extended to him through the window, and pressed them in his cold trembling fingers; "I thank God for being here, where I belong! I have the honor of presenting to you an old acquaintance, Herr Heinrich Mohr, the father of his son, of whom I've already written to you. I couldn't induce him to satisfy himself with an improvised couch on the green sofa. He thinks he can find a bed at the Star, on which he can more comfortably stretch his six feet of length. Is all well, dearest? but come, open the door for us. We must at least have a glass of wine together--"

He had released her hands, but she did not move from the window. These shallow jesting words had fallen on her soul like a frost and had paralysed her. She did not speak; she addressed no word of welcome to the old friend, asked no question as to how her beloved husband had fared. This, then, was the meeting for which she had waited with such ardent longing.

"Don't be afraid, Frau Leah, that I shall make use of this thoughtless invitation and trouble you this evening," said Mohr laughing. "Old friends are the most inconvenient articles in the world, when married people meet after a separation. To-morrow I'll take the liberty of knocking at your door to give you my wife's message and a photograph of the little Mohr, but now I shall wish you a good night's rest. No, my dear fellow, I need no guide. I looked carefully at your 'Star' as we passed by, and shall find it again in spite of my small share of astronomical knowledge. Good night, Frau Doctorin."

He raised his hat, pressed Edwin's hand, and walked back toward the main street.

Edwin still stood under the window.

"It seems like a dream to be at home again," said he. "This whole day, while we were marching like two lunatics, merely to get here, I have been constantly thinking of our old home, and how delightful it would be to clasp your hand again, and now I'm standing here, and the old stones are still firm, and I--but you're so silent; the surprise was too sudden; well, I hope yours--"

"I'll open the door for you," she said, making a mighty effort to repress her tears. "Oh! Edwin, is it really you?"

She left the window and took up the little lamp from the table; but suddenly replaced it again. Why should she let him read her feelings in her face? So she went through the dark entry, opened

the door, and felt herself clasped in his arms; but passionate as was his embrace, she noticed that he did not seek to press his lips against hers, but rested his forehead on her shoulder, repeating her name over and over again.

"I'm with you once more, my dearest, we have each other again. It seems as if we'd been parted for years--Leah, my faithful darling--"

"Come into the room," she murmured. "You're exhausted, and your forehead is wet with perspiration. Why did you hurry so recklessly?"

"Yes, yea, scold me, dear Wisdom. It's hard to keep within bounds. But I'm here again, all is well now. What's the matter?" he continued, as he entered the room and saw how his pale face, now fully revealed by the lamp-light, startled her. "I'm perfectly well--that is, I have suffered a few days from a nervous attack, similar to my old ones, but the famous household medicine--so-called because it can only be used out of the house--air and exercise--has done wonders. And now--I'm as delighted as a child to see the green sofa again--all our furniture; it can hardly be called princely, we must admit, but it's pretty, very pretty; and my dear little wife--I'll wager you have painted a whole table service while I was away, and the famous surprise is that the roses on your cheeks have been transplanted to the china. Well, I repeat again as I see--"

While uttering these hasty words he had sunk down on the sofa and closed his eyes, evidently in the greatest exhaustion. A strange smile, that cut her to the heart, rested on his lips. When he again looked up, she was kneeling beside him, clasping his hands and gazing with an expression of the most loving anxiety into his face, to seek for some consoling glance that would explain all this as only the consequences of over fatigue.

"Dear wife," said he, "if you could give me a mouthful to eat, or no, only a sip of the Spanish wine mamma sent us--and then--then we'll go to rest."

She instantly started up and hurried out of the room, soon returning bringing with her wine, bread and cold meat. Edwin nodded smilingly. "Little housewife!" he exclaimed, drawing her down beside him on the sofa. But he only touched her forehead with his lips, and did not appear to notice the glass of wine she poured out for him. "I'm so happy, so happy!" he repeated again and again. "I drink to peace and rest and--love!"

He tried to draw her toward him, but with a feeling of secret horror she gently repelled him. "Edwin," said she, "what has happened? You can't deceive me for I knew it at the first word you uttered, though you strove to conceal it; you've experienced something that has greatly excited, agitated, or saddened you. Won't you tell me about it? We've always told each other everything."

"Yes, indeed, dearest," he said with a weary nod, while he gently patted her on the cheek. "You're my strong-hearted little girl, my trusty comrade, my dear left hand, that always knows what the right hand is doing. But it's late, my eyes are closing with sleep and there will be plenty of time to-morrow--to-morrow, and the day after, and during our whole lives. What have I experienced? Nothing dangerous. We've passed through a storm, the thunderbolt struck close beside us, and we have been drenched to the skin, that's all. The warmth here will soon dry us again. Come, dearest. What says old Catullus?"

"Oh! how pleasant it is from all care to part!
Heavily all burdens fall away from the heart,
As weary of life's toils we return to our home,
Reposing there restfully, no more to roam."

"Do you want to sit up any longer, child?"

While repeating the verse, he had risen from the sofa with evident effort and approached the door of the bed room. There, leaning against it, he looked back at her. "Good Heavens, you're weeping!" he exclaimed, suddenly shaking off all fatigue. "What in the world is the matter?"

"Oh! Edwin," she said, gently repelling his passionate embrace, "forgive me, it's wrong. I ought not to be so childish. But my feelings overpowered me. Sleep! How can I think of sleeping, when I see you return so changed, with a burden on your heart which, for the first time, I'm not allowed to share! And yet this is wrong, you're so tired and ought above all to find rest here, and not a weeping wife. To-morrow--will you not? to-morrow, when you've slept--"

"No, not to-morrow!" he murmured bending over her and stroking her hair caressingly with both hands. "This very day, dearest, though it should cost us all sleep. This was the object for which I longed, the reason I could not wait, and walked without ceasing ten miles in six hours. And now I am here, I'm so cowardly that I want to sneak off to bed, instead of first confessing everything to my brave other self and begging absolution! Come, let me sit down beside you again; and be comforted, you see it has not cost me my life, I am here, holding your dear hands, and I feel more deeply than ever before, that we two are one, and that no power of Heaven or Hell can separate us."

He now sat down beside her and began to quietly relate everything that had occurred, from

the time he finished his letter to her and Marquard entered his room, till he met Mohr in the forest, where after the long superhuman strain of all the powers of his soul and senses, he had lost consciousness for a moment. Nothing was concealed or palliated. It was evidently a relief to recall to mind all his tortures, his weaknesses, and his honest struggle, now that he knew himself to be safe, where the friends who had followed at his heels could not pursue him into the sacred abode of his peace. The longer he spoke, the calmer became his voice, the clearer his glance. "It is over," he concluded, pressing her hand to his cheek. "I hope you'll praise me, dearest, for having done so well. To be sure, I've not the strong nerves essential to rude courage, and when I do anything heroic, feel long afterwards by the miserable trembling of my heart, what the exertion of moral courage has cost me. But be calm, child, this was the last attack. It will haunt me for a time; if you had seen her--even without being affected as I was by the old fate that binds me to this mysterious creature--you could not have helped feeling the deepest compassion. What a life is before her with nothing but the vague hope of some change that may release her and give her some reason for loving existence! My beloved reason, that helps me over unsolved questions, that sits incarnate beside me, and that all my future care--"

"You've not yet shown me her letter," she interrupted in an expressionless tone. They were the first words she had spoken for half an hour.

"The letter, child? Why do you wish to read it? It's as incoherent a collection of sentences as was ever scrawled by a poor tortured soul. I assure you I've not read it a second time myself."

"If I'm to know her thoroughly, to feel any real compassion for her, I must read it, Edwin. Give it to me. You see I am calm. I have told myself often enough, that this must come some day. It's a misfortune, like any other, only far more sad than every day sorrow. But with honest purpose, and--time--"

"Oh! child," he exclaimed, drawing her tenderly toward him, "have patience with me, leave it to time, do not doubt my honest purpose. I was sure of it--one hour with you, and the enchantment would be powerless, the magic spell shamed by your dear presence. I thank you for having insisted upon knowing everything to-day. Now for the first time I can hope to sleep. The last two nights, in spite of Heinrich's company and all the fatigues of traveling, I could not obtain anything worthy of the name of repose. I had dreams which I should pity a condemned man for having. Now if I can hold your hand--"

"Please go first," she said without looking at him. "I'll come directly---as soon as I've read the letter."

"You might wait until to-morrow--"

"This very day! Do me this favor; then to-morrow all will be over."

He took out his pocket book and looked for the fatal letter. "There it is," said he. "I scarcely know myself what she really wrote, except that it excited and grieved me inexpressibly. Oh! if we could find some way to help her endure life! Think of the matter, my beloved Wisdom. I've racked my brains in vain. Perhaps you will have some advice to offer."

She nodded, apparently with the most perfect composure, and while he remained in the room held the letter in her hand, without opening it. But he had scarcely entered the adjoining room with the little lamp he had just lighted, when with trembling hands and cheeks suffused by a sudden flush, she opened the envelope and with restless eyes devoured the lines.

When the maid-servant entered the room early the next morning, she was startled to find her mistress lying asleep on the green sofa, with the lamp, whose oil had now burned out, on the table beside her. Her astonishment increased, when she looked through the half open door of the chamber and saw her master, whose late return she had not heard, quietly sleeping in his bed. The noise she made in her attempt to leave the room again, roused the young wife; she glanced around in her bewilderment and evidently could not remember how she happened to be on this unusual couch. The fatal letter still lay on the table before her, and she suddenly recollected all. She motioned to the servant to keep quiet, and crept on tip-toe to the threshold of the adjoining room, where she paused and listened to Edwin's regular breathing. The next instant she had removed her clothes, noiselessly lain down beside him, and gazing at the twilight with wide open eyes, awaited the unclosing of his.

CHAPTER III.

It was Sunday. The bells that rang at nine o'clock to summon the people to church, roused the sleeper. It was a long time before he remembered how he happened to be in his own bed, and that he was again at home. A quiet, dreamy mood still haunted him, in which he said little, but gazed into vacancy with a smile and then looked around, as if in quest of something. He wanted Leah with him continually, sought her in the kitchen in order with all sorts of jesting words, to bring her back to the sitting room, and then walked up and down the spotless floor with his arm thrown fondly around her, now and then leaning his head on hers and asking various questions, without paying any special attention to the answers she gave. He even spoke of the surprise she had in store for him. "It is nothing," she replied gently, releasing herself from his embrace. Her eyes were heavy with unshed tears; she felt an unconquerable repugnance to telling him her secret, and yet a sense of bitter grief that she could not force her lips to reveal what had hitherto been a source of so much joy. She saw that he was only half with her, or rather that he was striving with all the powers of his soul to return to her again, and yet could not do so entirely. Should she communicate what at any previous time would have caused him such deep happiness, perhaps now only to be thanked with an absent smile? All the pride of the woman and mother rebelled against the possibility.

When Mohr at last arrived, he found them at breakfast. He sat down, begged permission to make a cigarette, and soon gave the conversation a freer tone. The first thing he did, was to take out the promised picture of the little Mohr and hand it to Leah.

"I don't doubt for a moment," said he, "that Edwin has described me to you as a fool of a father. Friends are great in caricaturing, but I really have the honor and pleasure of being just that. Besides, I saw that only politeness restrained him from laughing in my face when I described the boy's talents and virtues. Well, *qui vivra verra*. Meantime hear what my wife writes about the way he takes my absence. I've just received this letter; it contains the kindest remembrances to you as well."

He then read the letter, which contained a detailed account of the various clever, artless expressions of the little household idol. Edwin listened with silent nods, Leah on the contrary entered into the subject with eager admiration, which seemed to greatly delight their old friend.

"Dear friend," said he, "you have a wonderful knowledge of human nature, far more than this scornful skeptic. If he knows what's for his advantage, he'll allow you to prepare certain chapters of his great psychological work. I'll beg you for a sheet of paper, pen, and ink. I want to write a letter to my son, that we may continue to be in communication with each other."

He actually did so, standing at Edwin's desk and talking with his friends in his usual quaint manner. When Leah had gone out, he asked hastily: "Does she know all?"

"All."

"And how did she take it?"

"As you see. She's an angel--no, something better--a strong, upright, good, noble human being. Do you know, Heinz, I can't shake off the thought that she deserved a better fate than to have for a husband a lunatic, who is so pitifully defenceless against certain witches' arts."

"Defenceless. Well, I declare. We resisted with hands and feet!"

"Yes indeed. We left the field. Discretion is the better part of valor. Oh! Heinz, I feel miserable after that heroic deed. And now to see my dear, patient sufferer, who by no word of complaint, no look of reproach--"

"Hush! She's coming back; there! 'Your loving father.' Now I'm curious to see whether he'll have any idea of how his papa can talk to him when he's not with him. Shall we mail the letter and then pay our respects to Frau Reginchen?"

All three left the little house and strolled through the quiet streets. No one who saw Leah, leaning on Edwin's arm, would have suspected what a deep shadow had suddenly darkened her sunny life.

But it did not escape the notice of the little fair-haired woman in the neighboring, house for a single moment. As soon as the first greetings were over--Papa Feyertag was also present--Reginchen drew Leah aside, to ask what Edwin had said to the joyful news, and was greatly startled when she learned that he had not yet heard a word about it. He had returned home so exhausted that the greatest joy would have been lost upon him, and Mohr's visit had prevented her from telling it early that morning. Reginchen said nothing. Although, as we know, she did not possess a great deal of "education," her clear mind instantly showed her that something unpleasant had occurred, which would not be confided to her at present. She was glad when Reinhold and Mohr entered the nursery and the review of the children began; but could not help laughing and secretly nudging her husband, when the father of the remarkable boy evidently made the greatest effort to do justice to the twins and the little girl, but with the condescending gentleness a Cræsus would show in congratulating a man who had just won a hundred thalers in a lottery.

He was then obliged to go with Franzelius to see the printing office, the storerooms, and every

nook and corner of the house, during which the father-in-law made a silent third party. Edwin had gone into the country alone and did not return until noon, when Reginchen invited them all to dine with her. The meal was not particularly social. Old Feyertag did not say a word and seemed to be out of humor with his son-in-law, who pretended not to notice it, but in spite of the festive occasion was not unfaithful to his silent nature. Edwin sat beside Leah, whom he treated with the utmost gayety and tenderness, but, he still seemed to be in a half dreamy, half absent mood, which at last became so oppressive to her sensitive nature, that she was obliged to leave the table before the dinner was half over to conceal her tears. When she returned with red eyes, she said she had been attacked by one of her sudden headaches, from which, however, she had not suffered for years.

The only person, who seemed to be in high spirits, was Mohr, and it was owing to his efforts, that when they returned to Edwin's house in the evening, a more cheerful atmosphere pervaded the little circle, at least for a time.

During the walk the four men had taken about the city after dinner, he had been compelled to listen to the same melancholy disclosures from the old gentleman, in which the latter had received no special sympathy from Leah the evening before. Mohr, on the contrary, took the matter in the right way, and was psychologist enough to instantly perceive the remedy for the disease.

"I thank you for your confidence, my dear Herr Feyertag," he said after gravely listening to the dream about the boots and shoes. "Your state of mind is extremely interesting to me, the more so, as I've passed through precisely similar crises myself."

"You, Herr Mohr? You're joking."

"Not at all, my dear sir. If you've only cared for the feet all your life, I've spent my best days in merely making heads, that is heads to notes, and also very good tails to them; but the best part was lacking--the rascals had no hands and feet. You must know, my dear friend, I've just discovered the reason of this, and if I'm not mistaken, the case is precisely the same with you; we're both men of mediocre ability, Herr Feyertag. Once this vexed me very much, and an admirable lecture Papa Zaunkönig once gave, to prove that there must be such people in the world, was entirely lost upon me. Since then I've grown somewhat wiser. To be sure, it's disagreeable that we're neither of us remarkable men and only belong to the masses, helping to make up the crowd and to prepare the soil which supports the really gigantic human plants. But look around you at Nature--isn't it the same story everywhere? To one oak that lasts for centuries, there are hundreds of thousands of low bushes, which moulder and decay, that this historical representative of the species may grow to an unusual height. If we wish to fret or lament about it, of course we're at liberty to do so. It's only a pity, that there's no court before which we can bring our complaint, for it's useless, my dear sir, and therefore only injurious, first to ourselves because it sours the blood and poisons the wine, and secondly to our fellow men, whose happiness we spoil by our discontent."

"But progress, Herr Mohr, the aspiration toward higher things called propagandism--?"

Mohr stood still. "How old are you now, my dear friend?" he asked, pulling an over ripe ear of corn from the field through which they were just passing.

"Fifty-nine, Herr Mohr."

"An excellent age, Herr Feyertag, and I trust you may live to a still greater. And how tall are you now--I mean in feet and inches?"

"Five feet three inches, Herr Mohr."

"Do you expect to grow any more?"

"I? With my fifty-nine years?"

"But if you *desired* to do so, if you felt the *aspiration* to look over a file leader's shoulder?"

"I'm not so foolish, Herr Mohr, as to expect anything of that sort! But if I may venture to ask--"

"Why should you not venture to ask, my dear sir? I merely put the question to have you ask. That's called the Socratic method. You see, with all your aspirations toward higher things, you can no more succeed in adding an ell to your intellectual stature, than you can make your body taller. We're of middle height, Herr Feyertag; in case of need to be sure we can increase a little in breadth, add some fat of knowledge and skill, but the skeleton's complete and that's the end of it! If you compare yourself with me, you have the advantage. True, you're nothing extraordinary as a man, but in the art of shoe-making you're an accomplished master. I, on the contrary--if I did not enjoy the happiness of serving as a transition point for a better specimen, as it were, a test of the real material--I should go out of the world without having understood any reason for my existing in it. But let that be as it may, we non-commissioned officers and privates in the great army of mankind can bear ourselves bravely and win honor; and you in particular, Herr Feyertag--a man in the prime of life, with property, sense, and intelligence--do you know what I would do, if I were in your place?"

"What, Herr Mohr?"

"Your good wife doesn't want to leave Berlin. Well then propose to traverse Berlin itself with her. Go out every morning after breakfast and visit some place, the Arsenal, the Museum, in short what every Englishman sees, and in the evening attend the theatre, the zoological garden, or what ever seems most attractive to you. We can only advance by moving strictly in our own circle, and meantime keeping our eyes open. In this way you'll in time climb far enough up the heights, and yet remain what you are--a man who thoroughly understands his trade, instead of, in your old age, becoming a bungler in the social-political business, where there are too many bunglers now, and which only the wisest heads can thoroughly comprehend."

"Hm!" replied the shoe-maker, "that's worth hearing, that's a very sensible proposition. True, mother won't like it at first, but I'm master of my own house, and if she once gets *in*--into a museum, I mean--she's always had a clever head and by no means bad taste. I see what you're aiming at, Herr Mohr: propagandism is all very well, but where one has no idea, the mere will is of no avail, and, with my grey hairs, to wander about like a journeyman on his travels--but, by the way, my son-in-law--what do you think of him? Ought he, too, only to go around in a circle and accumulate fat? Do you think him also a man of mediocre ability, like ourselves?"

"Herr Feyertag," said Mohr with a perfectly immovable face, "don't you know that a clever physician is always careful how he expresses his opinion as to whether a person has a diseased liver or apoplexy, unless he's specially consulted by the patient? You expressly asked my advice about your sufferings, and I have told you my honest opinion. In regard to third persons, especially if they're my friends, I never express myself openly and am ready to think every one a great man, until I have received incontestable proofs to the contrary."

CHAPTER IV.

This conversation had this favorable result, that when Papa Feyertag came to Leah's house in the evening, he seemed completely transformed; or rather like the man his friends had formerly known. True he took care to put the best face upon his conversion, but was very reserved about the motives that induced him to return to Berlin. But he endeavored in every way to show that he bore his son-in-law no malice, principally by good natured jests about people who kept quiet to accumulate fat, and thought more about propagation than propagandism; moreover he was the most affectionate papa and grandpapa that could be desired, and related, as never happened except when he was in the best of humors, his own love story, that had led to the possession of "mother."

Mohr sat by with a quiet curl of the under lip, not uttering a syllable to betray the share he had had in the miracle. Besides, very different thoughts occupied his mind. In the first place, Edwin's still perceptible excitement caused him serious anxiety. The two young wives also, especially Leah, were forced to exert great self-control to conceal a heavy heart under a gay, jesting mood. As even the wine and all the comical and quaint ideas to which Mohr gave utterance during the evening, did not avail to lighten the oppression which, like an invisible thunder cloud rested more and more heavily on both couples, the faithful friend sat down to the harmonium and began to improvise. He played for an hour, forgetting time and place in his own music, into which he successively introduced all Christiane's favorite themes. When he at last paused and looked around at the company, he saw that the remedy had produced a totally different effect from the one he had intended. Reinhold was sitting like a black bearded genius of melancholy beside his little wife, who was quietly wiping her eyes; Leah had left the room and after a very long absence returned with a deadly pale face; Edwin had the bread knife in his hand and was industriously cutting a straw table-mat into small pieces; papa Feyertag was leaning back in the sofa corner, sleeping the sleep of the just.

They separated at an earlier hour than usual. Mohr rambled about the city a long time, revolving in his inventive brain one plan after another, by which the evil that had so suddenly burst forth again and threatened to destroy the harmony of these two lives, might be most quickly and surely removed.

At last he devised a perfectly absurd catastrophe, namely that he would represent Toinette as the moral cause of Balder's death and by a bold accusation of murder separate her from Edwin forever. There was not a spark of reason in the whole plan, but the very monstrosity and impossibility of the idea soothed his own excited mood, and enabled him at last, like a man well satisfied with his day's work, to go to bed and sleep seven hours.

But he started up in terror from a dream in which he had said the harshest things to the

author of the mischief and engaged to fight a duel with her husband, the count, to see Edwin standing beside his bed in the grey dawn, once more with an overcoat and traveling satchel, such as he had carried during the last days of their journey. Edwin smiled at his friend's astonishment and seemed to have suddenly attained a far more healthful condition of mind.

"I wanted to ask whether you'll go with me," said he. "Leah has persuaded me that it would be foolish to spend the last week of my vacation here. I've long desired to make an excursion to 'Wildwassern,' which will only take three or four days. Besides, I might accomplish many other things, take you back to Frau Christiane and the wonderful boy and return just before the school begins. At first I would not hear of it. I don't feel at ease out of doors; every time I turn a corner I fear to meet a face which I would rather avoid. But, to be sure, wearied and disinclined to work as I am, I should not be of much use here and only make my good wife anxious. You don't know Leah, Heinz, no one knows her, I should like to know how many women there are, who would have borne so nobly what has just befallen us. 'Go,' said she, 'it will do you good; only you must promise not to hurry so madly as you did the last day, but to walk quietly. When you return, you'll find a sensible wife.' Her voice trembled, and her eyes grew dim with tears, but she forced a smile, and then--I've not kissed her lips since I came back, haven't dared to do so, for I remembered that last night at the castle--but when I saw that she could not yet give me a caress! I miss it, miss it so strangely--you'll laugh at me, Heinz, but I think I should be instantly cured, if my only friend, my wise, proud, sad little wife--"

"Then let's go to her at once and tell her so! Besides, I've not yet taken leave of her. And it's so early--"

"No!" interrupted Edwin with restless anxiety, "she'll not expect us. I left farewell messages for our neighbors too. Come, my boy. I don't know why it is, but I can't rest till I get out into the woods and fields again. Your bill here is already settled. Of course the 'Star' is only an addition to our tun in case distinguished travelers arrive, whom we cannot entertain under our own roof."

He hastily helped him to pack his traveling satchel and hurried him away. Just as they left the house, they saw the hotel stage returning, which daily at this hour brought the travelers from the railway. A lady, closely veiled, who must have just arrived by the night train, sat leaning back in one corner of this lumbering vehicle. As she passed the two pedestrians, she made a hasty gesture, as if she recognised some one, but instantly drew back again.

Edwin started. "Did you notice--?" he said quickly.

"What?"

"In the stage--the veiled lady--I thought for a moment, that I recognized--by her way of bending forward--"

"You see ghosts, my dear fellow. Duchesses travel with a suit of retainers, not in an omnibus."

"You're right! Yes indeed, I'm a fool. What could bring her here. But that's the cross I bear every moment. If a carriage rattles by--a door opens--ah! Nature, which made me a philosopher, failed to provide one essential--a suitable dose of the famous ataraxia."

"That's unfortunately true," replied Mohr, shrugging his shoulders. "But your clever wife is right--the plant grows out of doors among the mountains and by the streams. But I too am not wholly insensible, and most earnestly beseech you not to seize me so convulsively, at least before I've breakfasted. We'll attend to this matter at the first stopping place, and then I'll sing you the old Eichendorff traveler's song, which Christiane has set to a very pretty air:

"Through fields and rows of beech trees,
Now singing, anon still,
How joyous he, who leaves his home
To wander at his will."

CHAPTER V.

Meantime Leah, absorbed in grief, was still sitting at the window, from which in the pale morning light she had waved a farewell to her departing husband. As soon as he had disappeared, all the suppressed anguish of the last few days had found vent in a flood of tears, but without relief to the poor aching heart. When the torrent was at last exhausted, she only

gazed the more hopelessly into vacancy with burning eyes, as if staring into a grey, impenetrable mist, from which no familiar form emerged, no loving voice reached her ear. The week that Edwin was to be absent, now seemed to her like a respite. During that time she might groan in anguish and weep to her heart's content. When he returned, he should find her what she had always been to him--his brave friend, his faithful comrade, to whom his inmost soul was revealed, even if a passion for a strange woman, the very root of which had seemed to have been destroyed, now flourished luxuriantly anew. True, how could he know that she herself was only a weak woman, who felt all her wise thoughts and heroic reason vanishing in a boundless longing for his love!

A strange reserve, or perhaps pride because he had never asked, had prevented her from telling him this.

But he *needed* passionate love--in her terror this had now become evident to her. The cooler his head was, the more vehemently his heart demanded boundless, self-forgetful folly, a love higher than reason. He had now found it--in the magic castle, where the old demon had resumed its sway over him. The enchantress herself had cast aside her black art to practise a more powerful and irresistible one--to throw herself into his arms in the guise of a poor helpless woman saying: "I am yours; do with me as you will." And was he to disdain all this and reply: "You come too late?"--Well, he *had* said so. He knew what he owed to duty. But to accept this martyrdom, to hold a man by an iron chain, against which every instinct of his blood rebelled--a feverish chill ran through her frame at the thought.

True, she might stake passion against passion, and see which would conquer, hers that was really no tamer and narrower than any ever offered by a woman to the man she loved, or the capricious one of this stranger, who now when it was too late, wanted to throw away a lost life, to regain her happiness in her saviour. But her pride rebelled against this also. Had he ever missed her passionate love? Could he believe, now that she had so long denied it utterance, that it was really true and genuine, not an ebullition of jealous pain, rather than the outburst of one of the hidden powers of nature?

But amid all this tumult of thoughts, one emotion was ever absent from her mind--no feeling of anger toward the two persons who now made her suffer so bitterly, stirred in her soul. The woman who had no scruple in making her life desolate, in wresting from her, her only happiness, of whom she knew nothing, except that she had bewitched her beloved husband and yet had not satisfied his heart--what did she this stranger? And Edwin--had he deceived her? Did he not suffer most bitterly, because he esteemed and honored her too highly to make even an attempt to delude her about his condition?

But the very fact of his remaining loving, affectionate and honest to her, and continuing to give her a brotherly share in his fate was unendurable. She could not suffer it longer, for it mocked her heart, whose inmost depths were overflowing with passionate love. Yet she did not know how to change it, what to say to him, when he should return with his wound nearly healed to place himself in her sisterly care--lest some day, by accident the wound should begin to bleed again and perhaps endanger his life. But did she not also owe something to herself and the child she bore under her heart? Could she suffer the poor thing to be greeted by its father with a joy only prompted by a sense of duty, and perhaps--who knows--secretly regarded as a new link in the oppressive chain that must be worn with the best possible grace? At this thought, the mother's blood in her rebelled with such fierce indignation and wrath, that for a moment an odious shadow darkened even Edwin's image. But the next instant she shrank from her own impetuosity, and with all the power of her will repelled the hostile feeling.

For the first time in her life, since she had been united to Edwin, she felt unspeakably alone. What would she have given for a friend who might have aided her to disentangle the sorrowful confusion of her thoughts? She remembered Reginchen--Reinhold--and instantly felt that no one, even if bound by far closer ties, possessing a much deeper insight into her nature, could have been a mediator between her fate and her womanly pride, her husband and her inmost feelings.

For hours she remained hopelessly striving to quell the tumult in her soul; at length her thoughts grew weary, and she began to perform her few household tasks, which were speedily accomplished. Then she mechanically took up one of Edwin's works and commenced to read; for a moment she was soothed by the thought of how thoroughly she understood all that would have been above the comprehension of many women, only to throw aside the book the next instant with passionate grief, as she remembered how powerless all the cultivation of the mind would be to the blind, unreasoning, elementary instinct of Nature, which conquers all freedom and befools the wisest. She herself felt this instinct in her heart more strongly than ever, and she remembered how happy she had been made by it only two evenings before--only to be rendered utterly wretched by it now since it had shown her the emptiness of her hopes.

Herr Feyertag's arrival roused her from this abstraction. The old man knew nothing about Edwin's departure, and came to say that he should return home that evening. He was in a comically mysterious mood, gave obscure hints of the reasons that had so suddenly recalled him to Berlin, but repeatedly declared that he felt as if he were new born, and people were never too old to go to school. As Mohr was also absent, he could indulge in the harmless pleasure of uttering many of the things he had heard yesterday from his clever physician of the mind--especially the theory of the oak trees and the soil of humanity--as the result of his own matured

wisdom, in such a lofty, matter-of-course tone, that several times Leah, in spite of her sorrow could not help laughing, for she easily perceived their source.

"I'll tell you, little lady," exclaimed the eager old man, as he concluded his remarks about the necessity of first advancing public welfare in our own persons, "come with me to Berlin to-night. Why should you stay here alone? Your husband can have no objections to your devoting this week to your dear parents, and it will afford me the greatest pleasure to show you Berlin, the Museum, the theatre, and of course we'll go out to Sans Souci too; as a native of Berlin, you ought to be ashamed of knowing next to nothing of all these things. Just to consider how many means of culture are daily at hand, that we need only stretch out our hands for, and just because they're not a long distance off--"

She shook her head with a forced smile. "Thank you, dear Herr Feyertag. But just now I really do not desire culture, so much as--rest, or whatever else you choose to call it. Give my parents the kindest remembrances from me, don't let them know that you found me with one of my bad headaches; when I come to Berlin, I want to bring with me clear eyes--and my husband."

The worthy old friend, who after all had not been very earnest in his proposal, could urge her no further, and after uttering all sorts of fine phrases, took leave of the young wife with unfeigned affection. She declined the invitation to dinner which he pressed upon her in Reginchen's name. Her stupid head was not fit for company. She was most comfortable alone, where no one could notice if her thoughts sometimes grew confused.

The shoemaker was scarcely in the street again, when in spite of his sincere regard for Leah, he banished from his mind all the sympathy he had felt for her suffering, and with the facility peculiar to many theoretical philanthropists, turned his thoughts to his own plans. He therefore looked up in some little bewilderment, when a slender lady accosted him in a musical, but somewhat low voice, and inquired the way to the Frau Doctorin's residence. The stranger was closely veiled, but the old man's practised eye did not permit him to doubt for a moment, that the person who stood before him was young, charming, and high-bred. He also noticed a faint perfume of violets, which floated from the lady's lace veil. He very politely offered to accompany and show her the few steps to Edwin's house, in doing which he remarked that the Herr Doctor had just gone away on a little pedestrian tour, but that his wife was at home. "I know it," said the lady. "I only wish to see his wife. Shall I probably find her alone?"

The shoe-maker answered in the affirmative and racked his cunning brains for means to find out something more about the veiled lady who, as he was instantly convinced, could not be a resident of the place. But unfortunately they had already reached the house, the stranger thanked him with a slight bend of the head, opened the door without ceremony, and disappeared in the dark hall.

Never had the old man been more bent upon the solution of a riddle or charade, over which he regularly pondered in the papers, than on discovering the cause of this visit. This was the only woman who wore a veil, that he had met in the little town. That she could be acquainted with Leah, while his daughter knew nothing about her, seemed to him incredible, so he determined to question Reginchen.

But this proved utterly useless. No lady answering to his description was known, even in the highest circles of society in the place. And yet, if it were a stranger, how could she know that Edwin had gone away and Leah was alone, facts that the friend and neighbor had just learned from her father?

The mystery must be solved in time, and Reginchen, like all people who are entirely in harmony with themselves, did not suffer in the least from curiosity, but even declined to send a servant to Leah to enquire about the matter. She had much graver cares, which were also connected with Edwin's household, but apparently had nothing to do with the accidental visit of a stranger.

However, in the course of the day the old man, who was not in the habit of keeping his mind long fixed upon one thought, also lost his curiosity, as no fresh incident occurred to excite it. Leah's name was not mentioned, nor the attempt to induce the lonely wife to join them at dinner again renewed. Papa Feyertag was very cheerful during the meal, talked of new inventions, of war and peace, and of the social question, but without any personal irritation, and spent the whole afternoon in drawing the most singular sounds from all sorts of imperfect wind instruments he had bought for the twins, to the great edification of his young auditors.

Reinhold, in his quiet fashion, seemed to be heartily pleased with this change of affairs, stopped his work half an hour earlier, and at seven o'clock was again in the sitting room to take tea with his father-in-law before his departure. The children had been put to bed, and the three adults had just seated themselves around the table, when the door opened and to the surprise of all, frequent as was the appearance of the visitor, Leah entered.

CHAPTER VI.

The lamp was not yet lighted, and the broad brim of her straw hat shadowed her face, yet all three noticed, though no one made any remark, that the young wife's features were strangely rigid and inanimate, like the face of a person who has endured severe sorrow and, with a certain savage indifference, is prepared for the worst.

She nodded to Reginchen, begged her in her usual tone not to disturb herself, and declining the chair the old man placed at the table, sat down in the window niche, with her face half averted. In reply to the question about her headache, she answered that it had passed away entirely. She had taken a nap, then eaten her dinner, and had never felt better than now, so she had thought of Papa Feyertag's proposal again, and determined to accept it.

"What proposal?" asked Reginchen. The old man himself would have been sorely puzzled if he had been obliged to answer the question. But Leah replied in his stead.

"For," she hastily burst forth, "what better could I do? My father is old and does not like to travel. Edwin, will not return until the end of the week; I've nothing to detain me here, and who knows when I shall find another such opportunity. How long is it before the train starts? A whole hour? Well, you must allow my presence here until then. At home--it's ridiculous--but I think if I had remained at home, my headache would have come on again. We're so weak, so irresolute when we're all alone, and yet nothing can be more sensible than this plan. Edwin himself, if he were here--but no, then I should not be alone. You say nothing, Herr Feyertag. Do you repent having offered to be my escort? I'll not make you the slightest trouble, you can smoke and sleep as much as you choose, I--I'll go in the ladies' coupé, I hope to be able to sleep too; after such a headache as I've had all day, I am not very entertaining in conversation."

"How can you think of such a thing?" said the old man. Then all were silent for a long time. Nothing was heard but the clicking of a little pair of scissors, which Leah had taken from Reginchen's work table and was opening and shutting.

"Before I forget it," Leah carelessly remarked, "as it's possible Edwin may return a few days before me, I've written him a few lines. If meantime a letter should come from him containing his address, or he himself should arrive--at any rate, you'll doubtless do me the favor to see that this note reaches him."

"Give it to me, Leah dear," said Reinhold rising. "Father, will you have another glass of wine? But you're not eating anything."

"It's not my time. And your famous dinner--Well, I'll go and look after my baggage. I've only to shut my little trunk."

He hastily rose--he evidently did not understand matters--and left the room.

Reinhold had also risen. He had put the little note which Leah had given him, in his pocket and now said: "I'll accompany you to the station of course. I must first give some business directions, but I'll come back again directly." He exchanged a significant glance with his wife, and left the room. The two women were now alone, Reginchen on the sofa in the dark corner, Leah at the window with her back turned toward the room.

"Have you nothing else for me to do, dearest Leah?" asked the little housekeeper after a pause.

"Nothing, Ginchen. What should I have? I leave no children behind, and Edwin's books require no care. The cook will water the flowers. But you--your mother--hark! Didn't the clock strike eight?"

"Seven. There's still a full hour--Leah--"

"What is it, child?"

"Have you reflected upon this?"

"What a strange question to ask? What is there to consider? A journey to my parents! one falls asleep here, and on awaking finds oneself at home."

"*At home*, Leah?"

There was no answer from the window. No one who could have obtained even a side view of the face gazing fixedly out, would have expected these compressed lips, that seemed with difficulty to repress a groan, to open for any intelligible answer.

Suddenly two arms embraced the motionless figure, and a fair head in a neat little cap nestled

to the pale cheek of the silent friend. "Leah," whispered Reginchen's voice, "if you love me, don't do it, don't go away; it can't be the right thing; or at least speak plainly first. What, for God's sake, *what* has happened, to drive you away so suddenly, as if--as if you were not *at home* here."

She covered the eyes and cheeks of the rigid face with the tenderest kisses. The next instant Leah gently released herself.

"I don't know what you mean," she said coldly. "You're childish in your anxiety about me. What should have happened? Let me alone, little goosey. I know what I'm doing only too well; that this is the best, the only thing, now I'm all alone--"

"You're right, dear Leah," they heard Reinhold's voice suddenly exclaim. "Don't listen to this foolish woman, who can't believe any one can leave home for pleasure--that's what she means by not right. But we still have half an hour; I should like to speak to you; I have a little commission to be done in Berlin, with which I didn't want to trouble Father."

"Willingly, dear Reinhold."

"But I must beg you to take the trouble to come up to my little attic room; I cannot tell you here, partly because we are liable to be interrupted at any moment, and partly because I keep what's necessary for the errand up there. Light the little lantern, child; I believe you've never been up in our garret--true, it's an old rat's nest, but as I'd not a corner in the whole house where I can work or think quietly away from the children, I furnished a room there."

Reginchen had taken a brass lantern from the cupboard and lighted the lamp in it. As she now handed it to her husband, these three who were so fondly attached to each other, for the first time dared not look each other in the face. The little wife cast down her eyes without uttering a syllable. Leah had risen, still in her hat and traveling cloak, as she had come. Reinhold's honest face looked strange and gloomy, framed in its black hair and bushy beard.

He silently took the lantern from Reginchen, and preceded Leah up the narrow, time begrimed staircase that led to the store rooms. He did not address a word to her as she followed close behind him. Not until they had walked through a large portion of the garret, across whose ceiling ran heavy beams, and he had turned the key in the door of a low room, did he pause a moment and say: "I'm taking you into my holy of holies, Leah."

Then he opened it, crossed the threshold with the light, and allowed her also to enter.

At the first glance it seemed a mere attic chamber, like hundreds of others, only perhaps somewhat higher, but as if to make amends for this the roof sloped the more, the ancient beams, which supported it, seeming no longer able to do their duty. But as Franzelius set the lantern on the little black stove and lighted a small lamp, Leah saw that the walls were covered with neat grey paper, and the few articles of furniture were kept scrupulously free from dust. The whole end of the room before the window was filled with something which she did not instantly recognize. When the lamplight penetrated to the window, she perceived that it was a turning lathe, and she instantly knew why this awkward piece of furniture stood in Reinhold's holy of holies. He seemed to use it for a writing table; a portfolio, books, and writing materials lay upon it, all in the neatest order. On the right and left of the single deep window niche, where in the daytime scarcely a ray of light could fall, two wide carved brackets were fastened to the wall. The one on the left bore the mask of Michael Angelo's prisoner, the other a square object, like a small box, covered with a cloth. The room contained no other furniture, except a small book-case and two plain cane chairs.

"Won't you sit down, dear Leah?" asked the silent guide, after he had set down the lamp on the stove beside the lantern. He did not look at her, but she saw that the hand which had held the little lamp trembled.

"Thank you," she replied, "I'm not tired. Tell me the commission you wanted to give me."

"Commission? I have none; pardon me, dear friend, it was only a paltry excuse; didn't you see through it at once: And besides, if I had anything to be done in Berlin, I could not entrust it to you--for you'll not go there yourself."

"Why do you attempt to dissuade me? Don't trouble yourself. I've made up my mind; I think I know what I am doing."

Notwithstanding her refusal, she sat down, as if absorbed in thought, in the chair he had placed for her, and diligently thrust the point of her parasol into a hole in the floor, seeming for a moment to forget everything around her.

"You've made up your mind?" he said with a very sorrowful face. "Of course you're mistress of your own actions. But in that case I must tell you that I have also made up my mind, not to give your letter to Edwin."

"You've read it? Oh Reinhold!" A hasty, indignant glance from her eyes met his. The next instant she lowered them to the ground in confusion.

"I have not read it," he said gravely. "Here it is; convince yourself that that the seal is unbroken. But it is just the same as if I had." She started up and moved toward the door, but suddenly paused halfway.

"Do not go," he pleaded. "There's time enough for that, when you've listened to what I have to say. Tell me frankly: can you expect me, when Edwin returns, to give him a letter in which his wife informs him, that she has left him, because she can no longer live beneath his roof?"

"Would I have said that? Would I have said it so? Now I ask you to open the letter, Reinhold, that you may see what I have told him."

"I thank you for your confidence, dear friend, but I will not read the letter which you will soon reproach yourself for having written. Besides, I know very nearly what you've said, to palliate what you're about to do to him--and yourself."

"Palliate? What I'm about to do is for his good; what it costs me no one knows."

She had sunk down into the chair, with her forehead pressed against the back; a shudder seemed to convulse her slight frame.

"Will you not bestow upon me the same confidence *he* has given?" she heard Franzelius ask after a pause. "True, his friendship is of an older date, but when you became his wife, it seemed to me as if I had loved you from childhood as my sister. Dear Leah, he has told me all he told you. And do you think so old a friend cannot feel how much suffering this heavy trial causes you?" She suddenly looked him full in the face, her features no longer distorted by passion, but an expression of such hopeless grief rested on her brow and lips, that he shrank back in alarm.

"He told you *all*? Yes, all he knew of his own heart. What could he have said to you of mine? What does he know about it? True, it's not his fault. I've always been ashamed to unbosom myself, to confess how I idolize him, how madly I love him. It might be unwelcome to him, I thought, since he--well, you know, for you're his friend; what he said about his 'intellectual love' sounded so pretty, very pretty for a philosopher and commendable for his wife also, if she had as much philosophy in her head as he expected, and no unbridled, tumultuous heart, that refused to listen to reason. 'If he should perceive,' I thought, 'that I have my mother's blood in my veins, hot, old-testament blood--perhaps he'll discover that he made a great mistake in thinking he could make a "sensible marriage" with such a nature, as a consolation for a lost love.' And then I also thought: 'who knows what may happen? Perhaps the day will come when I can tell him all, because he himself will no longer be satisfied with a modest happiness, but ask something prouder, higher, more enthusiastic, and then I can say to him: "you need not seek far, still waters run deep; you've yet to know your own wife, with whom you have lived so long unsuspecting of her true nature."' I was going to say it to him when he returned from this pedestrian tour; it seemed to me, from his letters, as if the last spark of the old fire had burned out, and he was longing for a new passion, a fervent love, which would completely engulf him, and after four years of married life, he now, for the first time, loved me with a new, yearning, longing affection. It gave me such delight. But I was rightly served; my weakness or delusion, or whatever it may have been--must be punished. Why did I not confess to him at once, that I should be miserable if he only chose me for his wife on account of my few intellectual qualities? Why did I not tell him I, too, must have all or nothing, and was far less suited for a 'sensible marriage,' than many a far more foolish creature? Now my fate has overtaken me--and his, him--and you want, by means of a few friendly, sensible arguments to heal the breach which has burst open again, the breach which ought never to have been closed."

She had arisen, and was pacing excitedly up and down the narrow room, while he sat silently on one corner of the turning lathe with his head bowed on his breast.

"You're slandering, Leah!" he said in a hollow tone. "You're slandering his heart."

"His heart?" she passionately replied. "Has he a heart he can call his? Oh! don't suppose I'm reproaching him for the lack of it! Yesterday I often thought--ought the remembrance of all the grave and joyous, pleasant and painful things we have shared together for four years, to be utterly effaced and blown away? Had not his heart been animated and warmed by mine till both beat in unison, in all questions of life great and small? You see, I thought so yesterday; today I no longer hold the same opinion, but find the present state of thing perfectly natural."

"To-day--what has happened to-day, that has so suddenly--"

She approached him till she stood close by his side, and without raising her eyes to his, whispered in an undertone: "To-day I've made *her* acquaintance."

"What? Then the veiled lady--"

"Came in search of him and found only me. Don't you agree with me, Reinhold, that under these circumstances it's quite time for the wife to go away, that the husband may be at home when such an agreeable visitor arrives?"

"Leah! What are you saying? You don't know how you wrong him. He--what did he know about her mad plan? And if he had been aware of it, would he not have gone away just at the right time

to baffle it?"

"Yes indeed," she nodded with a bitter expression on her face, "he would have fled from his fate to-day and to-morrow until it should overtake him at last. No, my friend, I do not wrong him; I know how he suffers, and I also know that it will be no disgrace if he succumbs. I have never seen such a woman; will you believe that I, who had good reasons for hating her, could not help loving her; not merely thinking her charming, more charming than I have ever thought any of my own sex before, but liking, loving her! Or no, I will not say too much; but I understand how people cannot help loving her unless they have reasons for hating her as strong as mine."

"Did she make herself known to you?"

"Not by a single syllable. But as soon as she entered the door, even before she threw back her veil, I knew it was she! She cast a hasty glance around the room, a glance that sought him. If I had not been dazzled and fascinated by her appearance, I should have said at once: 'He's not here. Countess, you've come in vain.' But I was silent, and allowed her to speak first, and then, when I had heard her voice, it was too late. She asked for me, she wanted to find some pretext for remaining until he returned, and I secretly admired her presence of mind. She had seen some of my paintings in the house of a lady acquaintance in Berlin, she said, and was so much pleased with them, that while on a journey she had stopped in the city, to make my acquaintance and learn whether she might hope to possess some of my work, she did not care what, a plate with fruit painted on it, a vase, or a flower piece in oils.

"At first her voice trembled, then she grew calmer and threw back her veil. Oh! I understood her perfectly. She was now convinced that she had nothing to fear from me, that the insignificant creature before her could make no pretensions to offer any compensation for the happiness virtuously disdained by the man, to whom she stood ready to give herself. And she was right, I instantly said to myself. Must I, if unhappy be so foolish also, as to deceive myself? And precisely because I instantly lost all hope, I obtained the composure and clearness of mind which I should not have preserved if either hope or defiance had lingered in my heart. I answered her without the least embarrassment, and showed her my portfolio, telling her that I now only painted for my own amusement and gave my productions to my friends. 'Then of course I have no hope of obtaining anything?' she said. I made no reply. Was I to lie, by saying courteously that it would afford me pleasure to do her a friendly service? But she did not expect it. She sat silently on the sofa, and there was a long pause in the conversation between us. Her eyes--what beautiful eyes she has!--wandered slowly and absently around the room. 'Your husband works there!' she said at last, pointing to his desk. 'And you sit yonder, close beside him, and it does not disturb him?' She sighed involuntarily. Probably for a moment it seemed to her as if she were destroying something that was good and beautiful and worthy of existence. I could look at her closely. I don't know now how I had the heart to do so. But she was so charming! 'Those eyes,' I said to myself, 'have stolen your happiness, those red, full lips have kissed him, drawn away from him all power to be happy with another woman.' Strange as it was I sat there beside her, wishing I was lying a hundred fathoms under the earth, and Edwin was sitting in my place. Then I was angry with myself that I could be so impartial, so terribly just, instead of looking at her with jealous rage and anger, for which I really had good cause. 'She has come to triumph over you,' cried a voice in my soul. 'She wants to outshine you, to tear him away from you before your eyes, and you sit beside her and all you feel is a sense of inexpressible sorrow.' I was beginning to hate myself, that I could offer no better resistance to this magic. Then, without the slightest pretext, she suddenly began to talk of my husband, inquired about him like a perfect stranger, who had only seen him casually, and read more things about him than by him. I don't know how it was--I ought to have been too proud to speak of him, at least as I did, as we only pour out to an intimate friend the deepest feelings of the heart about a person we love. But I probably thought I owed it to myself, to show that I was well aware what I had possessed and must lose in him. So I said just what came into my mind, and she sat nodding silently, without uttering a syllable, until I had talked myself in to an excited mood, and suddenly paused with some commonplace apology. My heart throbbled almost to bursting. The bitter anguish of the fact that we should be on such terms, suddenly burst upon me. God knows what I was about to say, when she rose, drew off her glove, and held out her hand, which in my bewilderment I actually took. 'Thank you,' said she. 'How much I should like to stay longer, for I see we understand each other in many things. But I must go, or I shall be missed. Farewell, dear wife, may you be happy. Think often--'

"She was about to add something, but her voice failed. Suddenly I felt her throw her arms around me and press her beautiful lips three times to mine; then before I could collect my thoughts, she had hurried out of the room and I was alone with my shame and astonishment.

"No, precisely because she is better than I thought, I must make room for her. I know now, for I have experienced it myself--he who has once seen her can never forget her again; he whom she has once kissed, must be her slave. But to be *her* slave would cause no pain, while other chains--No, no, he shall not bear this burden. I will go away, will not play the base, unworthy part of a third person, who is merely tolerated, secretly wished dead a thousand times. Besides, what is it? Have I not possessed for four years, what must now be restored to the hands of the rightful owner? Am I the first, or shall I be the last woman, in whom a good, generous, noble man has been mistaken, when he supposed she could fill his heart, and at whose feet he now, to the end of his life, wishes to lay his duty, heroic, self-sacrificing? Fie, who can accept such a sacrifice? Not I--not I--by my mother's blood, which lives in me--not I!"

While uttering the last words, she had approached the door and now laid her hand on the lock, saying: "Adieu! It is time--" when Franzelius suddenly stood close beside her, placed his hand gently on her arm, and looking steadily into her face, said:

"And yet notwithstanding all this, you will not go, Leah?"

"Not go? After all you have just heard?"

"No, Leah not even now."

She hastily released herself from his hold, and looked at him with eyes flashing with anger; "I don't understand you, Reinhold. By what right--"

"By what right do I interfere when you want to plunge into an abyss, and drag Edwin with you? Can you ask, Leah? Must I explain to you, as to a total stranger? Well then, I will remind you of what you have forgotten, of him from whom I derive the right to fill a brother's place to you and Edwin, because I promised him to do so, because it was his legacy to me, a legacy, which I hold sacred and will fulfil to my latest breath. If the living fails to persuade you to do your duty, to perceive what your duty is--perhaps the dead may better succeed."

While he uttered these words he had approached the window and hastily removed the covering from the bracket on the right. Under a square glass cover, on a black cushion, lay Balder's death-mask, so warmly illuminated by the lamplight, that the pure features of the beautiful, still countenance, seemed to be animate with life. Leah sank back into the chair in silence. In her first bewilderment she did not venture to open her eyes.

"Take courage to look at him, dear friend," said Reinhold after a long pause; "when you have conquered the first feeling of awe, you will become more and more calm in the presence of this face. Do you not think the resemblance very striking, seen from the side? Edwin's *sister* we might say. It was thus you saw this noble man for the first and last time--you have never heard his voice, never seen his eyes or his smile--you came too late. But believe me if he were now on earth, he would not have used so many words as I; he would only have looked at you, and to leave Edwin would have seemed impossible."

Still she did not utter a word, but sat on the chair in the middle of the room with both hands clasped in her lap, and her eyes streaming with tears, fixed steadily upon the pale profile. He did not know whether she even heard what he said. But his heart was full and overflowed again.

"No, my friend," said he, "it was an error of your heart, a human weakness, which cannot last in the presence of death--the end of all human joys and sorrows. What, did you intend to leave him alone in the hardest trial of his life? Can you really doubt that he will be truly miserable for the first time, when he loses you? The old disease has attacked him again, but would he have instantly placed himself in your care, if he had not felt that he could only be cured with the aid and under the protection of the old, sacred, eternal powers of true love and faith? And must he now find an empty house, a cold hearth, darkness around him, and the threshold from which hostile spectres are wont to recoil, no longer guarded by good household spirits? And will she, who is about to inflict this pain upon him, attempt to delude herself and him with the fancy that she is making a sacrifice for his sake? For her own sake, she ought to say, for the sake of her pride, her jealous, offended heart, that cannot endure the thought of not making this beloved husband forget every thing beside itself.

"Forgive these harsh words, dear Leah," he pleaded, approaching her and trying to take her hand. "If you were not the woman, whom I have so heartily rejoiced that he obtained for a wife, a woman as high-hearted and brave as himself, perhaps you would be right in what you are doing. One would scarcely dissuade a woman of the ordinary stamp, from making the attempt to bring her husband back to her, by leaving him for a time. But you, dear Leah, ought not to allow any petty arts, any sensitive pouting and reserve, to come between yourself and him. If he has caused you pain, has he not suffered most bitterly himself? Would he have left you again now, if he had not felt how it must torture you to see his condition? He--that I know--feels that he could not be cured anywhere so quickly as near you. If you had heard how he talked to me about you--oh! dear Leah, no man has ever struggled more honestly against the powers of evil, and shall his natural champion, from whose presence he might draw new strength, desert her colors?"

"Come. Compose yourself. Turn your eyes away from that glorified face--it moves you too deeply. Oh! dearest Leah, you're not the first who has learned from the dead, what we owe to the living. I've sat in this very chair through many an hour of bitter conflict, when I knew not what to do; and when it has sometimes happened that my dear wife and I did not agree, we came quietly up here, first I, and ere long she, and we soon saw clearly what we ought to do. You know yourself, dear friend, every thing in life is not as plain as a sum in arithmetic, where we only need to write down the fraction that is left over. Therefore we must question our dead, our immortal ones, and they will not leave us long in doubt about the answer."

He had taken both her hands, and was gazing down at her with a look of the tenderest love. She suddenly rose and threw her arms around his neck. "Dear--true--only friend," was all she could falter amid her sobs.

After a time some one knocked gently at the door, and Reginchen's voice said that her father

was going and wanted to take leave of Reinhold. As there was no sound from the attic room, the little wife then opened the door and timidly entered.

Reinhold gently released himself from Leah, who was still clinging to him in violent agitation. "Do you take charge of her now," he said to Reginchen, "we shall keep her."

"I knew it, Reinhold," replied the little wife, smiling through her tears; "you don't talk often, but when you do speak, you can move mountains. Has he turned your heart, you naughty woman, when you wouldn't be touched by my fondest words? Now I find her here on the most affectionate terms with my own husband, and must get jealous of my only friend forsooth, in my old age."

Long after Reinhold had left the house and was on his way to the railway station with his father-in-law, who understood nothing about the matter, the two friends remained clasped in each other's arms, Leah seated in the lap of Reginchen, who often pressed her to her heart with almost motherly tenderness. They said nothing, but leaned their heads against each other and looked up to the bracket from which the dead man's gentle face gazed down upon them in pure and calm majesty.

CHAPTER VII.

Meantime the two friends had spent their day in a somewhat grave mood.

It was easy to say and sing:

"How joyous he, who leaves his home,
To wander at his will,"

but difficult to realize it. After Mohr had sung all the verses in his best style, and Edwin at the conclusion had only remarked absently, that the air was very gay--a recognition the composer's husband did not consider sufficiently warm--they walked on for an hour without speaking, except in monosyllables. "You'll forgive my old uncivil habit, Heinz," Edwin had said. "The morning hour to me has gold in its mouth, and silence is golden."

"Hm!" muttered Mohr, "I don't know what we two should have to say to each other."

Nor did aught of importance occur to him in the second or third hour. The day was hot, the road through the forest cool and pleasant, but as it led into the mountains, both men, who were usually such sturdy pedestrians, seemed to find every step a burden.

The sun blazed hotly down, as they climbed a height overgrown with low bushes, from which the ruins of a stately castle overlooked a broad extent of country. They had hoped to find an inn here, but the little house which had formerly been used for that purpose, was deserted, and the tiny garden full of weeds and robbed of its summer fruits; only the well was still ready to do its duty. When they had partially quenched their thirst, they stretched themselves on the turf under the shadow of the ruined barbican, and Mohr began to make a cigarette.

"If we could only have a rubber of whist or a game of piquet," he sighed.

"In broad daylight, here on the green grass?" replied Edwin smiling. "Incorrigible sinner."

Mohr looked askance at him and shrugged his shoulders. "My worthy saint," he growled, "how often have I told you that this is one of your limitations; you've no taste for play. But just wait till you've written your book, completed your system. Then you'll have satisfied your soul's longing, and your eyes will be opened to the fact that a sensible man can take even play seriously."

"'There's often a deep meaning in children's games:' a wise man said that."

"Yes indeed, and a philosopher by trade ought to be the last to scoff at it. A game of whist, my dear fellow, is life in miniature, where one has more luck than judgment, another more judgment than luck, a third who holds the best trumps doesn't know what to do with them, while the fourth, who would probably have made the most of them, loses the cards at last by his partner's awkwardness, at the utmost counting only his honors. I never take a hand at cards, without a certain feeling of solemnity, as if we then compelled fate, which usually only allows herself to be seen through a rift in the clouds, to sit down close beside us and show her real colors. What, on the contrary, is a melodrama, comedy, or tragedy, at which fate is separated from us by the

orchestra and prompter's box, and we can lose nothing except our admission fee and faith in a new development of the German stage? Instead of the 'stage,' we ought to talk of 'the cards' that parody the world."

"A fine world, in which there are only knaves, kings, and queens, with the exception of a few insignificant mutes; and all this for a few penitents! No, my dear fellow, as I lack an appreciation of money, even more than an appreciation of play--"

Mohr puffed huge clouds of smoke into the air. "If you only say that, to avoid being compelled to acknowledge that I'm right, I'll forgive you," he said calmly. "But if you really made such a worthless remark in earnest, I pity you. You're generally clever, Edwin, or rather you think it worth while, when we're talking together, not only to pour out pure wine for me, but, as I'm a connoisseur, your best brands. Shall I tell you why, at this moment, you don't care a straw what you say? Because, for the last three hours, I've only rejoiced in your bodily presence, your soul has been far away."

"And where has it taken up its abode, omniscient friend?"

"Hm! do you see the telegraph poles, which appear between the pines yonder, and show that iron rails run through the forest beneath them? If, for a few hours, you follow toward the East the wires which are scarcely visible from here, in the direction from whence we have just come, your worthy body will reach the spot where your honored soul is at the present moment, and which it has not left five minutes today."

"You maybe right, my dear fellow," replied Edwin gravely. "I confess I've been thinking all the morning, whether it was not ridiculous nonsense to leave my little wife again, and without even a farewell kiss. She cannot feel happy, and I'm very miserable, while you, poor martyr to friendship, must be bored with me, whether you like it or not. No"--and he sprang to his feet with sudden resolution--"we must not carry anything too far, even want of consideration for our friends. Do you think I don't know that by following the telegraph wire toward the *West*, we shall in a few hours reach the spot where your heart dwells, though your mind, even if not in its most brilliant mood, may be beside me."

"Pray leave my insignificant self entirely out of the question. The matter under discussion is what's best for you, and with all due deference to Frau Leah's worldly wisdom, I think she made a mistake this time."

"Do you think so too?" cried Edwin with beaming eyes. "Well, my Socratic fiend has been saying the same thing, but the habit of respecting superior wisdom--no, I'll emancipate myself, I frankly declare that this distasteful bodily exercise, while the soul remains immovable in one spot, is unworthy of a sensible man and does more harm than good; in a word, I absolve you from the painful duty of acting as bear leader, and will go back at full speed, until I see the smoke of my own chimney."

"Stop," exclaimed Mohr, throwing his cigarette over the precipice. "Praiseworthy as this hasty resolution appears, for this day you belong to me; in the first place, because it will be salutary for your wife to do without you again for a whole day, and secondly, because neither at my home, nor during these last few days of travel, have we said anything about your work. That book my friend, must eventually be written. I should like to know how far you have progressed with the system, or whether the old step-mother, Mathematics, has so maltreated the tender little soul. Psychology, which cannot live without fancy, that we must despair of its attaining any further growth. Who knows when we shall see each other again. That we shall not write very frequently is unfortunately more than probable, and besides, now-a-days, letters contain nothing of any real importance. So be kind enough to sit down beside me again and submit to an examination. Or still better, let us drag ourselves to the next village, breakfast, and then begin."

They did so. Mohr was well aware that next to the gentle but powerful magic of Leah's presence, nothing could be so soothing to his friend's agitated soul, as to resolve to do what in his modesty he had always deferred, collect the work of the last few years in a large volume. Now, for the first time, while sketching the outlines to his sympathizing listener, Edwin felt that nothing essential was really lacking, that he only needed to go to work with a firm purpose and a good heart. Heinrich encouraged him in his resolve in every possible way.

"If you want to wait till you have nothing more to learn, before you begin to teach, you can write only posthumous books. I must preach very nearly the same sermon with which I yesterday converted a much more eccentric Christian; your head has reached its full growth, I think. It may be refurbished in one way or another; have a window cut here or there, but the foundations will not enlarge. And as it is tolerably spacious and not ill planned, it will be useful for the world to know how it (the world, I mean,) is reflected in this head. For my part, I have a special interest in wishing the book to be written soon; in the first place, because it must be dedicated to me and our ex-tribune of the people; and secondly, because in my own unfruitfulness, it is a satisfaction to have friends who can make themselves talked about and accomplish something entire."

When, toward evening, they parted, and Mohr went to the station, to return to his wife and child, both, though without showing it except by a somewhat over-strained gayety, were very much agitated. They had again shared what binds human beings most closely to each other, pure,

unselfish hours of grave meditation and quiet sympathy, in the contemplation of the eternal verities. And moreover they felt themselves bound more strongly to each other by a renewal of the old friendship which may, even when the thoughts are unlike, and the topmost branches as it were divide, forever entwine the roots of two lives.

It was already dark, when Edwin also set out by rail to return to the little city which he had left in the morning. The unconquerable longing for home had increased to an actual fever, during the hour he was obliged to wait at the station. When the train at last stopped in the town, which now contained his world, he sprang hastily out, looking neither to the right nor left, lest he should see some acquaintance who might detain him. He did not notice the two men who had been waiting for the arrival of the same train, Reinhold and Herr Feyertag, the latter, being as we know, about to return to Berlin. They, also, were too much engrossed in conversation, to heed the traveler in a suit of grey, who rushed blindly past them and instantly turned toward the city.

When at last, panting for breath and wiping the perspiration from his brow, he reached his house, he was surprised to find the windows dark, but instantly said to himself: "She's with Reginchen." The delay annoyed him, it had never entered his mind that he should not find her at home. He hastily entered resolved to send the maid-servant for her, for he felt unable to see others to-day, even though they might be his dearest friends. But when he opened the door of his room, the girl came toward him with a light.

"Herr Doctor!" she exclaimed, almost dropping the lamp in her surprise. "Good gracious, to-day! And my mistress--"

"Where's my wife? At the next house, I suppose?"

"Preserve us! Gone away entirely, an hour ago--you must have met her at the railway station."

"At the station? What are you talking about, Kathrin? Where should she go--alone--without me--"

"She's gone to Berlin with Herr Feyertag, and she said she didn't know when she'd come back, but she'd write, and as the Herr Doctor wouldn't return for a week--"

"Gone? To Berlin?"

"Why yes, to see her father--and she made up her mind very suddenly. Herr Feyertag said it would be a good opportunity, because he was going himself this evening, but my mistress would not hear of such a thing at first, but the other visitor had scarcely gone--"

"Another visitor? Who--don't make me drag the words out of you so--"

"But how should I know who it was? I never saw the lady in my life, she didn't tell her name, and I could not hear what she said to my mistress. She was very beautiful, and very elegantly dressed; after she'd gone the room smelt of violets a long time, and my mistress paced up and down, looking very pale and talking to herself. And then when I brought her dinner she didn't touch a mouthful, and I didn't dare to ask her any questions; she said nothing to me, except that she'd made up her mind to go to Berlin. So about twilight she went out with a little satchel, and didn't even allow me to go with her to the station. When she'd gone, I felt very sad and anxious, though I didn't know why, and I was just going to bed--but what ails you, Herr Doctor? Shall I get you a glass of water?"

He had sunk down on the sofa and his eyes were closed as if a stroke of apoplexy had benumbed his brain.

When, after some time, he opened his eyes again, he saw the maid-servant, who had no idea what all this could mean, still standing helplessly in the middle of the room. "What are you doing here, Kathrin?" he said harshly. "Go to bed, leave me, I want nothing more to-day. No, no light. I can see well enough. Good night."

The faithful servant glided silently out of the room, and he sank back again in the corner of the sofa, helplessly giving himself up, in the loneliness and darkness, to his bitter anguish.

CHAPTER VIII.

So he had lost her--his brave little wife, his good comrade, the friend who sympathized with all his moods and thoughts, all his feelings and wishes! The right hand must do without the left, the

complete man had become a pitiful fragment, a crumbling mass of ruin.

The blow was so sudden, so unexpected, that for the first hour his bewilderment swallowed up all sense of pain. If anything earthly had ever seemed positive and secure from loss, it had been the possession of this heart. The secret fear (which sometimes blends with the joy of passionate love,) that exuberance of feeling may fall from its exaltation and undergo the common lot of change, he had never known. He had never toiled in anxiety and doubt to win the woman's love; it had been his long before he suspected it; why should he fancy that it could ever change! And now she had deserted him!

No feeling of reproach or bitterness, that she failed him now when he needed her more than ever, rose in his heart. He esteemed her too highly to believe her capable of any petty irritability, any ordinary feminine weakness, such as going "to make herself missed." If she could feel that her place was no longer beside him, she must have had good reasons for her belief, reasons which would bear the examination not only of her sorely tried heart, but of her reason. What they might be, well as he knew her, was not clear to him. Did she not know him too, and know he would never leave her? But he also knew whom she had seen, and that this visitor had been the cause of her sudden resolution he was perfectly convinced.

But however that might be--he had lost her. True--in the midst of his deep sorrow, a voice within whispered consolingly it was not possible, not conceivable that he could have lost her forever. If she had suspected that he would return to her to-day, how desolate the lonely house would seem, how sleepless the night would be--perhaps she would have remained. And it could have needed only one word, one look into each other's eyes, to have banished all the ghosts that had come between them. But even if she returned with him--he missed her to-day, and had been longing all day to see her, as he had never done before, and only endured the weary hours, because he knew the last would bring him to her arms.

In the midst of the bitterest grief and regret, his mind suddenly grew strangely clear and calm. For the strength of a noble love that really fills a man's heart, is such, that in its glorious fervor it consumes all other feelings, and even in the denial of the beloved object, the renunciation of the joy of her presence and reciprocating love, renders him happy whose being it pervades. All the happiness Edwin had enjoyed during these four years of quiet possession, seemed like a pale twilight in comparison with the radiant brightness that suddenly burst upon him in this separation. For the first time, the inmost depths of his being were pervaded by the feeling that he would give the whole world to call this woman his again.

With the rapturous timidity of a young man in love, but far distant from the object of his longing, and who meantime indemnifies himself for all deprivations by the boldness of his waking dreams, he conjured up the image of his beloved wife and murmured confusedly a thousand happy, sweet, and sorrowful words. He sued for her heart as if she had never granted him a kind word, and in imagination whispered his yearning love in her ear and waited with a throbbing heart for some sound from her lips that might seem to favor his suit. Her little work basket stood on the table before the sofa, where he still lay in the dark. Just as she had toyed with his book, his pen, he now took up one after another, the skeins of silk, silver thimble, and little scissors; the thimble he put on and pressed to his lips. It was such a consolation to him to be permitted to touch the things that had belonged to her, as if they were hostages she would ransom when he had her again. "To Berlin," he said suddenly to himself. "Why should we not go there?" He said "we," as if they were to set out on their journey the next morning together. For the moment he had entirely forgotten that she was not sitting beside him.

So he lay in his dark corner in a condition between sleeping and waking, while visions of all his past and future happiness successively rose before him. He was so absorbed in his reverie that he did not hear the noise in the street outside, a strange humming and buzzing, as if a great crowd had assembled, but were moving gently about with subdued voices and light steps, in order not to betray some secret design. It was about nine o'clock, an hour at which such a gathering, except in case of fire, was utterly unprecedented. Now the gleam of several wavering lights penetrated the dark room seemingly stationary before the house. Still the dreamer's attention was not aroused. Not until the street had again become perfectly silent and a duet began, softly sung by two voices without, did Edwin start up. What was that? Who was singing that beautiful, familiar melody, which he could never hear without deep emotion, since it had been the last greeting of Balder's friends, ere they left him to his eternal repose? *Integer vitæ*--now it rose again, sung before his house by young, fresh voices, a greeting of life to the living. At first he listened without thinking how it happened that the old tune was now heard outside. Its melody fell so softly on his heart, and the words, with which he was perfectly familiar, seemed like the friendly consolation of a good spirit, closely allied to him. When the fourth verse began, he rose gently and approached the closed window. The street was crowded with people, whose faces were all turned toward him, though he was evidently not yet perceived against the dark background of the room for the expression of expectation, which rested on every countenance, did not alter as he approached. In the centre stood the singers, pupils belonging to the first classes of his school; his colleague, the singing-master, had stationed himself before the semi-circle, and by the light of some torches was beating time as intently as if some grand musical exhibition were taking place in a hall. Among the bystanders Edwin recognized many of the most prominent citizens in the place, the president of the workmen's society and several friends and neighbors, and could no longer doubt that the serenade was intended for him, a discovery, which even in his dark hiding place, made him blush to his temples.

What could have induced these good people, who as he well knew, were his friends, to express their feelings to him on this particular day, and in such a manner? Who had arranged this conspiracy so secretly, that even Franzelius, who would certainly have prepared him, had heard nothing of it? He was just resolving to choose the simplest way of solving the mystery, by going out and inquiring, when the door was cautiously opened and one of his younger colleagues, the teacher of history, with an exclamation of joy, entered the dark room. "So you are at home!" he cried, eagerly grasping Edwin's hand. "As the windows still remained dark, we were afraid that the beadle, who positively declared he saw you return by the evening train, might have been mistaken. It was known that you went away early this morning, and the serenade which had been appointed for this evening was of course deferred. But when you came back, there was no restraining them; all who were to take part were hastily assembled, and now nothing will save you; you must leave your hiding place and show yourself to the people, although so far as speech making is concerned, we can't under present circumstances stick to the original programme."

He then hastily told his astonished hearer, how all this had come to pass. Notwithstanding the secrecy with which the affair was managed, the rumor that Edwin was to be dismissed on account of his lecture before the workmen's society and the freethinking he had never denied, had spread itself among the pupils, who were greatly attached to him, and through this channel had reached the citizens and workmen. Instantly the thought occurred to them of averting the danger of losing their dear teacher and friend, by a solemn demonstration. If the city manifested its unanimous desire not to let Edwin go, those occupying high places would perhaps be startled. So an address had been secretly prepared, which was to be carried to Edwin escorted by a torchlight procession, and followed by a supper at the citizen's club. A partial knowledge of this had reached the ears of the principal of the school, who in his fear of offending both parties, could think of no wiser course than to telegraph to his superiors and beg them to adopt moderate measures. As soon as he had received an answer conceding his petition, he sent for the ringleaders among the pupils and told them no one had any intention of depriving them of their teacher, only that every thing must be avoided which would make an uproar and irritate the ecclesiastical authorities. There must be no torchlight procession nor any satirical addresses, either verbal or written; this was the condition of a mutual good understanding, which no one desired more than he, since he himself felt the highest esteem for the honored colleague in question.

"So we were obliged to content ourselves by merely singing a few songs to you, my dear friend," the young man concluded. "It is possible that even this course may destroy our pastor's rest. But why does he meddle with our affairs and disturb our little circle? It was hard enough for the lads to pledge themselves to do nothing more. Our little head boy had prepared a speech, which would have borne witness that he had read Thucydides to some purpose. And it seems as if I had never heard them sing so before!"

Edwin's only reply was to press his friend's hands; he then accompanied him into the street, where the last song was being sung. All present bared their heads, when they saw him, and seemed to expect a speech. But he only went up to the old music teacher, uttered a few cordial words, shook hands with him, and then embraced the head boy. "We know each other, my young friends," he said, "we will hold to each other in future, and I shall ever treasure it as one of my greatest joys, that you sang this particular song. I will tell you why another time. But here are other friends I must thank. Dear Herr Wolfhart," he said, addressing an old white-haired cabinet-maker, "you, too, have taken the trouble to come here to do me honor, although as I know, you are not a good walker. How shall I thank you for it--and you--and all of you! Well, I think the charming singing of our gallant lads will repay you for the trouble, better than I could do if I made a long speech. True, I might say a great deal to you all, but the street is not a suitable place for it, and we shall meet each other again at some more fitting opportunity. For your confidence in me and belief in my honest intentions, I thank you cordially; and now we will beg our singers to rejoice our hearts with a few more songs."

While the singing began again, many pressed around Edwin to shake hands with him and whisper how delighted they were to have this opportunity of showing their esteem for him and how the thought of losing him had alarmed them all. He accepted these proofs of friendship in his usual straight forward manner, said very little in reply, and escaped the most enthusiastic, as well as he could, by pretending to be completely absorbed in the music. But at heart he was strangely agitated and touched by this beautiful and affectionate ceremonial, and yet amid his joy he was deeply saddened by the thought that he must witness it without her, whose existence was most closely interwoven with his. He became more and more absorbed in this grief, which made him insensible to all that was passing around him. When the last notes had died in the air, the dark crowd silently melted away; the singers took leave of him, and those colleagues who ventured to share in the ovation, accompanied him to the door of the house with a last good night; he crossed the deserted threshold with a sense of sorrowful oppression, as if instead of this pleasurable event, some heavy grief had befallen him, and he felt actual horror at the thought that he must now remain through the long night alone with his despair.

Again he threw himself on the sofa, but the blissful certainty of happiness, in which he had just rested there, had fled. He had never felt more clearly, that he had lost the capacity for enjoying any pleasure, which she did not share with him, that his weal and woe were so indissolubly connected with this other self, that the mere thought of losing her palsied every aspiration of his soul.

Suddenly he fancied he heard a light foot coming along the street--now it ascended the steps--seemed to pause a moment at the door, which was ajar--and then to come through the dark entry--a footstep he knew so well! but no, impossible! She is far away or could his thoughts have had the power--? A hand is laid on the door knob; Edwin starts up with a beating heart, is about to say: "Who is there?" and prepares to reconcile himself to see a strange form enter, when the door opens, and Leah who has witnessed every thing that has just taken place before the house,--with what emotion! standing unnoticed among the crowd, not daring to approach!--appears, trembling from head to foot, like a criminal before her judge, on the threshold of the room she had left with such an agitated soul.

Another instant and she was clasped in his arms. As if beside himself in the exuberance of this unprecedented happiness, he raised the tottering form and carried, rather than led her to the sofa.

"Leah!" he exclaimed, "is it you?--you in bodily form clasped to my heart again? I hold, I feel you, come, speak one word, compose yourself--oh! you do not know what you have done for me in not going away!"

Meantime she had recovered from her bewilderment, but was still incapable of uttering a word. But he--all that he had just said in imagination, his newly awakened, passionate love, his wooing for her heart, the doubts and fears of a lover, he now poured forth aloud, while again and again seeking with his quivering lips her hands, her cheeks, the quiet mouth for which he had so ardently longed. "And you are here," he cried, "you have not fled from me, have not left a poor defenceless mortal alone in his need; no, my brave, faithful wife, now for the first time wholly mine and fairer and happier than ever, and all the idols which I had beside you, have crumbled into ruin forever."

"Oh Edwin," she whispered, "you make me both happy and miserable. You do not know, I am a bad wife--mean and cowardly, and not worthy to have you idolize me so. Oh! that this must be said now, but I must not allow any falsehood to come between us--you must see me as I am, even if you take back the treasure you have just poured into my lap."

"Speak out, if it must be told," he said with his brightest smile. "I am curious to see how far a person who has just saved another's life, can succeed in appearing odious."

He held her hands firmly clasped in his, but she glided down on the carpet before him, and on her knees, like a grievous sinner, confessed all that we already know. He let her talk on only interrupting now and then by an ironical word or saucy laugh. "Have you finished?" he asked, when she paused. She nodded, but made no effort to rise.

"Your sins are heavy," said he. "Above all, that of having given another man, even though he be a friend, to whom I do not grudge any good thing, the kiss which I myself so shamefully neglected to take with me, when I set out early this morning. However, in consideration that I too did not escape from the magic castle entirely unscathed, the only penance imposed upon you shall be, that in the future, if you want to kiss your own husband, you must never suppose that such folly does not beseem thinking beings, who have made a sensible marriage, but allow your heart every sweet absurdity--as in this hour. Leah, were there ever two happier mortals?"

"I fear I shall not survive the joy--" she murmured. Then withdrawing from his embrace she continued: "You are crushing me,--and you must be very gentle with me now--not for my own sake--Edwin, you do not yet know--I--I bear another life--"

This earth has joys that no heavenly joy can surpass, and which can be described by no human tongue.

CHAPTER IX.

This night was succeeded by days, whose radiance and joy exceeded even the far famed happiness of the honeymoon. And in fact many drops of gall had mingled with the honey of our lovers' first days of wedlock; the daughter's sorrowful parting from her beloved father, whose future at that time seemed far more lonely and joyless, because there was not the faintest thought of a marriage with his first love; the young wife's many household cares, and for Edwin himself numerous annoyances in his new position, where the reputation of being a philosopher who believes neither in religion nor in God, had preceded him.

They had passed honestly through all troubles hand in hand. But much as these trials aided in strengthening the foundation upon which their home was to be built, the happy rapture of joy, the unrestrained, tumultuous delight with which young couples usually enter upon a new life, had been lacking in them. Now all this was bestowed in overflowing measure, when as Leah smilingly said, "they had really been married too long to be so childishly happy."

True, they did not allow, the outside world to see much of the treasure they had so suddenly found under their own hearthstone, and he who had entered the sitting room on the following day would hardly have taken the quiet young teacher, who was writing the first chapter of his philosophical work, and the young wife, who was painting a study in water colors from a bouquet of fresh roses, for two newly married people, in whose hearts amazement at all the wonders of happy love was still burning with a bright flame. But the first chapter did not progress very rapidly, or the bouquet bloom speedily on the paper. Every ten minutes the writer had something to ask the artist, and the question generally concerned some childish folly, such as is usually discussed gravely and thoroughly only in the nursery; or the artist, who had gone out of the room a moment, could not as usual, on returning, find the way directly back to her own window, but being obliged to pass the other, her dress, with all its appurtenances would catch on something which was no rose bush, but two arms extended toward her like a sign post, that would not let her go until she had paid a suitable toll for crossing the boundary line.

"Since we have discovered that we are in love with each other, like ordinary foolish mortals, we can no longer abide within the same four walls!" said Edwin laughing. "It is fortunate that we shall soon need a larger dwelling at any rate. At least the neighbors will not notice it, if we, from pure love, cannot continue beside each other."

He threw his pen aside, gave his arm to his little wife, and went to the printers with her. Reginchen received them with eyes sparkling with delight, but Reinhold, after yesterday's rare expenditure of eloquence, was as monosyllabic as if he were compelled to make up for his unprecedented lavishness by redoubled parsimony. But the quiet smile that gleamed through his bushy beard was enough to tell his friends how the sun of their happiness warmed his heart. They must come again in the evening he said; but Edwin instantly declined--they were going into the country, or to the shooting match, or somewhere--in short, they did not know what wise or foolish thing they might undertake, but two such frivolous young people could not enter into any positive engagement.

The remainder of this last week of vacation passed in the same way. They were only seen for very short periods, when they talked in a courteous, but abstracted manner, smiled at vacancy, and suddenly departed again, as if they had some important business to transact, and at hours when no staid citizen would think of going to walk, would be met on the wall of the town or in the neighboring forest, strolling along hand in hand, or sitting on some bench engaged in eager conversation or absorbed in happy silence.

Yet despite all this, the first chapter did make considerable progress--more than the picture of the bouquet of roses, since the original of the latter did not expand so quietly as Edwin's thoughts, which had long before been bound into a beautiful wreath. "I know now," said he, "why I never could write the book before. Certain things cannot be done by reason and calm judgment. A hazardous enterprise, like the final expression of thought, can be undertaken only when, like a somnambulist, we wander over the heights of life, intoxicated by the winged flight of a rapturous happiness, or the march of a grand, solemn fate, with a courage which helps us to surmount all heights and depths. No can can be so bold, except he who has shaken off all the burdens of mortality and escaped into eternity. When I woke last night, my darling, and gazed at your sleeping face--the moon was still shining brightly--you had a saucy smile on your lips, while your grave brow--will you believe, that a light suddenly dawned upon that passage in Kant, over which I have racked my brains so long? now my third chapter need not end with an interrogation point."

Thus passed the bright time of this most cloudless summer. On Sunday, the last day of vacation, they walked to a neighboring village and passed the little church, just as the service was over. A flood of melody from the organ floated solemnly through the open door, like an invisible stream, which was bearing the church-goers into the world again. The two lovers stood still and let the congregation pass slowly by. A portion of it was composed of peasants with their wives and children. Many residents of the city, who were spending the summer in the country, had joined it, principally ladies, who nodded to Leah as they passed, but owing to the religious views which the pair were known to entertain, did not approach them at the moment.

"The pastor of this village is famed for his toleration and oratorical talent," said Leah. "Does it not seem as if all these faces bore witness, that a beautiful and noble gospel has just been preached, a religion of love and charity? How differently the people look, when they come from our city church, where your zealous opponent enters the pulpit every Sunday with a heart full of hatred and desire for persecution! These people have really been benefited; they have sanctified their holiday, and we ought to thank them for secretly pitying us, because they do not suspect we are doing so too, in our own way."

"Certainly," replied Edwin, "so long as they confine themselves to secret pity, and do not allow their acts to be affected by it, so long as they do not force upon us the consciousness that we have other wants and satisfy them in a different way. For after all the ultimate and most common standard of a man's value is, whether he is capable of devotion or not, whether he can raise his

thoughts above the dust of workday life and produce and worthily enjoy a holiday stillness. In this alone men differ and foolishly wrangle about how it happens. Those who only in dense crowds can succeed in remembering their common humanity, their universal weakness, their need, and all that binds them under the universal law, consider those persons arrogant and presumptuous, who can only feel the presence of the eternal powers, when communing with their own hearts in the deepest solitude, or with their most intimate friends. Nothing alien and fortuitous must touch me, if I am to approach what people have agreed to call God. The voice of a good man, who wants to obtrude upon me his little well meant passages from Scripture, the faces of his innocent hearers, to whom each word is a revelation, baffle and destroy my best efforts to rise above earthly appearances into the one and all. That which now speaks to us from the open house of God, is a feeling so strangely made up of memories of our childhood, universal philanthropy, the summer air, and the notes of the organ, that we gladly allow it to produce its effect upon us. But when we seriously reflect, it leads us away from, rather than into ourselves. It draws us toward natures which have little in common with us. We have often said, dearest, that mankind might be divided into two great classes, those who strive toward what is steadfast, calm, and limited, and those who never forget that every thing is fleeting, and are only satisfied when they themselves are in the current of the eternal stream. How could the piety of these two classes be the same? When the former pass from the restless, ever moving world, through a church door into their Sunday, where every thing has remained the same from time immemorial, the inexpressible appears before them confined within set forms, and for all new wants and sorrows the same consolations are ready, which have soothed their ancestors for a thousand years. How can it surprise us, that people who find their salvation in remaining ever the same and prefer to stifle certain instincts of the soul and mind, rather than be allured into the illimitable, cannot understand us, whose piety is rooted in the strength and boldness which in moments of enthusiasm, enable us to burst the barriers that confine us, in order through presentments and intuition, to grasp all space?"

"They do not know," said Leah gently, after a short pause, "how much more courage and humility it requires, to confess that we cannot recognize God, then to believe ourselves his pet children, in whose ears He whispers the secret of the world, and thereby relieves from all future care."

When they returned home in the evening and entered their cosy room, they espied a letter lying on the desk. "I don't know why it is," said Edwin, "but I fear this stranger which has crept in, will destroy the pleasure of the last hours of vacation."

"Don't read it until to-morrow," pleaded Leah.

But Edwin had already opened the letter, and a smaller note fell out. As Leah picked it up, he glanced at the signature of the large one. "Doctor Basler," he read, and his light tone instantly grew sad. "A letter from there--six closely written pages--strange, how far distant it seems, all that transpired there, as if years had intervened; so greatly does happiness harden us to the sorrows of others! And now once more it appears like yesterday. Poor creature, to be so quickly forgotten, even by your only friend! Perhaps though it may not contain a word about her. Come we will sit down on the sofa and read the letter together."

Leah had become perfectly silent. Without exactly concealing the note she had picked up, she held it in her hand, so that for the instant Edwin forgot it. They seated themselves near the lamp and read:

"Dear Sir and Friend!

"I should consider it my duty, even without the count's express command, to relate to my dear friend's son, the particulars of an event extremely sad in its nature, and which if it should reach him in its bare outlines through the medium of the press, would be doubly agitating.

"So-sine ambagibus--for so-called preparation in such cases only increases anxiety and dread, and men, dear Herr Doctor, know that fate strides rapidly--we have lost our beautiful young mistress, the countess, in a manner as sudden as it is distressing.

"You are already aware, that the writer of this letter did not enjoy any special favor or regard from the lady who has died so young. Yet I do not need to assure you, that the brevity of this account, which is garnished by no expression of feeling, is due solely to the haste imposed upon me by the pressure of circumstances, and not by any lack of sympathy in my master's misfortune. Such a thing would not only be inhuman in general, but ungrateful in particular, in so far as the noble lady at last did justice to the good will of her faithful servant and honored him with a priceless token of her confidence.

"To tell everything in due order, the countess, during the first few days after you left us, made no change in her mode of life, but on the third or fourth day--Monday, if I am not mistaken--remained shut up in her own room, allowing no one but her maid to attend her. On Thursday she again appeared at dinner, and to her husband's evident joy, seemed gayer and more cordial than was her habit in the family circle. The Italian tour of the prince and his wife, introduced the subject of traveling, and the countess jestingly remarked that she had become, so to speak, blasé through descriptions of travel in most foreign countries, but if any thing could please her, it would be to go alone to the promised land. This remark was taken seriously, both by Count

Gaston and the count himself, and the following day nothing was talked of except rides through the desert, Jordan water, the infidels, and the holy sepulchre. Therefore it afforded me special pleasure, that the countess should be the first to say: 'of course we must not leave the doctor--my insignificant self--at home.'

"Amid all this, it could not escape one familiar with the circumstances, that the noble lady's feelings toward her husband had softened, a fact which I could not help secretly attributing to your influence, my worthy friend. Old diagnosticians, like ourselves, are not deceived in such matters; the tone of the voice and the expression of the eyes, which accompanied even the most insignificant words, plainly showed me that her former harshness was softening, and I was already cherishing the brightest expectations of a complete reconciliation, expectations now unfortunately forever baffled, by this terrible catastrophe.

"A hunting party was arranged for Thursday, at which in addition to the members of the household, no one was present except the barons Thaddäus and Matthäus, who, however, were only spectators, as, since the accident to the fat landed-proprietor, though the wound is healing, the furrow made by the ball suppurating properly, and his general health admirable, they have vowed not to touch a gun, except in defence of their native land.

"I, as usual, remained at home, and did not even see the party ride away, but learned from the steward that Her Excellency had been particularly gay and blooming, and in unusually good spirits, so that the count really seemed to grow younger and the company moved off amid jests and laughter.

"The occupants of the castle were therefore the more alarmed, when, soon after noon, the noble party entered the courtyard very quietly at a walk, the countess lying in a carriage with a very pale face. Count Gaston riding beside her on horseback, and her husband on the box. We heard, that in the exuberance of her delight in hunting, Her Excellency had proposed a steeplechase to the gentlemen, in which her English chestnut horse instantly took the lead; but in leaping a high fence the animal unfortunately fell, and though the countess was apparently unhurt, the fright brought on a long fainting fit. The horse, which had broken one of its fore legs, was instantly relieved from its sufferings by a bullet from Count Gaston's pistol, at the express desire of its mistress, who, however, as soon as the deed was done, burst into violent sobs and afterwards did not utter a single word.

"Leaning on her husband's arm, she ascended the stairs, greeting the terrified servants only with a silent bend of the head and went at once to her own rooms, where she shut herself up for several hours, declaring that she was not hurt, and that she only needed rest. It was not a matter of surprise, that she did not consult me, as I have already told you, I was not in her favor, either as a physician or as a man. But to my no small surprise, about six o'clock I was called to the noble patient by the maid herself.

"I found her attired in an elegant negligé, sitting at a writing table, as if nothing had happened; she was unusually pale however, and her manner of receiving me was also surprising, for she was not in the habit of treating me with so much kindness and condescension. While sealing a letter and writing the address with a steady hand, she said in reply to my question about her health, that she was sure she had received no internal injury, but the dizziness which had recently attacked her--you remember how she stumbled the morning after your arrival, my dear sir--constantly hovered about her, and she wanted me to bleed her. At first I hesitated, from scientific reasons, which it would occupy too much space to explain here; but as I knew her, and knew that if I refused, she would send for the village barber, I did what she desired; it was the first time I had been permitted to touch her arm or render her any medical service. 'What do you think of my blood, Doctor?' she said, as it flowed into the silver basin. 'It is healthy isn't it? With such blood one might live to be a hundred years old!'

"When I put on the bandage, she expressly told me to fasten it securely, she was often restless in her sleep she said, and it might, easily become displaced. 'Well,' said I, 'in any case I will beg permission to watch through the night with the maid in the ante-room.' 'If you want me not to close my eyes,' she replied, 'my nerves are so irritated, that the slightest noise, even the mere vicinity of a man, keeps me awake.' No, if I wished to do her a favor, I would not omit the ride to the city I always took every Thursday, and I would carry with me to mail, the letter she had just written.

"You knew her, dear Herr Doctor, and therefore you know how difficult it would have been to have refused her any thing, especially a first service. So I bowed in silence, put the letter in my pocket, and gave her all sorts of directions for the night. Then she held out her hand, which I respectfully kissed, and at that moment it seemed as if no ill feeling had ever existed between us. 'Goodnight, dear Doctor'--those were the last words I ever heard her utter.

"In the hall below I met the count, who asked how I had found her. I told him, and also said I was going to the city--but did not mention the letter (although my motto has always been 'frankness and honesty,' there are cases where discretion becomes a duty.) The count positively forbade me to ride to the city. If the countess asked about the matter in the morning, he would be responsible for my disobedience. Then he went to her himself remained in her apartments about half an hour and returned in a mood I had scarcely ever remarked in him before--gentle and kind, as if he felt all would now be well. Dear me it was the first time for years, that he had been

allowed to sit by her bedside for half an hour.

"Then night closed in. No one in the castle noticed anything unusual, the supper was a little more quiet, and there was no card playing afterwards, which greatly vexed the chevalier, who does not know how to amuse himself without it. At eleven the count again sent to inquire about his wife's health; the maid, who was to spend the night on the sofa in the adjoining room, replied that the countess seemed to be asleep, and she could not get in. Her Excellency had locked the door.

"So all went to bed. What was to be feared? The symptoms were not alarming; rest, sleep, and a Utile bleeding could only be beneficial.

"But I was roused from, my sleep at five o'clock in the morning by the maid, who was standing beside my bed. I must come up at once, she had been aroused by a strange moan, had knocked at the countess' door and called her and at last with the help of a servant, burst the lock; there lay the poor countess weltering in her blood, with the bandage stripped from her arm, unconscious but still alive.

"Dear friend, you may suppose that our trade hardens us, but such a sight!--the count like a madman--the grief of the whole household--and I stood by, whose duty it was to help, and saw that all was useless!

"Had I not been convinced that the bandage--but why should I speak of that--the change in her feelings for the previous few days, instantly removed the supposition that otherwise might have arisen--besides no amount of reasoning can restore her to life.

"Suddenly I thought of the letter, which I still had in my pocket, and I told the count about it, for all discretion was then superfluous. He hastily seized it, for a moment I thought he would open it to see if it contained any intimation that--but then he read the address aloud and was gentleman enough to return it to me; 'take care of it,' said he, 'and write him about--' here his voice failed, and he sank down in a chair beside the bed of his beautiful dead wife.

"Here is the letter entrusted to me; I feel sure it will furnish no new disclosures, none that could be new to me. I know what I know, and voices from the grave even, could not change my conviction.

"I have been very prolix, but you, as an intimate friend of the departed, will not find these details too minute. Remember me to your honored wife; I regret that there is so little prospect of a continuance of our recent acquaintanceship, but the count leaves in a few days for the East, and I accompany him. So with sincere regards, my dear friend, I remain,

"Yours

"Dr. Basler.

"Address to the castle as before; all correspondence will be forwarded!"

The note enclosed in the doctor's letter ran as follows:

"You will be alarmed, my dear friend, that I already write you again. But fear nothing, it is for the last time, and means little more than the card inscribed P. P. C. which we leave with our friends before a long separation, I am going away on a journey, dear friend, far enough away to enable you to feel perfectly secure from any molestation on my part. How this has come about is a long story. Suffice it to say, that it is not envy of the laurels won by my beautiful fair-haired sister-in-law--I mean those she will undoubtedly win as a high-born, intellectual, and pious traveler--that induces me also to seek a change of air. If that which I breathe were but conducive to my health, if I could but sleep and wake, laugh and weep like other men and women, I certainly would not stir from the spot. But even my worst enemy could hardly fail to understand that matters can not go on any longer as they are; so I prefer to go. The 'promised land' has long allured me. I should have set out for it before, if I had not had much to expect, to hope, and to wait for, and been hindered by a multitude, as I now see, of very superfluous scruples, which are at least successfully conquered.

"Do you know that since I saw you I have made the acquaintance of your dear wife? A very, very pleasant acquaintance; if I had only made it a few years sooner, it might have been very useful to me. Well, even now it is not too late to rejoice, that you have what you need, the happiness you desire, in such a noble, wise, and loving life companion. Give my kindest remembrances to her. In my incognito I may have behaved strangely. But the idea of assuming it flashed upon me so suddenly, and, with the help of my faithful maid, it was carried so quickly into execution, that I had no time to consider what rôle I should play. So every thing was done on the spur of the moment. To be sure, I had at first a vague idea of proposing that you should accompany me on the great journey. But one glance into your home quickly told me, that you must be happiest there, that your 'promised land' is the room, where your desk and the artist table of your wife stand so quietly and peacefully side by side.

"Farewell, 'dear friend!' I should like to talk with you still longer--to philosophize as we used to call it; but what would be the use? Or has any sage ever given a satisfactory answer to the

question, of how the commandment that the sins of the fathers must be visited on the children, can be made to harmonize with the idea of a just government of the world? Why should a freak of nature, an abnormal creation, be expected to fulfil all the grave normal demands we are justified in making upon ordinary human beings? Or why are we usually punished by the gratification of our wishes, and allowed to perceive what we ought to have desired, only when it cannot be attained?

"A fool, you know, can propound more questions than ten philosophers can answer. Perhaps I shall receive special enlightenment in the 'promised land.' My memory is stored with much that is beautiful; even many a trial that I have experienced in the grey twilight of this strange, cold, inhospitable world, was not borne wholly without recompense. I would not give up even my sorrows, for the dull happiness of commonplace wiseacres, who in their limited sphere think all things perfectly natural and cling closely to their clod.

"Farewell, my dear friend. Let me hope that you will always wherever I may be, remember me with as much sympathy as the great and pure happiness you enjoy will allow, and that you will wish a pleasant journey to

"TOINETTE."

CHAPTER X.

Two winters and two summers have passed since the evening when the honeymoon happiness of the newly united pair was so deeply shadowed. The blow, however, left very different traces on each. While Edwin, after the first sudden pang, almost felt a satisfaction in knowing that the sad confusion of this noble life was ended by a heroic death, Leah was assailed by a strange melancholy, which caused her constantly to reflect whether she herself was not partly to blame for this terrible death. If she had not stood between them, if, in that first and only interview, she had treated the well known stranger differently,--! And again, even if the living woman would have had no further power over Edwin's heart, how the image of this wonderful creature, who had turned away from a lost life with such calm dignity now transfigured by death, must haunt his memory and overshadow every bodily form. Then a secret pride rebelled against the thought, that this voluntary departure might have been a favor bestowed upon, a sacrifice made for *her*, as if the generous Toinette had said to herself: "so long as I breathe, this woman cannot be sure of her happiness and peace; one of us must step aside."

She carefully concealed this restless succession of thoughts from Edwin, and as his profession and the now steady labor on his book gave him enough to do, he did not continually watch Leah, and attributed certain dark moods, which did not wholly escape his notice, to her changed condition and the anxiety natural to one about for the first time to become a mother. In fact, the fulfilment of this most ardent wish appeared to instantly transform her nature, and when the child lay in its cradle, all shadows of the past seemed driven from the house by perpetual sunlight. Thus a second year passed away.

When we again meet our friends it is once more vacation; but this time we do not find them among mountains and valleys, or within the cosy precincts of their new home. Leah, with pardonable maternal pride, unable to resist her own desires and the pressing invitation of her parents, has taken her rosy little girl, "who is already so sensible and gives no trouble at all," with her to Berlin. They arrived yesterday evening at the pretty little house in the Thiergarten suburb, where papa König, since he left the lagune, has built his modest but comfortable nest. Here, amid the green trees and under the care of his faithful companion, the old gentleman has fairly blossomed again, and the pleasure of embracing his daughter and grandchild has even made him strip off the chains, with which in the shape of cloths, bandages, and felt shoes, the gout usually makes his feet helpless. He came running up to the carriage, far in advance of his much more active and still charming wife, and would not be prevented from carrying the sleeping infant, with all its pillows and wrappings through the garden into the house, and then the rest of the day ran up and down stairs unweariedly, to ask for the hundredth time if the children were comfortable and wanted nothing, though his clever wife had provided every thing in the most loving manner. "Oh! it is so pleasant to come home again," Leah exclaimed, her eyes full of tears, and with grateful affection threw herself into the arms of the new mother, whom she had secretly dreaded to meet.

Edwin was also very gay. Meeting with these excellent people had done him good. But in the depths of his soul there still lingered a gentle melancholy, a quiet depression, which even the following morning, with all its sunlight and the twittering of the birds before the windows, could not dispel. Leah instantly understood his feelings, when, without waiting for the early breakfast,

he prepared to go out.

"Go, dearest," she said. "It must be done. I would accompany you, but the baby is not yet dressed. Remember me to all."

She kissed him and waving her hand, looked after him as he walked through the garden into the park. She knew that he would have no rest, until he had revisited the places around which his dearest memories clustered. He did not, however, as she anticipated, first turn his steps toward the cemetery where Balder reposed. He had not even taken any special interest in adorning the grave or providing a headstone, and when long ago Leah had asked him about the inscription--her father had quietly attended to every thing else--he had looked at her with an almost bewildered expression, and merely replied: "whatever you think best will suit me entirely," and then he had not gone there again. He confessed that his dead never seemed farther from him, than when he was near their graves, where he had never seen them while alive, and that the beloved images there paled to shadows among other shadows. But now, when in the quiet morning sunlight, he wandered across the deserted Thiergarten, it suddenly seemed even in broad daylight, as if a glorified spirit, that wore Balder's features, were walking close beside him, till he closed his eyes in order not to destroy the waking dream. All the events of the past, all the love and pleasure of their young lives together crowded upon his mind, and as he involuntarily stretched out his hand, for one moment he actually again experienced the feeling he had had in former days, when he had gently stroked his brother's soft hair.

Absorbed in these thoughts, he reached the neighborhood where the park stopped and where new streets and houses, which had sprung from the ground as if by magic, reminded him how many years he had been away. He knew that Marquard lived here, nay he even fancied that at one of the lofty windows, supported by caryatides, he recognized a face which reminded him of Adèle.

He turned away, that he might not be recognized. He did not desire to meet old acquaintances this first morning. He soon reached the bank of the Spree, turned to the right, and walked down along the quay, watching the sparkling water. He thought how strange it was, that the only thing in which he perceived no alteration, was that which was constantly moving. While the firm brick and mortar had not resisted the inroads of time, and house after house seemed to have been renovated, the old Spree, on the contrary, showed the same face, the floating houses on it had kept the form and color, and their occupants the costume and customs they had had on the day, when with the little artist, he first made his Canaletto studies.

He knew that he would find new buildings erected over the lagune and on the site of the Venetian palace, and yet something attracted him first to this part of the Schiffbauerdamm. But when he approached the spot and saw every trace of the old scene effaced, a wide gateway in place of the canal, and on the timber yard a tall, sombre building with glittering windows, he stood still, overpowered by a sudden emotion of sadness, and feeling as if he had found, on visiting the spot where he had buried a treasure only a heap of valueless stones. Then he could not help smiling at the vehemence of his feeling. "So it is that we cling to tangible things!" he said to himself. "We may fancy ourselves ever so secure in our idealism, the senses demand their share. What was this wretched old barrack to me! And now, since I can no longer see it with my bodily eyes, I feel as if barbarians had ransacked a temple which contained the most beautiful images and where I had often been disposed to devotion."

He slowly turned toward Friedrichstrasse, intending to go to the house in Dorotheenstrasse, look around the old "tun," and then deliver the messages Reginchen and Franzelius had sent to their mother. They could send no remembrances to the father; the worthy shoemaker was no longer among the living. The last autumn had torn this modest leaf from the tree of humanity, before it showed any signs of withering. The latter part of his life, in which, following Heinrich Mohr's counsel, he had eagerly striven for progress in his own sphere of action and studied the questions relating to the culture of humanity in the closest proximity, had been the most enjoyable and richest of his life. To be sure, he was at first very angry that "mother" could not be induced to accompany him on his journeys of discovery through Berlin. But by degrees he seemed to become reconciled to this obstinacy, nay he confessed to his friends in the society, that the full depths of certain abysses of modern civilization can be measured only when men venture into them "without ladies." As he talked continually about these "abysses," certain wags endeavored to persuade him to deliver a lecture upon them. For a long time he modestly refused, but at last consented, and to the great astonishment of his faithful wife, who saw her husband become an author in his old age, he spent many weeks in filling a few sheets with extremely strange, extraordinarily worded sentences, in which he forgot eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, and even his workshop, but was as happy as a student composing his first love song in honor of a lady, to whom he had never spoken a word. When he delivered this wonderful composition, under the title of "studies of social abysses," before one of the informal meetings, as a sort of rehearsal, he was rewarded for his trouble by great and universal merriment, a form of applause, which as he had scattered through it the spice of a few puns and anecdotes, seemed very flattering. To be sure, the president, for very plausible reasons, did not think the subject of the lecture judicious for a large audience, but thanked the assiduous shoe-maker in the warmest manner for the interesting communication, so that the old man, in an exalted mood which he had never experienced before, ordered champagne, and broke the neck of more than one bottle to the welfare of progress and the education of the people.

The following morning he was found dead in his bed from a stroke of apoplexy, a triumphant smile still resting on his lips, which seemed to ask the survivors whether his being so suddenly snatched away, when a wider influence seemed about to be allotted to him, might not perhaps have been destined to show that he possessed more than mediocre ability.

But Edwin was not thinking of this worthy friend, as he walked down the long street, and plucking up his courage, turned the corner. Here the narrow little house with the steep roof and bright flesh colored paint had formerly appeared at a distance. To-day--what has happened, that his eyes at first failed to distinguish it? Had it been unwilling to outlast its old master? No, it was still standing in its place, but its appearance was completely transformed. The cheerful pink paint, which contrasted too strongly with the feelings of its present owner, had disappeared under a gloomy stone grey, with black stripes, so that it seemed to be in mourning for its old master. The sign over the shop door had been altered also, for a melancholy change had taken place in the firm, whose name now read as follows: "Gottfried Feyertag's Widow & Co.," which appendix of course meant none other than George, the head journeyman.

All the windows on the first floor were wide open. In former days such a thing had never been known to happen even in midsummer. But the little old couple had left this peaceful dwelling several years ago, to occupy that still more quiet last lodging, where protected from every draught of air, we rest on our earthly laurels. Edwin had scarcely exchanged a dozen words with these fellow lodgers, yet he now felt as if they too had been a necessary part of his life, and that not to find them again would be a real sorrow.

He approached the house with hesitating feet, ascended the few door steps and went into the entry. Through the glass panes of the inner door he could look into the shop, where Madame Feyertag, completely attired in black with a large crêpe cap, sat in the corner behind the show case, sewing. He could not make up his mind to enter and deliver Reginchen's message; an iron band seemed to compress his chest, he feared that he should be unable to control his words. He glided cautiously past with noiseless steps and opened the door leading into the courtyard. He had intended to go up to the tun, an uncontrollable longing drew him toward the old room. Every thing here was the same; the bare, grey back building, the arbor overgrown with bean vines, the shade loving plants, the acacia tree, which it is true was now wholly dead, and did not even put forth one puny leaf--but what was that lying among the dry branches like a little heap of last winter's snow? A cat? Was it she herself, Balder's old friend, sunning her weary limbs on this lofty perch, or was it a descendant, which bore such a striking resemblance to its ancestress? He could not decide, his eyes grew dim with tears and his feet seemed paralysed; in spite of his longing, he could not cross the courtyard and mount the steep stairs. So he stood leaning against the door post with closed eyes. Just at that moment voices became audible in the workshop, and starting as if he feared to be caught here like a thief, he tore himself away and with a beating heart fled back into the street.

For a long time he walked on like a drunken man. He took no heed of the people who passed by, the glittering shops, the throng of carriages, the motley stir and bustle of life around him. But by degrees the painful agitation of his soul subsided, isolated words recurred to his mind involuntarily blended together, before he remembered that they composed an old song of Balder's, which suddenly echoed from the depths of his memory and soothed him with its mysterious magic:

Soul how thou roamest!
On wings of the wind,
Through high and through low,
Thy way thou dost find.

Though thou art poor,
What riches are thine!
Ceaselessly restless
What calmness divine!

Free above all,
Close, close thou art bound;
Soul, say, where hast thou
Thy resting place found?

Among stars and suns,
Thy wing circleth wide,
Yet with rapture,
Mid violet beds doth abide.

Where the lightning is cradled
Thy home thou hast made;
To the cloud's ample dwelling
As well hast thou strayed.

Yet in narrowest circle,
By joy art possessed,

And dost tenderly, timidly
Pensively rest.

As the ivy that creepeth
By lowly abodes,
On a thousand weak tendrils
Thou climb'st to the Gods.

Where memory glancing
The cleft ruins through,
As the sun to the vine
Giveth warm life anew.

Murmuring the last words aloud just as he turned into the Unter den Linden, he suddenly felt his arm seized, and turning saw a face which had been far from his thoughts.

The old Livonian baron, the enthusiastic connoisseur and friend of art, who had formerly helped the worthy zaunkönig to his short-lived dignity of court painter, stood before him wearing an expression of the greatest delight.

"Well," he cried, shaking Edwin's hand with boyish impetuosity, "this is what I call 'talking of a wolf and seeing the tip of his tail.' Only yesterday evening I was speaking of you for at least two hours, first condemning and then defending you when others undertook to condemn; and to-day, my dear fellow, you appear before me just as I was considering whether I should go to your father-in-law, to get your address; you see I wanted to write to you. I don't know how the worthy Herr Zaunkönig feels toward me, since that stupid piece of business; for gloriously as he behaved in the matter, just as I expected him to do, I was at any rate mixed up in it, and the wager--"

"You ought to know him better, my dear Baron," said Edwin, interrupting the torrent of words. "True, he is by no means such a weak dove as not to have been very much enraged against your prince at the first moment of discovery, but it was less from offended personal dignity, than indignation at the cold blooded frivolity, with which such noble Mæcenas' treat an insignificant artist. But then he grew quiet and thoughtful, collected his studies and the few pictures he had finished, and spread them before him. When I asked what he was doing, he replied: 'I am disgusting myself with my work. Let us be just: these things have emanated from an aberration of the artistic instinct.' The next day they had disappeared, and as I afterwards learned, were nailed up in a chest, loaded with brick-bats, and sunk in the lagune."

"Oh! oh! oh!" said the old man, shaking his head, "then we have really deprived him of the greatest pleasure of his life. I shall never look at the Luini I won from the prince, without a pang of conscience. Oh! oh!"

"Cheer up, dear Baron. You have only helped to prove his favorite saying, that to those who love God all things are for the best. His passion for art really emerged again, rejuvenated and vigorous, from the lagune where he had expected to bury it. Since he has lived in the suburbs, where in spite of his new and easier circumstances, he continues his old modest mode of life and industriously pursues his engraving, he has, it is true, made no attempt to return to his former 'specialty.' He says that now, when he daily sees the green fields, he perceives for the first time the full extent of the frivolous boldness, with which he daubed these wonders of God on his miserable canvass. To make amends, since what is denied always charms the soul and excites the fancy, he has now set up a new kind of *genre* picture; he paints views of the Spree and the green ditches, bridges, and steps leading to the water, not without skill, as it seems to me. You may suppose that he is more successful in reproducing the straight lines and grey tone, than the succulent weeds and bright sky of his former zaunkönigs. If you would come out to his house--he has just finished something--"

"*Col sommo piacere!* With the greatest pleasure. You take a hundred pound weight from my heart. But what was I going to say--what were we talking about just now? My head is growing old, friend, and nothing makes one more confused and forgetful, than intercourse with silent pictures."

"You were saying that you had been scolding about me yesterday for two hours. I am curious--"

"Yes, that was it: your book was the subject of conversation, everybody is talking about it now, so that I was at last ashamed of not having read it, though I don't exactly feel compelled to be familiar with all the new books that are talked about, not even those written by my friends. But, my dear fellow, what have you done?"

"Nothing very bad, I hope. At the worst only written a bad book."

"Something far worse, my friend--a good book, a book which in all main points is perfectly right and has the great majority of thinking men on its side. You laugh. Oh! these young people! You think it is easy to be in the right in this world. As if there could be any thing more repulsive, uncomfortable, and contrary to police regulations, than a person who looks neither to the right

nor left, knows neither caution nor discretion, but calls things by their right names. Such a fool-hardy man had better go into the Theban wilderness and deliver his wisdom to the stones; but if he supposes that he will be tolerated in a society founded upon mutual cloaking and palliation of faults, feigned respect for rotten rubbish, and the superficial varnish coated over old cracks, where people do not even have the courage to lay aside the humbug of false names in the catalogues of museums, let alone calling other idols by their right names--you see, my friend, gall enters into the construction of my sentences, and I no longer know how I began. But this I do know, that if you acknowledge the authorship of such books, you will never have any prospect of making a career in our dear native land, and I sincerely regret it."

"I thank you for this regret," replied Edwin with a quiet smile. "Nay I even share it in a certain sense, though not on my own account! I am happy where I am, and offices and titles have as little charm for me, as a heap of money, which at any rate if I were a little more careful, I might procure by lecturing or writing. But in the interest of public welfare, the health and morality of our political life, I can only think with regret how far we still are, from possessing the much praised and much scouted freedom of thought. So long as the patriarchal delusion still exists, that the state has the right or even the duty, of watching over the theoretical opinions of its members, while only their acts belong to its tribunal, we shall not emerge from a dreamy and trifling minority. And this rests upon a deeper error, against which my whole book is directed, although it apparently turns upon an objectless psychological problem--the error that metaphysics and morality are closely connected, nay are in a constant interchange of influence."

"Freedom of thought!" cried the eager old gentleman, standing still and baring his shingling bald head, as if his hat heated it, "as if it would be of any special consequence to you to obtain, this miserable acquisition, which you possess as much as the Spaniards themselves did in the darkest ages. What you want and will not obtain for a long time, is *freedom to teach*, freedom to transplant your thoughts into other heads, not merely by books, which will only be read by a small number, but by lectures in public halls, just as your colleague instils into his hearers the condensed milk of piety carefully tested and proved harmless. But you are wrong, my dear friend, in asking this, and that is why I blamed you, because I regret that by a premature expression of your secret thoughts, you render your own work difficult, if not impossible. Dear me, the field of philosophy is so terribly barren, people would be glad to foster and cherish a new power; but if it deals such blows to the right and left, loosens with its roots the soil on which tame kitchen vegetables have hitherto peacefully slept their nourishing plant-sleep--you have too clear a head, dear Herr Doctor, not to understand that the time has not yet come when we can need you among us."

"Not yet *come*, certainly, but it is near, nearer perhaps than those in high places suppose. Or how long do you think it will be, before shame at the incompleteness and artificially fostered self-deception, which is palliated by pedagogical considerations, will flush the faces of the leaders of the public, and compel them to openly acknowledge what has long since been secretly perceived and recognized? It is true that hitherto we have had other tasks to solve, questions of existence, of defence in peril, and then of our power and honor. But after we have advanced tolerably far in these, do you suppose that we, who have to support our moral dignity before other nations, will continue in this traditional track, and thereby allow the noblest intellectual possessions to be endangered? For all the canonized myths and metaphysical legends have also produced an ethical effect, not according to the measure of their truth, but by the degree of veracity in the author and hearer of the composition. And must the degree of veracity no longer be the standard of the allowableness and moral power of a lesson? Or is it not a great immorality, out of mere external considerations relating to the political education of children, to give us for the corner stone of our happiness, fairy tales and legends, which all cultivated minds believe as little, as the Greeks of Aristotle's time credited the fables of Homer and Hesiod. Of course we must not pour away the dirty water before we have fresh; but who will answer for it that we shall ever draw from the deepest, purest fountain? And who would not quench his thirst with the wild fruit that grows by the way side, rather than drink the water, which in spite of all filtering, has constantly become darker and more slimy? Oh! my dear friend, I see in your face the reply you wish to make, that the great masses are not so particular, and are satisfied with the foul stream in which weak minded theologians have washed their dirty linen for centuries, while we educated people could support ourselves on the fruits that philosophy and natural philosophy pluck from the tree of knowledge. I, too, once held the same aristocratic notions. But I can no longer reconcile myself to them. For--let alone every thing else--I do not believe that it would be dangerous for the masses, if they were educated to the truth instead of to a conventional fable, such as our histories of dogmas offer them. But even if certain village and city churches should become still more empty, than is now the case in consequence of the deadness and constantly decreasing reality in our forms of worship, has the state duties to perform only toward the uneducated? Can it, without danger, lose in the eyes of the educated that credit for veracity, which it might so easily maintain, if it did not take sides, and venture to decide questions of conscience by state institutions? Has it not also responsibilities toward the great strata *between* the educated and the simple people, those who will be strengthened and almost confirmed in their own frivolity by all these partly known, partly unknown things? The evil of shallowness and secularization in its worst sense existing in these circles, the preponderance of thoughtless pleasure, the whole despicable materialism of our times--do you really suppose, my friend, that all this is to be remedied by throwing up a dam composed of the crumbling ruins of a faith, which for centuries the elements have shaken, disintegrated, and scarcely left one stone upon another? I cannot believe it, even if I desired to do so, and the patching and mending of the tottering structure

seems to me more wicked and dangerous, than erecting a new dam--or at least measuring and marking out the foundations, on which our children's children may put up the structure."

"Our children's children already? Oh! you sanguine mortal!"

"You are right. Who can tell? And yet how quickly intellectual transitions take place now, in comparison with former days, when the intercourse between minds was effected with so much greater difficulty! Has a century elapsed since the time when Lessing's Nathan was a fact, a challenge, a single burning need of that great heart, until now, when his timid gospel of toleration for all religions has become a commonplace, and honest toleration even of the irreligious ripened to the silent need of countless numbers?"

"I hope your book will be introduced into German seminaries, but at any rate Nathan will be turned into flesh and blood, so that a Jew may be permitted, without hesitation, to read logic and metaphysics before grown men."

"I hope the latter also," replied Edwin smiling. "The former would be a sad token of the small progress science had made in a hundred years. One of us will then I hope be a conquered station."

"No," exclaimed the old man with a solemnity which moved Edwin strangely, and seizing both his companion's hands, while he looked him steadily in the eyes, he continued: "I must tell you here, though it probably will not signify much from an old enthusiast in art, in the new building of which you speak, even though it too, after thousands of years will become mouldy and tottering, and have to be rebuilt, the foundation will remain, and among other mementoes of these days, which will deserve to be placed in the corner stone, your book will find a place. I bought it and wrote on the first page avers of the old poet enlightened by divine frenzy the poet Holderlin:

"With shield divine, oh genius of the brave,
Desert not innocence, but swift to save
Ever be nigh; inspire and win to thee
The heart of youth with joy of victory.
Arouse, conquer, punish; do not delay,
The majesty of truth secure alway.
Till time's mysterious cradle shall release,
The child of Heaven, eternal peace.

"And may this peace be with you, my dear fellow. Farewell."

He embraced his silent companion and in spite of the throng of pedestrians, kissed him on both cheeks, then hastily turned the nearest street corner and vanished from Edwin's sight.

LAST CHAPTER.

This conversation echoed in Edwin's soul like a strong and solemn harmony, as he continued his walk along the Unter den Linden.

But he was not to be permitted to return to his family in this exalted mood. As he approached the Brandenburg Gate, he saw a light elegant carriage, drawn by two beautiful horses, pass through the central portal and turn up the Unter den Linden. A gentleman with a carefully trimmed beard, and regular, but shallow, vacant features, drove the fiery animals, occasionally addressing a word to the young lady, who sat beside him, leaning negligently back and casting smiling glances at the passers by from under her pink parasol. Edwin had just noticed her face in a photographer's show window, and beneath it the name of a well known ballet dancer. Behind this couple, with his arms folded across his breast in true jockey insolence, sat a tall, fair lad, in a green livery embroidered with silver, with a stiff shirt collar reaching to his ears, and the round glassy eyes in his beardless, boyish face, were upturned with a saucy, yet wearied expression to the sky.

Neither of the three had noticed the unpretending pedestrian, who remained rooted to the spot, as if he could not believe his eyes. A feeling of repugnance, such as one experiences when rudely awakened from enthusiastic dreams to a prosaic reality, where hopeless commonplace or shallow every day life prevails or occupies the largest place, overpowered Edwin and accompanied him as he walked through the shady paths of the Thiergarten to his father-in-law's house. Even there the painful impression did not instantly leave him. He was grave and silent, and as the others knew, or fancied they knew, where he had been that morning, they respected

his feelings and did not trouble him with questions.

In the afternoon he asked Leah to drive with him. She was unwilling to leave the child, though it was well taken care of by the grandmother and nurse, for in spite of her philosophy, she was the most anxious and unreasonably careful of mothers. But she felt that Edwin needed to be alone with her, and instantly prepared to accompany him.

They had driven quite a distance in the direction of Charlottenburg, when he first broke the silence, and holding her hand in his, and now and then gently pressing it, he told her the events and experiences of his morning. When he mentioned his meeting with the count, he said: "I do not understand why it moved me so deeply. To return from the pilgrimage to the 'Promised Land,' and then fill the empty seat in the carriage with such a creature--many of the most trivial natures could not bring their hearts to it. But I did not know him, was not aware what a 'perfect gentleman' he was, to be able to console himself by 'noble passions' for what he might have suffered in the higher emotions. And yet I instantly felt as if I owed her memory a silent ceremonial, to conciliate her insulted shade. The Catholics have the clever invention of their silent masses. We must help ourselves in our own way."

Meantime having reached the entrance to the park of Charlottenburg they alighted from the carriage. Silence surrounded them; the atmosphere was balmy, and the earth bathed in sunshine; not a leaf was stirring, and scarce a bubble rose to the surface of the carp pond as a frog leaped croaking from the hot grass into the water. There are hours when even nature seems to be gazing at her reflection, conscious of her beauty, as if in a dream.

The two, who walked arm in arm through the shaded avenue, felt the magic of the midsummer noon in their own souls, which grew more and more agitated, as if secret fountains were welling up within them without overflowing at their lips. Thus silent, they at last reached the mausoleum, which in the bright sunlight, looked specially grave and solemn under the dark trees.

"I wanted to come here," said Edwin. "It was on this spot that she said to me: 'There is but one real nobility: to be true to ourselves.' The poor, brave, free-born heart--it has been true to its nobility, faithful unto death. Let us enter the little temple, where beauty is high priestess and conquers death by perpetuating the forms of noble humanity. But we know that for that, marble is not necessary; for have not we in our grief, engraved the transfigured image indelibly upon our hearts till we ourselves shall enter eternity?"

They passed into the silent chamber. When, after a considerable lapse of time, they again emerged into the open air, the eyes of both were dim with tears. They paused in the next deserted avenue, and as they silently embraced each other, Leah gave free course to her grief.

"Weep your sorrow away, love," said Edwin at last. "Ought we to feel ashamed of the best gift mother nature has bestowed upon us? With what strange foresight she has arranged that the fountain of tears flows whenever the greatest joys or the bitterest sorrows fall upon our hearts! And is it not the same with all that is tragic in human destiny? Are not the weal and woe of all lives inseparably interwoven and blended in supreme moments into an emotion which lifts us above our petty selves, and makes us smile at grief when we are too awed by its solemnity to rejoice? Oh! dearest, a world in which we are permitted to achieve such a triumph over fate, and not only over our own fate but over that of our loved ones also, in which the tragic element is glorified by a sense of beauty, and in the midst of our horror of death we are thrilled with the comprehension of the highest earthly bliss, till only tears can relieve our hearts--such a world is not utterly cheerless. Come! Let us return to life, to our child, to our friends. What does my old friend Catullus say?"

"Beloved, let us live and love!"

END.

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FOOTNOTES

[Footnote 1](#): The word *könig* signifies "king."

[Footnote 2](#): The German word for "fence" is *zaun*, and *zaun-könig* means "hedge-sparrow."--Tr.

[Footnote 3](#): Commission paid a person who arranges marriages. Tr.

[Footnote 4](#): Fee paid a marriage broker.

[Footnote 5](#): The equivalent for "mitten." Tr.

[Footnote 6](#): Epsom salts.

[Footnote 7](#): Truffles are found by means of dogs which have an unusually keen scent.

[Footnote 8](#): A less ceremonious form of the pronoun you.

[Footnote 9](#): The German phrase for being hen-pecked.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD ***

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