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(of 2), by Joseph Victor von Scheffel**

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**COLLECTION**  
**OF**  
**GERMAN AUTHORS.**

**VOL. 21.**

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**EKKEHARD BY JOSEPH VICTOR SCHEFFEL.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

# **EKKEHARD.**

**A TALE OF THE TENTH CENTURY**

**BY**

**JOSEPH VICTOR SCHEFFEL.**

*Authorized Edition.*

**TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN**

**BY**

**SOFIE DELFFS.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.--VOL. I.**

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**TO HER DEAR FRIEND**

**MRS. EMILY CHAMIER**

**THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THIS BOOK**

**IS DEDICATED**

**BY**

**THE TRANSLATOR.**

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### **PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.**

Heine, that sharp-witted and unsparing critic once said that the relation of translator to author, were about the same as that of a monkey to a human being,--while Goëthe, a man of larger mind and more harmonious nature, compared the translator to a prophet, quoting a verse from the Koran which says: "God gives a prophet to every nation in its own tongue."--For sixteen years the following "Tale,"--which since its first appearance has made and held its place, not only in the esteem, but in the hearts of the German reading public, and which has already been translated into several languages,--has waited in vain for an *English "prophet"* to render it into that tongue, which being that most akin to the German language, is therefore, also the one best fitted for this purpose. It is true that the peculiarity of the style, which in the original is so wonderfully adapted to the matter it treats, as well as the number of old German words, might have proved a not inconsiderable difficulty for any but a German translator, and therefore, it is to be hoped, that the venturesome attempt of a German girl to render the book into English, may be excused. It need hardly be said, that with regard to expression she may often have need to appeal to the indulgence of the reader, but perhaps these defects may at least in some degree be compensated, by the strict, truthful adherence to the original, and further it should be observed that great care has been taken in choosing words of Saxon derivation whenever they were to be had. Her love for the book, and her admiration for the writer thereof, have made her spare no trouble in this undertaking, and if she could but hope to win some friends to "Ekkehard" in an English dress, she would deem herself amply repaid for the many hours spent over this work. May her critics "take all in all," and treat her *fairly!*

*Heidelberg, December, 1871.*

### **THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.**

This book was written with the firm belief that neither history nor poetry will lose anything, by forming a close alliance, and uniting their strength by working together.

For the last thirty years or so, the bequest of our ancestors has been the subject of universal investigation. A swarm of busy moles have undermined the ground of the middle-ages in all directions, and produced by their untiring industry such a quantity of old material, as to surprise even the collectors themselves. A whole literature, beautiful and perfect in itself; an abundance of monuments of the plastic art; a well organized political and social life, lies extended before our eyes. And yet all the labour and goodwill spent on this subject, has hardly succeeded in spreading to wider circles, pleasure and interest in this newly won historical knowledge. The numberless volumes stand quietly on the shelves of our libraries. Here and there, well-to-do spiders have begun to spin their cobwebs, and the pitiless, all-covering dust has come too, so that the thought is hardly improbable, that all this old German splendour, but just conjured back into life, may one

morning at cockcrow fade away and be buried in the dust and mouldering rubbish of the Past,--like to that weird cloister by the lake, the existence of which is only betrayed by the faint low tinkle of the bell, deep, deep under the waters.

This is not the place to examine how far this result is attributable to the ways and methods of our scientific men.

The accumulation of antiquarian lore, as well as the accumulation of gold, may become a passion, which collects and scrapes together for the sake and pleasure of scraping; quite forgetting that the metal which has been won, needs to be purified, remelted, and put to use. For else, what do we attain by it? Merely the being for ever confined within the narrow limits of the rough material; an equal valuation of the unimportant and the important; an unwillingness ever to finish and conclude anything, because here and there some scrap might still be added, which would lend a new significance to the subject;--and finally a literature *of* scholars *for* scholars, which the majority of the nation passes by with indifference and while looking up at the blue sky feel intensely grateful to their Creator, that *they* need read nothing of it.--

The writer of this book,--in the sunny days of his youth,--once took a ramble with some friends through the Roman Campagna. There, they lit on the remains of an old monument, and amongst other rubbish and fragments, there lay, half hidden by dark green acanthus leaves, a heap of mosaic stones, which, united into a fine picture with graceful ornaments, had formerly adorned the floor of a grave. Then, there arose a lively discussion as to what all the dispersed square little stones might have represented, when they were still united. One, a student of archæology, took up some of the pieces, to examine whether they were black or white marble. A second who occupied himself with historical studies, talked very learnedly about ancient sepulchres;--meanwhile a third had quietly sat down on the old wall, taken out his sketch-book and drawn a fine chariot with four prancing steeds, and charioteers, and around it some handsome Ionic ornaments. He had discovered in a corner of the floor, some insignificant remains of the old picture; horses feet and fragments of a chariot wheel, and at once the whole design stood clearly before his mind, and he dashed it down with a few bold strokes, whilst the others dealt in words merely ...

This little incident may serve to throw some light on the question, how one can work with success, at the historical resurrection of the Past. Surely, this can be done then only, when to a creative, reproducing imagination are given its full rights; when he who digs out the old bodies, breathes upon them the breath of a living soul, so that they may rise and walk about, like the resuscitated dead.

In this sense, the historical novel may become what epic poetry was in the time of the blooming youth of the nations,--a piece of national history, in the conception of the artist, who within a certain space, shows us a series of distinctly-drawn, clearly coloured figures, in whose individual lives, strivings and sufferings, the life and substance of the time in which they lived, is reflected as in a mirror.

Erected on the basis of historical studies, and embracing the beautiful and important part of an epoch, the historical novel may well claim to be the twin brother of history; and those who, shrugging their shoulders are inclined to reject the former as the production of an arbitrary and falsifying caprice, will please to remember, that history as it is generally written, is also but a traditional conglomeration of the true and the false, which merely by its greater clumsiness is prevented from filling up the occasional gaps, as the more graceful poesy can do.

If all the signs are not deceiving us, our present time is in a peculiar state of transition.

In all branches of knowledge, the perception is gaining ground, how intensely our thinking and feeling has been damaged by the supremacy of the Abstract and of Phraseology. Here and there, efforts are being made, to return from dry, colourless, hyperbolical abstractions, to the tangible, living, glowing Concrete; from idle self-contemplation, into close relation with life and the present, and from hackneyed formulas and patterns, to an investigating analysis of nature, and a creative productivity, instead of mere barren criticism.

Who knows, but our grandchildren may yet live to see the day, when people will speak of many a former colossus of science, with the same smiling veneration, as of the remains of a gigantic antediluvian animal; and when one may avow, without fear of being cried down as a barbarian, that in a jug of good old wine, there is as much wisdom, as in many a voluminous production of dry dialectics.

To the restitution of a serene, unbiassed view of things, adorned by poetry, the following work would wish to contribute; taking its materials out of our German Past.

Amongst the vast collection of valuable matter, enclosed in the big folios of the "*Monumenta Germaniae*" by Pertz, are the tales of the monasteries in St. Gall, which monk Ratpert began, and Ekkehard the younger (called also the fourth, to distinguish him, from three other members of the cloister, bearing the same name), continued till the end of the 10th century.

Whoever has painfully tracked his weary road, through the many unsatisfactory dry-as-dust chronicles of other monasteries, will linger with real pleasure and inward delight, over these last

named annals. There, one finds, in spite of manifold prejudices and awkwardnesses, an abundance of graceful and interesting tales, taken from accounts of eye and ear witnesses. Persons and circumstances are drawn with rough, but distinct lineaments, whilst a sort of unconscious poetry,--a thoroughly honest and genuine view of life and the world, as well as a naïve freshness and originality, puts a stamp of truth and genuineness on everything that is told; even when persons and events are not strictly subjected to the laws of time; and when a very tangible anachronism, causes very slight uneasiness to the chronicler.

Quite unintentionally, these sketches lead one far beyond the boundaries of the cloister-walls; painting the life and ways, the education and customs of the *Allemannic* country,<sup>[1]</sup> as it then was, with all the fidelity of a picture painted from nature. Times were pleasant then in the south-western part of Germany, and everyone who prefers a striving and healthy, though rough and imperfect strength, to a certain varnished finish, will feel much sympathy with them. The beginning of church and state,--whilst a considerable roughness, tempered by much natural kindness, still clung to the people in general; the feudal spirit, so pernicious to all later development, as yet harmless, in its first stage of existence; no supercilious, overbearing knighthood, and wanton ignorant priesthood as yet,--but rough, plainspoken, honest fellows, whose social intercourse frequently consisted in an extended system of verbal and real injuries, but who, under their coarse husk, hid an excellent kernel; susceptible of all good and noble things. Scholars, who in the morning translate Aristotle into German, and go wolf-hunting in the evening; noble ladies, full of enthusiasm for the old classics; peasants, in whose memory the old heathen beliefs of their forefathers still exist, unimpaired and side by side with the new christian creed,--in short, everywhere primitive but vigorous life, and conditions under which one feels inclined without contempt or rational ire, to put up even with sprites and hobgoblins.

In spite of political discord and a certain indifference towards the empire, of which Saxony had become the central point, there was much courage and valour, inspiring even monks in their cells, to exchange the breviary for the sword, in order to resist the Hungarian invasion; and although there were many elements opposed to science, serious study and much enthusiasm for the classics were preserved.

The highly frequented cloister-schools were full of zealous disciples, and the humane principles taught there, remind one of the best times in the 16th century. Besides this, the fine arts began to bud,--some eminent minds rising here and there above the multitude; a general culture of national history, though mostly dressed up in outlandish garments.

No wonder then, that the author of this book, when making some other researches concerning the first stages of the middle-ages, chancing to meet with those chronicles, felt like a man, who after long wanderings through a barren unfertile land, comes suddenly upon a comfortable wayside inn; which, with excellent kitchen and cellar, and a lovely view from the windows, offers all that heart could desire.

So he began to settle down in that cozy nook, and by diligently exploring the surrounding land, to gain the best possible knowledge of the country and people who lived in it.

But the poet meets with a peculiar fate, when trying to acquaint himself with the old Past. Where others, into whose veins nature has instilled some "*aqua fortis*,"--as the result of their labours produce many an abstract theory, and a quantity of instructive deductions,--to him appear a host of fantastic figures, that, at first surrounded by floating mists, become always clearer and clearer; and they look at him with pleading eyes, dance around his couch in midnight hours, and always whisper to him, "give us a living form."

Thus it was here. Out of the old Latin cloister-tales there arose, like rocks out of the water, the towers and walls of the monastery of St. Gall. Scores of grey-headed, venerable friars wandered up and down in the ancient cross-passages; behind the old manuscripts sat those who had once written them; the cloister-pupils played merrily in the courtyard; from the choir rose the solemn chaunts at midnight, and from the tower the clear sound of the bugle announced the approach of visitors. But before all other forms, there arose in dazzling beauty, that noble, haughty Dame, who carried off the youthful master from the quiet and peace of the cloister of St. Gall, to her rocky castle high over the Bodensee, there, to teach and propagate the old classics. The simple account given by the chronicler, of that quiet life, dedicated to the study of Virgil, is in itself a piece of poetry as beautiful and genuine as can be found anywhere.

He, however, who is beset by such apparitions cannot exorcise them otherwise, but by doing their will; trying to condense and fix their fleeting shapes. And not having read in vain in the old stories, how "Notker the stutterer," once treated similar visions, viz. by taking a strong hazel wand and therewith belabouring the spectres, until they revealed unto him their finest songs,--I also took to my arms, the steel-pen, and saying good-bye to the old folios which had been the sources of all these visionary fancies, I betook myself to the ground which had once been trodden by the Duchess Hadwig, and her contemporaries.

There, I sat in the venerable library of St. Gallus; took long rows in little rocking boats over the Bodensee; found a nest for myself under the old linden-tree at the foot of the Hohentwiel, where a worthy old Suabian bailiff has at present charge of the ruins of the ancient fortress, and finally climbed the airy Alpine heights of the Säntis, where the "*Wildkirchlein*" hangs like an eagle's nest over the green valley of Appenzell. There, in the wards of the "*Suabian Sea*," mind

and soul filled with the life of bygone generations; the heart refreshed by warm sunshine and balmy mountain air, I first sketched and then completed the greater part of this story.

That not much has been said therein, which is not founded on conscientious historical studies, can be boldly asserted; though persons and dates have sometimes been dealt with a little freely. The poet, in order to enhance the inward harmony of his work, may occasionally take liberties which would be most blameworthy, if indulged in by the strict historian. And yet the great historian Macaulay himself says: "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history if I can succeed in placing before the English of the 19th century, a true picture of the life of their ancestors."

Following the advice of some competent judges, I have given in an appendix some proofs and references to the sources out of which I have taken my materials, in order to satisfy those, who might otherwise be inclined to treat the subject as a mere fable or idle invention. Those, however, who do not require these same proofs to believe in the genuineness of the matter, are requested not to trouble themselves further with the notes, as they are otherwise of little import, and would be quite superfluous, if this book did not go out into the world in the garb of a novel, which is somewhat open to the suspicion of playing carelessly with facts and truths.<sup>[2]</sup>

The attacks of the critics will be received with great imperturbability. "A tale of the 10th century?" will they exclaim. "Who rideth so late, through night and wind?" And has it not been printed in the last manual of our national literature, in the chapter treating of the national novel: "If we ask which epoch in German history might be best suited to combine the local with the national interests, we must begin by excluding the middle-ages. Even the times of the Hohenstaufen, can only be treated in a lyrical style, as all efforts in other directions, are sure to turn out utter failures."

All the scruples and objections of those who prefer an anatomizing criticism, to a harmless enjoyment, and who spend all their strength in trying to force the German spirit into an Alexandrine or Byzantine form,—these have already been well answered by a literary lady of the tenth century, viz. the venerable nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim, who wrote in happy, self-conscious pleasure in her own work, in the preface to her graceful comedies: "If anybody should derive pleasure, from these my modest productions, I shall be much pleased thereat; but if on the contrary, on account of the objectivity displayed therein, or of the roughness of an imperfect style, it should please no one, then at least I myself shall take pleasure in that which I have created."

*Heidelberg, February, 1855.*

J. V. SCHEFFEL.

## **EKKEHARD.**

### **CHAPTER I.**

#### **Hadwig, the Duchess of Suabia.**

It was almost a thousand years ago. The world knew as yet nothing of gunpowder or the art of printing.

Over the Hegau there hung a gloomy leaden grey sky, corresponding to the mental darkness, which, according to general opinion, oppressed the whole time of the middle ages. From the lake of Constance white mists floated over the meads, covering up the whole country. Even the tower of the new church at Radolfszell was thickly enveloped, but the matinbell had rung merrily through mist and fog like the words of a sensible man, which pierce the cloudy atmosphere, that

fools create.

It is a lovely part of Germany which lies there, between the Blackforest and the Suabian lake. All those who are not too strict and particular with poetical similes, may be reminded of the following words of the poet:

"Ah fair is the Allemannic land  
With its bright transparent sky;  
And fair is its lake, so clear and blue  
Like a bonny maiden's eye;  
Like yellow locks, the corn-clad fields  
Surround this picture fair:  
And to a genuine German face  
This land one may compare."

--though the continuation of this allegory might tempt one to celebrate either of the Hegau mountains, as the prominent feature on the face of this country.

Sternly the summit of the Hohentwiel, with its craggy points and pinnacles rises into the air. Like monuments of the stormy stirring Past of our old mother Earth those steep picturesque mountain-pyramids rise from the plains which were once covered by undulating waves, as the bed of the present lake is now. For the fish and sea-gulls it must have been a memorable day, when the roaring and hissing began in the depths below, and the fiery basaltic masses, made their way, rising out of the very bowels of earth, above the surface of the waters. But that was long, long ago, and the sufferings of those, who were pitilessly annihilated in that mighty revolution, have long been forgotten. Only the hills are there still to tell the weird tale. There they stand, unconnected with their neighbours, solitary and defiant; as those, who with fiery glowing hearts break through the bars and fetters of existing opinions, must always be. Whether they in their inmost heart have still a recollection of the glorious time of their youth, when they greeted this beautiful upper world, for the first time with a jubilant cry, who knows?

At the time when our story begins, the Hohentwiel was crested already by stately towers and walls. This fortress had been held during his lifetime by Sir Burkhard, Duke of Suabia. He had been a valiant knight, and done many a good day's fighting in his time. The enemies of the Emperor, were also his, and so there was always work to do. If everything was quiet in Italy, then the Normans became troublesome, and when these were fairly subjugated, perhaps the Hungarians would make an invasion, or some bishop or mighty earl grew insolent and rebellious, and had to be put down. In this way Sir Burkhard had spent his days more in the saddle than in the easy-chair, and it was not to be wondered at, that he had gained for himself the reputation of great valour and bravery.

In Suabia it was said that he reigned like a true despot; and in far off Saxony the monks wrote down in their chronicles, that he had been an almost "invincible warrior."

Before Sir Burkhard was gathered to his forefathers, he had chosen a spouse for himself, in the person of the young Princess Hadwig, daughter of the Duke of Bavaria. But the evening-glow of a declining life is but ill matched with the light of the morning-star. Such a union is against nature's laws and Dame Hadwig had accepted the old Duke of Suabia, merely to please her father. It is true that she had nursed and tended him well, and held his grey hairs in honour; but when the old man laid himself down to die, grief did not break her heart.

When all was over, she buried him in the vault of his ancestors, erected a monument of grey sandstone to his memory, placed an everburning lamp over his grave, and sometimes, not too often, came down there to pray.

Thus Dame Hadwig lived now all alone in the castle of Hohentwiel. She remained in possession of all the landed property of her husband, with the full rights to do with it what she pleased. Besides this she was lady patroness of the bishopric of Constance and all the cloisters near the lake, and the emperor had given her a bill of feoffment signed and sealed by his own hand, by which the regency of Suabia remained her own, as long as she kept true to her widowhood. The young widow possessed a very aristocratic mind and no ordinary amount of beauty. Her nose however was a trifle short, the lovely lips had a strong tendency to pout, and in her boldly projecting chin, the graceful dimple so becoming to women, was not to be found. All those whose features are thus formed, unite to a clear intellect, a not over tender heart, and their disposition is more severe than charitable. For this reason the Duchess in spite of her soft beautiful complexion, inspired many of her subjects with a sort of trembling awe.--On that misty day mentioned before, the Duchess was standing at one of her chamber-windows, looking out into the distance. She wore a steelgrey undergarment, which fell down in graceful folds on her embroidered sandals; and over this a tightfitting black tunic, reaching to the knees. In the girdle, encircling her waist, there glittered a large precious beryl. Her chestnut brown hair was confined within a net of gold thread, but round her clear forehead some stray curls played unrestrainedly. On a small table of white marble, stood a fantastically shaped vessel of dark green bronze, in which some foreign frankincense was burning, sending its fragrant white little cloudlets up to the ceiling. The walls were covered with many-coloured finely woven tapestry.

There are days when one is dissatisfied with everything and everybody, and if one were suddenly transported into paradise itself, even paradise would not give contentment. At such times the thoughts wander gloomily from this to that subject, not knowing on what to fix themselves,—out of every corner a distorted face seems grinning at us, and he who is gifted with a very fine ear, may even hear the derisive laughter of the goblins. It is a belief in those parts that the universal contrariety of such days, arises from people having stepped out of bed with their left foot foremost; which is held to be in direct opposition to nature.

Under the spell of such a day, the Duchess was labouring just now. She wanted to look out of the window, and a subtle wind blew the mist right into her face, which annoyed her. She began to cough hastily, but no doubt if the whole country had lain before her bathed in sunshine, she would have found fault with that also.

Spazzo the chamberlain had come in meanwhile and stood respectfully waiting near the entrance. He threw a smiling complacent look on his outward equipment, feeling sure to attract his mistress's eye to-day, for he had put on an embroidered shirt of finest linen and a splendid sapphire coloured upper-garment, with purple seams. Everything was made in the latest fashion; and the bishop's tailor at Constance had brought the articles over only the day before.

The wolf-dog of the knight of Friedingen had killed two lambs of the ducal herd; therefore Master Spazzo intended to make his dutiful report and obtain Dame Hadwig's princely opinion, whether he should conclude a peaceful agreement with the dog's master, or whether he were to bring in a suit at the next session of the tribunal, to have him fined and sentenced to pay damages. So he began his well-prepared speech, but before he had got to the end, he saw the duchess make a sign, the meaning of which could not remain unintelligible to a sensible man. She put her forefinger first up to her forehead, and then pointed with it to the door. So the chamberlain perceived that it was left to his own wits, not only to find the best expedient with regard to the lambs,—but also to take himself off as quickly as possible. With a profound bow he withdrew accordingly.

In clear tones Dame Hadwig called out now: "Praxedis!"—and when the person thus named did not instantly make her appearance, she repeated in sharper accents, "Praxedis!"

It was not long before Praxedis with light, graceful steps entered the closet. Praxedis was waiting-maid to the Duchess of Suabia. She was a Greek and a living proof, that the son of the Byzantine Emperor Basilius had once asked the fair Hadwig's hand in marriage. He had made a present of the clever child, well instructed in music and the art of the needle, together with many jewels and precious stones, to the German duke's daughter, and in return had received a refusal. At that time one could give away human beings, as well as buy and sell them. Liberty was not everybody's birthright. But a slavery, such as the Greek child had to endure, in the ducal castle in Suabia, was not a very hard lot.

Praxedis had a small head with pale delicate features; out of which a pair of large dark eyes looked into the world, unspeakably sad one moment and in the next sparkling with merriment. Her hair was arranged over her forehead in heavy braids, like a coronet. She was very beautiful.

"Praxedis, where is the starling?" said Dame Hadwig.

"I will bring it," replied the Greek maid; and she went and fetched the black little fellow, who sat in his cage, with an important impudent air, as if his existence were filling up a vast gap in the universe. The starling had made his fortune at Hadwig's wedding-feast. An old fiddler and juggler had taught him with infinite pains, to repeat a Latin wedding-speech, and great was the merriment, when at the banquet the bird was put on the table, to say his lesson, "A new star has risen on the Suabian firmament, its name is Hadwig. Hail all hail!" and so forth.

But this was not all the knowledge which the starling possessed. Besides these rhymes, he could also recite the Lord's prayer. Now the bird was very obstinate, and had his caprices, as well as the Duchess of Suabia.

On this particular day, the latter must have been thinking of old times, and the starling was to deliver the wedding-speech. The starling, however, had one of his pious moods, and when Praxedis brought him into the chamber he called out solemnly: "Amen!" and when Dame Hadwig gave him a piece of gingerbread, and asked him in coaxing tones: "what was the name of the star on the Suabian firmament, my pretty one?"—he slowly responded: "Lead us not into temptation." But when she whispered to him to brighten his memory: "The star's name is Hadwig, all hail!"—then the starling continuing in his pious strain, said: "And deliver us from evil."—

"What, do birds even become insolent now?" exclaimed Dame Hadwig angrily. "Pussy, where art thou?" and she enticed towards her the black cat, which had long had an evil eye upon the starling, and who crept near softly, but with glittering eyes.

Dame Hadwig opened the cage, and left the bird to its mercy, but the starling, although the sharp claws had got hold of him already, ruffling and tearing his feathers, yet managed to escape, and flew out at the open window.

In a few moments he had become a mere black speck in the mist.



"Well, now really I might as well have kept him in the cage," said Dame Hadwig, "Praxedis, what dost thou think?"

"My mistress is always right whatever she does," replied the Greek maiden.

"Praxedis," continued the Duchess, "go and fetch me my trinkets. I wish to put on a bracelet."

So Praxedis, the everwilling, went away, and returned with the casket of jewels. This casket was made of silver; on it a few figures had been embossed, representing the Saviour as the good Shepherd; St. Peter with the keys and St. Paul with the sword, and around these, manifold leaves and twisted ornaments. Probably it had served for the keeping of relics formerly. Sir Burkhard had once brought it home, but he did not like to speak about it; for he returned at that time from a feud, in which he had vanquished and heavily thrown some bishop of Burgundy.

When the Duchess opened the casket, the rich jewels sparkled and glittered beautifully on their red velvet lining. Looking at such tokens of remembrance, many old memories came floating up to the surface again. Amongst other things there lay also the miniature of the Greek prince Constantine, smooth, pretty and spiritless, it had been painted by the Byzantine master on a background of gold.

"Praxedis," said Dame Hadwig, "how would it have been, if I had given my hand to that yellow-cheeked peak-nosed prince of yours."

"My liege Lady," was the answer, "I am sure that it would have been well."

"Well," continued Dame Hadwig, "tell me something about your own dull home. I should like to know what my entrance into Constantinople would have been like."

"Oh, princess," said Praxedis, "my home is beautiful," and with a melancholy look her dark eyes gazed into the misty distance--"and such a dreary sky at least, would have been spared you on the Marmora sea. Even you would have uttered a cry of surprise, when carried along by the proud galley, past the seven towers, the glittering masses of palaces, cupolas, churches, everything of dazzling white marble from the quarries of Prokonnesos, had first burst on our sight. From the blue waves the stately waterlily, proudly lifts her snowy petals, here a wood of dark cypress trees, there the gigantic cupola of the Hagia Sophia; on one side the long stretched cape of the Golden Horn, and opposite on the Asiatic shore, another magnificent city. And like a golden blue girdle, the sea, freighted with its innumerable ships, encircles this magic sight,--oh, my mistress, even in my dreams far away here in the Suabian land, I cannot realize the splendour of that view. And then, when the sun has sunk down, and the sable night steals over the glittering waves, then everything is bathed in blue Greek fire, in honour of the royal bride. Now we enter the port. The big chain which usually bars it, drops down before the bridal ship. Torches burn on the shore. There stand the emperor's body-guard, the Waragians with their two edged battle-axes, and the blue-eyed Normans; there the patriarch with innumerable priests; everywhere one hears music and shouts of joy, and the imperial prince in the bloom of youth, welcomes his betrothed, and the royal train direct their steps towards the palace of Blacharnae ..."

"And all this splendour I have thrown away," sneered Dame Hadwig. "Praxedis, thy picture is not complete, for on the following day, comes the patriarch, to hold a sharp discourse with the western Christian, and to instruct her in all the heresies, which flourish on the barren, arid soil of your religion, like deadly nightshade and henbane. Then I am instructed what to believe of their monkish pictures and the decrees of the Councils of Chalcedon and Nicaea. After him comes the mistress of the ceremonies, to teach me the laws of etiquette and court-manners; what expression to wear on my face, and how to manage my train; when to prostrate myself before the emperor and when to embrace my mother-in-law. Further, how to treat this favourite with courtesy, and to use this or that monstrous form of speech, in addressing some wonderful personage: 'If it please your Eminence, your Highness, your adorable Greatness!'--Whatever can be called originality and natural strength is nipped in the bud, and my Lord and Master turns out to be a painted doll like the rest. Then perhaps some fine morning the enemy appears before the gates, or the successor is not to the liking of the blues and greens of the Circus; revolution rages through the streets, and the German duke's daughter is put into a convent bereft of her eyesight ... what good does it do her then, that her children were addressed as their Highnesses when still in the cradle? Therefore, Praxedis, I did not go to Constantinople!"

"The emperor is the Master of the universe, and his will is for ever just," said the Greek, "so I have been taught to believe."

"Hast thou ever reflected, that it is a very precious boon, for a man to be his own master?"

"No," said Praxedis.

The turn which the conversation had taken pleased the Duchess.

"What account of me did your Byzantine painter, who was sent to take my likeness, carry home, I wonder?"

The Greek maid seemed not to have heard the question. She had risen from her seat and gone to the window.

"Praxedis," said the Duchess with asperity, "I want an answer."

Thus questioned Praxedis turned round, and faintly smiling said: "that was a pretty long time ago, but Master Michael Thallelaios did not speak over well of you. He told us that he had prepared his finest colours and goldleaves, and that you had been a lovely child, and when brought before him to be painted, that he had felt as if he must do his very utmost, and a thrill of awe had come over him, as when he painted God's holy mother, for the monastery of Athos. But Princess Hadwig had been pleased to distort her eyes; and when he had ventured to raise a modest objection, her Grace put out her tongue, held two openspread hands to her nose, and said in very graceful broken Greek, that this was the right position to be painted in. The imperial court-painter profited by the occasion to express his opinion, about the want of manners and education in German lands, and has vowed never again to try and paint a German Fräulein. And the emperor Basilius on hearing this account growled fiercely through his beard ..."

"Let his Majesty growl, as long as he chooses," said the Duchess, "and pray to Heaven that he may bestow the patience which I then lacked on others. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing a monkey, but according to all that is told about them, by trustworthy men, Master Michael's pedigree must extend to those members of creation."

Meanwhile she had put on the bracelets. It represented two serpents twisted together and kissing each other. On the head of each rested a tiny crown. From the mass of other trinkets, a heavy silver arrow, had got into her hands and it also left its prison-house for a fairer abode. It was drawn through the meshes of the golden threaded net.

As if to try the effect of the ornaments, Dame Hadwig now walked with stately steps through the chamber. Her attitude seemed to challenge admiration, but the hall was empty; even the cat had slunk away. Mirrors there were none on the walls, and as for the furniture, its adaptation to comfort was but small, according to our present views.

Praxedis' thoughts were still busy with the subject just discussed. "My gracious Mistress," said she, "I nevertheless felt very sorry for him."

"Sorry for whom?"

"For the emperor's son. He said that you had appeared to him in a dream, and that all his happiness depended upon you."

"Let the dead rest," said Dame Hadwig testily, "I had rather that you took your guitar and sang me the Greek ditty:

"Constantine thou foolish lad,  
Constantine leave off thy weeping!"

"The lute is broken, and all the strings torn, since my Lady Duchess pleased to ..."

"To throw it at the head of Count Boso of Burgundy," said Dame Hadwig. "That was well done indeed, for who told him to come uninvited to Sir Burkhard's funeral, and to preach to me, as if he were a saint?--So we will have the lute mended, and meanwhile, my Greek treasure, canst thou tell me, why I have donned these glittering ornaments to-day?"

"God is all-knowing," said the Greek maid, "I cannot tell."

After this she was silent. So was Dame Hadwig, and there ensued one of those long significant pauses generally preceding self-knowledge. At last the Duchess said: "Well to say the truth I don't know myself!--and looking dismally at the floor, added: "I believe I did it from ennui. But then the top of the Hohentwiel is but a dreary nest,--especially for a widow. Praxedis, dost thou know a remedy against dullness?"

"I once heard from a very wise preacher" said Praxedis, "that there are several remedies. Sleeping, drinking and travelling--but that the best is fasting and praying."

Then Dame Hadwig rested her head on her lily-white hand, and looking sharply at the quick-witted Greek, she said: "To-morrow we will go on a journey."

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **The Disciples of St. Gallus.**

The next day, the Duchess crossed the Bodensee in the early glow of the morning-sun, accompanied by Praxedis and a numerous train. The lake was beautifully blue; the flags floated in the air, and much fun was going on, on board the ship. And who could be melancholy, when gliding over the clear, crystal waters; past the green shores with their many towers and castles; snowy peaks rising in the distance; and the reflection of the white sails, trembling and breaking in the playful waves?

Nobody knew where the end of the journey was to be. But then they were accustomed to obey without questioning.

When they approached the bay at Rorschach, the Duchess commanded them to land there. So the prow was turned to the shore, and soon after she crossed lightly over the rocking plank and stepped on land. Here the toll-gatherer, who received the duty from all those who travelled to Italy, and the market-master, as well as those who held any official position, came to meet their sovereign; and calling out lustily "Hail Herro!" "Hail Liebo"<sup>[3]</sup> waved big branches of mighty fir-trees over their heads. Graciously returning their salutations, the Duchess walked through the deferential crowd, which fell back on either side, and ordered her chamberlain to distribute some silver coins;--but there was not much time for tarrying. Already the horses which had been secretly sent on before, in the night, stood ready waiting, and when all were in the saddle, Dame Hadwig gave the word of command: "To the holy Gallus." Then her servants looked at each other with wondering eyes, as if asking, "what business can we have there?" But there was not even time for an answer, as the cavalcade was already cantering over the hilly ground towards the monastery itself.

St. Benedict and his disciples knew very well on what places to build their monasteries. Up-hill and down-hill, wherever you find a large building, which like a fortress, commands a whole tract of land, or blocks up the entrance to a valley, or forms the central point of crossing highways, or that lies buried amongst vineyards, famous for their exquisite wines,--there the passing tourist,--until the contrary has been proved to him--may boldly advance the assertion, that the house in question belongs, or rather belonged formerly to the order of St. Benedict, for in our days monasteries become scarcer and inns, more plentiful, which phenomenon may be ascribed to the progress of civilisation.

The Irish saint Gallus, had also chosen a lovely spot, when pining for forest-air he settled down in this Helvetian solitude: In a high mountain-glen, separated by steep hills from the milder shores of the Bodensee, through which many a wild torrent rushed in mad flight, whilst on the other side rose the gigantic rocks of the Alpstein, whose snowcapped peaks disappear in the clouds, there, sheltered by the mountain, the monastery lay cradled at its foot. It was a strange thing for those apostles of Albion and Erin, to extend their missions unto the German continent, but if one examines the matter closely, their merit in doing so, is not so great as it appears at first sight.

"The taste for visiting foreign lands, is so deeply rooted in the minds of Britons, that it cannot be eradicated,"--thus wrote as early as in the times of Charlemagne, a simple, trust-worthy historian. They were simply the predecessors and ancestors of the present British tourists, and might be recognized even at a distance by the foreign, curious shape of their knapsacks. Now and then one of them would settle down for good somewhere, although the honest natives of the soil did not always look with favourable eyes on the intruder. Still their greater pertinacity, the inheritance of all Britons, the art of colonizing and the mystic veneration which all that is foreign, always inspires in the lower classes, made their missionary endeavours rather successful. With other times we have other customs! In the present day the descendants of those saints are making rail-roads for the Swiss, for good Helvetian money.

On the spot near the Steinach where once had stood, the simple cell of the Hibernian hermit, and where he had fought with bears, goblins and water-fairies, a spacious monastery had been built. Above the lower shingle-covered roofs of the dwelling and school-houses, the octagon church-tower rose in all its splendour; granaries, cellars and sheds, abounded also, and even the merry sound of a mill-wheel might be heard, for all the necessaries of life had to be prepared within the precincts of the cloister; so that the monks need not go too far beyond the boundaries, thereby endangering their souls. A strong wall, with heavy well-barred gates, surrounded the whole; less for ornament than for security, since there was many a powerful knight in those times who did not much heed the last commandment, "do not covet thy neighbours goods."

It was past the dinner-hour and a deep calm lay over the valley. The rules of St. Benedict prescribed that at that hour, everybody should seek his couch, and though on that side of the Alps, the terrible heat of an Italian sun which forces one into the arms of Morpheus is never felt, the pious monks nevertheless followed this rule to the letter.

Only the guard on the watch-tower stood upright and faithful as ever, near the little chamber-window, waging war with the innumerable flies, buzzing about him. His name was Romeias, and he was noted for keeping a sharp look out.

Suddenly he heard the tramp of horses' feet in the neighbouring firwood, to which he listened intently. "Eight or ten horsemen," muttered he, and upon this, quickly dropped down the

portcullis from the gate, drew up the little bridge leading over the moat, and then from a nail in the wall took his horn. Finding that some spiders had been weaving their cob-webs in it, he gave it a good rubbing.

At that moment the out-riders of the cavalcade became visible on the outskirts of the pine-wood. When Romeias caught sight of them, he first gave a rub to his forehead and then eyed the approaching party with a very puzzled look. "Womenfolk?" he exclaimed aloud, but in that exclamation there was neither pleasure nor edification.

He seized his horn and blew three times into it, with all his might. They were rough, uncouth notes that he produced, from which one might conclude, that neither the muses nor the graces had kindly surrounded the cradle of Romeias, when he first saw the light of this world at Villingen in the Blackforest.

Anyone who has often been in a wood, must have observed the life in an ant-hill. There, everything is well organized; each ant attending to its business and perfect harmony reigning in all the bustle and movement. Now you put your stick into it frightening the foremost ants, and instantly all is wild confusion, and a disorderly running hither and thither ensues. And all this commotion has been brought about by one single movement of your stick. Now the sounds coming from the horn of Romeias, had just the same disturbing effect in the monastery.

The windows of the great hall in the school-house were filled with young inquisitive faces. Many a lovely dream vanished out of the solitary cells, without ever coming to an end, and many a profound meditation of half-awake thinkers as well. The wicked Sindolt who at this hour used to read the forbidden book of Ovid's "art of love," rolled up hastily the parchment leaves and hid them carefully in his straw mattress.

The Abbot Cralo jumped up from his chair; stretched his arms heavy with sleep, and then dipping his forefinger into a magnificent silver washing-basin, standing before him on a stone table, wetted his eyes to drive away the drowsiness that was still lingering there. After this he limped to the open bow-window, but when he beheld who it was that had occasioned all this disturbance, he was as unpleasantly surprised, as if a walnut had dropt on his head, and exclaimed: "St. Benedict save us! my cousin the Duchess!"

He then quickly adjusted his habit, gave a brush to the scanty tuft of hair which his head still boasted of and that grew upwards like a pine-tree in a sandy desert; put on his golden chain with the cloister seal on it, took his abbot's staff made of the wood of an apple-tree adorned with a richly carved handle of ebony, and then descended into the courtyard.

"Can't you hasten?" called out one of the party outside. Then the abbot commanded the doorkeeper to ask them what they demanded. Romeias obeyed.

A bugle now sounded and the chamberlain Spazzo in the capacity of herald, rode up close to the gate, and called out loudly:

"The Duchess and reigning sovereign of Suabia sends her greeting to St. Gallus. Let the gates be opened to receive her."

The abbot heaved a deep sigh, then climbed up to Romeias' watch-tower and leaning on his staff, he gave his blessing, to those standing outside and spoke thus:

"In the name of St. Gallus, the most unworthy of his followers returns his thanks for the gracious greeting. But his monastery is no Noah's ark into which every species of living thing, pure and impure, male and female may enter. Therefore, although my heart is filled with regret, to sanction your entrance, is an impossibility. On the last day of judgment, the abbot is held responsible for the souls of those entrusted to him. The presence of a woman although the noblest in the land and the frivolous speech of the children of this world, would be too great a temptation for those who are bound, to strive first after the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness. Do not trouble the conscience of the shepherd who anxiously watches over his flock. The canonical laws bar the gate. The gracious Duchess will find at Trojen or Rorshach a house belonging to the monastery, at her entire disposal."

Dame Hadwig who had been sitting on horseback impatiently enough hitherto, now struck her white palfrey with her riding-whip, and reining it so as to make it rear and step backwards, called out laughingly:

"Spare yourself all your fine words, Cousin Cralo, for I will see the cloister."

In doleful accents, the abbot began: "Woe unto him by whom offence cometh. It were better for him ..."

But his warning speech did not come to an end; for Dame Hadwig, entirely changing the tone of her voice, sharply said: "Sir Abbot, the Duchess of Suabia, must see the monastery."

Then the much afflicted man perceived that further contradiction could scarcely be offered without damaging the future prospects of the monastery. Yet his conscience still urged him to opposition.

Whenever a person is in a doubtful position, and is uncertain how to act, it is a great comfort to the vacillating mind, to ask the advice of others; for that expedient lessens the responsibility, and is a solid support to fall back upon.

Therefore Sir Cralo now called down: "As you insist so peremptorily, I must put the case first before the assembled brotherhood. Until then, pray have patience."

He walked back through the courtyard, inwardly wishing, that a second great flood might come, and destroy the highway, on which such unwelcome guests had come. His limping gait was hurried and excited, and it is not to be wondered at, if the chronicler reports of him, that he had fluttered up and down the cloister-walk at that critical moment, like a swallow before a thunder-storm.

Five times the little bell of St. Othmar's chapel, near the great church rang out now; calling the brothers to the reading-room. The solitary cross-passages filled quickly with cowl-bearing figures; all going towards the place of assembly, which, opposite the hexagonal chief-building, was a simple grey hall, under the peristyle of which a graceful fountain shed its waters into a metal basin.

On a raised brick-floor, stood the abbot's marble chair; adorned with two roughly carved lions' heads. With a very pleasurable sensation the eye, from under these dark arches and pillars, looked out on the greenness of the little garden in the inner court. Roses and holly-hocks flourished and bloomed in it; for kind nature even smiles on those, who have turned their backs on her.

The white habits and dark-coloured mantles, contrasted well with the stone grey walls, as one after the other, noiselessly entered. A hasty bend of the head was the mutual greeting. Thus they stood in silent expectation, while the morning sun came slanting in through the narrow windows, lighting up their different faces.

They were tried men; a holy senate, well pleasing in God's sight.

He, with the shrunk figure, and sharp-featured pale face, bearing the traces of much fasting and many night-vigils, was Notker the stutterer. A melancholy smile played about his lips. The long practice of asceticism, had removed his spirit from the present. In former times he had composed very beautiful melodies; but now he had taken a more gloomy tendency and at night was constantly challenging demons to fight with him. In the crypt of the holy Gallus he had lately encountered the devil himself and beaten him so heartily that the latter hid himself in a corner, dismally howling. Envious tongues said, that Notker's melancholy song of "*media vita*" had also a dark origin; as the Evil One had revealed it to him in lieu of ransom, when he lay ignominiously conquered, on the ground, under Notker's strong foot. Close to him, there smiled a right-honest, and good-natured face, framed in by an iron-grey beard. That was the mighty Tutilo, who loved best to sit before the turning-lathe, and carve exquisitely fine images of ivory. Some proofs of his skill even now exist, such as the diptychon with the virgin Mary's ascension, and the bear of St. Gallus. But when his back began to ache, humming an old song, he would leave his work, to go wolf-hunting, or to engage in an honest boxing match, by way of recreation; for he preferred fighting with wicked men, to wrestling with midnight ghosts and often said to his friend Notker: "he who like myself, has imprinted his mark on many a Christian, as well as heathen back, can well afford to do without demons." Then came Ratpert the long tried teacher of the school, who left his historical books most unwillingly, whenever the little bell called him to an assembly. He carried his head somewhat high, yet he and the others, though their characters differed so much, were one heart and one soul; a three-leaved cloister shamrock. Being one of the last who entered the hall, he had to stand near his old antagonist, the evil Sindolt, who pretending not to see him, whispered something to his neighbour, a little man with a face like a shrew-mouse, who, puckering up his lips, tried hard not to smile; for the whispered remark had been: that in the large dictionary by Bishop Salomon, beside the words "*rabulista* signifies someone, who cannot help disputing about everything in the world" some unknown hand, had added, "like Ratpert our great thinker."

Now in the background there towered above the rest, the tall figure of Sintram the famous calligraphist; whose letters were then the wonder of the whole cisalpine world, but the greatest of St. Gallus's disciples, with regard to length of body, were the Scotchmen, who had taken their stand close to the entrance.

Fortegian and Failan, Dubslan and Brendan and so on; inseparable compatriots; secretly grumbling over what they considered the neglect shown them. The sandy-haired Dubduin was also amongst them, who in spite of the heavy iron penitential chain which he wore, had not been elected prior. As a punishment for the biting satirical verses, which he had composed on his German brothers, he had been sentenced to water the dead peach-tree in the garden for three years.

Notker, the physician, had also joined the assembly. He had but lately administered the wondrous remedy for the abbot's lame foot; an ointment made of fish-brain, and wrapping it up, in the fresh skin of a wolf, the warmth of which was to stretch out the contracted sinews. His nickname was peppercorn, on account of the strictness with which he maintained the monastic discipline;--and Wolo who could not bear to look at a woman or a ripe apple, and Engelbert the

founder of the collection of wild beasts, and Gerhard the preacher, and Folkard the painter. Who could name them all, the excellent masters, whose names, when mentioned called up in the next generation of monks, feelings of melancholy and regret, as they confessed, that such men were becoming scarcer everyday?

When all were assembled, the abbot mounted his chair, and the consultation began forthwith. The case however proved to be a very difficult one.

Ratpert spoke first, and demonstrated from history, in what way the Emperor Charlemagne had once been enabled to enter the monastery. "In that instance," he said, "it was presumed that he was a member of the order, as long as he was within our precincts, and all pretended not to know who he was. Not a word was spoken of imperial dignity, or deeds of war, or humble homage. He walked about amongst us like any other monk, and that he was not offended thereby, the letter of protection, which he threw over the wall, when departing well proved."

But in this way, the great difficulty,--the person asking for admittance being a woman,--could not be got rid of. The stricter ones amongst the brotherhood grumbled, and Notker, the peppercorn, said: "She is the widow of that destroyer of countries, and ravager of monasteries, who once carried off our most precious chalice as a war-contribution, saying the derisive words: 'God neither eats nor drinks, so what can he do with golden vessels?' I warn you not to unbar the gate." This advice however did not quite suit the abbot, as he wished to find a compromise. The debate became very stormy, one saying this, the other that. Brother Wolo on hearing that the discussion was about a woman, softly slunk out, and locked himself up in his cell.

At last one of the brothers rose and requested to be heard.

"Speak, Brother Ekkehard!" called out the abbot, and the noisy tumult was hushed, for all liked to hear Ekkehard speak. He was still young in years, of a very handsome figure, and he captivated everybody who looked at him, by his graceful mien and pleasing expression. Besides this he was both wise and eloquent, an excellent counsellor and a most learned scholar. At the cloister-school he taught Virgil, and though the rule prescribed, that none but a wise and hoary man, whose age would guard him from the abuse of his office, and who by his experience would be a fit counsellor for all,--should be made custodian, yet the brothers had agreed that Ekkehard united in himself all the necessary requirements, and consequently had entrusted him with that office.

A scarcely perceptible smile had played around his lips, whilst the others were disputing. He now raised his voice and spoke thus: "The Duchess of Suabia is the monastery's patron, and in such capacity is equal to a man, and as our monastic rules strictly forbid that a woman's foot shall touch the cloister-threshold, she may easily be carried over."

Upon this the faces of the old men brightened up, as if a great load had been taken off their minds. A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly, and the abbot likewise was not insensible to the wise counsel.

"Verily, the Lord often reveals himself, even unto a younger brother! Brother Ekkehard, you are guileless like the dove, and prudent like the serpent. So you shall carry out your own advice. I give you herewith the necessary dispensation." A deep blush overspread Ekkehard's features, but he quietly bowed his head in sign of obedience.

"And what about the female attendants of the Duchess?" asked the abbot. But here the assembly unanimously decided that even the most liberal interpretation of the monastic laws could not grant them admittance. The evil Sindolt proposed that they should meanwhile pay a visit to the recluses on Erin-hill, because when the monastery of St. Gallus was afflicted by a visitation, it was but fair that the pious Wiborad should bear her share of it. After having held a whispering consultation with Gerold the steward about the supper, the abbot descended from his high chair, and accompanied by the brotherhood, went out to meet his guests. These had meanwhile ridden three times round the cloister-walls, banishing the ennui of waiting by merry jests and laughter. The air of "*justus germinavit*," the monotonous hymn in praise of St. Benedict, was struck up by the monks, who were now heard approaching. The heavy gate opened creaking on its hinges, and out came the abbot at the head of the procession of friars, who walking, two and two together, chanted the hymn just mentioned.

Then the abbot gave a sign to stop the singing.

"How do you do, Cousin Cralo?" flippantly cried the Duchess from her saddle. "I have not seen you for an age! Are you still limping?"

Cralo however replied with dignity: "It is better that the shepherd should limp than the flock. Be pleased to hear the monastery's decree." And forthwith he communicated the condition on which she was to enter.

Then Dame Hadwig replied smilingly: "During all the time that I have wielded the sceptre in Suabia, such a proposition has never been made to me. But the laws of your order shall be respected. Which of the brothers have you chosen to carry the Sovereign over the threshold?" but on casting her sparkling eyes over the ranks of the spiritual champions and beholding the dark fanatical face of Notker the stutterer, she whispered to Praxedis: "May be we shall turn back at

once."

"There he stands," said the abbot.

Dame Hadwig following with her eyes the direction which the abbot's forefinger indicated, then beheld Ekkehard, and it was a long gaze, which she cast on his tall handsome figure, and noble countenance, glowing with youth and intellect. "We shall not turn back," was implied by a significant nod to Praxedis, and before the short-necked chamberlain, who in most cases was willing enough but was generally too slow, had dismounted, and approached her palfrey, she had gracefully alighted and approaching the custodian, she said: "Now then, perform your office."

Ekkehard had been trying meanwhile to compose an address, which in faultless Latin was intended to justify the strange liberty he was about to take,--but when she stood before him, proud and commanding, his voice failed him, and the speech remained where it had been conceived,--in his thoughts. Otherwise, however, he had not lost his courage, and so he lifted up his fair burden with his strong arms, who, putting her right arm round his shoulder, seemed not displeased with her novel position.

Cheerfully he thus stepped over the threshold which no woman's foot was allowed to touch; the abbot walking by his side, and the chamberlain and vassals following. The serving ministrants swung their censers gaily into the air, and the monks marching behind in a double file as before, sung the last verses of the unfinished hymn.

It was a wonderful spectacle, such as never occurred, either before or after in the monastery's history, and by those prone to useless moralising many a wise observation might be made, in connexion with the monk's carrying the duchess; on the relation of church and state in those times, and the changes which have occurred since,--but these reflections we leave each one to make for himself.--Natural philosophers affirm, that at the meeting of animate objects, invisible powers begin to act, streaming forth and passing from one to the other, thus creating strange affinities. This theory was proved true at least with regard to the Duchess and her bearer, for whilst she was being rocked in his arms, she thought inwardly: "Indeed, never the hood of St. Benedict has covered a more graceful head than this one," and when Ekkehard put down his burden with shy deference in the cool cross-passage, he was struck by the thought, that the distance from the gate had never appeared so short to him before. "I suppose that you found me very heavy?" said the Duchess.

"My liege lady, you may boldly say of yourself as it has been written, 'my yoke is easy and my burden is light,'" was the reply.

"I should not have thought, that you would turn the words of Scripture into a flattering speech. What is your name?"

"They call me Ekkehard."

"Ekkehard, I thank you," said the Duchess with a graceful wave of her hand.

He stepped back to an oriel window in the cross-passage, and looked out into the little garden. Was it mere chance that the image of St. Christopher now rose before his inward eye? He also considered his burden a light one, when he began to carry the child-stranger through the water, on his strong shoulder; but heavier and heavier the burden weighed on his back, and pressing him downwards into the roaring flood, deep, and deeper still; so that his courage began to fail him, and was well nigh turned into despair?...

The abbot had ordered a magnificent jug to be brought, and taking it in his hand, he went himself to the well, filled it and presenting it to the Duchess said: "It is the duty of the abbot to bring water to strangers for them to wash their hands, as well as their feet and ..."

"We thank you, but we do not want it," said the Duchess, interrupting him, in her most decided accents.

Meanwhile two of the brothers had carried down a box, which now stood open in the passage. Out of this the abbot drew a monk's habit, quite new and said: "Thus I ordain our monastery's mighty patron, a member of our brotherhood, and adorn him, with the holy garb of our order."

Dame Hadwig complied, lightly bending her knee, on receiving the cowl from his hands, and then she put on the garment, which became her well, being ample and falling in rich folds; for the rule says: "The abbot is to keep a strict look-out that the garments shall not be too scanty, but well fitted to their wearers."

The beautiful rosy countenance looked lovely in the brown hood.

"And you must likewise follow the example of your mistress," said the abbot to the followers of the Duchess, upon which the evil Sindolt gleefully assisted Master Spazzo to don the garb.

"Do you know," he whispered into his ear, "what this garment obliges you to? In putting it on, you swear to renounce the evil lusts of this world, and to lead a sober, self-denying and chaste life in future."

Master Spazzo who had already put his right arm into the ample gown, pulled it back hastily and exclaimed with terror, "I protest against this,"--but when Sindolt struck up a loud guffaw, he perceived that things were not quite so serious and said: "Brother, you are a wag."

In a few minutes the vassals were also adorned with the garb of the holy order, but the beards of some of the newly created monks, descended to the girdle, in opposition to the rules, and also they were not quite canonical as to the modest casting down of their eyes.

The abbot led his guests into the church.

## CHAPTER III.

### Wiborad the Recluse.

The one who was least of all delighted, by the arrival of the unexpected guests, was Romeias the gate-keeper. He had a presentiment, what part of the trouble was likely to fall to his share, but he did not yet know the whole of it. Whilst the abbot received the Duchess, Gerold the steward, came up to him and said:

"Romeias prepare to go on an errand. You are to tell the people on the different farms, to send in the fowls that are due, before evening, as they will be wanted at the feast, and besides you are to procure as much game as possible."

This order pleased Romeias well. It was not the first time that he had been to ask for fowls, and yeomen and farmers held him in great respect, as he had a commanding manner of speaking. Hunting was at all times the delight of his heart, and so Romeias took his spear, hung the cross-bow over his shoulder, and was just going to call out a pack of hounds, when Gerold pulled his sleeve and said: "Romeias, one thing more! You are to accompany the duchess' waiting-women, who have been forbidden to enter the monastery, to the Schwarza-Thal, and present them to the pious Wiborad, who is to entertain them as pleasantly as may be, until the evening. And you are to be very civil, Romeias, and I tell you there is a Greek maid amongst them with the darkest eyes imaginable ..."

On hearing this, a deep frown of displeasure darkened Romeias's forehead, and vehemently thrusting his spear to the ground he exclaimed: "I am to accompany womenfolk? That is none of the business of the gate-keeper of St. Gallus's monastery--" but Gerold with a significant nod towards him, continued: "Well, Romeias, you must try to do your best; and have you never heard that watchmen, who have faithfully performed their missions, have found an ample jug of wine in their room of an evening,--eh, Romeias?"

The discontented face brightened up considerably, and so he went down to let out the hounds. The blood-hound and the beagle jumped up gaily, and the little beaver-puppy also set up a joyous bark, hoping to be taken out likewise; but with a contemptuous kick it was sent back, for the hunter had nothing to do with fish-ponds and their inhabitants. Surrounded by his noisy pack of hounds, Romeias strode out of the gate.

Praxedis and the other waiting-women of the Duchess, had dismounted from their horses and seated themselves on a grassy slope, chatting away about monks and cowls and beards, as well as about the strange caprices of their mistress, when Romeias suddenly appeared before them and said: "Come on!"

Praxedis looked at the rough sports-man, and not quite knowing, what to make of him, pertly said: "Where to, my good friend?"--

Romeias however merely lifted his spear and pointing with it to a neighbouring hill behind the woods, held his tongue.

Then Praxedis called out: "Is speech such a rare article in St. Gall, that you do not answer properly when questioned?"

The other maids giggled, upon which Romeias said solemnly: "May you all be swallowed up by an earthquake, seven fathom deep."

"We are very much obliged to you, good friend," was Praxedis's reply, and the necessary preliminaries for a conversation being thus made, Romeias informed them of the commission he had received, and the women followed him willingly enough.



After some time the gate-keeper found out, that it was not the hardest work to accompany such guests, and when the Greek maid, desired to know something about his business and sport, his tongue got wonderfully loosened and he even related his great adventure with the terrible boar, into whose side he had thrown his spear and yet had not been able to kill it, for one of its feet would have loaded a cart, and its hair stood up as high as a pine-tree, and its teeth were twelve feet long at the least. After this he grew still more civil, for when the Greek once stopped, to listen to the warbling of a thrush, he waited also patiently enough, though a singing-bird was too miserable a piece of game for him to give much heed to; and when Praxedis bent down for a pretty brass-beetle, crawling about in the moss, Romeias politely tried to push it towards her, with his heavy boot, and when in doing so he crushed it instead, this was certainly not his intention.

They climbed up a wild, steep wood-path, beside which the Schwarza-brook flowed over jagged rocks. On that slope the holy Gallus had once fallen into some thorny bushes, and had said to his companion, who wanted to lift him up: "Here let me lie, for here shall be my resting-place and my abode for ever."

They had walked far, before they came to a clearing in the fir-wood, where leaning against the sheltering rocks stood a simple chapel in the shape of a cross. Close to it a square little stone-hut was built against the rock in which but one tiny window with a wooden shutter, was to be seen. Opposite there stood another hut exactly like it, having also but one little window.

It was customary at that time for those who inclined to the monastic life, and who as St. Benedict expressed himself, felt strong enough to fight with the Devil, without the assistance of pious companions, to have themselves immured in that way. They were called "Reclausi" that is Walled-in, and their usefulness and aim in life, may well be compared to that of the pillar-saints in Egypt. The sharp winds of winter, and frequent fall of snow, rendered their exposure in the open air somewhat impossible, but the longing for an anchorite's life, was nevertheless quite as strong.

Within those four walls on Erin-hill there lived the Sister Wiborad, a far-famed recluse of her time. She came from Klingnau in Aargau, and had been a proud and prudish virgin, learned in many an art; besides being able to recite all the Psalms in the Latin tongue, which she had learnt from her brother Hitto. She was not however quite opposed to the idea of sweetening the life of some man or other, but the flower of the youth at Aargau did not find grace in her eyes; and one day she set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. There in the holy city her restless mind must have undergone some great shock, but none of her contemporaries ever knew in what way. For three entire days her brother Hitto ran up and down the Forum through the halls of the Colliseum, and the triumphal arch of Constantine to the four-faced Janus near the Tiber, seeking for his sister and not finding her, and on the morning of the fourth day, she walked in by the Salarian gate, carrying her head very high, and whilst her eyes gleamed strangely she said, that things would not be right in the world until the due amount of veneration was shown unto St. Martin.

After returning to her home, she bequeathed all her wealth to the bishop's church at Constance, on condition that a great festival in honor of St. Martin, should be held every year on the 11th of November. Then she went to live in a small house where the holy Zilia had lived before, and there led a hermit's life, until she grew dissatisfied, and betook herself to the valley of St. Gallus. The bishop himself accompanied her, put the black veil on her head with his own hands, and after leading her into the cell, he laid the first stone with which the entrance was closed up. Then he pronounced his blessing, imprinting his seal four times into the lead, which joined the stones together, whilst the monks who had accompanied him, chaunted sad solemn strains, as if someone was being buried.

The people thereabout held the recluse in great honour. They called her a "hard-forged Saint" and on many a Sunday they flocked to the meadow before her cell, and listened to Wiborad, who stood preaching at her window, and several women went to live in her neighbourhood, to be instructed in all the virtues.

"We have arrived at the place of our destination," said Romeias, upon which Praxedis and her companions looked about in every direction; but not a human being was to be seen. Only some belated butterflies and beetles buzzed drowsily in the sunshine and the cricket chirped merrily, hidden in the grass. The shutter at Wiborad's window was almost shut, so that but a scanty ray of sunshine could penetrate; and from within came the monotonous hollow tones of a person chaunting psalms, with a somewhat nasal sound, breaking the silence without. Romeias knocked against the shutter with his spear, but this had no effect on the psalm-chaunting individual inside. Then the gate-keeper said: "We must try some other way of rousing her attention."

Romeias was rather a rough sort of man, or he would not have behaved as he did.

He began singing a song, such as he often sang to amuse the cloister-pupils, when they managed to steal off into his watch-tower, there to plague him, by pulling his beard or by making all sorts of absurd noises on his big horn. It was one of those ditties, which from the time that the German tongue was first spoken, have been sung by the thousand, on hills and highroads, beneath hedges and woody dells, and the wind has carried them on and spread them further. The words of this were as follows:

"I know an oak-tree fair to see,  
In yonder shady grove,  
There bills and coos the lifelong day  
A beautiful wild dove.

I know a rock in yonder vale,  
Around which bats are flitting  
There, old and hoary in her nest  
An ugly owl is sitting.

The wild dove is my heart's delight,  
And with a song I greet it;  
The arrow keep I for the owl  
To kill it when I meet it."

This song had about the same effect, as if Romeias had thrown a heavy stone against the shutter. Instantly there appeared a figure at the little window, from the withered and scraggy neck of which, rose a ghastly woman's head, in whose countenance the mouth had assumed a rather hostile position towards the nose. A dark veil hid the rest, and bending out of the little window as far as she could, she cried out with ominously gleaming eyes: "Art thou come back, Satan?"

Romeias then advanced a few steps and said complacently: "Nay, the Evil One does not know such fine songs as Romeias, the monastery's gate-keeper. Calm yourself Sister Wiborad, I bring you some dainty damsels, whom the Abbot warmly recommends to your kind reception."

"Take yourselves off, ye deceiving phantoms!" screamed the recluse. "I know the snares of the Tempter. Hence, begone!"

But Praxedis now approached the window, and humbly dropping a low curtsy to the old hag, explained to her that she did not come from hell, but from the Hohentwiel. Showing that the Greek maiden could be a little deceitful, she added, that she had already heard so much of the great piety of the far-famed Sister Wiborad, that she had availed herself of the first opportunity of paying her a visit, though the fact was, that she had before that day never heard about the cell and its inhabitant.

After this the wrinkles on Wiborad's forehead began somewhat to disappear. "Give me thy hand, stranger," said she, stretching her arm out of the window, which as the sleeve fell back, could be seen in all its skinny leanness.

Praxedis held up her right hand, and as the recluse touched with her dry fingers the soft warm hand with its throbbing pulses, she became slowly convinced, that the young girl was a being of flesh and blood.

Romeias on perceiving this change for the better rolled some big stones under the window of the cell. "In two hours I shall be back to fetch you;--God bless you, virgins all," he said aloud and then added in a whisper to the Greek maid,--"and don't be frightened if she should fall into one of her trances."

Whistling to his dogs he then quickly strode towards the wood. The first thirty steps or so, he got on without any impediment; but then he suddenly stopped; and turning first his shaggy head round, and then the whole body, he stood leaning on his spear, intently gazing at the spot before the cell, as if he had lost something there. Yet he had forgotten nothing.

Praxedis smiled and kissed her hand to the rudest of all gate-keepers. Then Romeias quickly turned round again, shouldered his spear,--dropped it, took it up again, then stumbled and finally managed to complete his retreat, after which he vanished behind the moss-grown stems.

"Oh thou child of the world, groping in darkness," scolded the recluse, "what meant that movement of thy hand?"

"A mere jest," replied Praxedis innocently.

"A downright sin," cried Wiborad in rough accents, so that Praxedis started,--and then continuing with her preaching added: "Oh the Devil's works and delusions! There you cast your eyes slyly about until they enter a man's heart like lightning, and kiss your hands to him as if that were nothing! Is it nought that he looks back who ought to be looking forwards? No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. 'A jest?' O give me hyssop to take away your sin, and snow to wash you clean!"

"I did not think of that," admitted Praxedis deeply blushing.

"That is the misery, that you do not think of so many things;--then looking at Praxedis from head to foot she continued, "neither do you think that wearing a bright green garment, and all such flaring colours are an abomination unto those, who have banished all worldly thoughts; and that thy girdle is tied so loosely and negligently round thy waist, as if thou wert a public dancer. Watch and pray!"

Leaving the window for a few moments, the recluse returned presently, and held out a coarsely twisted cord.

"I have pity on thee, poor turtle-dove," she said. "Tear off thy silken finery and receive herewith the girdle of self-denial, from Wiborad's own hand; and let it be a warning to thee, to have done with all vain talkings and doings. And when thou feelest the temptation again to kiss thy hand to the gate-keeper of a monastery, turn thy head eastwards and chaunt the psalm, 'Oh Lord, deliver me from evil!'--and if even then peace will not come to thee, then light a wax-candle and hold thy forefinger over the flame, and thou wilt be saved; for fire alone, cures fire."

Praxedis cast down her eye.

"Your words are bitter," she said.

"Bitter!" exclaimed the recluse. "Praised be the Lord that my lips do not taste of sweets! The mouth of saints must be bitter. When Pachomius sat in the desert, the angel of the Lord came unto him, took the leaves from a laurel-tree, and writing some holy words of prayer thereon, gave them to Pachomius and said: 'Swallow these leaves, and though they will be as bitter as gall in thy mouth, they will make thy heart overflow with true wisdom.' And Pachomius took the leaves and ate them, and from that moment his tongue became bitter, but his heart was filled with sweetness, and he praised the Lord."

Praxedis said nothing, and there ensued a silence which was not interrupted for some time. The other maids of the Duchess had all vanished, for when the recluse had handed out her girdle, they nudged each other and then quietly glided away. They were now gathering bunches of heather and other autumnal flowers, giggling at what they had witnessed.

"Shall we also put on such a belt?" said one of them.

"Yes, when the sun rises black," replied the other.

Praxedis had put the cord into the grass.

"I do not like robbing you of your girdle," she now said shyly.

"Oh, the simplicity," exclaimed Wiborad, "the girdle that we wear is no child's play like the one, that I gave thee. The girdle of Wiborad is an iron hoop with blunted spikes,--it clinks like a chain and cuts into the flesh,--thou wouldst shudder at the mere sight of it."

Praxedis gazed towards the wood, as if spying whether Romeias was not yet to be seen. The recluse probably noticed that her guest did not feel particularly comfortable, and now held out to her a board, on which lay about half a dozen of reddish green crab-apples.

"Does time pass by slowly for thee, child of the world?" she said.--"There, take these, if words of grace do not satisfy thee. Cakes and sweet-meats have I none, but these apples are fair in the sight of the Lord. They are the nourishment of the poor."

The Greek maid knew what politeness required. But they were crab-apples, and after having, with an effort swallowed the half of one, her pretty mouth looked awry, and involuntary tears started into her eyes.

"How dost thou like them?" cried the recluse. Then Praxedis feigned as if the remaining half fell by chance from her hand. "If the Creator had made all apples as acid as these," she said with a sour-sweet smile, "Eve would never have eaten of the apple."

Wiborad was offended. "Tis well," said she, "that thou dost not forget the story of Eve. She had the same tastes as thou, and therefore sin has come into the world."

The Greek maid looked up at the sky but not from emotion. A solitary hawk flew in circles over Wiborad's hut. "Oh that I could fly with thee, away to the Bodensee," she thought. Archly shaking her pretty head she then enquired: "What must I do, to become as perfect as you are?"

"To renounce the world entirely," replied Wiborad, "is a grace from above, which we poor mortals can't acquire by ourselves. Fasting, drinking of pure water, castigating the flesh and reciting of psalms,--all these are mere preparations. The most important thing is to select a good patron-saint. We women are but frail creatures, but fervent prayer brings the champions of God to our side, to assist us. Imagine, before this little window, there he often stands in lonely nights,--he, whom my heart has elected, the valiant Bishop Martin, and he holds out his lance and shield, to protect me from the raging devils. An aureole of blue flames crowns his head, flashing through the darkness like summer-lightning, and as soon as he appears the demons fly away shrieking. And when the battle is over, then he enters into friendly communion with me. I tell him all that weighs on my poor heart;--all the grief which my neighbours cause me, and the wrong which I suffer from the cloister-folk; and the Saint nods to me and shakes his curly head, and all that I tell him, he carries to heaven and repeats it to his friend the Archangel Michael, who keeps watch every Monday, before the throne of God Almighty. There it comes before the right ear, and Wiborad the last of the least is not forgotten...."

"Then I shall also choose St. Martin to become my patron-saint," exclaimed Praxedis. But this had not been the drift of Wiborad's praises. She threw a contemptuous half jealous look on the rosy cheeks of the young girl. "The Lord pardon thee, thy presumption!" cried she with folded hands "dost thou believe that this can be done with a flippant word and smooth face? Indeed! Many long years have I striven and fasted until my face became wrinkled and furrowed,--and he did not favour me even with one single look! He is a high and mighty Saint and a valiant soldier of the Lord, who only looks on long tried champions."

"He will not rudely shut his ears against my prayers," exclaimed Praxedis.

"But thou shalt not pray to him," cried Wiborad angrily. "What has he to do with thee? For such as thou art, there are other patron-saints. I will name thee one. Choose thou the pious Father Pachomius for thyself."

"Him, I don't know," said Praxedis.

"Bad enough, and it is high time for you to make his acquaintance. He was a venerable hermit who lived in the Theban desert, nourishing himself with wild roots and locusts. He was so pious that he heard during his lifetime, the harmony of the spheres and planets and often said: 'If all human beings would hear, what has blessed my ears, they would forsake house and land; and he who had put on the right shoe, would leave the left one behind, and hasten hither.' Now in the town of Alexandria there was a maid, whose name was Thaïs, and nobody could tell, which was greater, her beauty or her frivolity. Then Pachomius said unto himself 'Such a woman is a plague for the whole Egyptian land,' and after cutting his beard and anointing himself he mounted a crocodile, which by prayer he had made subservient to himself, and on its scaly back was carried down the Nile; and then he went to Thaïs, as if he also were an admirer of hers. His big stick, which was a palmtree, he had taken with him, and he managed to shake the heart of the sinner so, as to make her burn her silken robes, as well as her jewels, and she followed Pachomius, as a lamb does the shepherd. Then he shut her up in a rocky grave, leaving only a tiny window in it; instructed her in prayer, and after five years her purification was completed, and four angels carried her soul up to heaven."

This story did not impress Praxedis very favourably.

"The old hermit with his rough beard and bitter lips is not good enough for her," she thought, "and therefore I am to take him for myself," but she did not dare to give utterance to these thoughts.

At this moment the curfew bell began to ring in the monastery, and at this signal the recluse stepped back into her chamber and closed her shutter. The hollow sound of psalm-chanting was heard again, accompanied by the noise of falling strokes. She was flagellating herself.

Meanwhile Romeias had begun his sport in the distant wood, and thrown his spear--but he had mistaken the trunk of a felled oak for a young deer. Angrily he pulled out his weapon from the tenacious wood;--it was the first time in his life, that such a thing had happened to him.

Before Wiborad's cell total silence reigned for a considerable length of time, and when her voice was again heard, it was quite altered; the tones being fuller and vibrating with passion: "Come down unto me, holy Martin; valiant champion of God; thou consolation of my solitude; thou light in my darkness. Descend unto me, for my soul is ready to receive thee and my eyes are thirsting for thee."--

After this there ensued a pause, and then Praxedis started with terror.--A hollow shriek had come from within. She pushed open the shutter and looked in. The recluse was prostrated on her knees, her arms extended beseechingly, and her eyes had a fixed, stony expression. Beside her lay the scourge.

"For God's sake," cried Praxedis, "what is the matter with you?"

Wiborad jumped up and pressed the hand, which the Greek maid extended to her, convulsively. "Child of Earth," said she in broken accents, "that has been deemed worthy to witness the agonies of Wiborad,--strike thy bosom; for a token has been given. He, the elected of my soul has not come; offended that his name has been profaned by unholy lips; but the holy Gallus has appeared to my soul's eye,--he who as yet has never deigned to visit my cell, and his countenance was that of a sufferer and his garments were torn, and half burnt. That means that his monastery is threatened by some great disaster. We must pray that his disciples may not stumble in the path of righteousness."

Bending her head out of the window she called out, "Sister Wendelgard!"

Then the shutter was opened on the opposite cell and an aged face appeared. The face belonged to good Dame Wendelgard, who in that fashion was mourning for her spouse, who had never returned from the last wars.

"Sister Wendelgard," said Wiborad, "let us sing three times 'Be merciful to us, oh Lord.'"

But the Sister Wendelgard had just been indulging in loving thoughts of her noble spouse. She

still harboured an unalterable conviction, that some day he would return to her from the land of the Huns, and she would have liked best, there and then to leave her cell, to go and meet him.

"It is not the time for psalm-singing," she replied.

"So much the more acceptable, the voluntary devotion, rises up to Heaven," said Wiborad, after which she intoned the said psalm, with her rough unmelodious voice. But the expected response did not come. "Why dost thou not join me in singing David's song?"

"Because I don't wish to do so," was Sister Wendelgard's unceremonious reply. The fact was, that during the many years of her seclusion she had at last grown weary of it. Many thousand psalms had she sung at Wiborad's bidding, in order to induce St. Martin to deliver her husband, out of the hands of the infidels; but the sun rose and set daily--and yet he never came. And so she had begun to dislike her gaunt neighbour, with her visions and phantasms.

Wiborad however turned her eyes upwards, like one who thinks he can discover a comet in clear day-light. "Oh thou vessel, full of iniquity and wickedness!" she cried, "I will pray for thee, that the evil spirits may be banished from thee. Thine eye is blind as thy mind is dark."

But the other quietly replied: "Judge not, that thou be not judged. My eyes are as clear as they were a year ago, when in a moon-shiny night, they beheld you getting out of your window, and going away Heaven knows where;--and my mind still refuses to believe, that prayers coming from such a mouth can work miracles."

Then Wiborad's pale face became distorted, as if she had bitten a pebble. "Woe to thee, whom the Devil has deluded!" screamed she and a flood of scolding words streamed from her lips; but her neighbour knew well how to answer her with similar missiles.

Quicker and quicker the words came, confusing and mixing themselves together, whilst the rocky walls threw back unharmonious echoes, and frightened a pair of little owlets, which leaving their cranny nest flew away screeching ... in truth at the famous quarrel beneath the portal of the cathedral at Worms, when the two queens<sup>[4]</sup> were scolding and upbraiding each other, the volubility and anger exhibited were not to be compared to that of the pious recluses.

In mute astonishment Praxedis stood listening to the noise, secretly wishing to interfere and make peace; but then a soft thing fares ill between two sharp ones.

But now the merry notes of a horn, intermingled with the loud barking of dogs was heard from the wood, and a moment later, the tall majestic figure of Romeias could be seen also, approaching slowly.

The second time that he had thrown the spear, it had not hit a tree, but a magnificent stag of ten antlers, which now hung over his shoulder; and besides this, he carried fastened to his belt, six hares which had been caught in snares.

On beholding the fight before him, the sportsman's heart rejoiced mightily. Without saying a word, he loosened two of the living hares, and swinging one in each hand, he threw them so dexterously into the narrow little windows, that Wiborad suddenly feeling the soft fur brushing past her head, started back with a loud scream. The brave Sister Wendelgard likewise got a great shock, for her black habit had loosened itself in the heat of battle, and the wretched little hare, getting entangled therein, and trying to discover an outlet, caused her no small fright. So both stopped their scolding, closed the shutters, and there was silence again on Erin-hill.

"We'll go home," said Romeias to the Greek maid, "for it is getting late." Praxedis who was not over pleased, either by the quarrelling or Romeias' way of making peace, had no desire to stay any longer. Her companions had gone back some time ago, following their own inclinations.

"Hares must be of small value here, as you throw them away in such an unmannerly way," she said.

"True, they are not worth much," Romeias rejoined laughingly, "yet the present deserved thanks at least."

Whilst still speaking, the dormer-window of Wiborad's roof opened; about half of her gaunt lean figure became visible, and a stone of some weight, flew over Romeias head, without hitting him. That was her way of thanking him for the hare.

From this can be seen, that the forms of social intercourse differed somewhat from the present fashions.

Praxedis expressed her astonishment.

"Oh, such things happen about once a week," explained Romeias. "A moderate overflow of gall, gives new strength to such old hags, and it is doing them a kindness, if one helps them to effect such a crisis."

"But she is a saint," said Praxedis shyly.

After first murmuring some unintelligible words in his beard, Romeias said: "Well, she ought to be thankful if she is one, and I am not going to tear off her garb of sanctity. But since I was at Constance on a visit to my mother, I have heard many a tale, that's not quite as it ought to be. It has not yet been forgotten in those parts, how she had to defend herself before the bishop on account of this and that which is none of my business; and the Constance merchants will tell you, without your asking them, that the recluses near the cathedral have lent them money, given to them by pious pilgrims, on usurious interest. It was not my fault, that once, when I was still a boy, I found in a quarry a strange big pebble. When I knocked it to pieces with my hammer, there was a toad in the middle, looking very much astonished. Since then I know what a recluse is like. Snip-snap--trari-trara!"

Romeias accompanied his new friend to the house which lay beyond the cloister-walls and which was destined to receive her. Before it, the other maids were standing, and the posy of wild flower's they had gathered lay on a stone table before the door.

"We must say Good-bye," said the gate-keeper.

"Farewell," said Praxedis.

He then went away, and after going thirty steps suddenly turned round,--but the sun does not rise twice in one day; least of all for the keeper of a cloister-gate! No hand was being kissed to him. Praxedis had entered the house. Then Romeias slowly walked back, and without troubling himself to ask leave, hastily took up the flowers from the stone table, and went away. The stag and four hares he brought to the kitchen. After this he toiled up to his room in the watch-tower, fastened the nosegay to the wall with the help of a nail, and taking a piece of charcoal, drew a heart under it, which had two eyes, a long stroke in lieu of a nose, and a cross-line for a mouth.

He had just finished this, when the cloister-pupil Burkhard came up, bent upon amusing himself. Romeias seized him with a powerful grasp, held out the charcoal and placing him before the wall, said: "There, write the name under it!"

"What name?" asked the boy.

"Hers," commanded Romeias.

"What do I know about her, and her name," testily replied the pupil.

"There one can see again, what is the use of studying," grumbled Romeias. "Every day the boy sits for eight hours behind his asses'-skins and does not know the name of a strange damsel!" ...

## CHAPTER IV.

### In the Monastery.

Dame Hadwig had meanwhile performed her devotions at the grave of the holy Gallus. The Abbot was then about to propose a walk in the cloister-garden, but she asked him, first to show her the treasures of the church. The mind of woman, however intellectual, ever delights in ornaments, jewels and fine garments. The Abbot tried hard to dissuade her from this wish; saying that their's was but a poor little monastery, and that his cousin, no doubt, had seen far better things on her travels, or at court, but it was all in vain. So they went to the sacristy. Here the cupboards were first opened, revealing many purple chasubles and magnificent priest's garments, with embroidered pictures, representations of the holy history. Here and there was also some piece strongly reminding one of Roman heathenism, such as the marriage of Mercury with Philology. When the cupboards were done with, large boxes were opened, full of silver lamps, golden crowns, finely wrought frames for the holy books; and ornaments for the altar. These things had mostly been brought over the Alps by monks, who tying them round their knees, had thus slyly preserved them from covetous eyes and hands. Beautiful vessels, in all sorts of curious forms; candlesticks in the shape of dolphins; golden drinking-cups resting on silver pillars; censers and many other beautiful articles, altogether a rich treasure. A chalice made of a single piece of amber, which glistened wonderfully when held to the light, attracted the Duchess' notice. At the edge a small piece was broken off.

"When my predecessor Hartmuth was dying," said the Abbot, "that little bit was powdered and given to him, mixed with wine and honey, to calm the fever."

In the middle of the amber was a tiny fly, so well preserved, as if it had but just settled down

there. Probably the little insect sitting contentedly on its blade of grass, in antediluvian times, when the liquid resin streamed over it, little thought, that it would thus be bequeathed to far-off generations.

But such dumb testimonials of nature's powers, were little heeded then. At least the chamberlain Spazzo, who surveyed and examined everything with a careful eye, was occupied the while with very different ideas. He thought how much pleasanter it would be to be on war-terms with the pious monks, and instead of claiming their hospitality as a friend, to enter arms in hand, and carry all the treasures away. Having witnessed in his time many a reverse of friendship between the high-born, he was inwardly speculating on this possibility, and eyeing keenly the entrance to the sacristy, he murmured to himself: "Coming from the choir 'tis the first door to the right!"

The Abbot who probably thought likewise that the prolonged examination of the gold and silver, produced a hankering for their possession, slyly omitted opening the last box, which contained the most magnificent things of all, and in order to divert their attention from them urgently proposed, their going into the open air.

So the party directed their steps towards the garden, which occupied a considerable space, and produced much vegetable and fruit for the kitchen, as well as useful herbs for medicines.

In the orchard a large portion was divided off and reserved for wild animals and numerous birds, such as were to be found in the neighbouring Alps; and rarer ones which had been sent as presents, by stranger guests from foreign countries.

Dame Hadwig took great pleasure in looking at the rough uncouth bears, which were funny enough when climbing about on the tree in their prison. Close to these, a pug-nosed monkey, chained together with a baboon, played their merry gambols,--two creatures of which a poet of that time, says that neither one nor the other, possessed a single trace of the faculty of making itself useful, by which to establish a claim to its existence.

An old wild goat with bent down head stood immovably within its narrow boundary, for since it had been carried off from the icy atmosphere of its snowy mountain peaks and glaciers, the native of the Alps had become blind;--for it is not every creature that thrives amid low human habitations.

In another division a large family of thick-skinned badgers was living. On passing them the evil Sindolt exclaimed laughingly: "Heaven bless you miserable little beasts, the chosen game of pious monks."

On another side was heard a shrill whistle from a troop of marmots, which were running quickly to hide themselves in the chinks and crevices of the artificial rockery, that served as their dwelling. Dame Hadwig had never beheld such amusing little creatures before. The Abbot told her of their way of living.

"These animals," said he, "sleep more than any other creature; but when awake, they show a wonderful sharpness and forethought, for when winter approaches, they gather up grass and hay wherever they find it, and one of them lies down on its back, whilst the others put on it everything they have scraped together, and then they seize it by the tail, and drag it like a loaded cart into their caverns."<sup>[5]</sup>

Then Sindolt said to the stout chamberlain Master Spazzo: "What a pity that you have not become a mountain-rat, that would have been a pleasant and graceful occupation for you."

When the Abbot had proceeded a few paces, the evil Sindolt began to give a new sort of explanation: "That is our Tutilo," said he, pointing to a bear, which had just thrown down one of its companions,--"that the blind Thieto,"--pointing to the wild goat, and he was just about to honour the Abbot with some flattering comparison, when the Duchess interrupted him by saying: "As you are so clever in finding similes, will you find one for me also?"

Sindolt became embarrassed. Luckily his eye now fell on a beautiful silver-pheasant, which was in the midst of a troop of cranes, basking in the sunshine which lighted up its pearly grey feathers.

"There," said Sindolt.

But the Duchess turned round to Ekkehard, who gazed dreamily at the bustle and life before him.

"What do you think of it?" asked she.

He started up. "Oh, mistress!" said he in soft tones, "who is so audacious as to compare you to anything that flies or crawls?"

"But if we desire it?"

"Then I only know of one bird," said Ekkehard. "We have not got it, nor has anyone; in star-lit

midnights it flies high over our heads, brushing the sky with its wings. The bird's name is Caradrión, and when its wings touch the earth a sick man is healed. Then the bird, inclining towards the man, opens its beak over his mouth, and taking the man's sickness unto itself rises up to the sun, and purifies itself in the eternal light; and the man is saved."

The Abbot's return put a stop to further similes. One of the serving brothers was sitting on an apple-tree, plucking the apples, and putting them into baskets. When the Duchess approached the tree, he was going to descend, but she made him a sign to stop where he was.

Now, the singing of sweet boyish voices was heard. The voices were those of the younger cloister-pupils who came to do homage to the Duchess. Children as they were, the little fellows wore already the monk's habit, and several even the tonsure on their eleven years old heads. When the procession of the little rosy-cheeked future abbots came in sight, with their eyes cast down and singing their sequences so seriously, a slight, mocking smile played round Dame Hadwig's lips, and with her strong foot, she upset the nearest of the baskets, so that the apples rolled about enticingly on the ground, in the midst of the boys. But unabashed they continued their walk; only one of the youngest wanted to bend down and take up the tempting fruit, which his companion forcibly prevented, by taking a good hold of his girdle.

Much pleased the Abbot witnessed the young folks' excellent behaviour and said: "Discipline distinguishes human beings from animals, and if you were to throw the apples of Hesperides amongst them, they would remain steadfast."

Dame Hadwig was touched. "Are all your pupils so well trained?" asked she.

"If you like to convince yourself with your own eyes," said the Abbot, "you will see that the elder ones know quite as well the meaning of obedience and submission."

The Duchess nodding an assent, was then led into the outer cloister-school, in which the sons of noblemen, and those who intended to join the secular clergy, were educated.

They entered the upper class. In the lecturer's chair stood Ratpert, the wise and learned teacher who was initiating his pupils into the mysteries of Aristotle's logic. With bent heads the young scholars sat before their parchments, scarcely lifting their eyes to look at the party now entering. The teacher inwardly thought this a good opportunity to gather some laurels, and called out, "Notker Labeo!" This was the pearl amongst his pupils, the hope of science, who on a weakly body carried a powerful head, with an immense protruding under-lip, the cause of his surname, the symbol of great determination and perseverance on the stony roads of investigation.

"He will become a great man," whispered the Abbot. "Already in his twelfth year he said that the world was like a book, and that the monasteries were the classical passages in it."

The young man in question, let his eyes glide over the Greek text, and then translated with pompous solemnity the deep intricate meaning thereof:

"If on a stone or piece of wood, you find a straight line running through, that is the mutual line of demarcation, of the even surface. If the stone or wood were to split along that line, then we should behold two intersections, near the visible chink, where there was only one line before. Besides this we see two new surfaces, which are as broad as the object was thick, before one could see the new surface. From this it appears that this object existed as one whole, before it was separated."

But when this translation had been well got through, some of the young logicians put their heads together, and began to whisper, and the whispers became louder and louder;--even the cloister-pupil Hepidan, who undisturbed by Notker's capital translation, was employing all his skill to carve a devil with a double pair of wings, and a long curling tail, on the bench before him, stopped with his work. Then the teacher addressed the next boy, with the question: "But how does the surface become a mutual line of demarcation?" upon which he began to blunder over the Greek text; but the commotion in the school-benches became louder still, so that there arose a buzzing and booming like distant alarm bells. The translation ceased altogether and suddenly the whole mass of Ratpert's pupils rushed up noisily, towards the Duchess. In the next moment they had torn her from the Abbot's side, shouting "caught, caught," and making barricades with the benches, they repeated their cries: "We have caught the Duchess of Suabia! What shall be her ransom?"

Dame Hadwig, in the course of her life, had found herself in various positions, but that she could ever become the prisoner of school-boys had certainly never entered her head. This having however the charm of novelty for her, she submitted to her fate with a good grace.

Ratpert the teacher took out of the cupboard a mighty rod, and swinging it over his head, like a second Neptune, he recited, in a thundering voice, the verses of Virgil:

"So far has the conceit, in your pitiful powers, decoyed you,  
That, not awaiting my will, and rousing the heavens and waters,  
Ye have ventured to stir, ye rebellious winds of the ocean?  
*Quos ego!*"



A renewed shout was the answer. The room was already divided by a wall of benches and stools, and Master Spazzo was inwardly meditating the expediency of an attack, and the effect of vigorous blows on the heads of the ring-leaders. As for the Abbot, he was perfectly speechless, as this unexpected audacity had quite paralysed his faculties for the moment. The highborn prisoner stood at the other end of the school-room, in a niche, surrounded by her fifteen-years-old captors.

"What is the meaning of all this, ye wicked boys?" asked she smilingly.

Then one of the rebels advanced, bent his knee before her and humbly said: "He who comes as a stranger, is without protection or peace, and peaceless people are kept prisoners, until they have paid a ransom for their liberty."

"Do you learn that out of your Greek books?"

"No, mistress, that is German law."

"Very well, then I will ransom myself," said Dame Hadwig, and laughing merrily, she seized the red-cheeked logician, and drawing him towards her, wanted to kiss him. He however tore himself away, and joining the noisy ranks of his companions cried out:

"That coin, we do not understand!"

"What ransom then do you exact?" asked the Duchess who was fast getting impatient.

"The bishop of Constance was also our prisoner," replied the pupil, "and he obtained for us three extra holidays in the year, as well as a feast of bread and meat, and has further secured this to us with his name and seal."

"Oh gluttonous youth!" said Dame Hadwig. "Then I must at least do as much for you as the bishop. Have you ever tasted the *Felchen*<sup>[6]</sup> from the Bodensee?"

"No!" cried the boys.

"Then you shall receive six fish as an annual present. This fish is good for young beaks."

"Do you secure this to us with your name and seal?"

"If it must be so, yes."

"Long life to the Duchess of Suabia! All hail!" was now shouted on all sides. "Hail! she is free." The school-benches were quickly removed, the passage cleared, and jumping and shouting triumphantly they led back their prisoner.

In the background the parchment leaves of Aristotle flew up into the air, as outward signs of joy. Even the corners of Notker Labeo's mouth turned down into a broad grin, and Dame Hadwig said: "The young gentlemen were very gracious. Please to put back the rod into the cupboard, honoured professor."

A continuation of the translation of Aristotle, was not to be thought of. Who can tell, whether the uproarious outbreak of the pupils, was not in close connexion with their study of logic? Seriousness is often a very dry and leafless trunk; else folly would scarcely find room, to wind her wanton green-leaved tendrils around it ...

When the Duchess accompanied by the Abbot had left the school-room, the latter said: "There is nothing now left to show you but the library of the monastery, the well for thirsty souls, the armory with its weapons of science." But Dame Hadwig was tired and so declined his offer.

"I must keep my word," said she, "and make the donation to your boys documental. Will you be pleased to have the parchment got ready, that I may affix my signature and seal."

Sir Cralo conducted his guest to his apartments. On going along the cross-passage, they passed a small room, the door of which was open. Close to the bare wall stood a pillar, from the middle of which hung a chain. Over the portal, in faded colours, was painted a figure which held a rod in its lean hand. "Him whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth," was written under it in capital letters.

Dame Hadwig cast an enquiring look at the Abbot.

"The scourging room!" replied he.

"Is none of the brothers just now liable to punishment?" asked she, "it might be a warning example."

Then the evil Sindolt's feet twitched as if he had trodden on a thorn. He turned round as if he had been attracted by a voice calling to him, and exclaiming, "I am coming," he quickly vanished into the darker parts of the passage. He well knew why he did so.

Notker the stutterer, after the labour of years, had at last completed a psalm-book, adorned

with dainty drawings. This book the envious Sindolt had destroyed at night; casting it to pieces, and upsetting a jug of wine over it. On account of this, he had been sentenced to be flogged three times, and the last instalment was still due. He knew the room, and the instruments of penance hanging on the walls well enough, from the nine-tailed "Scorpion" down to the simple "wasp."

The Abbot hurried on. His state-rooms were richly decorated with flowers. Dame Hadwig threw herself into the primitive arm-chair, to rest from the fatigue of all the sight-seeing. She had received many new impressions within the space of a few hours. There was still half an hour left before supper.

Had anyone taken the trouble to visit all the cloister-cells, he might have satisfied himself, that not a single inhabitant thereof had remained unaffected by the arrival of the high-born guests. Even those who pass their whole lives in seclusion, feel that they owe homage to woman.

The hoary Tutilo had remembered with a pang, on the arrival of the Duchess, that the left sleeve of his habit was adorned with a hole. Under ordinary circumstances the sleeve would probably have remained unpatched, until the next great festival, but now there was no time for delay. So he sat down on his couch, provided with needle and thread, busily mending the rent. Being once busy with such things he also put new soles to his sandals; fastening them with nails, and humming a tune to speed the work. Ratold the thinker, walked up and down in his cell, with a deep frown on his forehead, hoping that an opportunity would present itself to praise the virtues of the high-born guest in an improvised speech, and to heighten the effect of the spontaneous effusion, he was studying it beforehand. He intended to take the following lines of Tacitus, "on the Germans," for a text: "They believe also, that there is something holy about women, and that they have the gift of seeing into the future. Therefore they never disdain the advice given by them, and often follow their warnings." This was about all that he knew of the other sex, but his squirrel-eyes twinkled with the hope, of being able, from the praise of the Duchess, easily to diverge to some spiteful criticism on his brethren. Unfortunately the opportunity to bring in his speech never came, or he did not know how to seize it.

In another cell, six of the brothers, sat under the huge ivory comb, which was suspended by an iron chain from the ceiling. This was a very useful institution established by Abbot Hartmuth. Murmuring the prescribed prayers, they assisted one another in the careful arrangement of each others hair. Many an overgrown tonsure was also restored to a shining smoothness on that day.

While these things were going on in the monastery itself, no less activity was displayed in the kitchen under the superintendence of Gerold the steward. And now resounded the tinkling of that bell, the sounds of which were not heard without a pleasurable sensation, even by the most pious of the brethren, as it was the signal for the evening-meal. Abbot Cralo led the Duchess into the refectory. The large room was divided in the middle by nine pillars, and around fourteen covered tables, the members of the monastery, priests and deacons stood assembled, like champions of the church militant. These however did not pay any great attention to the noble guest.

The duty of reader for that week, before the meals, had to be performed by Ekkehard the custodian. In honour of the Duchess he had chosen the 45th psalm. He arose and said: "Oh Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may speak forth thy praise," and all repeated these words in a low murmur, as a sort of blessing on his reading.

After that he lifted his voice and began reciting the psalm, which Scripture itself calls a lovely one.

"My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made, touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

"And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

"Thy throne, before God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

"Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia ..."

The Duchess seemed to understand the latent homage and as if she herself was being addressed in the words of the psalm, she fastened her eyes intently on Ekkehard. But the Abbot likewise had noticed this, and made a sign to interrupt the reading; and thus the psalm remained unfinished, and everyone sat down, to supper.

Sir Cralo could not however prevent Dame Hadwig's ordering the zealous reader, to sit down

by her side. According to rank, this seat on her left side, had been destined for the old dean Gozbert; but he for the last few minutes had been sitting on thorns; for he had once indulged in a very rough-spoken dispute with Dame Hadwig's late husband, at the time when the latter carried off the precious chalice, as a war-contribution. On that account he had also a grudge against the Duchess, and had no sooner remarked her intention, than he gladly moved downwards, and pushed the custodian into his seat. Next to Ekkehard came Spazzo the chamberlain, and after him the monk Sindolt.

The meal began. The steward well knowing that the arrival of stranger guests, fully sanctioned an enlargement of the accustomed frugal cloister-fare, had not restricted himself to the ordinary porridge. The strict bill of fare of the late Abbot Hartmuth was also not adhered to.

To be sure there appeared at first a steaming dish of millet-porridge, that those, who preferred strictly to adhere to the prescribed rule, might satisfy their hunger: but after that, one delicacy followed another in quick succession. Side by side with the roast stag, stood the delicious bear's ham, and even the beaver of the upper pond, which had been robbed of its life, in honour of the occasion. Pheasants, partridges, turtle-doves and a rich collection of smaller birds followed; as well as an immense quantity of fish of all descriptions, so that finally every species of animal,--crawling, flying or swimming, that was good to eat, was represented on the table.

Many an one of the brothers, fought a fierce battle within the depths of his heart on that day. Even Gozbert the old dean,--after having stilled the craving of hunger with millet-porridge, and having pushed aside with a tremendous frown, the roasted stag and bear's ham, as if it were a temptation of the Evil One,--when afterwards a beautifully roasted grouse, was put down before him, felt the odour thereof rise temptingly into his nostrils. And with the savory smell the memories of his youth came back; when he himself was a first-rate sportsman, fully two score years ago, and when he went out in the early morning to shoot the wood-cock, and meet the game-keeper's bright-eyed daughter; and twice he resisted the half involuntary movement of his arm, the third time he felt his strength going, and a moment after, one half of the bird lay before him, and was hastily dispatched.

Spazzo the chamberlain, had watched with an approving nod, the appearance of the many dishes. A large Rhine-salmon had quickly disappeared under his hands, and he now cast his eyes about, in search of something to drink. Then Sindolt, his neighbour, seized a small stone jug, poured out its contents into a metal cup and said: "Your health in the choicest wine of the monastery."

Master Spazzo intended to take a copious draught, but scarcely had the liquid touched his palate, when he put down the goblet hastily, shaking all over as with the ague, and exclaimed, "then may the Devil be friar!"

The evil Sindolt had given him a sour cider, made of crab-apples, and sweetened with the juice of the blackberry. On Master Spazzo's looking inclined to thank him by a blow, he quickly fetched a jug of the delicious red "Valtelliner," wherewith to soften his ire. The "Valtelliner" is a capital wine; in which formerly the Roman Emperor Augustus, drowned his grief over the lost battle of Varus. By degrees Master Spazzo's good humour returned; so that without knowing him, he willingly drank to the health of the Bishop of Chur; to whom the monastery was indebted for this wine, and Sindolt did not fail to keep him company.

"What may your patron say to such drinking?" asked the chamberlain.

"St. Benedict was a wise man," replied Sindolt, "therefore he ordained, that although it had been written, that wine was altogether no drink for monks, yet as not a single person, at the present day, could be persuaded of the justness of this observation; and in consequence of the weakness of the human mind, everyone should be allowed a bottle a day. No one however is to drink to satiety, for wine will make even the wisest swerve from the path of wisdom."

"Good," said Spazzo and drained his tumbler.

"On the other hand," continued Sindolt, "those of the brotherhood, in whose district little or no wine grows, must resign themselves, and praise the Lord without grumbling."

"Good also," said Spazzo again emptying his goblet.

Meanwhile the Abbot did his best, to entertain his princely cousin. He first began, to sing the praises of her late husband Sir Burkhard, but Dame Hadwig's responses were but scanty and cold, so that the Abbot found out, that everything has its time; especially the love of a widow for her late spouse. So he changed the conversation, asking her, how the cloister-schools had pleased her.

"I feel sorry for the poor fellows, who are forced to learn so much in their early days," said the Duchess. "Is not that a burden for them under the weight of which they suffer all their lives?"

"Pardon me, noble cousin," replied the Abbot, "if both in the capacity of friend and relation, I beg you not to indulge in such thoughtless speech. The study of science is no disagreeable obligation for the young; rather is it to them like strawberries, the more they eat the more they want."

"But what can they have to do with the heathen art of logic?" asked Dame Hadwig.

"That, in proper hands, becomes a weapon to protect God's church," said the Abbot. "With such arts, heretics were wont to attack believers, but now we fight them with their own arms; and believe me, good Greek or Latin is a much finer instrument than our native language, which even in the hands of the ablest, is but an unwieldy bludgeon."

"Indeed," said the Duchess, "must we still learn from you, what is to be admired? I have existed until now, without speaking the Latin tongue, Sir Cousin."

"It would not harm you, if you were still to learn it," said the Abbot, "and when the first euphonious sounds of the Latin tongue shall have gladdened your ear, you will admit, that compared to it, our mother-tongue is but a young bear, which can neither stand nor walk well, before it has been licked by a classical tongue. Besides much wisdom, flows from the mouths of the old Romans. Ask your neighbour to the left."

"Is it so?" asked Dame Hadwig, turning towards Ekkehard, who had silently listened to the foregoing conversation.

"It would be true, liege lady," said he enthusiastically, "if you still needed to learn wisdom."

Dame Hadwig archly held up her forefinger: "Have you yourself derived pleasure from those old parchments?"

"Both, pleasure and happiness," exclaimed Ekkehard with beaming eyes. "Believe me, mistress, you do well to come to the classics for advice, in all positions of life. Does not Cicero teach us to walk safely, in the intricate paths of worldly prudence? Do we not gather confidence and courage from Livy and Sallust? Do not the songs of Virgil awaken us to the conception of imperishable beauty? The Gospel is the guiding-star of our faith; the old classics, however, have left a light behind them, which like the glow of the evening-sun, sends refreshment and joy into the hearts of men."

Ekkehard spoke with emotion. Since the day on which the old Duke Burkhard had asked her hand in marriage, the Duchess had not seen anyone, who showed enthusiasm for anything. She was endowed with a high intellect, quick and imaginative. She had learned the Greek language very rapidly, in the days of her youth, on account of the Byzantine proposal. Latin inspired her with a sort of awe, because unknown to her. Unknown things easily impress us, whilst knowledge leads us to judge things according to their real worth, which is often much less than we had expected. The name of Virgil besides had a certain magic about it....

In that hour the resolution was formed in Hadwig's heart to learn Latin. She had plenty of time for this, and after having cast another look on her neighbour to the left, she knew who was to be her teacher....

The dainty dessert, consisting of peaches, melons and dried figs, had vanished also, and the lively conversation at the different tables, told of the frequent passing round of the wine-jug.

After the meal, in accordance with the rules of the order, a chapter out of the lives of the holy fathers, had to be read, for the general edification.

The day before, Ekkehard had begun a description of the life of St. Benedict, which had been written by Pope Gregory. The brothers drew the tables closer together; the wine-jug came to a dead stop, and all conversation was hushed. Ekkehard continued with the second chapter: "One day when he was alone, the Tempter approached him; for a small black bird, commonly called a crow, came and constantly flew around his head, and approaching so near, that the holy man, might have captured it with his hand. He, however, made the sign of the cross, and the bird flew away.

"No sooner however had the bird flown away, when a fiercer temptation than the holy man had ever yet experienced, assailed him. A considerable time before, he had beheld a certain woman. This woman, the Evil One caused to appear before his mental eyes, and to influence the heart of God's servant, to such a degree, that a devouring love gnawed at his heart, and he almost resolved, to leave his hermit-life, so strong was the longing and desire within him.

"But at that moment however, a light from heaven shone on him, compelling him to return to his better self. And he beheld on one side a hedge of brambles and nettles, and he undressed and threw himself into the thorns and stinging nettles, until his whole body was lacerated.

"And thus the wounds of the skin had healed the wound of the spirit, and having conquered sin he was saved." ...

Dame Hadwig was not greatly edified by this lecture. She let her eyes wander about in the hall in search of something to divert her thoughts. Had the chamberlain, perhaps also disapproved of the choice of the chapter, or had the wine got into his head?--for suddenly he dashed at the book and closing it vehemently, so that the wooden covers clapped audibly, he held up his beaker, saying: "To the health of St. Benedict." Ekkehard turned a reproachful look on him, but the younger members of the brotherhood, regarding the toast as serious, had already echoed it

noisely. Here and there a hymn in praise of the holy man was begun; this time to the tune of a merry drinking song, and loud joyous voices rang through the hall.

Whilst Abbot Cralo looked about with a somewhat dubious expression, and Master Spazzo was still busily drinking to the health of the saint with the younger clergy, Dame Hadwig inclined her head towards Ekkehard and said in a half whisper:

"Would you be willing to teach me Latin, young admirer of the classics, if I felt inclined to learn it?"

Then Ekkehard heard an inner voice, whispering like an echo of what he had read: "throw thyself into the thorns and nettles, and say no!"--but heedless of the warning voice he replied: "Command and I obey."

The Duchess gazed once more on the young monk with a furtive, searching look; then turned to the Abbot and talked of indifferent things.

The cloister-inmates did not seem inclined as yet to let this day's unusual liberty end here. In the Abbot's eyes there was a peculiarly soft and lenient expression, and the cellarer also never said "nay," when the brothers descended with their emptied wine-jugs into the vaults below.

At the fourth table the old Tutilo began to get jolly, and was telling his inevitable story of the robbers. Louder and louder his powerful voice rang through the hall: "One of them turned to fly,-- I after him with my oaken stick,--he throws away spear and shield to the ground,--I quickly seize him by the throat, force the spear into his hand and cry, 'thou knave of a robber, for what art thou encumbering the world? Thou shalt fight with me!'" ...

But they had all heard it too often already how he had then in honest fight split open the scull of his antagonist,--so they eagerly requested him, to sing some favourite song, and on his giving an assenting nod, some of them hurried out, presently to return with their instruments. One of them brought a lute, another a violin with one string only, a third a sort of dulcimer with metal pegs, which were played on with a tuning key, and a fourth a small ten-stringed harp. This last curious-looking instrument was called a psalter, and its three-cornered shape was held to be a symbol of the Trinity.

When the instruments were tuned, they gave him his baton of ebony. Smilingly the hoary artist received it, and rising from his seat, gave them the signal to play a piece of music, which he himself had composed in his younger days. Gladly the others listened; only Gerold the steward, became rather melancholy on hearing the melodious sounds, for he was just counting the emptied dishes and stone jugs, and like a text to the melody the words vibrated through his mind: "How much this one day has swallowed up in goods and money?" Softly he beat time with his sandal-clad foot, until the last note had died away.

At the bottom of the table a silent guest, with a pale olive complexion and black curls, was sitting. He came from Italy, and had accompanied the mules loaded with chestnuts and oil, from Lombardy over the Alp. In melancholy silence, he let the floods of song pass over him.

"Well, Master Giovanni," said Folkard the painter, "has the fine Italian ear been satisfied? The Emperor Julianus once compared the singing of our forefathers to the screeching of wild birds, but since that time we have made progress. Did it not sound lovelier in your ears than the singing of wild swans?"

"Lovelier--than the singing of swans"--repeated the stranger in dreamy accents. Then he arose and quietly stole away. Nobody in the monastery ever read what he wrote down in his journal that evening.

"These men on the other side of the Alp," he wrote, "when they let their thundering voices rise up to heaven, never can attain to the sweetness of an artistic modulation. Truly barbarous is the roughness of their wine-guzzling throats and whenever they attempt by sinking and then raising their voices, to attain a melodious softness,--all nature shudders at the sound, and it resembles the creaking of chariot-wheels on frozen ground." ...

Master Spazzo intending to end well, what he had so well begun, slunk away to the building in which Praxedis and her companions were installed, and said: "You are to come to the Duchess, and that at once." The maidens first laughed at his cowl, and then followed him into the refectory, as there was no one to hinder their entrance; and as soon as they became visible at the open door, a buzzing and murmuring began, as if a dancing and jumping were now to commence, such as these walls had never before experienced.

Sir Cralo the abbot, however looked at the Duchess, and exclaimed: "My Lady Cousin!" and he said it with such a touching, woe-begone expression, that she started up from her reverie. And suddenly she looked with different eyes than before on the chamberlain and herself, in their monks habits, as well as on the rows of carousing men. The faces of the more distant ones were hidden by their projecting hoods, and it looked as if the wine was being poured down into empty cowls; in short, the scene altogether with the boisterous music appeared to her like a mad masquerade, that had lasted too long already.

So she said: "It is time to go to bed;" and then went with her suite over to the school-house, where she was to rest that night.

"Do you know what would have been the reward of dancing?" asked Sindolt of one of his fellow monks, who seemed rather sorry at this sudden termination of their festivity. He stared at him enquiringly. Then Sindolt made a movement which meant unmistakably "scourging."

## CHAPTER V.

### Ekkehard's Departure.

Early the next morning, the Duchess and her attendants mounted their steeds, to ride homewards; and when she declined all parting ceremonies, the Abbot did not press her to the contrary. Therefore perfect quiet reigned in the monastery, whilst the horses were neighing impatiently. Only Sir Cralo came over, knowing well, what good manners demanded.

Two of the brothers accompanied him. One of them carried a handsome crystal cup with a finely wrought silver foot and cover, in which many a pretty bit of onyx and emerald was set. The other carried a small jug of old wine. The Abbot pouring out some into the cup, then wished good speed to his cousin, begging her to drink the parting-draught with him, and to keep the cup as a small remembrance.

In case that the present should not be thought sufficient, he had still another curious piece in the background, which though made of silver, had a very insignificant appearance, as it bore close resemblance to an ordinary loaf of bread. This could be opened, and was filled up to the brim with gold-pieces. Without there being an absolute necessity for it, the Abbot did not intend to mention this; keeping it carefully hidden under his habit.

Dame Hadwig took the proffered cup, feigned to drink a little and then handing it back, said: "Pardon me, dear cousin, what shall a woman do with that drinking-vessel? I claim another parting gift. Did you not speak of the wells of wisdom yesterday? Give me a Virgil out of your library!"

"Always jesting," said Sir Cralo, who had expected a more costly demand. "What good can Virgil do you, as you do not know the language?"

"As a matter of course, you must give me the teacher with it," seriously replied Dame Hadwig.

But the Abbot shook his head in sign of displeasure. "Since what time are the disciples of St. Gallus given away as parting-gifts?"

Upon this the Duchess resumed: "I suppose you understand me. The fair-haired custodian shall be my teacher; and three days hence, at the latest, he and the volume of Virgil shall make their appearance at my castle! Mind, that the settlement of the disputed land in the Rhinevalley, as well as the confirmation of the monastery's rights, are in my hands; and that I am not disinclined, to erect a small cloister to the disciples of St. Gallus, on the rocks of the Hohentwiel.-And so farewell, Sir Cousin!"

Then Sir Cralo, with a melancholy look, beckoned to the serving monk, to carry the chalice back to the treasury. Dame Hadwig gracefully extended her right hand to him, the mares pawed the ground; Master Spazzo took off his hat with a flourish,--and the little cavalcade turned their backs on the monastery, setting out on their way, homewards.

From the window of the watch-tower, an immense nosegay was thrown into the midst of the parting guests; in which there shone at least half a dozen sun-flowers, not to mention innumerable asters; but nobody caught it, and the horses hoofs passed over it....

In the dry moat outside the gate, the cloister-pupils had hidden themselves. "Long life to the Duchess of Suabia! Hail! hail!--and she must not forget to send us the Felchen!" was loudly shouted after her, as a parting salutation.

"He who as reward for his bad behaviour, obtains three holidays, and the best fish of the lake, may well shout," said Master Spazzo.

Slowly the Abbot went back to the monastery, and as soon as he got there, he sent for Ekkehard the custodian.

"A dispensation has come for you. You are to take a volume of Virgil to the Duchess Hadwig, and become her teacher. 'The old song of Maro may soften the Scythian customs by their lovely tunes'--is written in Sidonius. I know that it is not your wish ..." Ekkehard cast down his eyes, with a heightened colour, "but we must not offend the mighty ones of this earth. To-morrow, you will set out on your journey. 'Tis with regret that I lose you, for you were one of the best and most dutiful here. The holy Gallus will not forget the service which you are rendering him. Don't omit to cut out the title-page of Virgil, on which is written the curse on him, who takes the book away from the monastery."

That which our hearts desire, we gladly suffer to be put on us, as a duty.

"The vow of obedience," said Ekkehard, "obliges me, to do the will of my Superior, without fear or delay, without regret or murmur."

He bent his knee before the Abbot, and then went to his cell. It seemed to him as if he had been dreaming. Since yesterday, almost too much had occurred for him. It is often so in life. In a long period, time pursues its monotonous way, but when once we come to a turning-point, then one change follows another. He prepared himself for the journey.

"What thou hast begun, leave unfinished behind thee; draw back thy hand from the work it was employed on, and go away with thy heart full of obedience,"--he scarcely needed to remind himself of this portion of the rules.

In his cell lay the parchment-leaves of a psalm-book, which had been written, and illustrated by Folkard's masterly hand. Ekkehard had been commissioned to finish up the first letter on each page, with the precious gold-colour, which the Abbot had lately bought from a Venetian merchant; and by adding faint golden lines at the crowns, sceptres and swords, as well as at the borders of the mantles, to give the last touch to the figures.

He took up parchments and colours, and brought them over to his companion, that he might put the finishing strokes to the work himself. Folkard was just about, to compose a new picture; David playing the lute, and dancing before the ark of the Covenant. He did not look up, and Ekkehard silently left the studio again.

After this he bent his steps to the library, there to fetch the Virgil, and when he stood all alone in the high-arched hall, amongst the silent parchments, a feeling of melancholy came over him. Even lifeless things, when one is about to take leave of them, seem to possess something of a soul, and to share some of the feelings, which are moving our own hearts.

The books were his best friends. He knew them all, and knew who had written them. Some of the handwritings reminded him of companions, whom death had gathered already.

"What will the new life, which begins to-morrow, bring to me?" he thought, whilst a solitary tear started into his eye. At that moment his gaze fell on the small, metal-bound glossary, in which the holy Gallus, not knowing the German language, had had a translation of the most familiar words and sentences, written down by the priest of Arbon. Then Ekkehard bethought himself, how the founder of the monastery, had once set out, with so little help and preparation, a stranger into heathen lands; and how his God and his courageous heart, had protected him in all dangers and sorrows. His spirits rose; he kissed the little book, took the Virgil from the book-shelf, and then turned to go.

"Whoever carries away this book, shall receive a thousand lashes of the scourge; may palsy and leprosy attack him," was written on the title-page. Ekkehard cut it out.

Once more he looked around, as if to take a final leave, of all the books. At that moment a rustling was heard in the wall, and the large sketch which the architect Gerung had once drawn, when Abbot Hartmuth had wanted a new building to be added to the monastery, fell to the ground, raising a cloud of dust.

Ekkehard did not regard this occurrence in the light of a presentiment or warning.

On walking along the passage of the upper storey, he passed an open chamber. This was the snuggerly of the old men. The blind Thieto who had been Abbot before Cralo, until his waning eyesight had forced him to resign, was sitting there. A window was open, so that the old man could breathe freely and enjoy the warm sunny air. With him, Ekkehard had spent many an hour, in friendly converse. The blind man recognized his step and called him in.

"Where are you going?" asked he.

"Down stairs,--and to-morrow I am going far away. Give me your hand, I am going to the Hohentwiel."

"Bad,--very bad," muttered the old man.

"Why, father Thieto?"

"The service of women is an evil thing for him, who wishes to remain good. Court service is

worse still. What then are both together?"

"It is my fate," said Ekkehard.

"St. Gallus keep you and bless you. I will pray for you. Give me my stick."

Ekkehard offered his arm, which was refused however, and seizing his staff, the blind man rose, and went to a niche in the wall, from which he took out a small phial and gave it to Ekkehard.

"It's water from the river Jordan, which I took myself. When the dust of this world has covered your face, and is dimming your eyes, then bathe them with it. It will not help me any more. Farewell."

In the evening Ekkehard mounted the little hill, which rose behind the monastery. This was his favourite walk. In the fish-ponds which had been artificially made there, to supply the necessary fish for the fast-days, the dark fir-trees were reflected. A gentle breeze ruffled the surface of the water, in which the fish swam briskly about. With a smile he gazed at them, thinking, "when shall I taste you again?"

In the fir-wood on the top of the Freudenberg, there was solemn silence. There he stopped, to enjoy the extensive view before him.

At his feet lay the monastery, with all its buildings and walls. There, in the court-yard was the well known fountain; the garden was full of autumnal flowers, and in one long row the windows of the many cells were presented to his view. He knew each one, and saw also his own. "May God protect thee, peaceful abode!"

Contemplating the place where we have spent the days of our eager, and striving youth, works like a magnet on our hearts, which require so little to feel attracted. He only is poor, to whom the great bustling life of this world, has not granted time, bodily and mentally to find a quiet resting-place, a real home.--

Ekkehard raised his eyes. Far away in the distance, like the fair prospect of a distant future, the Bodensee's placid surface, shone out like a mirror. The line of the opposite shore, as well as the outlines of the hills behind it, were covered with a light mist, only here and there a bright light and the reflection in the water, indicating the dwelling places of human beings.

"But what does the obscurity behind mean?" He turned round and beheld the Sântis rising with its horns and pinnacles behind the fir-clad hills. On the gray and weatherbeaten rocky walls, the warm sunbeams were contending with the clouds, and lighting up the masses of old snow, which in its caves and crevices lay awaiting a new winter. Right over the Kamor, hung a heavy cloud, which widely extended, was obscuring the sun and throwing a grey and sombre light on the mountain-peaks around. It began to lighten in the distance ...

"Is that meant as a warning for me?" said Ekkehard. "I don't understand it. My way is not towards the Sântis."

Full of thoughts, he descended to the valley again.

In the night he prayed at the grave of St. Gallus, and early in the morning he bid good-bye to all. The volume of Virgil, and the little bottle of Thieto were packed up in his knapsack, which also held the few things besides that he possessed.

He, who has not even his own person, his wishes and his desires at his free disposal, can still less have any worldly possessions and goods.

The Abbot gave him two gold-pieces and some silver coins, as a travelling penny.

In a ship, laden with corn, he crossed the lake; a favourable wind filling the sail, and courage and the love of travel swelling his bosom.

At dinner-time the castle of Constance, as well as the cathedral with its towers, became more and more distinct.

With a joyous bound, Ekkehard sprang on shore. In Constance he might have stopped and claimed the hospitality of the Bishop, but this he did not do. The place was disagreeable to him,-- he hated it from the bottom of his heart. Not on account of its position and scenery, for in that respect, it may be boldly compared with any town on the lake, but on account of a man whom he detested.

This was the Bishop Salomon, who had been lately buried, with great pomp in the cathedral. Ekkehard was a simple-minded, straightforward and pious man. To become proud and overbearing in the service of the church, seemed very wrong to him; to combine this with worldly tricks and knavery highly blamable,--and in spite of wickedness of heart, to become famous, most strange. Such however had been the Bishop Salomon's career. Ekkehard well remembered having heard from older companions, how the young nobleman had forced his way, into the monastery, and acted as spy; how he had managed to represent himself as indispensable to the



Emperor, until the mitre of an Abbot of St. Gall was exchanged for that of a Bishop of Constance.

And the fate which had befallen the messengers of the exchequer,--that was related by the children in the streets. These, the intriguing prelate, had provoked and insulted so long, till they trying to right themselves with the sword, had made him prisoner; but though Sir Erchanger's wife Berchta, tended and nursed him like a Lord, during his captivity, and begged him for the kiss of peace, and ate out of the same plate with him, his revenge was not appeased, until the Emperor's court of law, at Adingen, condemned his enemies to be beheaded.

And the daughter which he had begotten in the early days of his student-life, was even then Lady Abbess at the cathedral in Zurich.

All this was known to Ekkehard; and in the church where that man was buried, he did not like to pray.

It may be unjust to transfer the hatred, which is intended for a human being alone, to the actual spot where he has lived and died, but still one can understand this feeling. So he shook the dust from his feet, and walked out of the city-gate, leaving the stripling Rhine, having but just issued from the lake, on his right hand.

He cut for himself a strong walking stick from a hazel-bush. "Like unto the rod of Aaron which budded in the temple of God, distinguishing his race from that of the degenerate Jews, so may this stick, blessed by God's grace, be my protection against the evil ones on my way,"--he said in the words of an old blessing on walking sticks.

His heart beat with pleasure, as he briskly walked along.

How full of hope and joy is he, who in the days of his youth, goes out on unknown paths, to meet an unknown future. With the wide world before him, a blue sky over-head, and the heart fresh and trusting, as if his walking-stick must produce leaves and blossoms, wherever he plants it in the ground, and must bear happiness, in the shape of golden apples on its boughs. Walk merrily on.--The day will come when thou also, wilt drag thyself wearily along, on the dusty high-roads, when thy staff will be but a dry withered stick, when thy face will be pale and worn, and the children will be pointing their fingers at thee, laughing and asking: where are the golden apples?...

Ekkehard was truly light-hearted and content. To sing merry songs was not becoming for a man of his calling; more fitting was the song of David which he now began:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters"--and this may have been registered in heaven, in the same book in which the guardian-angels of youth put down the merry songs of wandering scholars, and apprentice-boys.

His path took him through meadows, and past high reeds. A long and narrow island, called Reichenau, extended itself in the lake. The towers and cloister-walls were mirrored in the placid waters, and vine-yards, meadows and orchards testified to the industry of the inhabitants. About two hundred years ago, the island was but a barren tract, where damp ground had been inhabited by hideous crawling things, and poisonous snakes. The Austrian Governor Sintlaz however, begged the wandering Bishop Pirminius, to come over, and to pronounce a solemn blessing on the island. Then the snakes went away in great masses, headed by the scolopendras, ear-wigs and scorpions; toads and salamanders bringing up the rear. Nothing could resist the curse which the Bishop had pronounced over them. To the shore, on the spot where afterwards the castle Schopfeln was built, the swarm directed its course, and from thence they fell down into the green floods of the lake; and the fish had a good meal on that day....

From that time the monastery founded by St. Pirmin had thriven and flourished; a hot-bed of monastic erudition, of considerable repute, in German lands.

"Reichenau, emerald isle, thou favourite child of kind nature, Rich with the law of science, and all that is pious and godly, Rich in thy fruit-bearing trees, and the swelling grapes of thy vineyards; Proudly, and fair from the waves, the lily lifts its white petals,-- So that thy praise has e'en reached, the misty land of the Britons."

Thus sang the learned monk Ermenrich already in the days of Ludwig the German, when in his abbey of Ellwangen, he was longing for the glittering waters of the Bodensee.

Ekkehard resolved to pay a visit to this rival of his monastery. On the white sandy shore of Ermatingen, a fisherman was standing in his boat, baling out water. Then Ekkehard pointing with his staff towards the island, said: "Ferry me over there, my good friend."

The monk's habit in those days, generally gave weight to all demands, but the fisherman crossly shook his head and said: "I will not take any more of you over, since you fined me a shilling, at the last session-day."

"Why did they fine you?"

"On account of the Kreuzmann!"

"And who is the Kreuzmann?"

"The Allmann."

"He likewise is unknown to me," said Ekkehard. "What is he like?"

"He is made of metal," grumbled the fisherman, "two spans high, and holds three water-lilies in his hand. He was standing in the old willow-tree at Allmannsdorf, and it was good that he stood there; but at the last session they took him out of the tree, and carried him into their cloister. So now he stands on that Italian bishop's grave at Niedertzell. What good does he do there?--Does he help dead Saints to catch fish?"

Then Ekkehard perceived, that the fisherman's Christian faith was as yet not very strong; and also why the bronze idol had cost him a shilling's fine. He had sacrificed a kid to him at night-time, in order that his nets might be well filled with felchen, trout and perch; and the authorities had punished these heathenish memories, according to the imperial laws.

"Be sensible, my good fellow," said Ekkehard, "and try to forget the Allmann. I will restore you a good part of your shilling, if you will row me over."

"What I say," replied the old man, "shall not be turned round like a ring on a finger. I will take none of you. My boy may do it if he likes."

He then whistled through his fingers, which brought his boy, a tall boatman, who undertook to row him over.

When Ekkehard landed, he directed his steps towards the monastery, which hidden between fruit-trees and vine-clad hills, stands in the middle of the island.

The autumn was already advanced, and both old and young, were occupied with the vintage. Here and there, the hood of a serving brother stood out in dark contrast to the red and yellow vine-leaves. On the watch-tower the fathers of the monastery stood assembled in groups, looking down, and taking pleasure in the busy crowd of grape-gatherers below. In a large marble vase, which was believed to be one of the identical vessels, used at the marriage at Cana, the new wine had been earned about in the procession, to receive the blessing. Merry shouts, and singing, were heard from all sides.

Unobserved, Ekkehard reached the monastery, and when he was but a few steps from it, he perceived the heavy tower with its vestibule, the arches of which are ornamented alternately with red and grey sand-stone.

In the court all was hushed and silent. A large dog wagged its tail at the stranger, without giving a single growl, for it knew better than to bark at a monk's habit. All the brotherhood seemed to have been enticed into the open air, by the beautiful weather.

Ekkehard now entered the vaulted room for visitors, near the entrance. Even the door-keeper's chamber next to it, was empty. Open tuns were standing about; some filled already with the newly pressed wine. Behind these, near the wall was a stone bench, and Ekkehard feeling tired from his long walk, the fresh breeze having blown about his head and made him sleepy, he put his staff against the wall, lay down on the bench, and soon fell asleep.

As he lay thus, a slow step approached the cool recess. This was the worthy brother Rudimann, the cellarer. He carried a small stone jug in his right hand, and had come to fulfil his duty by tasting the new wine. The smile of a man, contented with himself and with the world, was on his lips; and his belly had thriven well, like the household of an industrious man. Over this, he wore a white apron, and at his side dangled a ponderous bunch of keys.

"As cellarer shall be chosen some wise man of ripe judgment, sober, and no glutton; no quarreler or fault-finder, no idler and no spendthrift; but a pious man, who will be to the whole brotherhood like a father,"--and as far as the weakness of the flesh allowed this, Rudimann strove to unite in himself the above mentioned qualities. At the same time he had to perform the unpleasant duty of carrying out the punishments, and whenever one of the brothers became liable to a flogging, he tied him to the pillar, and nobody could then complain of the weakness of his arm. That he, besides this, sometimes uttered malicious speeches with a malicious tongue, and tried to entertain the Abbot with insinuations against his fellow-monks,--like the squirrel Ratatöskr of the Edda, which ran up and down the ash-tree called Yggdrasil, and repeated the eagle's angry speeches at the top of the tree, to Nidhögge the dragon at the bottom,--this was none of his business; and he did it of his own free will.

To-day, however, he wore a very benign and mild expression, the result of the excellent vintage; and he dipt his drinking vessel into an open vat, held it towards the window and then slowly sipped its contents, without once observing the sleeping guest.

"This also is sweet," said he, "though it comes from the northern side of the hill. Praised be the Lord; who taking the position and wants of his servants on this island, into due consideration, has

given a fat year after so many meagre ones."

Meanwhile Kerhildis the upper maid-servant, passed the door, carrying a tub full of grapes to the press.

"Kerhildis," whispered the cellarer, "most trustworthy of all maids, take my jug, and fill it with wine from the Wartberg, which you will find over there, that I may compare it with this one."

Kerhildis put down her load, went away and speedily returning, stood before Rudimann with the jug in her hand. Archly looking up at him, for he was a head taller than she was, she said: "to your health."

Rudimann took a long pious draught, as a taste so that the new wine ran down his throat, with a low melodious gurgle.

"It will all be sweet and good," said he, lifting his eyes with emotion, and that they then fell on the maid-servant's beaming countenance,--was scarcely the cellarer's fault, as she had had plenty of time in which to retire.

So he continued with unctious: "But when I look at thee, Kerhildis, my heart becomes doubly glad, for you also thrive as the cloister-wine does this autumn, and your cheeks are like the pomegranates, waiting to be plucked. Rejoice with me, over the goodness of this wine, best of all maids."

So saying, the cellarer put his arm round the waist of the dark-eyed maid, who did not resist very long; for what is a kiss at vintage-time?--and besides she knew Rudimann to be a man of sober character, who did everything in moderation, as it befitted a cellarer.

The sleeper started up from his slumbers on the stone bench. A peculiar noise, which could be caused by nothing else, but by a well-meant and well-applied kiss; struck his ear; and looking through the opening between the vats, he saw the cellarer's garments covered with flowing tresses, which could not well belong to that habit. Up he sprang, for Ekkehard was young and zealous, and moreover accustomed to the strict discipline of St. Gall. The idea that a man in the holy garb of the order, could kiss a woman, had never struck him as possible before.

Snatching up his strong hazel-wand, he quickly advanced, and with it struck a powerful blow at the cellarer, which extended from the right shoulder to the left hip, and which fitted like a coat made according to measure,--and before the astonished Rudimann had recovered from the first shock, there followed a second and third blow of the same description. He dropped his pitcher, which was shattered to pieces on the stone floor, whilst Kerhildis fled.

"In the name of the pitcher at the marriage at Cana!" cried Rudimann, "what is the meaning of this!" and turning round on his assailant, the two looked into each other's faces for the first time.

"'Tis a present which the holy Gallus sends to St. Pirmin," replied Ekkehard fiercely, again raising his stick.

"Well, I might have guessed as much," roared the cellarer, "St. Gallish crab-apples! You may be recognized by your fruits. Rough ground, rough faith and rougher people! Just wait for the present I shall make thee in return!"

Looking about for some weapon, and perceiving a good-sized broom, he took it up, and was just about to attack the disturber of his peace, when a commanding voice called out from the gate:

"Stop! Peace be with you!"--and a second voice with a foreign accent exclaimed: "What Holofernes has sprung out of the ground here?"

It was the Abbot Wazmann, who with his friend Simon Bardo, the former Protospathar of the Greek Emperor, was returning from blessing the new wine. The noise of the quarrel had interrupted a very learned discussion of the Greek, on the siege of the town of Hai by Joshua; and the strategic mistakes of the king of Hai, when he went out at the head of his army, towards the desert. The old Greek commander who had left his home, not to lose his strength of body and mind, in the peaceful state of Byzantium, employed himself very zealously with the study of tactics, in his leisure hours; and he was jestingly called, "the Captain of Capernaum," although he had adopted the garb of the Order.

"Make room for the fight," cried Simon Bardo, who had witnessed with regret the interruption, of the combat by the Abbot. "In my dreams last night I saw a rain of fiery sparks. That means fighting."

But the Abbot in whose eyes the self-assumed power of younger brothers was most obnoxious, commanded peace, and desired to hear the case before him, that he might settle it.

Then Rudimann began his tale, and kept back nothing. "A slight misbehaviour," murmured the Abbot. "Chapter forty-six, of misbehaviour during work-time, whilst gardening or fishing, in the kitchen or cellar. Allemannic law, of that which is done to maids, ... let the antagonist speak."

Then Ekkehard also told what he had witnessed; and how he had acted on the impulse of a just and righteous indignation.

"This is complicated," murmured the Abbot. "Chapter seventy: no brother shall dare to strike a fellow-brother, without the Abbot's sanction. Chapter seventy-two: of that which is becoming in a monk; and which leads to eternal felicity, ... How old are you?"

"Twenty-three."

Then the Abbot seriously resumed. "The quarrel is ended. You brother cellarer, may look on the received blows, as the just retribution, for your forgetfulness; and you stranger I might well bid to continue your journey, for the laws say: 'Whenever a stranger-monk, enters a monastery, he shall be satisfied with everything he meets there, allowing himself only to reprove mildly, and not making himself officious in any way.' In consideration of your youth however, as well as the blameless motive of your action, you shall be allowed to pass an hour's devotion at the chief-altar of our church, in expiation of your rashness, and after that you will be welcome as the guest of the monastery."

The Abbot and his sentence, fared as many an impartial judge has fared before. Neither of the two were satisfied. They obeyed, but they were not reconciled. When Ekkehard was performing his expiatory prayers, many thoughts and reflections on timely zeal, good will and other people's judgment thereon, crossed his mind. It was one of the first lessons he learned, from contact with other men. He returned to the monastery by a little side-door.

What Kerhildis the upper-maid related that evening to her companions, in the sewing-room at Oberzell, where they had to make a dozen new monks' habits, by the flickering light of the pinewood, was couched in such very insulting terms, regarding the disciples of the holy Gallus, that it had better not be repeated here!...

## CHAPTER VI.

### Moengal.

While Ekkehard was performing his compulsory devotions, in the church at Reichenau, Dame Hadwig had stood on the balcony, looking out into the distance;--but not on account of the setting sun, for the sun went to his rest at her back, behind the dark hills of the black-forest, and Dame Hadwig, looked with eager, expectant eyes towards the lake, and the path which led from it up to the Hohentwiel. The view however did not appear to satisfy her, for when the twilight melted into darkness, she went in, rather discontentedly; ordered her chamberlain to come, and conversed a long time with him.

Early the next morning Ekkehard stood at the threshold of the cloister, ready to continue his journey. The Abbot was also up betimes, and was taking a walk in the garden. The serious look of the judge, was no longer visible on his face. Ekkehard said good-bye to him. Then the Abbot with a meaning smile, whispered in his ear: "Happy man, who has to teach grammar, to such a fair pupil." These words stabbed Ekkehard to the heart. An old story rose in his memory; for even within cloister-walls, there are evil, gossiping tongues, and traditional stories which go round, from mouth to mouth.

"You are probably thinking of the time," replied he tauntingly, "when you were instructing the nun Clotildis in the act of dialectics, Sir Abbot."

After this he went down to the boat. The Abbot would much rather have taken a quantity of pepper for his breakfast, than have had that fact called up to his mind. "A happy journey!" he called out after his departing guest.

From that time, Ekkehard had drawn down on himself the enmity of the monks at Reichenau. This however he little heeded; and was rowed down the lake, by the same boat-man of Ermatingen.

Dreamily he gazed about from his boat. Over the lake, transparent white mists were floating, through which the little belfry of Egina's cloister, Niedercell, peeped out on the left, while on the other side, the island stretched out its farthest points. A large stone-built castle could be seen through the willow-bushes, but Ekkehard's eyes were riveted on a more distant point. Proud and grand, in steep, bold outlines a rocky mountain-peak rose above the hills on the shore, like to a mighty spirit, which, ponderous and pregnant with action, towers over the insignificant objects

around. The morning sun was casting faint gleams of light on the rocky edges and steep walls. A little to the right, several lower hills of the same shape, stood modestly there, like sentinels of the mighty one.

"The Hohentwiel," said the boat-man to Ekkehard. The latter had never before beheld the place of his destination, but he did not need the boatman's information. Inwardly thinking, "thus must the mountain be, which she has chosen for her residence."

A deep, earnest expression overspread his features. Mountain-ranges, extensive plains, water and sky, in fact all that is grand and beautiful in nature always produces seriousness. Only the actions of men, sometimes bring a smile to the lips of the looker on. He was thinking of the apostle John, who had gone to the rocky isle of Patmos, and who had there met with a revelation.

The boat-man rowed steadily onwards; and they had already come to the projecting neck of land, on which Radolfzell and a few scattered houses were situated, when they suddenly came in view of a strange little canoe. It was simply made of the rough, hollow trunk of a tree; roofed over and quite covered up with green boughs and water-rushes, so that the rower inside was invisible. The wind drifted it towards a thick plantation of water reeds and bulrushes near the shore.

Ekkehard ordered his ferry-man to stop this curious little boat, and in obedience he pushed his oar into the green covering.

"Ill luck befall you!" called out a deep bass voice from the inside, "*oleum et operam perdidit*, all my labour lost!--Wild geese and water-ducks are gone to the Devil!"

A covey of water-fowl, which hoarsely shrieking rose up from the rushes, corroborated the truth of this exclamation.

After this, the leafy boughs were pushed aside, and a brown weather-beaten and deeply furrowed countenance, peeped out. The man it belonged to, was clothed in an old faded priest's robe, which cut off at the knees, by an unskilled hand, hung down in a ragged fringe. At his girdle, the owner of the boat wore, instead of a rosary, a quiver full of arrows; whilst the strung bow lay at the head of the boat.

The individual just described, was about to repeat his cursing, when he beheld Ekkehard's tonsure and Benedictine garment, and quickly changing his tone, he cried: "Oho! *salve confrater!* By the beard of St. Patrick of Armagh! If your curiosity had left me unmolested another quarter of an hour, I might have invited you to a goodly repast of the game of our lake." With a melancholy expression he cast a look at the covey of wild ducks in the distance.

Ekkehard smilingly lifted his fore-finger: "*Ne clericus venationi incumbat!* No consecrated servant of God shall be a sportsman!"

"Your book-wisdom does not do for us at the Untersee," called out the other. "Are you sent hither perhaps, to hold a church examination, with the parish-priest of Radolfzell?"

"The parish-priest of Radolfzell?" enquired Ekkehard in his turn. "Do I verily see the brother Marcellus?" He cast a side-look on the sportsman's right arm, from which the sleeve was turned back, and there beheld, etched into the flesh, in rough outlines, a picture of our Saviour, encircled by a serpent, over which stood the words, "*Christus vindex.*"

"Brother Marcellus?" laughed the other pushing his hair back from his forehead, "*fuius Troes!* welcome in Moengal's realm!"

He stepped out of the canoe into Ekkehard's boat, and kissing him on cheek and forehead he said: "Health to the holy Gallus! And now we will land together, and you shall be my guest, even without the wild ducks."

"Of yourself, I had conceived a very different idea," said Ekkehard, and this was not to be wondered at.

Nothing gives a more erroneous idea of persons, than when we come to the places, where they once lived and worked, there to see fragmentary bits of their activity; and from the remarks of those left behind, to form in ourselves an impression of those that are gone. The deepest and most peculiar part of the character of a man, is frequently unnoticed by others; even though it be open to the day; and in tradition it disappears entirely.

When Ekkehard had joined the monastery, the brother Marcellus had already left it, to assume the priest's office at Radolfzell. Some neatly written manuscripts, such as Cicero's book on duty, and a Latin Priscianus with Irish characters between the lines, still kept up the remembrance of him. His name too was held in great veneration in the inner cloister-school, where he had been one of the most distinguished teachers. Besides this, he had led a blameless life, but since that time, nothing had been heard of him at St. Gall. For these reasons, instead of the lively sportsman, Ekkehard had expected to find a serious, meagre and pale-faced scholar.

The shores of Radolfzell were soon reached. A thin silver coin, stamped on one side only, satisfied the boat-man, and then the two stepped on shore. A few houses and a handful of

fishermen's huts, surrounded the little church, which holds the remains of St. Radolf.

"We have reached Moengal's dwelling," said the old man. "Be pleased to enter. It's to be hoped that you will not carry tales about my house, to the Bishop of Constance, like the deacon of Rheingau, who pretended that he found the jugs and drinking-horns, of a size, which ought to have been objectionable, in any century."

They entered into a wainscoted hall. Stag-antlers and bison-horns hung over the entrance; while spears and fishing-tackle of every description, ornamented the walls in picturesque confusion. Close to a reversed tun in one corner, stood a dice-box,--in fact, if it had not been the abode of the parish-priest, it might have been that of an imperial gamekeeper.

A few moments later, a jug of somewhat sour wine as well as a loaf of bread and some butter, were placed on the oak table; and when the priest returned from an expedition to the kitchen, he held up his habit like a filled apron, and poured down a shower of smoked fish, before his guest.

"*Heu quod anseres fugasti, antvogelasque et horotumblum!* Alas that you should have frightened away, the wild geese, as well as the ducks and moor-fowls!" said he, "but when a person has to choose between smoked fish and nothing, he always chooses the former."

Members of the same fraternity are quickly at their ease with each other; and a lively conversation was kept up during the meal. But the old man had far more questions to put, than Ekkehard could well answer. Of many a one of his former brothers, nothing else was to be told, but that his coffin had been laid in the vault; side by side with the others; a cross on the wall, besides an entry in the death-register, being the sole traces left, that he had ever lived. The stories, jokes and quarrels, which had been told, thirty years ago, had been replaced by new ones, and all that had happened lately, did not interest him much. Only when Ekkehard told him about the end and aim of his journey he exclaimed: "*Oho confrater!* how could you cry out against all sport, when you yourself aim at such noble deer!"

But Ekkehard turned the subject, by asking him: "Have you never felt any longing for the quiet and study within the cloister-walls?"

At that question the parish-priest's eyes lighted up: "Did Catilina ever feel any longing for the wooden benches of the senate, after they had said to him: *excessit, evasit, erupit?*--Young men, like you cannot understand that. The flesh-pots of Egypt?! *ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes ...* said the dog to the kennel, in which he had lain seven years."

"No, I certainly do not understand you," replied Ekkehard. "What was it, that created such a change in your views," casting a look at the sportsman's implements, which were lying about.

"Time," replied the priest, beating his fish on the table to make them tender, "time and growing experience. But this you need not repeat to your Abbot. I also was once such a man as you are now, for Ireland produces pious people, as is well known here. *Eheu*, what a different being I was when I returned with my Uncle Marcus, from our pilgrimage to Rome. You should have seen the young Moengal then! The whole world was not worth a herring to him, whilst psalm-singing, vigils, and spiritual exercises, were his heart's delight. Thus we entered the monastery of St. Gallus--for in honour of a countryman, an honest Hibernian does not mind, going a few miles out of his way,--and finally I stopped there altogether. Outward property, books, money and knowledge,--the whole man became the monastery's own, and the Irish Moengal, was called Marcellus, and threw his uncle's silver and golden coins out of the window; thus to break down the bridge leading back to the world. They were fine times I tell you; praying, fasting and studying, to my heart's content."--

"But then too much sitting is unhealthy, and much knowledge, gives one a quantity of superfluous work to do. Many an evening I have meditated like a book-worm, and disputed like a magpie; for there was nothing which could not be proved. Where the head of St. John the baptist was buried, and in what language the serpent had spoken to Adam,--all was investigated and demonstrated, while such ideas, as that human beings had also received flesh and blood from their Creator, never entered my head. Ohone, confrater, then there came evil hours for me, such as I hope may be spared you. The head grew heavy, and the hands restless. Neither at the writing-desk nor in the church could I find rest or peace;--hence, hence was the inward cry of my heart. I once said to the old Thieto, that I had made a discovery. What discovery, quoth he? That outside the cloister-walls there was fresh air ... Then they forbade me to go out; but many a night did I steal up to the belfry, to look out and envy the bats, that could fly over into the pinewoods ... Confrater, that cannot be cured by fasting and prayer, for that which is in human nature, must come out."

"The late Abbot at last took pity on me, and sent me here for one year; but the Brother Marcellus never returned. When I cut down a pine-tree in the sweat of my brow, and made myself a boat out of it, and struck down the bird flying in the air, then I began to understand what it meant to be healthy. Hunting and fishing drive away morbid fancies. In this way I have performed the priest's duties at Radolfszell for thirty years, *rusticitate quadam imbutus*,--liable to become a rustic, but what does it matter? 'I am like the pelican in the wilderness, and, like the owl, I have built my nest amidst ruins,' says the psalmist, but I am fresh and strong, and old Moengal does not intend to become a dead man so soon, and he knows that he is at least secure

against one evil ..."

"And that is?" enquired Ekkehard.

"That St. Peter will not one day give me a blow on the forehead with the blessed key of heaven, saying, 'Off with you, who have meddled with vain and useless philosophy!'"

Ekkehard did not reply to Moengal's outpourings. "I suppose," said he, "that you have often hard work with your ecclesiastical duties. Hardened hearts, heathendom, and heresy."

"'Tis not so bad, as they make it out to be," said the old man. "To be sure in the mouths of Bishops and Chamberlains and in the reports of the session and the synod, it seems terrifying enough, when they describe the heathenish idolatry, and threaten it with punishment. Here we have simply the old faith; tracing the Godhead, in tree and river and on mountain-heights. Everybody in this world must have his book of revelations, his apocalypse. Now the people hereabouts, have theirs in the open air; and really, one is capable of high and holy thoughts, when early in the morning, one stands in the water-reeds and sees the glorious sun arise. Nevertheless they come to me, on the Lord's day, and chaunt the mass; and if they were not fined so often, they would open their hearts to the Gospel, far more readily still. A bumper, confrater, to the fresh air!"

"Allow me," said Ekkehard, "I will drink to the health of Marcellus the teacher at the cloister-school, and the learned author of the Irish translation of Priscianus."

"Very well," laughed Moengal. "But with regard to the Irish translation, I am afraid that there is a hitch in the matter!"<sup>[7]</sup>

Ekkehard was very anxious to reach his destination, for anybody who is close to the end of his journey, is loth to tarry long. "The mountain stands fast enough," said Moengal, "that won't run away, you may be sure."

But Moengal's wine, and his ideas of fresh air, had nothing very tempting for him, who was about to go to a Duchess. So he rose from his seat.

"I will accompany you to the borders of my district," said the priest, "for to-day you may still walk by my side, in spite of my torn and faded garments; but when you are once settled down on yonder mountain, you will believe yourself transfigured, and that you have become a grand lord; and on the day that you will pass Radolfszell on horseback, and will behold old Moengal standing on the threshold, then perhaps, you will hardly deign to wave your hand to him,—that is the way of the world. When the 'heuerling' has become big, then it is called 'felchen,' and devours the small ones of its own race."

"It is not fair that you should speak thus," said Ekkehard, kissing his Irish brother.

Then they set out together, Moengal taking his lime-twigs with him, therewith to ensnare birds on his return. It was a long distance through the pine-wood, and no sound was stirring.

Where the trees were less crowded together, they could see the dark mass of the Hohentwiel, throwing its shadow over them. Moengal's sharp eyes now looked searchingly along the path, and shaking his head he muttered: "there's something coming."

They had proceeded a short way, when Moengal seized his companion's arm, and pointing forward, he said: "these are neither wild ducks nor animals of the forest!"

At the same moment was heard a sound like the neighing of a horse in the distance. Moengal sprang aside, glided through the trees, and lying down on the ground, listened intently.

"Sportsman's folly," muttered Ekkehard to himself, quietly waiting till Moengal came back and enquired: "brother, do you know whether St. Gallus is at war with any of the mighty ones in the land?"

"No."

"Then may be that you have offended some one?"

"No."

"Strange," said the old man, "for three armed men are coming towards us."

"Most likely they are messengers sent by the Duchess, to receive me," said Ekkehard, with a proud smile.

"Oho!" muttered Moengal, "you've not hit the mark there. That is not the livery of the Duchess's vassals. The helmet has no distinguishing mark, and no one on the Hohentwiel wears a grey mantle!"

He stood still now.

"Forwards," said Ekkehard. "He whose conscience is clear, is protected by the angels of the Lord."

"Not always, at least in the Hegau," replied the old man. There was no more time for continuing the dialogue, for the tramp of horses' feet, and the clattering of arms was heard, and the next moment, three men on horseback, with closed visors and drawn swords, became visible.

"Follow me!" cried the priest, "*naturate fugam!*" He threw his lime-twigs on the ground, and tried to drag Ekkehard along with him, but when he resisted, Moengal sprang into the bushes alone. The thorns added new rents to the old ones in his well worn garments, but this he heeded not, and tearing himself free, he escaped into the thicket, with the agility of a squirrel. He knew the tricks!

"It is he!" called out one of the riders; upon which the others jumped out of their saddles. Ekkehard stood proudly waiting for them. "What do you want?"--no answer. Then he seized the crucifix suspended from his girdle, and was just beginning with "in the name of our Saviour" ... when he was already thrown on the ground. Rough, strong hands held him as in a vice; a cord was twisted round his arms, which were then tied behind his back; a white handkerchief bound over his eyes, so that he could see nothing, and then the command "forwards" was given.

Surprise and consternation at this strange treatment had quite paralysed him, so that he advanced with tottering steps, upon which they took him up, and carried him to the opening of the wood, where four men were waiting with a sedan-chair.

Into this, they threw their victim and then the train sped onwards; Ekkehard noticing by the tramp of the horses' feet, that his captors remained at his side.

Whilst Moengal was fleeing through the wood, the blackbirds and linnets flew about so confidently from bough to bough; and the thrushes' clear notes sounded so tempting, that he forgot all danger, and his heart upbraided him, for having dropped the lime-twigs.

When even the quail now sang out its "Quakker! quakker!"--it sounded downright provoking, and he turned his steps back towards the spot, where he had left his companion. Everything was quiet there, as if nothing had happened. In the distance he could see the sun shining on the helmets of the departing knights.

"Many that are first, shall be last," said he, shaking his head, and bending down to pick up his lime-twigs. "He expected to go to a princess's castle, and a prison opens to receive him. Holy Gallus, pray for us!"

Further reflections did not trouble Moengal's brains. Such deeds of violence were as plentiful as primroses in spring-time.

Once a fish swam about in the Bodensee, and could not understand, what the cormorant meant by coming down on it, and the black diver had already got it in its beak, and flew away with it, and the fish could still not understand it.

So it was with Ekkehard, lying with tied hands in the sedan-chair; for the more he reflected about this sudden change in his fate, the less could he comprehend it.

Now the idea rose dimly within him, that some friend or relation, of those messengers of the exchequer, might live in the Hegau, and revenge their death, on the innocent disciple of St. Gallus; for Solomon who had occasioned their shameful execution, had once been Abbot of St. Gall. In that case, Ekkehard had to prepare himself for the worst; as he well knew, that neither tonsure, nor monk's habit would be any protection, against having his eyes burnt out, or hands cut off, if it was a question of revenge.

He thought of dying. With his conscience he was at peace, and death itself had no terror for him; but yet in his heart there arose the faint murmur; "why not a year later, after my foot had been set on the Hohentwiel?"

Now his bearers were moving more slowly, as they were walking uphill. Into which of their robbers' nests, were they carrying him? They had ascended for about half an hour, when the tramp of the horses' feet made a hollow sound, as if they were going over a wooden bridge. Still everything was quiet; there was no call even of the watchman on the tower. The decisive moment was close at hand, and Ekkehard now felt new courage and confidence rising within his heart, as he remembered the words of the psalmist:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."

Another bridge was crossed, then a gate opened and the sedan-chair was put down; after which they took out their prisoner. His foot touched the ground; he felt grass, and heard a faint whispering, as if there were many people around him. At the same time the cords were loosened.



"Take away the bandage from your eyes," said one of his companions. He obeyed, and--oh heart, do not break with too much happiness!--he stood in the court-yard on the Hohentwiel.

The wind was rustling in the boughs of the old linden-tree, to which a tent-like linen cloth was fastened, from which garlands of ivy and vine-leaves were hanging. All the inhabitants of the fortress were assembled, and on a stone bench in the midst, sat the Duchess. From her shoulders the princely mantle of dark purple descended in heavy folds; a sweet smile softened her haughty features, and now the stately figure rose, and advanced towards Ekkehard.

"Welcome to Hadwig's domains!"

Ekkehard had as yet scarcely realized his position. He was about to kneel down before her, but she prevented him, by graciously extending her hand to him. Throwing aside his grey mantle, the chamberlain Spazzo, now likewise came forwards, and embraced Ekkehard like an old friend.

"In the name of our gracious mistress, please to receive the kiss of peace."

A faint suspicion that he was being played with, crossed Ekkehard's mind; but the Duchess now called out laughingly: "You have been paid in your own coin. As you did not allow the Duchess of Suabia, to cross the threshold of St. Gallus otherwise, it was but fair that she also should have the man of St. Gall, carried through the gateway into her castle."

Master Spazzo again shook hands with him, and said: "I hope you're not angry; we were but acting up to our mistress's commands!"--He had first headed the attack, and was now helping to welcome Ekkehard, doing both with the same pompous air, for a chamberlain must be flexible, and even know how to reconcile contradictions.

Ekkehard smiled. "For a mere jest, you have acted your part very seriously." He remembered how one of the riders had given him a good thrust between the ribs, with the butt-end of his lance, when they threw him into the sedan-chair. This had certainly not been the Duchess's order; but the lancer had once been present, when Luitfried the nephew of one of the exchequer's messengers, had thrown down the Bishop Solomon; and from that time had kept the erroneous notion, that a good blow or kick, was absolutely necessary to throw down anybody belonging to the church.

Dame Hadwig now took her guest by the hand and showed him her airy castle with its beautiful view of the Bodensee, and the distant mountain peaks. Then all the people belonging to the castle, came and asked for his blessing; amongst them also the lancers; and he blessed them all.--

The Duchess accompanied him to the entrance of his chamber, where new clothes and other comforts awaited him; there she told him to rest himself from the fatigues of the journey; and Ekkehard felt happy and light-hearted, after his strange adventure.

The following night, it occurred in the monastery of St. Gall, that Romeias the gate-keeper, without any reason started up from his couch, and fiercely blew his horn; so that the dogs barked loudly, and everybody awoke. Yet there was no one asking admittance. The Abbot concluded, that it was the doing of evil spirits; but at the same time, ordered Romeias's evening drink, to be reduced to one half, for six days;--a measure which was based however on very wrong suppositions.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Virgilius on the Hohentwiel.

After one has got over the trouble and fatigue of a migration to a new residence, it is very pleasant work, to make everything around cozy and comfortable.

No one ought to think it a matter of indifference, in what place he lives, and what his surroundings are. He whose windows for instance, look out on a high-way, where carts and carriages are constantly passing, and on which stones are being ground to pieces, is certainly oftener visited by gray, dusty thoughts, than by gay many-coloured fancies.

With regard to situation, Ekkehard might well be contented; for the ducal castle on the Hohentwiel, was high, airy and lonely enough;--but still he was not quite satisfied, when on the day after his arrival, Dame Hadwig showed him his domicile.

It was a spacious chamber, with arched windows supported on pillars, and was entered by the same passage, which also led to the Duchess's hall and chambers. Now the impressions which a man takes with him, from his lonely cloister-cell, are not to be shaken off in one single night, and Ekkehard reflected how often he might be disturbed in his meditations, if the tread of armour-clad men, or the softer footstep of serving maids, were to pass his door; where he might even hear the mistress of the castle, passing up and down, in her chambers. So he simply addressed himself to the Duchess saying: "I have a favour to ask of you, my liege lady."

"Speak," said she mildly.

"Could you not give me besides this grand room, a more distant and solitary little chamber, no matter whether it be high up under the roof, or in one of the watch-towers? One great requirement for the study of science, as well as the exercise of prayer, is perfect quiet, according to the rules of the cloister!"

On hearing this, a slight frown overshadowed Dame Hadwig's fair brow. It was not a cloud,--only a cloudlet. "If you wish to be often quite alone," said she with a satirical smile, "why did you not stay at St. Gall?"

Ekkehard bowed his head and remained silent.

"Stay," cried Dame Hadwig, "your wish shall be fulfilled. You can look at the room in which Vincentius, our chaplain lived till his blessed end. He also had the taste of a bird of prey, and preferred being the highest on the Hohentwiel, to being the most comfortable. Praxedis, get the large bunch of keys and accompany our guest."

Praxedis obeyed. The chamber of the late chaplain, was high in the square tower of the castle. Slowly she ascended the winding staircase, followed by Ekkehard. The key grated in the long unused lock, and creaking on its hinges the heavy door swung back. They entered,--but what a sight was before them!

Where a learned man has lived, it takes some time to destroy all traces of him. The room in question, of moderate size and with white-washed walls, contained but little furniture; dust and cobwebs covering everything. On the oak table in the middle stood a small pot, that had once served as an inkstand, but the ink had long been dried up. In one corner stood a stone jug, which in former times had probably held the sparkling wine. On a rough book-shelf were some books, and close by, some open parchments;--but oh misery!--a storm had broken the little window; so Vincentius's room, after his death, had been open to sunshine and rain, to insects and birds. A flock of pigeons taking undisputed possession, had snugly settled down, among all the book-wisdom. On the epistles of St. Paul and Julius Cæsar's Gallic wars, they had built their nests, and now looked with surprise at the intruders.

Opposite the door, was written with charcoal on the wall: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things."--Ekkehard read it and then asked his lovely guide, "was that the late chaplain's last will?"

Praxedis laughed merrily. "He was a pleasant and peace-loving man the late Master Vincentius. 'Comfort and rest are better than many a pound of silver,' was what he often said. But my lady the Duchess, worried him a good deal with her questions; one day she was wanting to know about the stars; the next about herbs and medicine; the day after, about the Holy Bible and the traditions of the church.--'What have you studied for, if you cannot tell me anything?'--she would say, and Master Vincentius's patience was often sorely tried."

Praxedis pointed archly to her forehead.

"'In the middle of Asia,' he often replied, 'there is a black marble stone; and he who can lift it, knows everything and need not ask any more questions.' He was from Bavaria, Master Vincentius, and I suppose that he wrote down, the quotation from Scripture, to console himself."

"Does the Duchess ask so many questions'?" said Ekkehard absently.

"That you will soon find out for yourself," replied Praxedis.

Ekkehard examined the books on the shelves. "I am sorry for the pigeons, but they will have to go."

"Why?"

"They have spoilt the whole of the first book on the Gallic wars; and the epistle to the Corinthians is hopelessly and irreparably damaged."

"Is that a great loss?" asked Praxedis.

"A very great loss!"

"Oh, you naughty doves," said Praxedis jestingly. "Come to me, before yonder pious man drives you out, amongst the hawks and falcons," and she called the birds which had quietly remained in their niche; and when they did not come, she threw a ball of white worsted on the

table; the male dove flew towards it, believing that it were a new dove. With stately steps he approached the white ball, greeting it with a gentle cooing; and when Praxedis snatched it up, the bird flew on her head.

Then she began to sing softly a Greek melody. It was the song of the old, yet ever young singer of Teus.

"Tell me, thou pretty birdie,  
Tell me, from whence thou comest,  
And whence the balmy fragrance  
Which from thy snowy pinions  
Drips down upon the meadow;  
Who art thou? and what wilt thou?"

Ekkehard started up with surprise from the codex, in which he was reading, and threw an almost frightened look on the young girl. If his eye had been more accustomed to see natural grace and beauty, it would probably have rested somewhat longer on the Greek maid. The dove had hopped upon her hand, and she lifted it up with a bended arm. Anacreon's old countryman, who out of a block of Parian marble, created the Venus of Knidos, would have fixed the picture in his memory, if he had witnessed it.

"What are you singing," asked Ekkehard, "it sounds like a foreign language."

"Why should it not be foreign?"

"Greek?"--

"And why should I not sing Greek," pertly rejoined Praxedis.

"By the lyre of Homer," exclaimed Ekkehard, full of surprise, "where in the name of wonder did you learn that; the highest aim of our scholars?"

"At home," quietly replied Praxedis.

Ekkehard cast another look, full of shy respect and admiration at her. While reading Aristotle and Plato he had hardly remembered, that any living persons still spoke the Greek tongue. The idea now dawned upon him, that something was here embodied before him, that in spite of all his spiritual and wordly wisdom, was beyond his reach and understanding.

"I thought I had come as a teacher to the Hohentwiel," said he almost humbly, "and I find my master here. Would you not now and then deign to bestow a grain of your mother-tongue on me?"

"On condition that you will not drive away the doves," replied Praxedis. "You can easily have a grating put up before the niche, so that they do not fly about your head."

"For the sake of pure Greek"--Ekkehard was beginning to say, when the door opened, and the sharp voice of Dame Hadwig was heard.

"What are you talking here about doves and pure Greek? Does it take so much time to look at four walls?--Well, Master Ekkehard, does the den suit your taste?"

He bowed in the affirmative.

"Then it shall be cleaned and put in order," continued Dame Hadwig. "Be quick, Praxedis, and see about it,--and to begin with, let us drive away these doves!"

Ekkehard ventured to put in a word on their behalf.

"Indeed!" said the Duchess, "you desire to be alone, and yet wish to keep doves! Shall we perhaps hang a lute on the wall, and strew rose-leaves into your wine? Well, they shall not be driven out; but they shall appear roasted on our supper-table, this evening."

Praxedis appeared, as if she heard nothing of all this.

"And what was that about the pure Greek?" enquired the Duchess. And Ekkehard simply told her the favour, he had asked of Praxedis. Upon this, the frown returned to Dame Hadwig's forehead. "If you are so very anxious to learn," said she, "you can ask me; for I also speak that language." Ekkehard made no objection, for in her speech there was a certain sharpness, which cut off all replies. The Duchess was strict and punctual in everything. A day or two, after Ekkehard's arrival, she worked out a plan, for learning the Latin language, and so it was settled that they should devote one hour each day to the grammar, and another to the reading of Virgil. This latter was looked forward to with great pleasure by Ekkehard. He intended to apply the whole of his faculties to the new study and to summon up all his erudition and knowledge, in order to make the task easy to the Duchess.

"It is certainly no useless work which the old poets have left behind," he said. "How difficult it would be to learn a language, if it were bequeathed to us, merely through a dictionary, like corn

in a sack, which we should first have to grind into flour, and then to make into bread. Now the poet puts everything in its right place, and the whole is clothed in harmonious forms; so that what otherwise would prove a hard and tough matter for our teeth, we can now drink in like honey-dew."

To mitigate the bitterness of the grammar, Ekkehard could find no means. Every day he wrote a task for the Duchess on parchment, and she proved a very eager and industrious pupil; for each morning when the sun rose over the Bodensee, and cast its early rays on the Hohentwiel, she stood already at her window, learning her task; silently or loud as might be. Once her monotonous reciting of *amo, amas, amat, amamus etc.* reached even Ekkehard's ear in his chamber.

Poor Praxedis was heavily afflicted, as the Duchess to heighten her own zeal, ordered her to learn always the same task with her, which she considered a great nuisance. Dame Hadwig, only a beginner herself, delighted in correcting her handmaiden, and was never so pleased, as when Praxedis took a substantive for an adjective, or conjugated an irregular verb as a regular one.

In the evening the Duchess came over to Ekkehard's room, where everything had to be ready for the reading of Virgil. Praxedis accompanied her, and as no dictionary was found amongst the books which Master Vincentius had left behind, Praxedis who was well-versed in the art of writing, was ordered to begin to make one, as Dame Hadwig did not know so much of that. "What would be the use of priests and monks," said she, "if everybody knew the art belonging to their profession? Let the blacksmiths wield the hammer, the soldiers the sword, and the scribes the pen, and everyone stick to his own business." She had however well practised writing her name, in capital letters, artistically entwined; so that she could affix it, to all documents to which she put her seal, as sovereign of the land.

Praxedis cut up a big roll of parchment, into small leaves; drawing two lines on each, to make three divisions. After each lesson she wrote down the Latin words they had learned in one, the German in the next, and the Greek equivalent in the third column. This last was done by the Duchess's desire, in order to prove to Ekkehard, that they had acquired some knowledge, already before he came. Thus the lessons had fairly begun.

The door of Ekkehard's room, leading into the passage, was left wide open by Praxedis. He rose and was about to shut it, when the Duchess prevented him, by saying: "Do you not yet know the world?"

Ekkehard could not understand the meaning of this. He now began to read and translate the first book of Virgil's great epic poem. Æneas the Trojan rose before their eyes; how he had wandered about for seven years on the Tyrian sea, and what unspeakable pains it had cost him to become the founder of the Roman people. Then came the recital of Juno's anger, when she went to entreat Aeolus to do her bidding; promising the fairest of her nymphs to the God of the winds, if he would destroy the Trojan ships.--Thunder-storms, tempests, and dire ship-wrecks;--the turbulent waves scattering weapons and armour, beams and rafters, of what had once been the stately fleet of the Trojans. And the roar of the excited waves, reach the ears of Neptune himself, who rising from his watery depths, beholds the dire confusion. The winds of Aeolus are ignominiously sent home; the rebellious waves settle down; and the remaining ships, anchor on the Lybian shores ...

So far Ekkehard had read and translated. His voice was full and sonorous, and vibrating with emotion; for he perfectly understood what he had read. It was getting late; the lamp was flickering in its socket, and Dame Hadwig rose from her seat to go.

"How does my gracious mistress like the tale of the heathen poet?" asked Ekkehard.

"I will tell you to-morrow," was the reply.

To be sure, she might have said it there and then; for the impression of what she had heard, was already fixed in her mind; but she refrained from doing so, not liking to hurt his feelings.

"May you have pleasant dreams," she called out as he was departing.

Ekkehard went up to Vincentius's room in the tower, which had been restored to perfect order; all traces of the doves having been removed. He wanted to pray and meditate, as he was wont to do in the monastery, but his head began to burn and before his soul stood the lofty figure of the Duchess; and when he looked straight at her, then Praxedis's black eyes, also peeped at him from over her mistress's shoulders.--What was to become of all this?--He went to the window where the fresh autumn air cooled his forehead, and looked out at the dark vast sky, stretching out over the silent earth. The stars twinkled brightly, some nearer, some farther off, more or less brilliant. He had never before enjoyed such an extensive view of the starry firmament; for on the top of the mountains, the appearance and size of things change much. For a long time he stood thus, until he began to shiver; and he felt as if the stars were attracting him upwards, and that he must rise towards them as on wings ... He closed the window, crossed himself, and went to seek his resting place.

On the next day, Dame Hadwig came with Praxedis to take her grammar lesson. She had learnt many words and declensions, and knew her task well; but she was absent withal.

"Did you dream anything?" she asked her teacher when the lesson was over.

"No."

"Nor yesterday?"

"Neither."

"Tis a pity, for it is said, that, what we dream the first night in a new domicile comes true. Now confess, are you not a very awkward young man?" she continued after a short pause.

"I?" asked Ekkehard greatly surprised.

"As you hold constant intercourse with the poets, why did you not invent some graceful dream, and tell it me? Poetry and dreams,--'tis all the same, and it would have given me pleasure."

"If such is your command," said Ekkehard, "I will do so the next time you ask me; even if I have dreamt nothing."

Such conversations were entirely new and mystical for Ekkehard. "You still owe me your opinion of Virgil," said he.

"Well," returned Dame Hadwig, "if I had been a queen in Roman lands, I do not know whether I should not have burnt the poem, and imposed eternal silence on the man ..."

Ekkehard stared at her, full of amazement.

"I am perfectly serious about it," continued she, "and do you wish to know why?--because he reviles the Gods of his country. I paid great attention, when you recited the speeches of Juno yesterday. That she, the wife of the chief of all the Gods, feels a rankling in her mind, because a Trojan shepherd boy, does not declare her to be the most beautiful,--and being powerless to call up a tempest at her will, to destroy a few miserable ships, must first bribe Aeolus by the offer of a nymph! And then Neptune, who calls himself the king of the seas, and allows strange winds to cause a tempest in his realms; and only notices this transgression, when it is well nigh over!--What is the upshot of all that?--I can tell you, that in a country whose Gods are thus abased and defamed, I should not like to wield the sceptre!"

Ekkehard could not very readily find an answer. All the manuscripts of the ancients, were for him stable and immovable as the mountains; and he was content to read and admire, what lay before him and now such doubts!

"Pardon me, gracious lady," he said, "we have not read very far as yet, and it is to be hoped, that the human beings of the Æneid will find greater favour in your eyes. Please to remember, that at the time when the Emperor Augustus, had his subjects counted, the light of the world began to dawn at Bethlehem. The legend says, that a ray of that light had also fallen on Virgil, which explains why the old Gods could not appear so great in his eyes."

Dame Hadwig had spoken according to her first impression, but she did not intend to argue with her teacher.

"Praxedis," said she in a jesting tone, "what may thy opinion be?"

"My powers of thought are not so great," said the Greek maid. "Everything appeared to me to be so very natural; and that made me like it. And what has pleased me most, was that Mistress Juno gave Aeolus to one of her nymphs for a husband; for though he was somewhat elderly, he was after all, king of the winds, and she must certainly have been well provided for."

"Certainly,"--said Dame Hadwig, making a sign to her to be silent. "'Tis well that we have learnt in what way waiting-women can appreciate Virgil."

Ekkehard was only provoked into 'greater zeal, by the Duchess's contradiction. With enthusiasm he read, on the following evening, how the pious Æneas goes out to seek the Lybian land; and how he meets his mother Venus, dressed in the habit and armour of a Spartan maid; the light bow hanging over her shoulder, and her fair heaving bosom, scarcely hidden by the looped-up garment; and how she directs her son's steps, towards the Lybian princess. Further he read, how Æneas recognized his Divine mother but too late,--calling after her in vain; but how she wrapped him up in a mist, so that he could reach the new town unseen, where the Tyrian queen is building a splendid temple in honour of Juno. There he stands transfixed with admiration, gazing at the representation of the battles before Troy; painted by the hand of the artist; and his soul is refreshed by the recollections of past battles.

And now Dido, the mistress of the land, herself approaches, urging on the workmen, and performing her sovereign's duties.

"And at the gate of the temple, in Juno's honour erected, There on her throne sat the queen, surrounded by arms-bearing warriors, Dealing out justice to all, and dividing the labours amongst them, With an impartial hand, allotting his share to each one ..."

"Read that over again," said the Duchess. Ekkehard complied with her wish.

"Is it written thus in the book?" asked she. "I should not have objected if you had put in these lines yourself; for I almost fancied I heard a description of my own government. Yes, with the human beings of your poet, I am well satisfied."

"It was no doubt easier to describe them, than the Gods," said Ekkehard. "There are so many men in this world ..."

She made him a sign to continue. So he read on, how the companions of Æneas came, to implore her protection, and how they sung their leader's praise; who, hidden by a cloud, stood close by. And Dido opens her town to the helpless ones; and the wish arises in her, that Æneas their king, might also be thrown by the raging waves on her shores; so that the hero feels a great longing to break through the cloud that is veiling him.

But when Ekkehard began with:

"Scarce had she uttered this wish, when the veiling cloud, floated backwards ..."

a heavy tread was heard, and the next moment, in came Master Spazzo the chamberlain; wanting to have a look at the Duchess, taking her lesson. Most likely he had been sitting with the wine-jug before him, for his eyes were staring vacantly, and the salutation-speech died on his lips. It was not his fault though; for quite early in the morning, he had felt his nose burn and itch dreadfully, and that is an unmistakable sign, of a tipsy evening to come.

"Stop there," cried the Duchess, "and you Ekkehard continue!"

He read on with his clear expressive voice.

"Showing Æneas himself, in all the bloom of his beauty, High and lofty withal; godlike, for the heavenly mother, Having with soft flowing locks, and glorious features endowed him, Breathing, into his eyes, serenity and radiance for ever. Like, as the ivory may, by dexterous hands be embellished, Or as the Parian stone, encircled by red, golden fillets. Then he, addressing the queen, to the wonder of all the surroundings, Suddenly turned, and said: Behold then, him you were seeking, Me, the Trojan Æneas, escaped from the Lybian breakers."

Master Spazzo stood there, in utter confusion; whilst an arch smile played around the lips of Praxedis.

"When you honour us next with your presence," called out the Duchess, "please to choose a more suitable moment for your entrance; so that we are not tempted to imagine you to be, 'Æneas the Trojan escaped from the Lybian breakers!'"

Master Spazzo quickly withdrew, muttering: "Æneas the Trojan? has another Rhinelandish adventurer forged some mythical pedigree for himself? Troy?!--and clouds floating backwards?... Wait Æneas the Trojan; when we two meet, we shall break a lance together! Death and damnation!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Audifax.

In those times, there also lived on the Hohentwiel a boy, whose name was Audifax. He was the child of a bondsman, and had lost both his parents early in life. He had grown up like a wild mountain-ash, and the people did not care much about him. He belonged to the castle, as the house-leek did that grew on the roof; or the ivy which had fastened its tendrils to the walls. As he grew older he was entrusted with the care of the goats; and this office he fulfilled faithfully enough; driving them out and home again, every day. He was a shy and silent boy, with a pale face, and short-cut fair hair, for only the free-born were allowed to wear long waving locks.

In the spring, when trees and bushes put forth their new shoots, Audifax loved to sit in the open air; making himself pipes out of the young wood, and blowing thereon. It was a doleful, melancholy music, and Dame Hadwig had once stood on her balcony, listening to it for hours. Probably the plaintive notes of the pipe had suited her fancy that day; for when Audifax came home with his goats on the evening, she told him to ask a favour for himself; and he begged for a little bell for one of his favourite goats, called blackfoot. Blackfoot got the little bell, and from

that time nothing particular had broken the monotonous routine of Audifax's life. But with increasing years he became shyer, and since the last spring he had even given up blowing on his pipe. It was now late in the autumn, but the sun was shining brightly still, and he was driving his goats as usual down the rocky mountain slope; and sitting on a rock, looked out into the distance. Through the dark fir-trees he could see the glittering surface of the Bodensee. All around, the trees were already wearing their autumnal colours, and the winds were playing merrily with the rustling red and yellow leaves on the ground. Heaving a deep sigh, Audifax after a while began to cry bitterly.

At that time, a little girl, whose name was Hadumoth, was minding the geese and ducks belonging to the castle poultry-yard. She was the daughter of an old maid-servant, and had never seen her father. This Hadumoth was a very good little girl, with bright red cheeks and blue eyes; and she wore her hair in two tresses falling down on her shoulders. The geese were kept in excellent order and training, and though they would stick out their long necks sometimes, and cackle like foolish women,--not one of them dared to disobey its mistress; and when she waved her hazel-wand, they all went quietly and decently along; refraining from useless noise. Often they picked their herbs in company with the goats of Audifax; for Hadumoth rather liked the short-haired goat-herd, and often sat beside him; and the two looked up together at the blue sky; and the animals soon found out the friendly feelings between their guardians, and consequently were friendly also.

At that moment Hadumoth was likewise coming down the hill with her geese, and on hearing the tinkling of the goat-bells, she looked about for the driver. Then she beheld him sitting on the stone, in his distress; and going up to him, sat down by his side and said: "Audifax, what makes thee cry?"

But the boy gave no answer. Then Hadumoth put her arm round his shoulders, drew his little smooth head towards her and said sorrowfully: "Audifax, if thou criest, I must cry also."

Then Audifax tried to dry his tears, saying: "Thou needest not cry, but I must. There is something within me, that makes me cry."

"What is in thee, tell me?" she urged him.

Then he took one of the stones, such as were lying about plentifully, and threw it on the other stones. The stone was thin and produced a ringing sound.

"Didst thou hear it?"

"Yes," replied Hadumoth, "it sounded just as usual."

"Hast thou also understood the sound?"

"No."

"Ah, but I understand it, and therefore I must cry," said Audifax. "It is now many weeks ago, that I sat in yonder valley on a rock. There it first came to me. I cannot tell thee how, but it must have come from the depths below; and since then, I feel as if my eyes and ears were quite changed, and in my hands I sometimes see glittering sparks. Whenever I walk over the fields, I hear it murmuring under my feet, as if there were some hidden spring; and when I stand by the rocks, I see the veins running through them; and down below, I hear a hammering and digging, and that must come from the dwarfs, of which my grandfather has told me many a time. And sometimes I even see a red glowing light, shining through the earth.... Hadumoth, I must find some great treasure, and because I cannot find it, therefore I cry."

Hadumoth made the sign of the cross, and then said: "Thou must have been bewitched somehow, Audifax. Perhaps thou hast slept after sunset on the ground, in the open air; and thus one of the goblins below, has got power over thee. Wait, I know something better than crying."

She ran up the hill, speedily returning with a small cup full of water, and a bit of soap, which Praxedis had once given her; as well as some straws. Then she made a good lather, and giving one of the straws to Audifax she said: "There, let us make soap-bubbles, as we used to do. Dost thou remember, when we made them last time, how they always grew bigger and more beautifully coloured; and how they flew down the valley, glittering like the rain-bow? And how we almost cried when they burst?"

Audifax had taken the straw without saying a word, and had blown a fine bubble, which fresh like a dew-drop was hanging at the end of the straw; and he held it up into the air to let the sun shine on it.

"Dost thou recollect, Audifax," continued the girl, "what thou saidst to me once, when we had used up all our soap-water, and it became night, with the stars all coming out?--'These are also soap-bubbles,' thou saidst, 'and the good God is sitting on a high mountain, blowing them, and he can do it better than we can.'" ...

"No, I do not remember that," said Audifax.

He hung down his head again, and began to cry afresh. "What must I do, to find the treasure?" sobbed he.

"Be sensible," said Hadumoth, "what wilt thou do with the treasure, if thou couldst find it?"

"I should buy my liberty, and thine also; and all the land from the Duchess; mountain and all; and I should have made for thee a golden crown, and for every goat a golden bell, and for myself a flute made of ebony and pure gold." ...

"Of pure gold," laughed Hadumoth. "Dost thou know, what gold looks like?"

Audifax pointed with his fingers to his lips. "Canst thou keep a secret?" She nodded in the affirmative. "Then promise me with your hand." She gave him her hand.

"Now I will show you, how pure gold looks," said the boy, diving into his breast-pocket, and pulling out a piece like a good-sized coin, but shaped like a cup. On it were engraven mystic, half-effaced characters. It glistened and shone brightly in the sun, and was really gold. Hadumoth balanced it on her forefinger.

"That I found in yonder field; far over there, after the thunderstorm," said Audifax. "Whenever the many-coloured rain-bow descends to us, there come two angels, who hold out a golden cup, so that its ends should not touch the rough and rain-drenched ground; and when it vanishes again, they leave their cups on the fields, as they cannot use them twice; for fear of offending the rain-bow."

Hadumoth began to believe that her companion was really destined to obtain some great treasure. "Audifax," said she, giving him back his rain-bow cup, "this will not help thee. He who wants to find a treasure, must know the spell. Down in the depth below, they keep a good watch over their treasures, and don't give up anything, unless they are forced to do it."

"Oh, yes, the spell!" said Audifax with tearful eyes. "If I only knew that!"

"Hast thou seen the holy man already?" asked Hadumoth.

"No."

"For some days a holy man has been in the castle, who is sure to know all spells. He has brought a great book with him, out of which he reads to the Duchess; in it is written everything; how one conquers all the spirits in air, earth, water and fire. The tall Friderun told the men-servants; and that the Duchess had made him come, to strengthen her power; and to make her remain for ever young and beautiful, and live to eternity."

"I will go to the holy man then," said Audifax

"They will beat you perhaps," warned Hadumoth.

"They will not beat me," replied he. "I know something which I will give him, if he tells me the spell."

Meanwhile the evening had set in. The two children arose from their stony seat; goats and geese were collected; and then, in well organized troops, like soldiers, were driven up the hill, and into their respective sheds. That same evening, Ekkehard read out to the Duchess, the end of the first book of the *Æneid*, which had been interrupted by Master Spazzo's untimely entrance.-- How Dido greatly surprised by the hero's unexpected appearance, invites him as well as his companions into her hospitable halls;--and Dame Hadwig gave an approving nod, at the following words of Dido:

"I, by a similar fate, with many a sorrow acquainted, Wearily erring about, till I found a home in this country, Grief is no stranger to me, and has taught me to help the afflicted."

Then *Æneas* sends back *Achates* to the ships, that he might bring the good news to *Ascanius*; for on him was centred all the care and affection of his father. But *Dame Venus*, whose head is rife with new cunning, wishes to enflame *Dido's* heart with love for *Æneas*. So she removed *Ascanius* to the distant *Idalian* groves and gave his form to the *God of love*; who divesting himself of his wings, and imitating the carriage and gait of *Ascanius*, followed the *Trojans* sent to fetch him, and thus appeared before the queen in her palace at *Carthago*.

"Often she thus could be found, with her soul in her eyes, gazing at him, Then too, many a time, she presses him close to her bosom, Little knowing, poor queen, to what God she is giving a shelter. Bent on his mother's designs, in her heart he effaces the image Of *Sichæus* her spouse; then tries to rekindle her passions, Calling up feelings within her, which long had slumber'd forgotten."

"Stop a moment," said *Dame Hadwig*. "This part, I think, is again very poor, and weakly conceived."



"Poor, and weakly conceived?" asked Ekkehard.

"What need is there of Amor," she said. "Could it not happen without using cunning and deceit, and without his interference that the memory of her first husband could be effaced in the heart of a widow?"

"If a God himself made the mischief," said Ekkehard, "then queen Dido's behaviour is excused, or even justified;--that I believe is the intention of the poet." Ekkehard probably thought this a very clever remark, but the Duchess now rose, and pointedly said: "Oh that of course alters the matter! So she needed an excuse!--really that idea did not strike me! Good night."

Proudly she stepped through the chamber; her long flowing garments rustling reproachfully.

"'Tis strange," thought Ekkehard, "but to read Virgil with women, has certainly its difficulties." Further his reflections did not go ...

The following day he was going over the courtyard, when Audifax the goat-herd came to him; kissed the hem of his garment, and then looked up at him, with beseeching eyes.

"What dost thou want?" asked Ekkehard.

"I should like to know the spell," replied Audifax timidly.

"What spell?"

"To lift the treasure, out of the deeps."

"That spell I should like to know also," said Ekkehard laughing.

"Oh, you have got it, holy man," said the boy eagerly. "Have you not got the great book, out of which you read to the Duchess, in the evening?"

Ekkehard looked at him sharply. He became suspicious; remembering the way, in which he had come to the Hohentwiel. "Has anybody prompted thee,--thus to interrogate me?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

Then Audifax began to cry, and sobbed out, "Hadumoth."

Ekkehard did not understand him. "And who is Hadumoth?"

"The goose-girl," faltered the boy.

"Thou art a foolish boy, who ought to mind his business."

But Audifax did not go.

"You are not to give it me for nothing," said he. "I will show you something very pretty. There must be many treasures in the mountain. I know one, but it is not the right one; and I should so like to find the right one!"

Ekkehard's attention was roused. "Show me what thou knowest." Audifax pointed downwards; and Ekkehard going out of the court-yard followed him down the hill. On the back of the mountain, where one beholds the fir-clad Hohenstoffeln and Hohenhöwen, Audifax quitted the path, and went into the bushes, towards a high wall of grey rocks.

Audifax pushed aside the opposing branches, and tearing away the moss, showed him a yellow vein, as broad as a finger, running through the grey stone. The boy then managed to break off a bit of the yellow substance, which stuck in the chinks of the rock, like petrified drops. In the bright gold-coloured mass, small opal crystals, in reddish white globules, were scattered.

Closely examining it, Ekkehard looked at the detached piece, which was unknown to him. It was no precious stone; the learned men in later years, gave it the name of Natrolith.

"Do you see now, that I know something?" said Audifax.

"But what shall I do with it?" enquired Ekkehard.

"That you must know better than I. You can have them polished, and adorn your great books with them. Will you now give me the spell?"

Ekkehard could not help laughing at the boy. "Thou oughtest to become a miner," he said, turning to go.

But Audifax held him fast by his garment.

"No, you must first teach me something out of your book."

"What shall I teach you?"

"The most powerful charm."

An inclination to allow himself an innocent joke, now came into Ekkehard's serious mind. "Come along with me then, and thou shalt have the most powerful charm."

Joyfully Audifax went with him. Then Ekkehard laughingly told him the following words out of Virgil:

"Auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia cogis pectora?"

With stubborn patience, Audifax repeated the foreign words, over and over again, until he had fixed them in his memory.

"Please to write it down, that I may wear it on me," he now entreated.

Ekkehard wishing to complete the joke, wrote the words on a thin strip of parchment, and gave it to the boy; who gleefully hiding it in his breast-pocket, again kissed his garment, and then darted off; with innumerable mad gambols, outrivalling the merriest of his goats.

"This child holds Virgil in greater honour, than the Duchess," thought Ekkehard to himself.

At noon-tide Audifax was again sitting on his rock; but this time there were no tears glistening in his timid eyes. For the first time, after a long while, his pipe was taken out, and the wind carried its notes into the valley, where they reached his friend Hadumoth; who came over at once, and gaily asked him: "Shall we make soap-bubbles again?"

"I will make no more soap-bubbles," said Audifax, and resumed his pipe-blowing; but after a while, he looked about carefully, and then drawing Hadumoth quite close to him, he whispered in her ear, his eyes glistening strangely: "I have been to see the holy man. This night we will seek the treasure. Thou must go with me." Hadumoth readily promised.

In the servants' hall, the supper was finished; and now they all rose from their benches at the same time, and arranged themselves in a long file. At the bottom stood Audifax and Hadumoth, and it was the latter who used to say the prayers, before these rough, but well-meaning folks. Her voice was rather trembling this time.

Before the table had been cleared, two shadows glided out, by the yet unlocked gate. They belonged to Hadumoth and Audifax; the latter going on before. "The night will be cold," he said to his companion, throwing a long-haired goat's skin over her.

On the southern side where the mountain wall is steepest, there was an old rampart. Here Audifax stopped, as it afforded them a shelter against the keen night-wind of autumn. He stretched out his arm and said: "I think this must be the place. We have yet to wait a long time, till midnight."

Hadumoth said nothing. The two children sat down side by side. The moon had risen, and sent her trembling light, through airy, scattered cloudlets. In the castle some windows were lighted up; they were again reading out of their Virgil. Everything was quiet and motionless around; only at rare intervals, the hoarse shriek of an owl was heard. After a long while, Hadumoth timidly said: "How will it be, Audifax?"

"I don't know," was the answer. "Somebody will come and bring it; or the earth will open, and we must descend; or ..."

"Be quiet, I am frightened."

After another long interval, during which Hadumoth had slumbered peacefully, her head resting on Audifax's bosom,—the latter, rubbing his eyes hard, to drive away sleepiness, now awakened his companion.

"Hadumoth," said he, "the night is long, wilt thou not tell me something?"

"Something evil has come into my mind," replied she. "There was once a man, who went out in the early morning, at sunrise, to plough his field; and there he found the gold-dwarf, standing in a furrow and grinning at him, who spoke thus: 'take me with you. He who does not seek us, shall have us; but he who seeketh us, we strangle him ...' Audifax, I am so frightened."

"Give me thy hand," said Audifax, "and have courage."

The lights on the castle had all died out. The hollow bugle-notes of the watchman on the tower, announced midnight. Then Audifax knelt down, and Hadumoth, beside him. The former had taken off his wooden shoe from his right foot, so that the naked sole touched the dark earth. The parchment strip he held in his hand, and with a clear firm voice he pronounced the words, the meaning of which he did not understand,

He remembered them well. And on their knees the two remained, waiting for that which was to come. But there came neither dwarf nor giant, and the ground did not open either. The stars over their heads, glittered coldly, and the chill night-air blew into their faces ... Yet a faith so strong and deep, as that of the two children, ought not to be laughed at, even if it cannot remove mountains, or bring up treasures from the deep.

Now a strange light was seen on the firmament. A shooting star, marking its way by a trailing line of light, fell down; followed by many others. "It is coming from above," whispered Audifax, convulsively pressing the little maiden to his side. "*Auri sacra fames* ..." he called out once more into the night. Then the golden lines crossed each other; and soon one meteor after another became extinguished, and everything in the sky, was again quiet as before.

Audifax looked with anxious eyes around; then he rose sorrowfully, and said in faltering tones: "'Tis nothing; they have fallen into the lake. They grudge us everything. We shall remain poor."

"Hast thou said the words, which the holy man gave thee, quite right?"

"Exactly so as he taught me."

"Then he has not told thee the right spell. Probably he wants to find the treasure for himself. Perhaps he has put a net in the place where the stars fell down ..."

"No, I don't believe that," said Audifax. "His face is mild and good, and his lips are not deceitful."

Hadumoth was thoughtful.

"Perhaps he does not know the right words?"

"Why not?"

"Because he has not got the right God. He prays to the new God. The old Gods were great and strong also."

Audifax pressed his fingers on the lips of his companion. "Be silent."

"I am no longer afraid," said Hadumoth. "I know someone else, who knows all about spells and charms."

"Who is it?"

Hadumoth pointed to a steep dark mountain, opposite. "The woman of the wood," replied she.

"The woman of the wood?" repeated Audifax aghast. "She, who made the great thunder-storm, when the hailstones fell as big as pigeon's eggs, into the fields; and who has eaten up the count of Hilzingen, who never returned home?"

"Just on account of that. We will ask her. The castle will still be closed for some hours, and the night is cold."

The little goose-girl had become bold and adventurous; for her sympathy with Audifax was great, and she wanted so much to help him to the fulfilment of his wishes. "Come," said she eagerly, "if thou art frightened in the dark wood, thou canst blow on thy pipe; and the birds will answer thee, for it will soon be dawn."

Audifax did not raise any further objection. So they walked on northwards, through the dark fir-wood. They both knew the path well. Not a human creature was stirring about; only an old fox, lying in ambush, for some rabbit or partridge, caught sight of them and was as little satisfied with their appearance, as they had been with the shooting stars.

Foxes also, have to bear their disappointments in life; therefore it drew in its tail, and hid itself in the bushes.

The two children had gone on for about an hour, when they reached the top of the Hohenkrähen. Hidden amongst trees, there stood a small stone hut, before which they stopped. "The dog is sure to bark," said Hadumoth. But no dog was heard. They approached nearer and saw that the door stood wide open.

"The woman of the wood is gone," they said. But on the high rock on the Hohenkrähen, a small fire was still faintly burning; and dark shadows could be seen gliding about it. Then the children crept along the steep path leading up to the rock.

The first gleam of the coming dawn, was already visible over the Bodensee. The path was very narrow, and a projecting piece of rock, over which a mighty oak-tree spread out its branches hid the fire from their view. There, Audifax and Hadumoth cowered down, and peeped round the

corner. Then they saw, that some big animal had been killed. A head, apparently that of a horse, was nailed to the stem of the oak; and weapons as well as a quantity of bones, lay scattered about; while a vase filled with blood, stood beside the fire.

Around a roughly hewn piece of rock, serving as table, a number of men were sitting. On it, stood a big kettle of beer, out of which they filled and refilled their stone jugs.

At the foot of the oak, sat a woman, who was certainly not so lovely, as the Allemannic virgin Bissula; who inflamed the heart of the Roman statesman Ausonius, in spite of his age, to such a degree that he went about in his prefecture, spouting poetry in her praise: "her eyes are blue as the colour of the Heavens, and like gold is her wavy hair. Superior to all the dolls of Latium, is she, a child of the barbarians; and he who wants to paint her, must blend the rose with the lily." [8] The woman on the Hohenkrähen was old and haggard.

The men were looking at her; whilst the dawn was evidently spreading in the east. The mists hanging over the Bodensee, began to move, and now the sun was casting his first ray on the hills, burnishing their tops with gold. The fiery ball itself had just risen on the horizon, when the woman jumped up; the men following her example. She swung a bunch of mistletoe and fir-tree branches over her head, and then dipping it into the vase, three times sprinkled the bloody drops towards the sun; three times also over the men, and then poured out the contents of the vase, at the foot of the tree.

The men all seized their jugs, and rubbing them in a monotonous way, three times on the smooth surface of the rock, to produce a strange humming noise, lifted them together towards the sun, and then drained them at one draught. The putting them down again, sounded like one single blow, so simultaneous, was the movement. After this everyone put on his mantle, and then they all went silently down hill.

It was the first night of November.

When all had become quiet again, the children stepped out of their hiding-place, and confronted the old woman. Audifax had taken out the slip of parchment,--but the hag snatching up a brand out of the fire, approached them with a threatening look; so that the children hastily turned round, and fled down the hill, as fast as their feet could carry them.

## CHAPTER IX.

### The Woman of the Wood.

Audifax and Hadumoth had returned to the castle on the Hohentwiel, without anybody having noticed their having made this nightly expedition. They did not speak of their adventures, even to each other; but Audifax brooded over them night and day. He became rather negligent in his duties, so that one of his flock got lost in the hilly ground near where the Rhine flows out of the Bodensee. So Audifax went to look for the goat; and after spending a whole day in the pursuit, he triumphantly returned with the truant, in the evening.

Hadumoth welcomed him joyfully; delighted at his success, which saved him from a whipping. By and by, the winter came, and the animals remained in their respective stalls. One day the two children were sitting alone before the fire-place in the servant's hall.

"Dost thou still think of the treasure and the spell?" said Hadumoth.

Then Audifax drew closer to her and whispered mysteriously. "The holy man has after all got the right God."

"Why so?" asked Hadumoth. He ran away to his chamber where, hidden in the straw of his mattress, were a number of different stones. He took out one of these and brought it to her.

"Look here," he said. It was a piece of grey mica-slate, containing the remains of a fish; the delicate outlines of which, were clearly visible. "That's what I have found at the foot of the Schiener mountain, when I went to look for the goat. That must come from the great flood, which Father Vincentius, once preached about; and this flood, the Lord of Heaven and Earth sent over the world, when he told Noah to build the big ship. Of all this, the woman of the wood knows nothing."

Hadumoth became thoughtful. "Then it must be her fault, that the stars did not fall into our

lap. Let us go and complain of her, to the holy man."

So they went to Ekkehard, and told him all that they had beheld that night on the Hohenkrähen. He listened kindly to their tale, which he repeated to the Duchess in the evening. Dame Hadwig smiled.

"They have a peculiar taste, my faithful subjects," said she. "Everywhere handsome churches have been erected, in which the Gospel is preached to them. Fine church-music, great festivals and processions through the waving corn-fields, with cross and flag at their head,—all this does not content them. So they must needs sit on their mountaintops in cold, chilly nights, not understanding what they're about, except that they drink beer. 'Tis really wonderful. What do you think of the matter, pious Master Ekkehard?"

"It is superstition," replied he, "which, the Evil One sows in weak and rebellions hearts. I have read in our books about the doings of the heathens, how they perform their idolatrous rites in dark woods; by lonely wells and even at the graves of their dead."

"But they are no longer heathens," said Dame Hadwig. "They are all baptized and belong to some parish-church. But nevertheless some of the old traditions still live among them; and though these have lost their meaning, they yet run through their thoughts and actions, as the Rhine does in winter, flowing noiselessly on, under the icy cover of the Bodensee. What would you do with them?"

"Annihilate them," said Ekkehard. "He who forsakes his christian faith and breaks the vows of his baptism, shall be eternally damned."

"Not so fast, my young zealot!" continued Dame Hadwig. "My good Hegau people are not to lose their heads, because they prefer sitting on the cold top of the Hohenkrähen, on the first night of November, to lying on their straw-mattresses. For all that, they do their duties well enough, and fought under Charlemagne against the heathenish Saxons, as if everyone of them had been a chosen combatant of the Church itself."

"With the Devil there can be no peace," cried Ekkehard hotly. "Are you going to be lukewarm in your faith, noble Mistress?"

"In reigning over a country," returned she with a slight sarcasm in her voice—"one learns a good deal that is not written down in books. Don't you know that a weak man is often more easily defeated by his own weakness, than by the sharpness of the sword? When the holy Gallus one day visited the ruins of Bregenz, he found the altar of St. Amelia destroyed, and in its place three metal idols erected; and around the great beer-kettle the men sat drinking; for this is a ceremony which is never omitted when our Suabians wish to show their piety in the old fashion. The holy Gallus did not hurt a single man amongst them; but he cut their idols to pieces, threw them into the green waves of the lake, and made a large hole into their beer-kettle. On this very spot he preached the Gospel to them, and when they saw that no fire fell down from the Heavens to destroy him, they were convinced that their Gods were powerless, and so became converted. So you see that to be sensible is not to be lukewarm." ...

"That was in those times," began Ekkehard, but Dame Hadwig continued: "And now the Church has been established from the source of the Rhine to the North Sea, and far stronger than the ancient castles of the Romans, a chain of monasteries, fortresses of the christian faith, runs through the land. Even into the recesses of the Black-forest the Gospel has penetrated; so why should we wage war so fiercely against the miserable stragglers of the olden times?"

"Then you had better reward them," said Ekkehard bitterly.

"Reward them?" quoth the Duchess. "Between the one and the other, there is still many an expedient left. Perhaps it were better if we put a stop to these nightly trespasses. No realm can be powerful in which two different creeds exist, for that leads to internal warfare, which is rather dangerous, as long as there are plenty of outward enemies. Besides, the laws of the land have forbidden them these follies, and they must find out, that our ordinances and prohibitions are not to be tampered with in that way."

Ekkehard did not seem to be satisfied yet; a shadow of displeasure being still visible on his countenance.

"Tell me," continued the Duchess, "what is your opinion of witchcraft in general?"

"Witchcraft," said Ekkehard seriously, taking a deep breath, which seemed to denote the intention of indulging in a longer speech than usual—"witchcraft is a damnable art, by which human beings make treaties with the demons inhabiting the elements, whose workings in nature are everywhere traceable; rendering them subservient by these compacts. Even in lifeless things there are latent living powers, which we neither hear nor see, but which often tempt careless and unguarded minds, to wish to know more and to attain greater power, than is granted to a faithful servant of the Lord. That is the old sorcery of the serpent; and he, who holds communion with the powers of darkness, may obtain part of their power, but he reigns over the Devils by Beelzebub himself, and becomes his property, when his time is at an end. Therefore witchcraft is as old as sin itself, and instead of the one true faith, the belief in the Trinity reigning paramount, fortune-

tellers and interpreters of dreams, wandering actors and expounders of riddles, still infest the world; and their partisans are to be found above all among the daughters of Eve."

"You are really getting polite!" exclaimed Dame Hadwig.

"For the minds of women," continued Ekkehard, "have in all times been curious and eager to attain forbidden knowledge. As we shall proceed with our reading of Virgil, you will see the excess of witchcraft embodied in a woman, called Circe, who passed her days, singing, on a rocky headland. Burning chips, of sweet-scented cedar-wood, lighten up her dark chambers, where she is industriously throwing the shuttle, and weaving beautiful tapestry; but outside in the yard, is heard the melancholy roaring of lions and tigers, as well as the grunting of swine, which were formerly men, whom by administering to them her potent magic philters, she has changed into brutes."

"I declare, you are talking like a book," said the Duchess pointedly. "You really ought to extend your study of witchcraft. To-morrow you shall ride over to the Hohenkrähen and examine, whether the woman of the wood is a Circe also. We give you full authority to act in our name, and are truly curious to ascertain what your wisdom will decree."

"It is not for me to reign over a people and to settle the affairs of this world," replied he evasively.

"That will be seen," said Duchess Hadwig. "I do not think that the power of commanding has ever embarrassed anyone, least of all a son of the Church."

So Ekkehard submitted; the more readily, as the commission was a proof of confidence on her part. Early on the next morning he rode over to the Hohenkrähen on horseback, taking Audifax with him, to show him the way.

"A happy journey, Sir Chancellor!" called out a laughing voice behind him. It was the voice of Praxedis.

They soon reached the old hag's dwelling, which was a stone hut, built on a projecting part of the high rock, about half way up. Mighty oaks and beech-trees spread their boughs over it, hiding the summit of the Hohenkrähen. Three high stone steps led into the inside, which was a dark, but airy chamber. On the floor, there lay heaps of dried herbs, giving out a strong fragrance. Three bleached horses' skulls grinned down fantastically from the walls; whilst beneath them hung the huge antlers of a stag. In the door-post was cut a double, intricate triangle; and on the floor, a tame wood-pecker, and a raven with cropped wings, were hopping about.

The inhabitant of this abode, was seated beside the flickering fire on the hearth; sewing some garment. By her side stood a high, roughly hewn weather-beaten stone. From time to time, she bent down to the hearth, and held out her meagre hand over the coals; for the cold of November was beginning to be felt, especially on the mountains. The boughs of an old beech-tree came almost into the room through the window. A faint breeze was stirring them; and the leaves being withered and sere, trembled and fell off; a few of them falling right into the chamber.

The woman of the wood was old and lonely; and suffering probably from the cold.

"There you are lying now, despised and faded and dead," she said to the leaves--"and I am like you." A peculiar expression now came to her old wrinkled face. She was thinking of former times, when she also had been young and blooming, and had had a sweetheart of her own. But his fate had driven him far away from his native fir-woods. Plundering Normans, coming up the Rhine, robbing and burning wherever they came, had carried him off as a prisoner, like so many others; and he had staid with them more than a year, and had become a seaman, and in the rough sea-air he had got to be rough and hard also. When at last they gave him his liberty, and he returned to his Suabian woods, he still carried with him the longing for the North-Sea, and pined for his wild sailor life. The home-faces were no longer pleasant to his eyes; those of the monks and priests least of all; and as misfortune would have it, in the heat of passion he slew a monk who had upbraided him, so that he could no longer remain in his home.

The thoughts of the old woman were constantly recurring that day, to the hour when he had parted from her for ever. Then, the servants of the judge led him to his cottage in the wood of Weiterdingen, and exacted six hundred shillings from him, as a fine for the man he had slain. Then he had to swear a great oath, that beside his cottage and acre, he had nothing left, either above or underground.

After that he went into his house, took a handful of earth, and threw it with his left hand over his shoulder, at his father's brother, in sign that his debt was thus to pass on to this his only remaining relation by blood. This done, he seized his staff, and dressed in his linen shirt, without shoes or girdle, he jumped over the fence of his acre, for such was the custom of the "*Chrene Chruda*,"<sup>[9]</sup> and thus he became a homeless wanderer, free to go out into the wilderness. So he went back to Denmark to his own Northmen and never returned any more. All that had ever reached her, was a dark rumour that he had gone over with them to Seeland, where the brave sea-kings, refusing to adopt the christian faith with its new laws, had founded a new home for themselves.

All this had happened long, long ago; but the old woman remembered it all, as if it were but yesterday, that she had seen her Friduhelm going away from her for ever. Then she had hung up a garland of vervain at the little chapel of Weiterdingen, shedding many tears over it; and never had another lover been able to efface his image from her heart. The cold dreary November weather, reminded her of an old Norman song, which he had once taught her and which she now hummed to herself:

"The evening comes, and winter is near,  
The hoar-frost on fir-trees is lying;  
Oh book, and cross and prayers of monk--  
How soon shall we all be a dying.

Our homes are getting so dusky and old  
And the holy wells desecrated,  
Thou god-inhabited, beautiful wood,  
Wilt thou, even thou be prostrated?

And silent we go, a defeated tribe,  
Whose stars are all dying and sinking,  
Oh Iceland, thou icy rock in the sea,  
With thee, our fates we'll be linking.

Arise and receive our wandering race,  
Which is coming to thee, and bringing  
The ancient Gods, and the ancient rights,  
To which our hearts are still clinging.

Where the fiery hill is shedding its light,  
And the breakers are shorewards sweeping,  
On thee thou defiant end of the world!  
Our last long watch, we'll be keeping."

Ekkehard meanwhile had got down from the saddle, and tied his horse to a neighbouring fir-tree. He now stepped over the threshold, shyly followed by Audifax.

The woman of the wood threw the garment she had been working at, over the stone, folded her hands on her lap, and looked fixedly at the intruder in his monk's habit, but did not get up.

"Praised be Jesus Christ," said Ekkehard, by way of greeting, and also to avert any possible spell. Instinctively he drew in the thumb of his right hand, doubling his fingers over it, being afraid of the evil eye and its powers. Audifax had told him how people said, that with one look she could wither up a whole meadow. She did not return his greeting.

"What are you doing there," began Ekkehard.

"I am mending an old garment that is getting worn," was the answer.

"You have been also gathering herbs?"

"So I have. Are you an herb-gatherer? Here are many of them, if you wish for any. Hawk-weed and snail-clover, goats-beard and mouse-ear, as well as dried wood-ruff."

"I am no herb-gatherer," said Ekkehard. "What use do you make of those herbs?"

"Need you be asking what is the use of herbs?" said the old woman. "Such as you, know that well enough. It would fare ill with sick people and sick hearts, and with our protection against nightly sprites, as well as the stilling of lover's longings, if there were no herbs to be had!"

"And have you been baptized?" continued Ekkehard.

"Aye, they will have baptized me, likely enough." ...

"And if you have been baptized," he said raising his voice, "and have renounced the devil with all his works and allurements, what is the meaning of all this?" He pointed with his stick towards the horses' skulls on the wall, and giving a violent push to one, caused it to fall down on the floor, where it broke to pieces, so that the white teeth rolled about on the ground.

"The skull of a horse," quietly replied the old woman, "which you have shivered to pieces. It was a young animal, as you may see by the teeth."

"And you like to eat horse-flesh?"

"It is no impure animal, nor is it forbidden to eat it."

"Woman!" cried Ekkehard approaching her closer, "thou exercisest witchcraft and sorcery!"

Then she arose and with a frowning brow and strangely glittering eyes, she said: "You wear a priest's garment, so you may say this to me; for an old woman has no protection against such as

you. Otherwise it were a grave insult which you have cast on me, and the laws of the land punish those that use such words." ...

During this conversation, Audifax had remained timidly standing at the door, but when the raven now made its way towards him, he was afraid and ran up to Ekkehard; from thence he saw the stone by the hearth, and walked up to it; for the fear even of twenty ravens would not have prevented him from examining a curious stone. Lifting the garment which was spread over it, he beheld some strange, weather-beaten figures carved on it.

At that moment Ekkehard's eye fell also on the stone. It was a Roman altar, and had doubtless been erected on those heights by cohorts, who at the command of their Emperor had left their camp in luxurious Asia, for the inhospitable shores of the Bodensee. A youth, in a flowing mantle and with Phrygian cap, was kneeling on a prostrate bull,--the Persian God of light, Mithras; who gave new hope and strength to the fast sinking faith of the Romans.

An inscription was nowhere visible. For a considerable time Ekkehard stood examining it; for with the exception of a golden coin bearing the head of Vespasian, which had been found in the moor at Rapperswyl, by some dependants of the monastery, and some carved stones among the church treasures, his eye had never before beheld any carving of the olden times; but from the shape and look of the thing, he guessed at its being some silent witness of a bygone world.

"Whence comes the stone?" asked he.

"I have been questioned more than enough now," defiantly said the old woman. "Find an answer for yourself."

The stone might have said a good deal for itself, if stones were gifted with speech, for a goodly piece of history often clings to such old and weather-beaten ruins. What do they teach us? That the races of men, come and go like the leaves; that spring produces and autumn destroys, and that all their thinkings and doings, last but a short span of time. After them, there come others, talking in other tongues and creating other forms. That which was holy before, is then pulled down and despised, and that which was condemned, becomes holy in its place. New Gods mount the throne,--and it is well if their altars are not erected on the bodies of too many victims....

Ekkehard saw another meaning in the stone's being in the hut of the woman of the wood.

"You worship that man on the bull!" he cried vehemently. The old woman took up a stick standing by the fire-place, and with a knife made two notches in it. "Tis the second insult you have offered me," she said hoarsely. "What have we to do with yonder stone image?"

"Then speak out. How is it that the stone comes to be here?"

"Because we took pity on it," replied she. "You, who wear the tonsure and monk's habit, probably will not understand that. The stone stood outside, on yonder projecting rock, which must have been a consecrated spot, on which many have knelt probably, in the olden times. But in the present days nobody heeded it. The people here about, dried their crab-apples, or split their wood on it; just as it suited them; and the cruel rain has been washing away the figures. 'The sight of the stone grieves me,' said my mother one day. It was once something holy, but the bones of those, who have known and worshipped the man on it, have long been bleached white,--and the man in the flowing mantle looks as if he were freezing with the cold. So we took it up, and placed it beside the hearth, and it has never harmed us as yet. We know how the old Gods feel, when their altars are shattered; for ours also have been dethroned. You need not begrudge its rest to the old stone."

"Your Gods?" said Ekkehard, "who are your Gods?"

"That you ought to know best, for you have driven them away, and banished them into the depths of the lake. In the floods below, everything has been buried. The ancient rights and the ancient Gods! We can see them no more, and know but the places where our fathers have worshipped them, before the Franks and the cowl-bearing men had come. But when the winds are shaking the tops of yonder oak-tree, you may hear their wailing voices in the air; and on consecrated nights, there is a moaning and roaring in the forest, and a shining of lights; whilst serpents are winding themselves round the stems of the trees; and over the mountains you hear a rustling of wings, of despairing spirits, that have come to look at their ancient home."

Ekkehard crossed himself.

"I tell it thus as I know it," continued the old woman. "I do not wish to offend the Saviour, but he has come as a stranger into the land. You serve him in a foreign tongue, which we cannot understand. If he had sprung up from our own ground, then we might talk to him, and should be his most faithful worshippers, and maybe things would then fare better in Allemannia."

"Woman!" cried Ekkehard wrathfully, "we will have thee burned ..."

"If it be written in your books that trees grow up, to burn old woman with, very well. I have lived long enough. The lightning has lately paid a visit to the woman of the wood,"--pointing to a dark stripe on the wall,--"the lightning has spared the old woman."



After this she cowered down before the hearth, and remained there motionless like a statue. The flickering coals threw a fitful, varying light on her wrinkled face.

"Tis well," said Ekkehard as he left the chamber. Audifax was very glad when he could see the blue sky again over his head. "There they sat together," said he pointing upwards.

"I will go and look at it, whilst thou goest back to the Hohentwiel, and sendest over two men with hatchets. And tell Otfried the deacon of Singen to come and bring his stole and mass-book with him."

Audifax bounded away, whilst Ekkehard went up to the top of the Hohenkrähen.

In the castle on the Hohentwiel, the Duchess had been sitting meanwhile taking her midday meal. She had often looked about, as if something were missing. The meal was soon over, and when Dame Hadwig found herself alone with Praxedis she began:

"How dost thou like our new teacher, Praxedis?"

The Greek maid smiled.

"Speak," said the Duchess in a commanding voice.

"Well I have seen many a schoolmaster before this, at Constantinopolis," said Praxedis flippantly.

Dame Hadwig threatened her with her finger, "I shall have to banish thee from my sight, if thou indulgest in such irreverent speeches. What hast thou to say against schoolmasters?"

"Pardon me," said Praxedis. "I did not mean any offence. But whenever I see such a bookman, wearing such a very serious expression, and assuming such an important air, drawing out of his manuscript some meaning which we have already nearly guessed; and when I see how he is bound up in his parchments, his eyes seeing nothing but dead letters, having scarcely a look to spare for the human beings around him,—then I always feel strongly tempted to laugh. When I am in doubt whether pity would be the proper feeling, I take to laughing. And he certainly does not require my pity, as he knows so much more, than I do."

"A teacher must be serious," said the Duchess. "Seriousness belongs to him, as the snow does to our Alps."

"Serious,—ah well! in this land where the snow covers the mountain-peaks, everything must be serious," resumed the Greek maid. "If I were only as learned as Master Ekkehard to be able to express all that I want to say! I mean that one can learn many things jestingly, without the sweat-drops of hard labour on one's brow. All that is beautiful ought to please, and be true, at the same time. I mean that knowledge is like honey, which can be got at in different ways. The butterfly hovers over the flowers and finds it; but such a learned German appears to me like a bear, who clumsily puts his paws into a bee-hive and then licks them. I for my part don't admire bears."

"Thou art a frivolous minded maiden and not fond of learning. But how does Ekkehard please thee otherwise,—I think him very handsome."

Praxedis looked up at her mistress. "I have never yet looked at a monk, to see whether he were handsome."

"Why not?"

"Because I thought it quite unnecessary."

"Thou givest queer answers to-day," said Dame Hadwig, getting up from her seat. She stepped to the window and looked out northwards; where from the dark fir-trees rose the heavy mass of the steep, rocky Hohenkrähen.

"The goat-boy has just been here, and has told some of the men to go over," said Praxedis.

"The afternoon is mild and sunny," observed the Duchess. "Tell them to saddle the horses and we will ride over, and see what they are doing. Ah—I forgot that thou complainedst of the fatigue of riding, when we returned from St. Gallus. So I will go there alone ..."

Ekkehard meanwhile had inspected the scene of the nightly revel, of which but few traces remained. The earth around the oak-tree was still wet and reddish looking, and a few coals and ashes indicated where the fire had been.

With astonishment he beheld here and there, hanging in the branches of the oak, small wax effigies of human limbs. There were feet and hands, as well as images of cows and horses,—offerings for the recovery of sick men and beasts, which the superstitious peasantry, preferred hanging up on old consecrated trees, to placing them on the altars of churches.

Two men, with hatchets, now came up.

"We have been ordered to come here," they said.

"From the Hohentwiel?" asked Ekkehard.

"We belong to the Duchess, but we live yonder on the Hohenhöwen; where you can see the smoke rise from the charcoal-pile."

"Good," said Ekkehard. "You are to cut down this oak for me."

The men looked at him. Embarrassment was visible in their faces.

"Begin at once, and make haste, for before nightfall, the tree must be felled to the ground."

Then the two men walked up to the oak. With gaping mouths they stood before the magnificent tree. One of them let his axe fall.

"Don't you know the spot, Chomuli?" quoth he to his companion.

"How should I know it, Woveli?"

The former pointed towards the east, and lifting one of his hands to his mouth, imitated the act of drinking. "On account of that, Chomuli."

Then the other looked downhill where Ekkehard was standing, and winking cunningly with one eye, said: "We know nothing, Woveli."

"But he will know, Chomuli."

"That remains to be seen," was the reply.

"It is really a sin and a shame," continued the other. "That oak is at least two hundred years old, and has lived to witness many a bright May- and Autumn-fire. I really can't do it."

"Don't be a fool," said his companion making the first stroke. "The more readily we hew away at the tree, the less yonder monk will believe, that we have sat under its branches in nightly worship. Remember the shilling fine! A man must be cautious, Woveli!"

This last remark did not fail to have its effect. "Yes, a man must be cautious," he repeated aiming a blow at the tree of his devotion. But ten days ago, he had hung up a wax effigy himself, in order to cure his brown cow of fever.

The chips flew about, and keeping regular time, their blows quickly followed each other.

The deacon of Singen had also arrived with stole and mass-book. Ekkehard beckoned to him to go with him into the hut of the woman of the wood. She was still sitting motionless as before, beside her hearth. A sharp gust of wind, entering as the door opened, extinguished her fire.

"Woman of the wood," called out Ekkehard imperiously, "put your house in order and pack up your things, for you must go!"

The old woman seized her staff and cut a third notch. "Who is it, that is insulting me for the third time," growled she, "and who wishes to cast me out of my mother's house, like a stray dog?"

"In the name of the Duchess of Suabia," continued Ekkehard solemnly, "and on account of your practising heathenish superstitions, and nightly idolatries, I banish you herewith from house and home; and bid you leave the land. Your chair shall be placed before the door of your hut, and you shall wander restlessly about, as far as the sky is blue, and christians visit the church; as far as the falcon flies on a day of Spring when the wind is carrying him along, faster than his wings. No hospitable door shall be opened to you; no fire be lighted to give you warmth; and may the wells deny you water, until you have renounced the powers of darkness, and made your peace with the almighty God; the judge of the living and dead."

The woman of the wood had listened to him, without showing great emotion.

"An anointed man, will insult thee three times under thy own roof," muttered she, "and thou shalt make a sign on thy staff, in witness of this; and with that same staff, thou shalt go out towards the setting sun, for they will not give thee sufficient ground, to rest thy head upon. Oh mother! My mother!"

She then scraped her scanty belongings together, making a bundle of them; and taking her staff, prepared herself to go. The heart of the deacon of Singen was touched. "Pray God through his servants to have mercy on you, and perform some christian penance," he said, "so that you may find forgiveness."

"For that, the woman of the wood is too old," she replied. Then she called her wood-pecker, which flew about her head; the raven followed, with a scared frightened look, and she had already opened the door and cast back one last look on the walls and fire-place, the herbs and horses' skulls, when she struck her stick violently on the threshold; so as to make the stone flags

resound. "Be cursed ye dogs!" cried she; then followed by her birds, took the path leading into the woods, and disappeared.

"And silent we go, a defeated tribe,  
Whose stars are all dying and sinking,  
Oh Iceland, thou icy rock in the sea,  
With thee, our fates we'll be linking!"

was her low chaunt; slowly dying out, among the leafless trees.

Ekkehard now put on the stole; and the deacon of Singen carrying the mass-book before him, they proceeded through chamber and closet. The walls were sanctified by the sign of the cross, so as to banish the evil spirits for ever; and finally, with prayers, he pronounced the mighty exorcism over the place.

The pious work had lasted long; and when the deacon took off Ekkehard's stole, the cold sweat-drops stood on his brow; as he had never before heard such impressive words. Just when all was over, the tramping of horses' feet was heard.

It was the Duchess, accompanied by one servant only. Ekkehard went out to meet her; and the deacon directed his steps homewards.

"You were so long away, that I had to come hither myself, to see how you had settled everything," graciously called out the Duchess.

The two wood-cutters had in the meanwhile finished their job, and made their retreat by the back of the hill. They stood in awe of the Duchess. Ekkehard then told her about the life and doings of the woman of the wood, and how he had driven her away.

"You are very severe," said Dame Hadwig.

"I thought I was very mild," replied Ekkehard.

"Well, we approve of that which you have done. What do you intend to do with the deserted hut," casting a hasty look at the stone walls.

"The power of the evil spirits has been banished and exorcised," said Ekkehard. "I mean to consecrate it as a chapel to St. Hadwig."

The Duchess looked at him with a well pleased expression.

"How did you hit upon that idea?"

"The thought struck me just now, ... the oak I have had cut down."

"We will examine that spot; and I think that we shall approve also, of the felling of the oak."

She climbed the steep path, leading up to the top of the Hohenkrähen, accompanied by Ekkehard.

There lay the oak on the ground; its mighty branches almost preventing their further ascent. A flat stone, but a few paces in circumference, crowned the top of the strangely shaped hill. They were standing on the rocks, which formed a declivitous wall beneath their feet. It was a giddy height, on which was neither stone nor tree for support, and the two figures stood out picturesquely, against the blue sky; the monk in his dark garment and the Duchess, wrapped up in her bright coloured mantle. Silently they stood thus; looking at the splendid view before them. In the depth below, the plain lay stretched out before them, through the green meadows of which, the river Aach ran in serpentine lines. The roofs and gables of the houses in the valley, looked like tiny dots on a map. Opposite rose darkly, the proud, well-known peak of the Hohentwiel; blue, flat mountain-ridges rising like walls, behind the mighty one; hiding the Rhine after its escape from the Bodensee.

The Untersee with the island of Reichenau lay bathed in light; and in the far off distance, the faint outlines of gigantic mountains were visible, through transparent clouds. They became clearer and clearer as the sun sank down, a golden glow surrounding them like a halo of glory ... the landscape becoming softer, shadows and glittering lights melting into each other ...

Dame Hadwig was touched, for her noble heart could feel and appreciate nature's beauty and grandeur. But the feelings lie very close to each other, and at that moment, a certain tenderness, pervaded her whole being. Her looks from the snowy Alpine peaks fell on Ekkehard. "He is going to consecrate a chapel to St. Hadwig," something whispered within her, over and over again.

She advanced a step, as if she were afraid of becoming giddy, and putting her right arm on Ekkehard's shoulder, leaned heavily on him; her sparkling eyes looking intently into his. "What is my friend thinking about?" said she in soft accents.

Ekkehard who had been lost in thought started.

"I have never before stood on such a height," said he, "and I was reminded of the passage in Scripture: 'Afterwards the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him: All this will I give Thee, and the glory of them, if thou wilt worship me. But Jesus answered and said unto him: Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

With a strange look the Duchess stepped backwards; the light in her eyes changing, as if she would have liked to push the monk down into the abyss.

"Ekkehard!" cried she, "you are either a child--or a fool!"

Then she turned round, and hastily and displeased descended the path. Mounting her horse, she rode back to the Hohentwiel, at a gallop, so furious, that her servant could scarcely follow her.

Ekkehard full of consternation, remained where he was. He passed his hand over his eyes, as if to remove a mist from before them.

When late at night he sat in his tower on the Hohentwiel, thinking of all that had happened that day, he beheld a distant gleam of fire. He looked out and saw that the fiery blaze, arose from the fir-trees on the Hohenkrähen. The woman of the wood, had been paying her last visit to the future chapel of St. Hadwig.

## CHAPTER X.

### Christmas.

The evening on the Hohenkrähen, cast a gloom also over the following days. Misunderstandings are not easily forgiven; least of all by him who has caused them.

For this reason, Dame Hadwig spent some days in a very bad humour, in her own private apartments. Grammar and Virgil had both a holiday. With Praxedis, she took up the old jest about the schoolmasters at Constantinople; seeming now to enjoy it much better. Ekkehard came to ask whether he were to continue his lessons. "I have got a toothache," said the Duchess. Expressing his regret, he attributed it to the rough autumnal weather.

Every day, he asked several times how she was, which somewhat conciliated the Duchess.

"How is it," said she to Praxedis, "that a person can be of so much more real worth, than he appears outwardly to possess?"

"That comes from a want of gracefulness," replied the Greek maid. "In other countries I often found the reverse; but here, people are too lazy, to manifest their individuality by every movement or word. They prefer thinking, to acting; believing that the whole world must be able to read on their foreheads, what is passing within."

"But we are generally so industrious," said Dame Hadwig, complacently.

"The buffaloes likewise work the live-long day," Praxedis had almost said,--but she finally contented herself, with merely thinking it.

Ekkehard all this time, felt quite at his ease; for the idea, that he had given an unsuitable answer to the Duchess, never struck him. He had really been thinking of that parable in Scripture and failed to see, that in reply to the timid expression of a friendly liking, it might not always be quite the right thing, to quote Scripture. He revered the Duchess; but far more as the embodied idea of sublimity, than as a woman. That sublime beings demand adoration, had never struck him; and still less that even the sublimest personage, is often perfectly satisfied with simple affection. That Dame Hadwig was out of spirits, he noticed however, but he contented himself by making the general observation, that the intercourse with a Duchess was rather more difficult than that with the brotherhood at St. Gall.

Amongst the books which Vincentius had left behind, were the Epistles of St. Paul, which he now studied. Master Spazzo during those days, put on a still haughtier mien than usual, when he passed him. Dame Hadwig soon found out, that it were better, to return to the old order of things.

"It was really a grand sight, which we had, that evening, from the Hohenkrähen," said she one day to Ekkehard. "But do you know our weather-signs on the Hohentwiel? Whenever the Alps appear very distinct and near, the weather is sure to change. So we have had some bad weather since. And now we will resume our reading of Virgil."

Upon this, Ekkehard, highly pleased, went to fetch his heavy metal-bound book; and so their studies were resumed. He read and translated to them, the second book of the *Æneid*, about the downfall of Troy, the wooden horse and the fearful end of Laocoon. Further, of the nightly battle; Cassandra's fate, and Priamus' death; and finally *Æneas'* flight with the aged Anchises.

With evident sympathy, Dame Hadwig listened to the interesting tale. Only, with the disappearance of *Æneas'* spouse Kreüsa, she was not quite satisfied.

"That, he need not have told so lengthily to Queen Dido," she said, "for I doubt much, whether the living woman was overpleased, that he had run after the lost one so long. Lost is lost."

And now the winter was drawing near. The sky became dreary and leaden, and the distance shrouded with mists. First the mountain peaks round about, put on their snow-caps; and then valley and fields followed their example. Small icicles fastened on the rafters under the roofs; with the intention of quietly remaining there, for some months; and the old linden-tree in the courtyard, had for some time, like a careful and economical man, who disposes of his worn-out garments to the Hebrews,--shaken down its faded leaves to the winds. They made up a good heap; which was soon scattered in all directions, by the merry, gambolling breezes. The bare branches of the tree, were often crowded with cawing rooks, coming from the neighbouring woods, and eagerly watching for a bone or crumb, from the kitchen of the castle. Once, there was one amongst the sable brotherhood, whose flight was heavy, as its wings were damaged; and on beholding Ekkehard, who chanced to go over the courtyard, the raven flew screeching away. It had seen the monk's habit before, and had no reason to like it.

The nights of winter, are long and dark. Now and then, appear the northern lights; but far brighter than these, in the hearts of men, is the remembrance of that night, when angels descended to the shepherds in the fields, greeting them with:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."--

On the Hohentwiel they were preparing for Christmas, by getting ready all sorts of presents. The year is long, and numbers many a day, in which people can show each other little kindnesses; but the Germans like having one especial day, set aside for that, in particular. Therefore, before all other nations, they keep up the custom of making Christmas presents. The good heart has its own peculiar rights.

During that time, Dame Hadwig had almost put aside the grammar entirely; taking to sewing and embroidery. Balls of gold-thread and black silk, lay about in the women's apartments; and when Ekkehard once came in unawares, Praxedis rushed up, and pushed him out of the door whilst Dame Hadwig, hid some needle-work in a basket.

This aroused Ekkehard's curiosity, and he arrived at the not unreasonable conclusion, that some present was being made for him. Therefore he thought about returning the kindness; intending to exert his utmost powers and abilities for that purpose. So he sent word to his friend and teacher, Folkard, at St. Gall, to send him parchment, colours and brushes, as well as some precious ink; which request was speedily fulfilled. Then Ekkehard sat up many an hour at night, in his tower; pondering over a Latin composition, which he wanted to dedicate to the Duchess, and which was to contain, some delicate homage.

But all this was not so easy, as he had thought. Once he began, at the creation of the world; intending to proceed in daring flight, to the beginning of Dame Hadwig's reign in Suabia; but he had already written some hundred hexametres and had only got as far as King David; and the work would probably have taken him, three years to complete. Another time he tried to number up, all the women, who either by their strength or their beauty, had influenced the fate of nations; such as Queen Semiramis and the virgin Amazons; the heroic Judith and the tuneful Sappho;--but to his great regret he found out, that by the time his pen had worked its way to the Duchess; it would have been quite impossible, to find anything new to say in her praise. So he went about much downcast and distressed.

"Have you swallowed a spider, pearl of all professors?" enquired Praxedis one day, on meeting him in the aforesaid mental condition.

"You may well be jesting," said Ekkehard sadly;--and under the seal of secrecy, he confided his griefs to her.

"By the thirty-six thousand volumes; in the library at Constantinopolis!" exclaimed she, "why, you are going to cut down a whole forest of trees, when a few flowers are all that's wanted. Why don't you make it simple and graceful,--such as your beloved Virgil would have made it?" After this she ran away, and Ekkehard crept back to his chamber. "Like Virgil?" he mused. But in the whole of the *Æneid*, there was no example of a similar case. He read some cantos, and dreamily sat thinking over them, when a good idea suddenly struck him. "I've got it!" cried he. "The beloved poet himself, is to do homage to her!" He then wrote a poem, as if Virgil had appeared to

him, in his solitude; expressing his delight, that his poetry was living again in German lands; and thanking the high-born lady, for thus befriending him. In a few minutes it was ready.

This poem Ekkehard now wished to write down on parchment; adorned by some handsome illustrations. So he composed the following picture. The Duchess, with crown and sceptre, sitting on her throne, accosted by Virgil in white garments; who inclining his bay-crowned head, advances towards her. He is leading Ekkehard,--who modestly walking by his side, as the pupil with the master, is likewise humbly bowing before her.

In the strict manner of the excellent Folkard, he first drew the sketch. He remembered a picture in a psalm-book, representing the young David, before King Abimelech. Thus, he arranged the figures. The Duchess, he drew two fingers breadth higher than Virgil; and the Ekkehard of the sketch, was considerably shorter than the heathen poet. Budding Art, lacking other means, expressed rank and greatness, outwardly.

With the figure of Virgil, he succeeded tolerably well; for they had always used ancient pictures as models, for their drawings at St. Gall; and assumed a stereotype way of executing both drapery and outline. Likewise he succeeded with his own portrait; in so far as he managed to draw a figure in a monk's habit, wearing a tonsure; but a terrible problem for him, was the representation of a queenly woman's form, for as yet no woman's picture, not even God's holy Mother, had received admittance, amongst the monastery's paintings. David and Abimelech, which he was so well accustomed to, were of no help to him here, for the regal mantle scarcely came down to their knees; and he knew not how to draw it any longer. So, care once more resumed its seat on his forehead.

"Well, what now?" quoth Praxedis, one day.

"The poem is finished," replied Ekkehard. "Now something else is wanting."

"And what may that be?"

"I ought to know, in what way, women's garments cling to their tender limbs," said he in doleful accents.

"You are really saying quite wicked things, ye chosen vessel of virtue," scolded Praxedis. But Ekkehard then made his difficulties known to her, in a clearer way, upon which the Greek maid, made a movement with her hand, as if to open his eyes.

"Open your eyes," she said, "and look at the living things around you."

The advice was simple enough, and yet entirely novel to one, who had acquired all his skill in art in his solitary cell. Ekkehard cast a long and scrutinizing look at his counsellor. "It avails me nothing," said he, "for you do not wear a regal mantle."

Then the Greek took pity on the doubt-beset artist. "Wait," said she, "the Duchess is down stairs in the garden, so I can put on her ducal mantle, and you will be helped." She glided out, and after a few minutes reappeared, with the purple mantle, hanging negligently from her shoulders. With slow measured steps, she walked through the chamber. On a table stood a metal candlestick, which she seized, and held up like a sceptre; and thus with head thrown back, she stood before the monk.

He had taken out his pencil and parchment. "Turn round, a little more towards the light," said he, beginning at once to draw eagerly.

Every time however, when he looked at his graceful model, she darted a sparkling look at him. His movements became slower, and Praxedis looked towards the window. "But, as our rival in the realm," began she with an artificially raised voice, "is already leaving the courtyard, threatening to take us by surprise; we command you on pain of losing your head, to finish your drawing within the next minute."

"I thank you," said Ekkehard, putting down his pencil.

Praxedis stepped up to him, and bending forwards, looked at what he had done. "What shameful treason!" exclaimed she, "why, the picture has no head!"

"I merely wanted the drapery," said Ekkehard.

"Well you have forfeited a great piece of good fortune," continued Praxedis in her former tone. "If you had faithfully portrayed the features, who knows, whether we should not have made you Patriarch of Constantinople, in sign of our princely favour."

Steps were now heard outside. Praxedis quickly tore off the mantle from her shoulders, so that it dropped on her arm; just as the Duchess was standing before them.

"Are you again learning Greek?" said she reproachfully to Ekkehard.

"I have shown him the precious sardonyx, in the clasp of my mistress's mantle;--it is such a beautifully cut head," said Praxedis. "Master Ekkehard has much taste for antiquities, and he was

greatly pleased with the stone ..."

Even Audifax made his preparations for Christmas. His hope of finding treasures being greatly diminished,--he now stuck more to the actual things around him. Often he descended at night-time, to the shores of the river Aach, which slowly flowed on towards the lake. Close to the rotten little bridge, stood a hollow willow-tree; before which, Audifax lay in ambush, many an hour; his raised stick directed towards the opening in the tree. He was on the look-out for an otter. But no philosopher trying to fathom the last cause of Being, ever found his task such a difficult one, as Audifax did his otter-hunting; for from the hollow tree, there was still many a subterranean outlet to the river, which the otter knew, and Audifax did not. And often when Audifax, trembling with cold, said: "Now it must come,"--he would hear a noise far up in the river, caused by his friend the otter putting its snout out of the water, to take a good breath of air; and when Audifax softly crept up to the place from whence the sound had come, the otter was lying on its back, and floating comfortably down the river.

In the kitchen on the Hohentwiel, there was great bustle and activity;--such as there is in the tent of a commander-in-chief, on the eve of a battle. Dame Hadwig herself stood amongst the serving maidens. She did not wear her ducal mantle, but a white apron; and stood distributing flour and honey for the gingerbread. Praxedis was mixing, ginger, pepper and cinnamon, to flavour the paste with.

"What shape shall we take?" asked she. "The square with the serpents?"

"No, the big heart is prettier," said Dame Hadwig. So the gingerbread was made in the shape of hearts, and the finest was stuck with almonds and cardamom, by the Duchess's own hand.

One morning Audifax entered the kitchen, half frozen with cold, and crept up to the fire-place. His lips trembled as in a fever; but he seemed to be merry, and in high spirits. "Get ready, my boy," said Praxedis, "for this afternoon, thou must go to the forest and hew down a fir-tree."

"That is none of my business," proudly said Audifax, "but I will do it, if you will also do me a favour."

"And what does Master goat-herd desire?" asked Praxedis.

Audifax ran out, and on returning, triumphantly held up, a dark-brown otter's skin; glossy and soft to the touch.

"Where did you get that from?" asked Praxedis.

"I caught it myself," replied Audifax, looking with sparkling eyes at his booty. "You are to make a fur-cap out of it for Hadumoth."

The Greek maid, who liked the boy well, promised to fulfil his request.

The Christmas-tree was brought home, and adorned with apples and wax-lights. The Duchess arranged everything in the great hall. A man from Stein on the Rhine, had arrived and brought a basket, tightly sewn up in linen. He said that it was from St. Gall, and destined for Master Ekkehard. Dame Hadwig had the basket put unopened on the table with the other gifts.

Christmas-Eve had arrived. All the inhabitants of the castle were assembled, dressed in their best; for on that day, there was to be no separation, between masters and servants. Ekkehard read to them the story of Christ's nativity; and then they all went, two and two, into the great hall. There the Christmas-tree, with its many candles, lighted up the room splendidly. The last to enter were Audifax and Hadumoth. A little bit of tinsel, with which the nuts had been gilt, lay on the threshold. Audifax took it up. "That has fallen off, from the wings of the Christ-child," whispered Hadumoth.

On large tables, the presents for the serving people, were laid out; a piece of linen, or cloth, and some cakes. They rejoiced at the generosity of their mistress, which was not always so manifest. Beside the share allotted to Hadumoth, verily lay the fur-cap. She cried, when Praxedis kindly betrayed the giver to her. "I have got nothing for thee, Audifax," said she.

"It is instead of the golden crown," whispered he.

Men and maid-servants then offered their thanks to the Duchess, and went down again to the servants' hall. Dame Hadwig taking Ekkehard by the hand, led him to a little table apart. "This is meant for you," said she.

Between the almond-covered, gingerbread heart and the basket; there lay a handsome, velvet priest's cap, and a magnificent stole. Fringe and grounding were of gold thread, and embroideries of black silk, interwoven with pearls, ran through the latter; which was worthy indeed of a bishop.

"Let me see, how it becomes you," said Praxedis, and in spite of their ecclesiastical character, she put the cap on his head, and threw the stole over his shoulders. Ekkehard cast down his eyes. "Splendid," exclaimed she, "you may offer your thanks!"

Shyly Ekkehard put down the consecrated gifts; and then drawing the parchment roll from out his ample garment, he timidly presented it to the Duchess. Dame Hadwig held it unopened in her hand. "First we must open the basket," she said. "The best"--smilingly pointing to the parchment,--"must come last."

So they cut open the basket. Buried in hay, and well-preserved by winter's cold,--there lay a huge mountain-cock. Ekkehard lifted it up. With outspread wings, it measured above six feet. A letter accompanied this magnificent piece of feathered game.

"Read it aloud!" said the Duchess, whose curiosity was aroused. Ekkehard breaking the clumsy seal then read as follows:

"To the venerable Brother Ekkehard on the Hohentwiel, through Burkard the cloister-pupil, from Romeias the gate-keeper.

"If there were two of them, one would be for you; but as I have not been lucky enough to get two, this one is not for you, and yours will come later. It is sent to you, on account of not knowing her name; but she was with the Duchess in the monastery on that day, and wore a dress of the colour of the green wood-pecker; and her tresses were fastened round her head.

"For her,--the bird; on account of continual thinking, on the part of him who shot it, of the walk to the recluses. It must be well macerated and roasted, because otherwise tough. In case of other guests, she is herself to eat the white flesh on the back-bone, because that is the best; the brown often having a resinous taste.

"With it, I wish her all blessings and happiness. To you venerable brother, likewise. If on your castle were wanting a watchman, porter or gamekeeper, you might recommend Romeias to the Duchess; who, on account of being mocked at by the steward, and of the complaints of that dragon, Wiborad, would gladly change his service. Practice in the office of gate-keeper, both giving admittance, and pitching out of strange visitors, can be testified to. The same with regard to hunting. He is already now looking towards the Hohentwiel, as if a cord were drawing him thither.--Long life to you and to the Lady Duchess. Farewell!"

A merry peal of laughter followed the reading of this curious epistle. Praxedis had blushed all over. "That is a bad reward," angrily exclaimed she, "that you write letters in other people's name, to insult me!"

"Stop," said Ekkehard, "why should the letter not be genuine?"

"It would not be the first, that was forged by a monk," was Praxedis' bitter reply. "Why need you laugh at that rough sportsman? He was by no means so bad!"

"Praxedis, be reasonable!" urged the Duchess. "Look at that mountain-cock,--that has not been shot in the Hegau; and Ekkehard writes a somewhat different hand. Shall we give the petitioner a place on the Hohentwiel?"

"Pray don't!" cried Praxedis eagerly. "Nobody is to believe that----"

"Very well," said Dame Hadwig, in a tone bespeaking silence. She then opened Ekkehard's parchment-roll. The painting at the beginning had succeeded pretty well; and any doubt of its meaning, was done away with, by the superscription of the names: Hadwigis, Virgilius and Ekkehard. A bold initial, with intricate golden arabesques headed the poem.

The Duchess was highly pleased. Ekkehard had never before given her any proof of his skill in art. Praxedis looked with an arch smile at the purple mantle, which the Duchess wore on the picture, as if she could tell something more about it.

Dame Hadwig made a sign to Ekkehard, to read and explain the poem. So he read out the following verses; which rendered into English are as follows:

"In nightly silence sat I once alone,  
deciphering some parchments old and deep;  
When suddenly, a bright unearthly light,  
Lit up my room. 'T was not the moon's pale ray,  
And then, a radiant figure did I see.  
Immortal smiles were playing round his mouth,  
And in his rich and sable-coloured locks,  
He wore a crown of everlasting bay.

And with his finger pointing to the book,  
He then spoke thus; 'Be of good cheer, my friend,  
I am no spirit, come to rob thy peace,  
I merely came to wish thee all that's good.  
All that which the dead letters here relate,



I once have written with my own heart's blood:  
The siege of Troy, and then Æneas' flight  
The wrath of Gods, and splendid Roma's birth.

Almost a thousand years have since gone by.  
The singer died,--his nation died with him.  
My grave is still; but seldom do I hear  
The distant shouts, at merry vintage time  
Or roar of breakers from the Cape Misene.  
Yet lately was I call'd up from my rest,  
By some rough gale, which coming from the North  
Brought me the tidings, that in distant lands,  
Æneas' fate was being read again;  
And that a noble princess, proud and fair  
Had kindly deigned, to dress my epic song  
In the bold accents of her native tongue.

We once believed, the land beyond the Alps  
Was peopled by a rough, uncultured race;--  
But now at home we long have been forgot,  
And in the stranger land we live again.  
Therefore I come, to offer you my thanks;  
The greatest boon, a minstrel can obtain  
It is the praise from noble woman's lip.

Hail to thy mistress, who in union rare,  
Has strength and wisdom, in herself enshrined,  
And like Minerva in the ranks of Gods,  
In steel-clad armour sitteth on the throne,  
Fair patron yet of all the peaceful arts.  
Yet many years may she the sceptre wield,  
Surrounded by a strong and loving race.  
And when you listen to the foreign strains,  
Like armour rattling, and the clash of steel,--  
Then think of me, it is Italia's voice,  
'Tis Virgil greets the rock of Hohentwiel.'

Thus spoke he, waved his hand and disappear'd.  
But I wrote down, still on that very night  
What he had said; and to my mistress now  
I shyly venture to present these leaves,  
A humble gift, from faithful Ekkehard."

A short pause ensued, after he had finished the reading of his poem. Then the Duchess approached him with outstretched hand, "Ekkehard I thank you." They were the same words, which she had once said to him in the cloister courtyard at St. Gall; but the tones were still milder than at that time; her eyes sparkled and her lips wore a wondrous smile, like that of sweet-eyed fairies, which is said to be followed by a shower of delicious roses.

Then turning to Praxedis she continued, "and thee I ought to condemn to ask his pardon on thy very knees, for having but lately spoken with so little veneration of learned and ecclesiastical men." But the Greek maiden's eyes sparkled archly, well knowing that without her help and advice, the shy monk would scarcely have been able to attain this success.

"In future I will give him all the reverence that's due," said she. "I will even weave him a garland if you desire it."

After Ekkehard had gone up to his little chamber, the two women still sat up together, and the Greek maid fetched a basin filled with water; some pieces of lead and a metal spoon. "The lead-melting of last year, has prophesied well," said she. "We could then, not quite understand, what the strange shape was, which the lead assumed in the water;--but now I am almost sure that it resembled a monk's cowl; and that, our castle can now boast off."

The Duchess had become thoughtful. She listened to hear whether Ekkehard might not be returning.

"It is nothing but an idle amusement," said she.

"If it does not please my mistress," said the Greek, "then she might order our teacher to entertain us with something better. His Virgil, is no doubt a far better oracle, than our lead; when opened on a consecrated night, with prayers and a blessing. I wonder now, what part of his epic would foretell to us, the events of the coming year."

"Be silent," said the Duchess. "He spoke but lately so severely on witchcraft; he would laugh at us ..."

"Then we shall have to content ourselves with the old way," returned Praxedis; holding the spoon with the lead in it over the flame of the lamp. The lead melted and trembled; and muttering a few unintelligible words, she poured it into the water; the liquid metal making a hissing sound.

Dame Hadwig, with seeming indifference, cast a look at it, when Praxedis held the basin up to the light. Instead of dividing into fantastic shapes, the lead had formed a long pointed drop. It glimmered faintly in Dame Hadwig's hand.

"That is another riddle, for time to solve," laughed Praxedis. "The future, this time closely resembles a pine-cone."

"Or a tear," said the Duchess seriously, leaning her head on her right hand.

A loud noise from the ground-floor, interrupted the further investigation of the omen. Giggling and screams of the maid-servants, rough sounds of male voices, interspersed with the shrill tones of a lute, were heard in dire confusion, coming up the passage. Respectfully but beseechingly, the flying troop of the maids stopped at the threshold. The tall Friderun could scarcely refrain from scolding; and little Hadumoth was crying audibly. A groping, fumbling step was heard behind them, and presently there appeared an uncouth figure, wrapt in a bearskin; with a painted mask, in the form of a bear's snout; snarling and growling like a hungry bruin, seeking for its prey. Now and then, this apparition drew some inharmonious sounds from a lute, which was hanging over his shaggy shoulders, suspended on a red ribbon; but as soon as the door of the hall was thrown open, and the rustling dress of the Duchess was heard approaching, the nightly phantom turned round, and slowly tumbled back into the echoing passage.

The old housekeeper then began; telling their mistress, how they had sat merrily together, rejoicing over their presents, when the monster had come in upon them, and had first executed a dance, to his own lute's playing, but how he had afterwards blown out the candles, threatening the frightened maidens with kisses and embraces; finally becoming so wild and obstreperous, that they had all been obliged to take flight.

Judging from the hoarse laughter of the bear, there was strong reason for suspecting Master Spazzo's being hidden under the shaggy fur; who after embibing a considerable quantity of wine, had concluded his Christmas frolics in that way.

Dame Hadwig appeased her exasperated servants, and bade them go to bed. From the yard however was soon heard another cry of surprise. There they all stood in a group; steadfastly looking up at the tower; for the terrible bear had climbed up, and was now promenading on the top of it, lifting his shaggy head up to the stars, as if he wanted to send a greeting to his namesake in the firmament;--the great bear.

The dark figure stood out in clear outlines against the pale starry sky, and his growls sounded weirdly through the silent night; but no mortal was ever told, what the luminous stars revealed to the wine-clouded brains of Master Spazzo the chamberlain.

At the same midnight hour, Ekkehard knelt before the altar of the castle chapel, softly chanting the Christmas-matins, as the church rules prescribed.

## CHAPTER XI.

### The old Man of the Heidenhöhle.

The remainder of the winter passed by monotonously; and in consequence swiftly enough. They prayed and worked; read Virgil and studied the grammar, every day. Dame Hadwig had quite given up asking dangerous questions. During the Carnival, the neighbouring nobility came to pay their respects to the Duchess. Those of Nellenburg and of Veringen; the old Count of Argengau with his daughters, the Guelphs from over the lake, and many others; and in those days there was much feasting, accompanied by more drinking. After that, it became lonely again on the top of the Hohentwiel.

March had come, and heavy gales blew over the land. On the first starlight night, a comet was seen in the sky; and the stork which lived comfortably on the castle-gable, had flown away again, a week after its return. At all these things, people shook their heads. Further, a shepherd, driving his flock past the hill, told how he had met the army-worm,<sup>[10]</sup> which was a sure sign of coming war.

A strange, uncomfortable feeling took possession of all minds. The approach of an earthquake is often felt at a considerable distance; here, by the stopping of a spring; there, by the anxious flying about of birds; and in the same way the danger of war makes itself felt beforehand.

Master Spazzo who had bravely sat behind the wine-jug in February, now walked about with a downcast expression. "You are to do me a favour," said he one day to Ekkehard. "I have seen a dead fish in my dream, floating on its back. I wish to make my last will. The world has become old and is left standing on its last leg; and that also will soon give way. Good-bye then Firnewine! Besides we are not very far off from the Millenium; and have lived merrily enough. Perhaps the last years count double. At any rate, mankind cannot go on much longer in that way. Erudition has gone so far, that in this one castle of Hohentwiel, more than half a dozen books lie heaped up; and when a fellow gets a good thrashing, he goes up to court and makes his complaint, instead of burning down his enemy's house, over his head. With such a state of affairs, the world must naturally soon come to an end."

"Who is to be your heir, if all the world is to perish," was Ekkehard's reply.

A man of Augsburg, coming to the Reichenau, also brought evil tidings. Bishop Ulrich had promised a precious relic to the monastery--the right arm of the holy Theopontus, richly set in silver and precious stones. He now sent word that as the country was unsafe at present, he could not risk sending it.

The Abbot ordered the man to go to the Hohentwiel; there to inform the Duchess of the state of things.

"What is the good news?" asked she, on his presenting himself.

"There's not much good in them. I would rather take away better ones from here. The Suabian arrier-ban is up in arms; horses and riders, as many as have a sword and shield hanging on their walls, are ready. They are again on the road, between the Danube and the Rhine."

"Who?"

"The old enemies from yonder. The small fellows with the deep-set eyes and blunt noses. A good deal of our meat will again be ridden tender under the saddle this year."

He drew out of his pocket a strangely shaped small horse-shoe, with a high heel to it. "Do you know that?--A little shoe, and a little steed, a crooked sabre, and arrows fleet;--as quick as lightning, and never at rest; oh Lord, deliver us from this pest!"

"The Huns?" exclaimed the Duchess, in startled tones.

"If you prefer to call them Hungarians, or Hungry-ones,--'tis the same to me," said the messenger. "Bishop Pilgrim sent the tidings from Passau to Freising; whence it reached us. They have already swum over the Danube, and will be falling like locusts into the German lands; and as quick as winged Devils. 'You may sooner catch the wind on the plain, or the bird in the air,' is an old saying with us. May the plague take their horses!--I for myself, only fear for my sister's child at Passau; the fair little Bertha." ...

"It is impossible!" said Dame Hadwig. "Can they have forgotten already, what answer the messengers of the Exchequer, returned them: 'we have iron and swords and five fingers to our hands?' In the battle on the Inn, their heads were made acquainted with the truth of these words."

"Just for that very reason," said the man. "He who has been beaten once, likes to come back and beat the enemy in his turn. The messengers of the Exchequer, in reward for their bravery, have had their heads cut off;--so who will like taking their places in the foremost ranks?"

"We likewise know the path, which has been trodden by our ancestors, going to meet the enemy," proudly returned the Duchess.

She dismissed the man from Augsburg with a present. Then she sent for Ekkehard.

"Virgil will have to rest a while," said she, telling him of the danger that was threatening from the Huns. This state of things was by no means pleasant. The nobles had forgotten, in their many personal feuds, how to act and stand up together; whilst the Emperor, of Saxon origin and not over fond of the Suabians, was fighting in Italy, far away from the German frontier. So the passage to the Bodensee was open to the invaders; whose mere name caused a terror wherever it was pronounced. For years their tribes swarmed like will-o'-the-wisps, through the unsettled realm, which Charlemagne had left in the hands of unqualified successors. From the shores of the North-Sea, where the ruins of Bremen spoke of their invasion, down to the southern point of Calabria, where the natives had to pay a ransom for each head,--fire and plunder marked their way.

"If they are not ghosts which the pious Bishop Ulrich has seen," said the Duchess, "they are certain to come to us also; so what is to be done? To meet them in open battle?--Even bravery is folly, when the enemy is too numerous. To obtain peace, by paying tribute and ransom, thus driving them over to our neighbours' territory?--Others have done that before, but we have other ideas of honour and dishonour. Are we to barricade ourselves on the Hohentwiel, and leave the land at their mercy, when we have promised our protection to our subjects?--never! What do you advise?"

"My knowledge does not extend to such matters," sorrowfully replied Ekkehard.

The Duchess was excited. "Oh schoolmaster," cried she reproachfully, "why has Heaven not made you a warrior? Many things would be better then!"

Ekkehard, deeply hurt, turned to go. The words had entered his heart like an arrow, and remained there. The reproach had some truth in it, so it hurt him all the more.

"Ekkehard," called out Dame Hadwig, "you must not go. You are to serve the country with your knowledge, and what you do not know as yet, you may learn. I will send you to some one who is well versed in these matters. Will you undertake this mission for me?"

Ekkehard had turned round again. "I never have been unwilling to serve my mistress," said he.

"But then you must not be frightened, if he gives you but a rough and unfriendly reception. He has suffered many a wrong from past generations; and he does not know the present. Neither must you be shocked, if he should appear very old and fat to you."

He had listened attentively: "I do not quite understand you ..."

"Never mind," said the Duchess. "You are to go over to Sipplingen to-morrow; close to Ueberlingen, where the rocky shore shelves down into the lake. These caverns were made, in the olden times, to serve as hiding-places. When you see the smoke of a fire rising out of the hill, go to that spot. There you will find the person I want you to see; and you must then speak with him about the Huns."

"To whom is my mistress sending me?" enquired Ekkehard, eagerly.

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle," replied Dame Hadwig. "One does not know any other name for him hereabouts.--But stop," continued she, "I must give you the watchword, in case of his refusing you admittance."

She opened a cupboard, and searching about amongst her trinkets and other small things, took out a tiny slate, on which were scrawled a few letters. "That you are to say to him, besides giving him my kindest greetings."

Ekkehard looked at the slate. It contained only the two insignificant Latin words, "*neque enim!*"--nothing else.

"That has no meaning," said he.

"Never mind, the old man knows well, what it means for him."

Before cockcrow the next morning, Ekkehard passed out of the gate on the Hohentwiel, on horseback. The fresh morning air blew about his head, over which he now drew his hood. "Why has Heaven not made you a warrior; many things would be better then." These words of the Duchess accompanied him, like his own shadow. They were for him a spur to courageous resolutions. "When danger comes, she shall not find the schoolmaster, sitting behind his books," thought he.

His horse went on at a good pace. In a few hours, he rode over the woody hills, that separate the Untersee from the lake of Ueberlingen. At the ducal tenement of Sernatingen, the blue mirror of the lake lay stretched out before his eyes. There he left his horse in the care of the steward, and continued the path leading along the shore, on foot.

At a projecting point, he stopped a while, to gaze at leisure at the fine view before him. The eye, here meeting with no obstacle, could glance over the waters to the distant Rhætian Alps, which like a crystal wall, rise heavenwards; forming the background of the landscape.

Where the rocks of red sandstone steeply arise out of the lake, the path mounted upwards. Steps, hewn in the rocks, made the ascent easier. Here and there, apertures serving as windows, broke the uniformity of the walls; indicating by their deep shadows, the places, where in the times of the Roman supremacy, unknown men, had dug these caverns as an asylum, in the same way as the catacombs.

The ascent was fatiguing enough. Now he had reached a level, only a few steps in circumference, on which young grass was growing. In front, there was an entrance into the rock, about the height of a man. Out of this, there now rushed, violently barking, a huge black dog, which stopping short about two paces from Ekkehard, held itself ready with teeth and fangs to fly at him; keeping its eyes steadily fixed on the monk, who could not move, without risk of the dog's attacking him. His position was certainly not an enviable one; retreat being impossible, and Ekkehard not carrying arms about him. So he remained immovable, facing his enemy; when at an opening, there appeared the head of a man, with grey hair, piercing eyes, and a reddish beard.

"Call back the dog!" cried Ekkehard.

A few moments afterwards, the grey-haired man appeared at the entrance, armed with a spear.

"Back, Mummolin!" cried he.

The huge animal reluctantly obeyed; and not until the old man had threatened it with his spear, did it retreat growling.

"Your dog ought to be killed, and hung up nine feet over your door, until it fell to pieces," said Ekkehard angrily. "It nearly made me fall over into the lake," turning round, and beholding the lake lying at his feet, from the perpendicular height.

"In the Heidenhöhlen the common laws have no force," defiantly replied the old man. "With us, 'tis--keep off two steps, or we split your skull."

Ekkehard wanted to go on.

"Stop there," continued the stranger, barring the passage with his spear. "Not so fast if you please. Where are you going to?"

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle."

"To the old man of the Heidenhöhle?" angrily repeated the other. "Have you no more respectful term for that personage, you yellow-beaked cowl-bearer?"

"I know no other name," replied Ekkehard somewhat abashed. "My greeting is, *neque enim*."

"That sounds better," said the old man in a softer tone. "From whence do you come?"

"From the Hohentwiel. I am to tell you ..."

"Stop, I am not he whom you seek. I am merely his servant Rauching. I will announce you."

Considering the appearance of those barren, rocky walls and the black dog, this formality seemed somewhat out of place. Ekkehard was kept waiting some time. It was as if preparations for his reception were being made. At last Rauching made his reappearance. "Be pleased to enter." So they walked along a dark passage that widened at the end, admitting them into a chamber, which had been hewn in the rocks by human hands, high and spacious, with an arched ceiling. A rough panelling partly covered the walls. The openings for the windows were wide and airy; showing a piece of the lake and hills, like a picture in a frame. Some bright, warm sunbeams streamed in, lighting up the otherwise dark chamber. Here and there, traces of stone-benches were visible; while a high-backed chair, likewise of stone, and resembling a bishop's seat in old churches, stood beside the window. In it a figure was seated. It was a strange, human form, of mighty dimensions. The huge head rested heavily between the broad shoulders; forehead and cheeks were deeply furrowed. Round his temples were a few scanty white curls; whilst his mouth was almost entirely toothless,--signs which spoke of the wondrous age of the man. Round his shoulders hung a cloak of undecided colour, the back of which, hidden by the chair, was no doubt threadbare enough; the seams showing here and there, many a patch. He wore a pair of coarse boots, and by his side lay an old hat, with a dusty old trimming of fox's fur. In a niche in the wall, stood a chess-board with carved ivory pieces. A game seemed just to have been finished; the king mated by a knight, and two bishops ...

"Who comes to the forgotten one?" asked the old man, in a trembling voice. Then Ekkehard bowing his head before him, told his name, and who had sent him there.

"You have brought an evil watchword with you. Do people still speak of Luitward of Vercelli?"

"Whose soul be damned," added Rauching.

"I have never heard anything about him," said Ekkehard.

"Tell him, Rauching, who Luitward of Vercelli was. It would be a pity if he were to die in the memory of men."

"He was the greatest rascal, that ever the sun shone upon," was Rauching's reply.

"Tell him also, what is the meaning of *neque enim*."

"There is no gratitude in this world; and of an Emperor's friends, even the best is a traitor."

"Even the best is a traitor," murmured the old man, lost in thought. His eye now fell on the chessboard. "Ah yes," muttered he faintly, "checkmated, mated by bishops and knights" ... he clenched his fist, and made a movement as if to rise; then falling back with a deep sigh, he raised his shrivelled hand to his forehead, resting his heavy head on it.

"The headache" ... said he, "the cursed headache!"

"Mummolin!" cried Rauching.

With bounding steps the black dog came in; and on seeing the old man with bent-down head, he whiningly crept up to him, and licked his forehead. "'Tis well," said the old man, after a while,

lifting himself up again.

"Are you ill?" kindly asked Ekkehard.

"Ill?" rejoined he,--"may be that it is a sort of illness! I have been visited by it such a long time, that it seems quite like an old acquaintance. Have you ever had the headache? I advise you, never to go out to battle, when you are attacked by a headache; and by no means to conclude a peace. It may cost you a realm, that headache ..."

"Could not some physician" ... began Ekkehard.

"The wisdom of physicians, has in this case, long come to an end. They have done their best for me," pointing to his forehead, where two old scars crossed each other.

"Look here!--If they want you to try that remedy, you must not do so. In my younger days they hung me up by the feet;--then they made some cuts in my head; thus taking away some blood, and part of my intellects, without helping me. At Cremona (Zedekias was the name of the Hebrew sage), they consulted the stars, and placed me on a mulberry-tree at midnight. It was a long exorcism with which they drove the headache into the tree, but it did not help me. In the German lands, they ordered me to take powdered crabs' eyes, mixed with the dust of St. Mark's grave; and a draught of wine from the lake after it: all in vain! Now I've got used to it. The worst is licked away by Muramolín's rough tongue. Come here my brave Mummolin, who has never betrayed me yet ..."

He stopped, almost breathless, and caressed the dog.

"My message" ... Ekkehard was beginning--, but the old man waved his hand to him and said: "Have patience yet awhile; 'tis not well to speak with an empty stomach. You must be hungry. Nothing is more awful and more holy than hunger--said that dean of yore, when his friend and guest, ate up five of the six trouts before him; leaving only the smallest on the plate. He who has had something to do with the world, does not easily forget that saying. Rauching, prepare our meal."

So Rauching went into a neighbouring closet, which had been fitted up as a kitchen. The provisions were kept in different niches, and a few moments later, a white wreath of smoke curled up, from the rocky chimney. Shortly after, the cooking was done. A stone slab served as table. The crowning piece of the frugal repast was a pike; but the pike was old; moss growing on its head, and its flesh was tough, as leather. A jug of reddish looking wine, was also brought by Rauching; but *that* had grown on the Sippling hills, a vintage which still enjoys the reputation of being the most sour of all the sour wines produced on the lake. Rauching waited upon them during the meal.

"Well, what may your business be?" asked the old man, when the meagre repast was ended.

"Evil tidings; the Huns are invading the country. Their hoofs will soon be treading the Suabian ground."

"Good!" cried the old man. "That serves you right. Are the Normans also approaching?"

"You speak strangely," said Ekkehard.

The eyes of the old man lighted up. "And if enemies were to spring up around you, like mushrooms, you have deserved it well; you and your masters. Rauching, fill the glass; the Huns are coming,--*neque enim!* Now you will have to swallow the soup, which your masters have salted for you. A great and proud empire had been founded, extending from the shores of the Ebro, to the Raab in the Danish land, into which not a rat could have entered, without faithful watchmen catching it. And this, the great Emperor Charlemagne ..."

"God bless him," exclaimed Rauching.

"... left behind him; strong and powerful. The tribes which had once put a stop to the Roman supremacy, were all united as they ought to be; and in those days, the Huns slyly kept behind their hedges on the Danube, the weather not being favourable for them; and as soon as they tried to move, their wooden camp-town in Pannonia, was destroyed to the last chip, by the brave Franks. Later, the great ones in Germany, began to feel sorely, that not every one of them could be the master of the world; so each one must needs establish a government in his own territory. Sedition, rebellion and high-treason, well suited their tastes; and so they dethroned the last of Charlemagne's descendants, who held the reins of the world.--The representative of the unity of the realm has become a beggar; who must eat unbuttered water-gruel;--and now, your lords who preferred Arnulf the bastard and their own arrogance, have got the Huns on their heels, and the old times are coming back, as King Attila had them painted. Do you know the picture in the palace at Milan?..."

"There the Roman Emperor was painted sitting on the throne, with Scythian princes lying at his feet; till one day King Attila, chancing to ride by, gave a long and steadfast look at the picture, and laughingly said: 'quite right; only I'll make a small alteration.' And he had his own features, given to the man on the throne; those kneeling before him, pouring out bags of tributary gold,--"

being now the Roman Cæsars ... The picture is still to be seen."

"You are thinking of bygone tales," said Ekkehard.

"Of bygone tales?" exclaimed the old man. "For me there has been nothing new, these last forty years, but want and misery. Bygone tales! 'Tis well for him, who still remembers them, in order that he may see how the sins of the fathers, are visited on the children and children's children. Do you know why Charlemagne shed tears once in his life?--When they announced to him, the arrival of the Norman sea-robbers: 'as long as I live,' said he, 'tis mere child's play, but I grieve for my grandsons."

"As yet we have still an Emperor and a realm," said Ekkehard.

"Have you still one?" said the old man, draining his glass of sour Sipping wine, and shivering after it, "well I wish him joy. The corner-stones are dashed to pieces; and the building is crumbling away. With a clique of presumptuous nobles, no realm can exist. Those who ought to obey are lording it over the others; and he who ought to reign, must wheedle and flatter, instead of commanding. Methinks, I have heard of one, to whom his faithful subjects, sent the tribute in pebbles, instead of silver, and the head of the count who was sent to collect it, lay beside the stones, in the bag. Who has avenged it?" ...

"The Emperor is fighting and gathering laurels in Italy," rejoined Ekkehard.

"Oh Italy! Italy!" continued the old man. "That will still become a thorn in the German flesh. That was the only time the great Charles ..."

"Whom God bless," exclaimed Rauching.

"... allowed himself to be entrapped. It was a sad day, on which they crowned him at Rome; and no one has chuckled so gleefully, as he on St. Peter's chair. He was in want of us,--but what have we ever had to do in Italy? Look there! Has that mountain-wall been erected heavenwards, for nothing?--All that, which lies on the other side, belongs to those in Byzantium; and it is all right so; for Greek cunning is better there than German strength; but later generations have found nothing better to do than to perpetuate the error of Charlemagne. The good example he left them, they have trampled upon; and whilst there was plenty to do in the East and North, they must needs run off to Italy, as if the great magnet lay behind the Roman hills. I have often thought about it, what could have driven us, in that direction; and if it was not the Devil himself, it can only have been the good wine."

Ekkehard had become saddened by the old man's speeches, who, seeming to feel this, said: "Do not regard what a buried man tells you. We here in the Heidenhöhlen, cannot make it any better; but the truth has many a time taken up her abode in caverns; whilst ignorance was striding at a great pace through the land."

"A buried man?" said Ekkehard enquiringly.

"You may for all that, drink a bumper with him," jestingly replied the mysterious stranger. "It was necessary that I should die before the world; for the headache and the rascals had brought me into discredit. You need not therefore, stare at me so, little monk. Sit down here on the stone bench, and I will tell you about it and you can make a song of it, to play on the lute ... There once lived an Emperor, who had few happy days; for his realm was large, and he himself was big and stout, and the headache tormented him; ever since the day that he mounted the throne. Therefore he took unto himself a chancellor, who had got a fine head, and could think better than his master; for he was thin and meagre like a pole, and had no headache. The Emperor had raised him from obscure birth, for he was only the son of a blacksmith; and he bestowed favours on him, doing all that his chancellor advised him to do. Aye, he even concluded a miserable peace with the Normans; for his counsellor told him, that this matter was too insignificant; and that he had more important things to do, than to worry himself about a handful of pirates. At the same time, the chancellor went to the Emperor's spouse, and beguiled her weak heart; playing on the lute before her. Besides this he carried off by force, the daughters of some noble Allemannians; and finally joined in a league, with the Emperor's enemies. And when the Emperor at last called together a great diet, to remedy the state of affairs, his gaunt chancellor was among the foremost who spoke against him. With the words, '*neque enim*,' he began his speech, and then he proved to them, that they must dethrone their Emperor; and he spoke so venomously and treacherously against the peace with the Normans, which he had himself concluded,--that they all fell off from their master, like withered leaves when the autumn winds are shaking the tree. And they cried that the time for the stout ones was at an end; and then and there they dethroned him; so that he who had entered Tribur, with a threefold crown on his head, had nothing when he went away that he could call his own, but what he wore on his back; and at Mainz he sat before the Bishop's castle, glad when they presented him with a dish of soup. The brave chancellor's name was Luitward of Vercelli. May God reward him according to his deserts, and the Empress Richardis and the rest of them, likewise."--

"But when later the people in Suabia took pity on the poor outlaw, and gave him a little bit of land, whereby to earn a scanty livelihood; and when they thought of sending an army to fight for his rights, Luitward dispatched murderers against him. It was a wild night for the tenement of

Neidingen; the storm was breaking the branches of the trees, and the shutters were rattling violently. The dethroned Emperor not being able to sleep on account of the headache, had mounted on the roof, to let the storm cool his burning forehead, when they broke in to murder him. It is not a very pleasant feeling I can tell you, to sit in the cold night-air on the roof, with a heavy aching head, and hear how people are regretting downstairs, that they cannot strangle you, or hang you over the draw-well." ...

"He who has lived to hear that, had better die at once. The stout Meginhard at Neidingen, had fallen down from a tree and was killed just at the right time; so that they could lay him on the bier, and spread the news in the country that the dethroned Emperor had paid his tribute to grim King Death. They say that it was a fine procession, when they carried him to the Reichenau. The Heavens are said to have opened, casting a ray of light on the bier; and the funeral must have been touching indeed, when they buried him on the right side of the altar. 'That he had been stript of his honour, and bereft of his kingdom, was a trial imposed from above, to cleanse and purify his soul, and as he bore it patiently, it is to be hoped that the Lord rewarded him, with the crown of eternal life; to comfort him for the earthly crown which he had lost' ... thus they preached in the cloister-church, not knowing that he, whom they imagined they had buried, was at that same hour entering the solitude of the Heidenhöhlen; laden with all his trifling belongings; and leaving behind him a curse on the world." ...

The old man laughed. "Here it is safe and quiet enough, to think of old times. Let's drink a bumper to the dead! And Luitward has been cheated after all; for though his Emperor wears an old hat instead of a golden crown, and drinks the sour juice of the Sippling grape, instead of the sparkling Rhinewine, he is still alive; whilst the meagre ones and all their race are dead, long ago. And the stars will prove right after all, in prophesying at his birth, that he would leave this false world, in the roar of battle. The Huns are coming! Oh, come thou also soon, thou joyful end!"

Ekkehard had listened with the utmost attention. "Oh Lord, how wonderful are Thy ways," he exclaimed, attempting to kneel down and kiss the old man's hands; but he prevented him, saying: "All these things have been done away with, long ago. Take an example ..."

"Germany has greatly wronged you, and your race," Ekkehard was beginning to say, but the old man interrupted him, saying: "Germany! I do not bear her a grudge. May she prosper and nourish, undisturbed by enemies; and find some ruler who will make her powerful again; and who is not plagued with the headache when the Normans come back; and not have a chancellor whose name is Luitward of Vercelli. But those who have divided his garments amongst them; and cast lots for his vesture." ...

"May Heaven punish them with fire and brimstone," said Rauching in the background.

"And what answer shall I give to my mistress?" asked Ekkehard, after having finished his beaker.

"With regard to the Huns?" said the old man. "I believe that is simple enough. Tell the Duchess to go into the woods, and to see what the hedgehog does, when an enemy is coming too near. It curls itself up into a ball, and presents its prickles; and he who lays hands on it, is wounded. Suabia has got plenty of lances. Let them do the same.--You monks will also not be the worse for carrying the spear. And if your mistress wishes to know still more; then you may tell her the adage which rules in the Heidenhöhlen. Rauching, what is it?"

"Keep two steps off, or we'll break your head," he replied.

"And if there should be a question of peace, then tell her, that the old man of the Heidenhöhle once concluded a bad one, and that he would never do so again; although his headache were as bad as ever; and that he would much rather saddle his own horse, at the sound of the war-trumpet,--if you outlive his last ride, you may say a mass for him."

The old man had spoken with a strange excitement. Suddenly his voice broke off; his breath became short, almost groaning, and bending his head, he said: "it is coming on again."

Rauching hastily presented him with a draught of water; but the oppression did not subside.

"We must try the remedy," said Rauching. From a corner of the chamber, he rolled forwards a heavy block of stone, about a man's height, bearing some traces of sculpture, which they had found in the cavern; a mystic monument, belonging to former inhabitants. He placed it upright against the wall. It appeared as if a human head bearing a bishop's mitre, had once been represented on it. Rauching now seized a thick, knotty stick, and placing another in the hands of the old man, began thrashing away at the stone image, and pronouncing slowly and solemnly the following words. "Luitward of Vercelli! Traitor and adulterer, *neque enim!* Ravisher of nuns, and foul rebel, *neque enim!*" Heavily fell the blows, and a faint smile lighted up the withered features of the old man. He arose and began striking away at it also, with feeble arms.

"It has been written, that a bishop must lead a blameless life," said he in the same tone as Rauching,--"take this for the peace with the Normans! This for the seduction of the Empress Richardis, *neque enim!* This for the diet at Tribur, and that for the election of Arnulf! *neque enim!*"



The cavern rang with the resounding blows; the stone image standing immovable, under the fierce attacks. The old man became more and more relieved; warming himself by giving vent to the old hatred, which for years had nourished his miserable life.

Ekkehard did not quite understand the meaning of what he saw. He began 'to feel uncomfortable and so took his leave.

"I trust you have been enjoying yourself, at the expense of the old fool up there," said the steward of Sernatingen to him, when he brought out his saddled horse. "Does he still believe, that he has lost a crown and a kingdom? Ha, ha!"

Ekkehard rode away. In the beech-wood, the new green leaves were sprouting forth, telling of the coming Spring. A young monk from the Reichenau was going the same road. Bold and gay, like the clashing of arms, his song floated through the solitary wood:

"Arise ye men of Germany, ye warriors gay;  
With warlike song, and watchman's call, drive sleep away!  
At ev'ry hour make the round, from gate to wall,  
Lest unawares the enemy, upon you fall.  
From walls and towers then be heard, *eia vigila!*  
The echoes all repeating, *eia vigila!*"

It was the song which the night-guards sang at Mutina in Italy, while the Huns were attacking the town in which the Bishop resided. The monk had stood himself on guard at the gate of St. Geminianus, three years ago, and well knew the hissing of the Hunnic arrows; and when a presentiment of new battles, is so to say in the air, the old songs rise again in the minds of men.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Approach of the Huns.

"The old man is right," said Dame Hadwig, when Ekkehard reported to her, the result of his mission. "When the enemy threatens,--prepare, and when he attacks us,--beat him; that is so simple that one really need not ask anyone's advice. I believe that the habit of long thinking and wavering in critical moments, has been sown by the enemy, like weeds in the German lands. He who doubts, is near falling; and he who misses the right moment for action, often digs his own grave. We will get ready."

The exciting and dangerous position, put the Duchess into high spirits; just as trout delight in the turbulent waters, rushing over rocks and stones; while they sicken in a still lake. An example of courage and energy given by one in power, is never lost on inferiors. So they were all busy, making preparations for the reception of the enemy. From the tower on the Hohentwiel, visible at a great distance, the war-flag floated forth upon the air; and through the woods and fields, unto the remotest farm-steads, hidden in lonely mountain-glens, the war-trumpet was heard; calling together all those capable of bearing arms; poverty alone freeing anyone from the military service. Every man possessing more than two acres of land, was obliged to place himself under arms, and to present himself at the first call. The Hohentwiel was to be head-quarters; nature herself having made it a fortress. Swift messengers were riding on horseback through the Hegau; and people began stirring everywhere in the land. Behind the dark fir-woods, the charcoal-burners had formed a corps. "This will do," said one of them, swinging a heavy poker over his head, as if about to strike down an enemy. "I will also fight with the rest of them."

At the doors of the priests, and at those of the old and sick, the messengers also knocked. Those who could not fight, were to pray for the others.--This decree resounded through the land; reaching also the monastery in St. Gall.

Ekkehard, likewise went to the peaceful little island of Reichenau, as the Duchess had desired. This mission would have been highly distasteful to him, if the reason for it had been a different one. He was to bring an invitation to the brotherhood, to come to the Hohentwiel, in case of danger.

There, he found everything already in a state of excitement. The brothers were promenading beside the fountain, in the mild spring air; but not one of them was seriously thinking of enjoying the fine weather and blue sky. They were talking of the evil times, and holding counsel, what was to be done. The idea of leaving their quiet cells, did not appear to please them at all.

"St. Mark," one of them had said, "will protect his disciples, and by striking the enemy with blindness, cause them to ride past; or he will raise the waves of the Bodensee, to devour them, as the Red Sea swallowed up the Egyptians."

But old Simon Bardo replied: "This calculation is not quite safe; and when a place is not fortified by towers and walls, a retreat might after all, be the better plan. Wherever a shilling's worth is still to be got, no Hun will ride by, and if you put a gold piece on the grave of a dead man, his hand will grow out of the earth to seize it."

"Holy Pirminius!" said the gardener, in doleful accents, "who then is to mind the fruits and vegetables in the garden, if we must go?"

"And the chickens," said another, whose chief delight was in the poultry-yard,--"have we then, bought the three dozen turkeys merely for the enemy?"

"If one were to write an impressive letter to them," proposed a third,--"they surely cannot be such barbarians, as to harm God and His saints."

Simon Bardo, with a pitying smile, then said: "Thou hadst better become a shepherd, and drink a decoction of camomile,--thou who wouldst write impressive letters to the Huns! Oh, that I had brought my old firework-maker Kedrenus with me, over the Alps! Then we should cast a light on the enemy, far brighter than the mild moonshine in the flower-garden, which called up such tender recollections in the soul of Abbot Walafrid. We should then sink ships; and command the whole shore with our long fire-tubes. Hurrah! How they would be scattered to the winds, when our missiles would be flying through the air like fiery dragons, pouring down a rain of burning naphtha. But what does any of you, know about such fire! Oh Kedrenus, thou paragon of firework-makers!"

Ekkehard had entered the monastery, and asked for the Abbot. A serving brother showed him up to his apartments; but he was neither there, nor was he to be seen anywhere else.

"He will most likely be in the armoury," said a monk passing by. So the serving brother led Ekkehard to the armoury, which was situated high up in the tower. There, quantities of arms and harness were heaped up; with which the monastery provided its warriors for the arrier-ban. Abbot Wazmann stood there, hidden by a cloud of dust. He had had the armour taken down from the walls, to examine it. Dust and cobwebs bore witness to its having rested for a long while. During the examination, the Abbot had not forgotten to provide for himself. His upper garment lay on the ground before him; and in its place, he had donned a coat of mail, with the help of a fair-haired cloister-pupil. He was now stretching out his arms, to see whether it fitted him tightly and comfortably.

"Come nearer!" cried he, on seeing Ekkehard. "The reception is fitted to the times!"

Ekkehard then communicated the Duchess's invitation, to him.

"I should have asked for this, myself," replied he, "if you had not come." He had seized a long sword, and made a cut in the air with it; so that Ekkehard started back a pace or two. From the swift, whizzing sound which it produced, one could guess that the hand which held it, was not unaccustomed to its use.

"Yes, 'tis getting serious," said he. "Down in Altdorf in the Shussenthal, the Huns have already effected their entrance; and we shall soon see the flames of Lindau, reflected in the water. Do you wish to choose a suitable armour for yourself also? This one, with the shoulder-strap, will defeat every blow or thrust as well, as the finest linen shirt, ever spun by a virgin in holy nights."

Ekkehard courteously declined the offer, and then went down, accompanied by the Abbot; who seemed to enjoy his coat of mail thoroughly. Throwing his brown habit over it, like a true champion of the Lord, he made his appearance amongst the anxious brotherhood still assembled in the garden.

"St. Mark appeared to me this night, pointing to the Hohentwiel," cried the Abbot. "Thither, thou shalt bring my remains, to save them from desecration by the hands of the heathen," he said. "Be up and get ready! With prayers and fasting your souls have fought to the present moment with the Evil One; but now your fists are to prove that you are warriors indeed; for those who come, are the sons of the Devil. Witches and demons begot them in the Asiatic deserts. All their doings are vile wickedness, and when their time comes, they will all go back to hell!"

During this appeal, even the most careless of the brothers became convinced that danger was near. A murmur of approbation ran through the ranks; for the cultivation of science had not yet made them so effeminate, but that they looked on a warlike expedition, as a very desirable pastime.

With his back leaning against an apple-tree, stood Rudimann the cellarer; an ominous frown on his forehead. Ekkehard went up to him, wishing to embrace him, as a sign that a general calamity was wiping out the old quarrel; but Rudimann, waving him off, said: "I know what you mean." Then drawing a coarse thread out of the seam of his garment, he threw it to the ground, and placed his foot on it.

"As long as a Hunnic horse is treading German ground, all enmity shall be torn out of my heart, as this thread is out of my garment; but if we both outlive the coming battles, we will take it up again, as it were meet." After these words he turned round, and descended into the cellar, there to attend to important business. In due order, the large tuns lay there in the arched vaults; and not one of them gave back a hollow sound, when struck. Rudimann had ordered some masons, and now had a small antichamber, which generally served for the keeping of fruit and vegetable, arranged, as if it were the cloister-cellar. Two small casks, and one larger one, were put there. "If the enemy finds nothing, he becomes suspicious," said the cellarer to himself, "and if the Sipplinger choice wine, which I sacrifice, only does its duty, many a Hun will find some difficulty in continuing his journey."

The masons had already got ready the square stones, to wall up the inner cellar-door,--when Rudimann once more stepped in. Walking up to an old rotten-looking tun, he tapped it; and filling a small jug, emptied this with a most melancholy expression; and then, folding his hands as in prayer, he said: "May God protect thee, noble red wine of Meersburg!"--A solitary tear stood glistening in his eye ...

In all parts of the monastery, busy hands were preparing for the coming danger. In the armoury, the harness and arms were being divided. Unfortunately there were many heads, and but few helmets. Then, the leather-work was in a somewhat dilapidated condition, and stood in great need of repair.

In the treasury, the Abbot was superintending the packing up of precious articles, and holy relics. Many heavy boxes were thus filled. The golden cross with the holy blood; the white marble vase, which had once held the wine at the marriage of Cana; coffins with the remains of martyrs; the Abbot's staff, and the golden pixes,--all were carefully packed up, and brought over to the ships. Some, were also carrying off the heavy green emerald, weighing fully twenty-eight pounds.

"The emerald, you may leave behind," said the Abbot.

"The parting gift of the great Emperor Charles?--The rarest jewel of the cathedral? Another such the bowels of the earth do not contain?" asked the serving brother.

"I know a glass-maker in Venetia, who can easily make another, if the Huns should carry this one away," carelessly replied the Abbot. So they put the jewel back into the cupboard.

Before evening had set in, everything was ready for the departure. Then the Abbot commanded the brothers to assemble in the courtyard. All appeared, with the exception of one.

"Where is Heribald?" asked he.

Heribald was a pious monk, whose ways had many a time cheered up a desponding brother. In his infancy, his nurse had let him fall on the stone floor, and from that time, he had had a weakness of the brain; a certain softness,--but he possessed an excellent heart, and took as much delight in God's beautiful world, as any stronger-minded being.

So they went to look for Heribald, and found him up in his cell. The yellow and grey cloister-cat, seemed to have offended him in some way; for he had fastened the cord which generally served him as a girdle, round its body; and hung it up on a nail in the ceiling. The poor old animal hung thus suspended in the air; screeching and mewing pitifully; whilst Heribald rocked it gently to and fro, talking Latin to it.

"Come on Heribald!" called out his companions. "We must leave the island."

"Let him fly, who will," replied the idiot. "Heribald won't go away."

"Be good, Heribald, and follow us; the Abbot commands you."

Then Heribald pulled off his shoe, and held it out to the brothers. "The shoe was already torn last year," said he. "Then Heribald went to the camerarius and said: 'give me my yearly portion of leather, that I may make myself a new pair of shoes.' But the camerarius replied: 'if thou didst not tread thy shoes all awry, then they would not tear,'--and so he refused the leather. Upon this, Heribald complained of the camerarius to the Abbot, but he said: 'a fool, as thou art, can well go barefoot.' Now Heribald has no decent shoes to put on; and he will not go amongst strangers with his torn ones."

Such sound reasons could not well be argued away; so the brothers seized him, intending to carry him off by force; but no sooner had they reached the passage, than Heribald broke away from them, and rushed as quick as lightning to the church and from thence up the stairs, that led to the belfry. When he had reached the very top, he drew up the small wooden ladder after him; so that there was no possibility of getting at him.

They reported to the Abbot, how matters stood. "Well, then we must leave him behind," said he. "Children and fools, are protected by a guardian-angel of their own."

Two large barges lay waiting at the shore, to receive the fugitives. They were strong, well-built ships; furnished with oars and masts. In some smaller boats, the serving people, and all others

who lived on the Reichenau, sailed, with all their chattels and belongings. The whole looked a strange medley.

One bark, filled by the maid-servants, and commanded by Kerhildis the upper maid, had already steered off; without its crew knowing what place they were bound for; but fear, this time was stronger than their curiosity to see the moustaches of strange warriors.

And now the brotherhood was approaching the shore; presenting a strange sight. The greater part were armed; some chanting the litany, others carrying the coffin of St. Mark; the Abbot with Ekkehard walking at the head of the cloister-pupils. They all cast back a sorrowful look towards the home where they had spent so many years; and then they went on board.

No sooner had they fairly started, than all the bells began to ring merrily. The weak-minded Heribald, was ringing a farewell-greeting to them. Afterwards, he appeared on the top of the cathedral-tower, and called down with a powerful voice "*dominus vobiscum*," and here and there, one of the monks responded in the accustomed way: "*et cum spiritu tuo*."

A keen breeze was curling the waves of the lake, which had only lately thawed. Numerous, large iceblocks were still floating about, so that the ships often had great difficulty in proceeding.

The monks who were taking care of St. Mark's coffin, anxiously cowered down, when the waves sometimes entered their boat; but bold and erect Abbot Wazmann's tall figure towered above the rest; his habit fluttering in the wind.

"The Lord is at our head," said he, "as He was in the fiery pillar before the people of Israel. He is with us on our flight, and He will be with us, in the hour of our happy return."

In a clear, moonshiny night the monks of the Reichenau ascended the Hohentwiel, where they found everything prepared for their reception. In the small castle-church, they deposited the coffin of their saint; six of the brothers being ordered to stay beside it; watching and praying.

The courtyard, on the next morning, was transformed into a bustling bivouac. Some hundred armed vassals, were already assembled, and from the Reichenau, ninety more combatants were added to their numbers. They were all eagerly preparing, for the coming contest. Already before sunrise, the hammering of the blacksmiths, awakened the sleepers. Arrows and lances were being made. Near the fountain in the yard, stood the big grinding-stone, on which the rusty blades were sharpened. The old basketmaker of Weiterdingen, had also been fetched up; and was sitting with his boys under the great linden-tree; covering the long boards destined for shields, with a strong plating of willow branches. Over this, a tanned skin was fastened, and the shield was complete. Round a merry fire, others were seated, melting lead, to make sharp pointed missiles for the slings. Bludgeons and heavy clubs of ash were also hardened in the flames. "If one of these knocks at the skull of a heathen," said Rudimann swinging a heavy club over his head, "it is sure to be admitted."

All who had served before in the arrier-ban, were put under the command of Simon Bardo, the Greek fieldmarshal. "A man who wants to pass his old days peaceably, must come to Germany," he had jestingly said to the Duchess; but in reality the clatter of arms, strengthened his mind, like old Rhinewine. With an untiring zeal, he drilled the unexperienced men, in the use of arms; and every day for many an hour, the stone flags of the courtyard resounded with the heavy, regular tramp of the monks, who in closed ranks, were being taught the art of a spear-attack. "With you, one could verily knock down walls, when once your blood is up," said the old soldier with an approving nod.

Those of the younger men, who possessed a good eye and flexible sinews, were enlisted among the archers. These also, practised industriously, shooting at a target. Once, a loud cry of delight was heard in the courtyard, where the jolly fellows had manufactured a straw figure, wearing a crown of owl's feathers, and holding a six-corded whip in its hand. A small piece of red cloth in the shape of a heart, fastened in front, was the mark.

"Attila the King of the Huns!" cried the archers, "who can hit him right in the heart?"

"Boasting is easy enough," said Dame Hadwig, who was looking down from her balcony; "but though on an evil bridal night, Death felled him, his spirit is still living in the world; and I fear, that even those coming after us, will yet have trouble enough, to banish his dread memory."

"If they could only shoot away at him, as well as they do now down there," said Praxedis, when a triumphant shout was heard. The straw-figure tottered and fell; an arrow having hit the heart.

Ekkehard came up to the hall. He had exercised with the others, and his face glowed with the unwonted exertion; whilst the helmet had left a red stripe on his forehead. In the excitement of the moment, he had forgotten to leave his lance, outside the door.

With evident pleasure Dame Hadwig stood looking at him. He was no longer the timid teacher of Latin. Bowing his head before the Duchess, he said: "Our brothers in the Lord, from the Reichenau, bid me tell you that a great thirst is besetting their ranks."

Dame Hadwig laughed merrily. "Let them put a tun of cool beer in the courtyard. Until the

Huns are all driven out of the country, our cellarer is not to complain about the emptying of his tuns." Then pointing at the bustling life in the courtyard, she added: "Life after all, brings us richer and more manifold pictures than all poets can paint. You were hardly prepared for such a change of things, eh?"

But Ekkehard would allow nothing approaching a slight, to come near his beloved Virgilius.

"Allow me," said he, leaning on his spear, "all that we now see, you will find word for word in the *Æneid*; as if there was to be nothing new under the sun. Would you not fancy that Virgil stood here on this balcony, looking down on yonder busy crowd;--when he sang, at the beginning of the war in Latium:

"Yonder the shields for the head, are with willowy branches surrounded; Others the armour of ore, are to shining polish restoring, There, the protecting greaves, of glittering silver are forged. Sickle and plough for the time, are dishonoured and wholly forgotten, All are busily mending the rusty swords of their fathers; bugles are heard in the land, and the watch-word to all is now given."

"Yes, that really fits the situation wonderfully well," said Dame Hadwig, "but can you also predict, the issue of the coming battles, from your epic,"--she was going to ask; but in times of such busy confusion, 'tis somewhat difficult to speak about poetry. At that moment the steward came in, to report that all the meat was eaten up; and to ask whether he might kill two more oxen.

After a few days, Simon Bardo's men were so well drilled, that he could let them pass muster before the Duchess;--and it was time, for they had already been disturbed in their rest, last night. A bright red light was illuminating the sky, far over the lake. Like a fiery cloud, the dread sign hung there for several hours; the conflagration being probably far off in Helvetia. The monks began to dispute about it. Some said that it was a heavenly apparition; a fiery star, sent as a warning unto all Christendom. Others said that there must be a great conflagration in the Rhine-valley; and one brother, gifted with a particularly fine nose, even pretended to perceive the smell of burning. It was long past midnight, when the red light died out.

On the southern declivity of the mountain, there was a moderate sized grove, where the first spring-flowers were blooming already, while the snow was still lying in the nooks and crevices of the valleys. This was to be the place for the mustering. Dame Hadwig was seated on her noble palfrey, surrounded by a small troop of well-armed knights, who had also joined the party on the Hohentwiel; the Barons of Randegg, of Hoewen and the gaunt Friedinger. The Abbot from Reichenau, was likewise proudly sitting, on his ambling-nag; a well-mounted champion of the Lord. Master Spazzo the chamberlain, was taking great pains to equal him, with regard to carriage and movements, which were both highly aristocratic and knightly. Ekkehard who was likewise to have accompanied the Duchess on horseback, had declined the honour; that he might not raise envy in the hearts of the other monks.

And now the outer castle-gate slowly opened on its heavy hinges, and out strode the archers; who with the cross-bow-men, headed the march. Amidst the merry sounds of music, they walked on in closed ranks; Audifax, with a very serious expression, being amongst the horn-blowers, in the capacity of bagpiper. Suddenly, Simon Bardo ordered a signal to be given; at the sound of which the ranks swiftly deployed; skirmishing about, like a swarm of wild bees. They had soon occupied every bush and hedge in the neighbourhood.

Then there came the troop of monks, firmly treading the ground, with helmets and armour under their habits; the shields hanging on their backs. With couched lances, they were a redoubtable force. Their flag floated merrily, high in the air; a red cross in a white field. They marched on as regularly, as if they had been soldiers these many years; for with strong-minded men, mental discipline, is an excellent preparation for the warrior's life. Only one in the left wing, was not able to keep pace with the others; his lance protruding beyond the straight line preserved by his companions. "It is not his fault," said Abbot Wazmann to the Duchess. "He copied a whole mass-book, in the space of six weeks, so that he has got the writing-cramp in his hand."

Ekkehard was marching in the right wing, and when his troop passed the Duchess, he caught a look from the radiant eyes, which could scarcely have been intended for the whole corps.

Divided into three bodies, then came the vassals and bondsmen. Their musical instruments were huge bulls' horns; emitting strange, uncouth sounds, and many a singular looking weapon was seen that day, which had already been used under the great Emperor Charles. Some of them were merely armed with a heavy bludgeon.

Master Spazzo with his sharp eyes meanwhile looked down into the valley. "'Tis well that we are all together, and well prepared; for I verily believe that we shall soon get some work to do," said he, pointing downwards in the direction, where the roofs of Hilzingen were peeping out from the wooded dells. A dark line was seen approaching. Then Simon Bardo ordered his troops to stop, and after casting a searching look in that direction, said: "these are not Huns, for they are not on horseback." Still, taking all needful precaution, he commanded his archers to occupy the foot of the hill.

As the ranks of the strangers approached, the garb of St. Benedict became visible. A golden cross, in lieu of a standard, was towering above the lances, and the "*Kyrie eleison*," was now heard quite plainly. "My brothers!" exclaimed Ekkehard. Then the ranks of the Reichenau monks broke up, and running down the hill with shouts of delight, they soon met, and were joyfully embracing each other. To meet again in the hour of danger, makes the heart doubly glad. Arm in arm with those of the Reichenau, the stranger guests now ascended the hill, headed by their Abbot, Cralo. On a heavy cart in the rear-guard, they were transporting the blind Thieto.

"May God bless you, most noble cousin," said the Abbot bowing his head before the Duchess. "Who would have thought half a year ago, that we should return your call, with the whole of the brotherhood? But the God of Israel says, 'let my people leave their home, so that they may remain faithful unto me.'"

Dame Hadwig held out her hand to him, with visible emotion. "Yes, these are times of trial," said she. "Be welcome!"

Thus fortified by the new-comers, the troop betook themselves back again, behind the protecting walls of the Hohentwiel. Praxedis had descended into the courtyard. There she stood under the linden-tree, gazing at the men as they came in. Those of St. Gall had all arrived, yet her eyes were still riveted on the door, as if there were still someone missing. He, however, whom her eyes sought, was not amongst the last entering guests either.

In the castle, they were busying themselves to make room for the new-comers. For the number of men, now assembled, the space was but scanty. In the round, principal tower, there was an airy hall, in which they heaped up straw, for a temporary nights quarter. "If things go on in this way," grumbled the steward, whose head was nearly turned with all the demands that were being made on him,--"we shall soon have the whole priesthood of Europe, up here."

Kitchen and cellar gave all they could. In the hall downstairs, monks and warriors were sitting, noisily taking their meal. Dame Hadwig had invited the two Abbots as well as those of noble birth amongst her guests, into her own reception room. There was a great deal to be discussed, and the questions and answers, quickly given and often crossing each other, made a strange confusion of voices.

As soon as an opportunity offered, Abbot Cralo told them about the fate of his monastery.

"This time," he began, "the danger came upon us almost unawares. Scarcely had one spoken of the Huns, when the ground was already resounding, with the tramp of their horses hoofs. 'Sharp,' was the word now. The pupils of the cloister-school, I hastily sent over to the fortress of Wasserburg. Aristotle and Cicero will probably get somewhat dusty; the boys catching fish in the Bodensee, instead of studying the classics,--if they do not get more serious work to do. The old teachers fled with them over the water, in good time. We others had made ourselves a sort of stronghold, as a refuge. Where the Sitter-brook rushes through the narrow, fir-grown valley, we found an excellent hiding-place, which we thought no heathenish bloodhound would ever sniff out. There, we built ourselves a strong house, with towers and walls; and we consecrated it to the holy Trinity,--who I trust will protect it.

"We had scarcely finished it, when the messengers from the lake came, crying: 'fly, the Huns are coming!' Then there came others from the Rhine valley, and 'fly!' was again the word. The sky was already dyed red, from conflagrations and camp-fires; the air was filled with the shrieks of people flying and the creaking of retreating cartwheels. So we also set out. Gold and jewels; St. Gallus' and St. Othmar's coffins, in fact all our treasures were first safely hidden; the books being carried off before to the Wasserburg, by the boys. So we left the monastery; not thinking much about eating and drinking; some scanty provisions, only having been brought to our retreat in the wood, beforehand. Thither we now went in great haste. Only on the road, the brothers perceived that we had left the blind Thieto behind in his cell; but nobody ventured to return for him, as the ground was so to say, already burning under our feet. Thus we remained for several days quietly hidden in our firwood; often jumping up at night, to seize our arms, fancying the enemy were outside; but it was but the rushing of the Sitter, or the rustling of the wind in the tree-tops. One evening however, a clear voice, demanded admittance; and on opening the door, in came Burkhard, the cloister-pupil; haggard and tired to death. Out of friendship for Romeias the cloister-watchman, he had remained behind, without our noticing it. He was the bearer of evil tidings. The terror of that which he had seen, had turned some of the hairs on his young head, quite grey."--Abbot Cralo's voice here began to tremble. He stopped a moment to take a draught of wine. "The Lord be merciful to all christian departed ones," said he with emotion. "His blessing be with them, and may He let them rest in peace."

"Amen," said the others.

"Of whom are you thinking?" asked the Duchess. Praxedis had left her place and gone behind her mistress's chair, where she stood breathlessly watching Abbot Cralo's lips.

"It is only when a man is dead and gone," continued the Abbot, taking up again the thread of his tale, "that the remaining ones appreciate his value. Romeias, the best of all watchmen, did not leave the monastery with us. 'I will keep my post to the last,' said he. He then barred and locked all the gates; hid all that was valuable, and went his round on the walls; accompanied by

Burkhard the cloister-pupil. The remaining time he kept watch on the tower; his arms by his side. Soon after we had left, a large body of Huns on horseback, carefully prying about, approached the walls. Romeias gave the ordinary bugle sounds, and then quickly running to the other end of the courtyard, blew the horn again there; as if the monastery were still occupied, and well prepared. 'Now the time has come, for us to depart also,' said he to the pupil. He had fastened an old withered nosegay to his helmet, Burkhard told us; and thus the two went over to the blind Thieto, who, being loth to leave his accustomed corner, was placed on two spears, and thus carried away. Letting themselves out by a secret little gate, they fled up the Schwarzathal.

"Already the Huns had sprung from their horses, and had begun to climb the walls, and when they saw that nothing stirred, they swarmed in like flies on a drop of honey. Romeias meanwhile, quietly walked on with his hoary burden. 'Nobody shall say of the cloister-watchman,' said he, 'that he quickened his step, to please a pack of heathenish blood-hounds.' Thus he tried to encourage his young friend; but only too soon, the Huns were on their track. Wild cries came up the valley, and soon after, the first arrows whizzed through the air. So they reached the rock of the recluses; but here, even Romeias was surprised;--for as if nothing uncommon had happened, Wiborad's hollow psalm-singing was heard as usual. In a heavenly vision, her speedy suffering and death had been revealed to her, and even the pious Waldramm, could not persuade her to fly. 'My cell is the battle-field on which I have fought against the old enemy of mankind, and like a true champion of the Lord, I will defend it to the last breath,' said she; and so she remained quite alone in that desolate spot, when all others left it. As the cloister's refuge in the firwood was too far to be reached, Romeias picked out a remote little hut, and in it carefully deposited the blind Thieto; letting him in by the roof. Before leaving him, he kissed the old man, and then told the cloister-pupil to fly, and save himself.

"'You see something may happen to me,' he said, 'and so you must tell those in the refuge, to look after the blind one.' Burkhard in vain besought him to fly likewise; quoting Nisus and Euryalus, who had also fled into the woods, before the greater numbers of the Volskian horsemen. 'I should have to run too fast,' replied Romeias, 'and that would make me too warm, and give me pains in the chest. Besides I should like to speak a word or two with the children of the Devil.'

"He then went up to Wiborad's cell, and knocking at the shutter, called out: 'Give me thy hand old dragon; we will make peace now,' upon which Wiborad stretched out her withered right hand. Finally, Romeias blocked up the narrow passage of the Schwarzathal with some huge stones, and then taking his shield from his back, and holding his spears ready, he seized his big bugle-horn, to blow once more on it. With flying hair he thus stood behind his wall, expecting the enemy. At first the sounds were fierce and warlike, but by degree they became softer and sweeter, until an arrow, flying right into the opening, produced a sharp dissonance. The next moment, a whole shower of arrows covered him and stuck fast in his shield; but he shook them off like rain-drops. Here and there, one of the Huns, climbed up the rocks to get at him, but Romeias's spears, fetched them down quickly. The attack became fiercer and louder, but undaunted, Wiborad was still chanting her psalm:

"'Destroy them in Thy anger, oh Lord. Destroy them that they do no more exist, so that the world knows that God is reigning in Israel, and over the whole earth, Sela.' ...

"So far Burkhard had witnessed the fighting; then he had turned and fled. On hearing his account in the refuge, we were all very much grieved, and sent out a troop that very night, to look after the blind Thieto. Perfect quiet reigned on the hill of the recluses, when they reached it. The moon was shining on the bodies of the slain Huns, and amongst them, the brothers found also ..."

Here the recital was interrupted by loud sobs. Praxedis was with difficulty supporting herself, on the back of the Duchess's chair, and was weeping bitterly.

"... There they found the dismembered body of Romeias," continued the Abbot. "His head was hewn off and carried away by the enemy. He lay on his shield; the faded flowers which had adorned his helmet, tightly clutched in his hand. May God reward him: for he, whose life was lost in doing his duty, is surely worthy to enter heaven. Wiborad's shutter was knocked at in vain, and the tiles of her roof were mostly broken. So one of the brothers climbed up, and on looking down, beheld the recluse lying in her blood, before the little altar of her cell. Three wounds were visible on her head; which proved that the Lord had deemed her worthy to die a martyr's death, by the hands of the heathen."

Everyone was too much moved to speak. Dame Hadwig also, was deeply touched.

"I have brought you the veil of the martyr," said Sir Cralo, "consecrated by the blood of her wounds. You might hang it up, in the castle-church. Only Thieto, the blind one, had remained unharmed. Undiscovered by the enemy, he was found soundly sleeping in the little hut by the rock. 'I have been dreaming that an eternal peace had come over the world,' said he to the brothers, when they awoke him. But even in our remote little valley, we were not to have peace much longer; as the Huns found their way to us also. That was a swarming, piping and snorting, such as had never been heard before in the quiet firwood. Our walls were strong, and our courage likewise; but hungry people soon get tired of being besieged. The day before yesterday our provisions were eaten up; and when the evening came, we saw a pillar of smoke rise from our

monastery. So we broke through the enemy, in the middle of the night; the Lord being with us and our swords helping likewise. And so we have come to you,"--with a bow towards the Duchess, "homeless and orphaned, like birds whose nest has been struck by lightning; and bringing nothing with us, but the tidings that the Huns, whom the Lord destroy, are following on our heels." ...

"The sooner they come, the better," defiantly said the Abbot of the Reichenau, raising his goblet.

"Here's to the arms of God's own champions," said the Duchess, ringing her glass, against his.

"And revenge for the death of the brave Romeias," added Praxedis in a low voice and with tears in her eyes, when her glass vibrated against that of the gaunt Fridinger.

It was getting late. Wild songs and warlike cries, were still resounding in the hall on the first floor. The young monk who had come to the Reichenau from Mutina in Italy, had again struck up his sentinel's song.

The opportunity for valiant deeds, was no longer very far off.

## **CHAPTER XIII.**

### **Heribald and his Guests.**

On the little island of Reichenau, it was silent and lonely after the departure of the inhabitants of the cloister. The weak-minded Heribald was lord and master of the whole place, and was much pleased with his solitude. For hours he now sat on the shore, throwing smooth pebbles over the waves, so that they danced merrily along. When they sank at once, he scolded them loudly.

With the poultry in the yard, which he fed very regularly, he also talked a good deal. "If you are very good, and the brothers do not return," he once said, "Heribald will preach you a sermon."--In the monastery itself, he also found plenty of amusement, for in a single day of solitude, a man can hatch a good many useful ideas. The camerarius had angered him, by refusing to give him the necessary shoe-leather; so Heribald went up to the cell of the camerarius, smashed to pieces his large, stone water-jug, as well as his three flower-pots, and then opening the straw mattress, he took out some of the straw, and put in the broken crockery instead. Having achieved this feat, he lay down on it, and on feeling the hard and sharp-edged contents tolerably unpleasant, he smiled contentedly and betook himself to the Abbot's apartments.

Towards the Abbot he also bore a grudge, as he was indebted to him for many a sound whipping; but in his rooms, everything was locked up, and in excellent order. So nothing was left to him, but to cut off one of the legs of the cushioned easy-chair. Having done this, he cunningly placed it back in its old place, as if nothing whatever had happened. "That will break down nicely with him, when he comes home, and sits comfortably on it. 'Thou shalt castigate the flesh,' says St. Benedict. But Heribald has not cut off the chair's foot.--The Huns have done it."

The duty of prayer and psalm-singing he performed regularly, as the rules of the order prescribed. The seven times for prayer each day, the solitary man strictly adhered to, as if he could be punished for missing them; and he descended also every night into the cloister-church, there to hold the midnight vigil.

At the same hour, when his brothers were carousing in the hall of the ducal castle with the monks of St. Gall, Heribald was standing in the choir. The dark, dreary shadows of night enveloped the aisle, in which the everlasting lamp was dimly burning; but fearlessly and with a clear voice, Heribald intoned the first verse: "Oh Lord, deliver me from evil"--and then sang the third psalm, which David had once sung, when he fled before his son Absalon. When he came to the place where the antiphon was to fall in, according to custom, he stopped, waiting for the responses. Everything remained silent and still, however. Heribald passed his hand over his forehead, and said: "Ah, I forgot! They are all gone, and Heribald is alone." Then he wanted to sing the forty-ninth psalm, as the nightly service required,--when the everlasting lamp went out, a bat having extinguished it with its wings. Outside, storm and rain were raging. Heavy drops fell on the roof of the church, and beat against the windows. Heribald began to shudder.

"Holy Benedict," exclaimed he, "be pleased to see that it is not Heribald's fault, that the antiphon was not sung." He then rose and walked with careful steps through the dark aisle. A



shrill wind whistled through a little window of the crypt under the high-altar, producing a howling sound; and as Heribald advanced, a draught caught his garment. "Art thou come back, thou hellish tempter?" said he, "must I fight thee once more?"

Undauntedly he stepped back to the altar and seized a wooden crucifix, which the Abbot had not had taken away. "In the name of the Holy Trinity, I defy thee, Satan. Come on, Heribald awaits thee!" With unabated courage he thus stood on the altar-steps; but though the wind continued to howl dismally, the Devil did not appear.

"He still remembers the last time," smilingly said the idiot. About a year ago the Evil One had appeared to him in the shape of a big dog, barking furiously at him; but Heribald had attacked him with a pole; and had aimed his blows so well, that the pole broke.

Then Heribald screamed out a number of choice invectives, in the direction where the wind was moaning; and when even after this, nothing came to tempt him, he replaced the crucifix on the altar, bent his knees before it, and then went back to his cell, murmuring the "*Kyrie eleison*." There he slept the sleep of the just until late in the morning. The sun was already high in the heavens, when Heribald was complacently walking up and down, before the monastery. Since the time, when he had enjoyed an occasional holiday at school, he had seldom had an opportunity of resting himself. "Idleness is the soul's worst enemy," St. Benedict had said, and in consequence strictly ordered his disciples, to fill up the time which was not claimed by devotional tasks, by the work of their hands. Heribald, not knowing any art or handicraft, had been employed in cutting wood and in rendering similar useful, but tiring services;--but now, he paced up and down with crossed arms before the heaped up log-wood; looking up smilingly at one of the cloister-windows.

"Why don't you come down, Father Rudimann, and make Heribald cut the wood? You, who used to keep such excellent watch over the brothers; and who so often called Heribald a useless servant of the Lord, when he looked at the clouds, instead of handling the axe. Why don't you attend to your duty?"

Not even an echo gave answer to the half-witted creature's query; so he drew out some of the under logs, thus making the whole pile fall noisily down. "Tumble down if you like," continued he in his soliloquy, "Heribald has got a holiday, and is not going to put you up again.--The Abbot has run away, and the brothers have run away also; so it serves them right, if everything tumbles down."

After these laudable achievements, Heribald directed his steps to the cloister-garden. Another project now occupied his mind. He intended to cut a few delicate lettuces for his dinner, and to dress them a good deal better than they would ever have been done, during the time of the father head-cook's superintendance. Temptingly the vision rose before him, how he would not spare the oil-jug, and would pitilessly cut to pieces some of the biggest onions; when a cloud of dust rose on the opposite shore and the forms of horses and riders became visible.

"Are you there, already?" said the monk, making the sign of the cross and then mumbling a hasty prayer; but a few moments later, his face had resumed its customary smile of contentment.

"Strange wanderers and pilgrims are to meet with a christian reception, at the gate of any house of the Lord," murmured he. "I will receive them."

A new idea now crossed his brain, and again passing his hand over his forehead, he exclaimed: "Have I not studied the history of the ancients, in the cloister-school, and learned how the Roman Senators received the invading Gauls?--Dressed in their mantles, the ivory sceptre in their hands, the venerable men sat in their chairs, immovable like bronze idols. Ah well, the Latin teacher shall not have told us in vain, that this was a most worthy reception. Heribald can do the same!"

A mild imbecility may be an enviable dower, now and then in life. That, which appears black to others, seems to the half-witted, blue or green, and if his path be zig-zag, he does not notice the serpents hidden in the grass; and the precipice into which the wise man inevitably falls, he stumbles over, without even perceiving the threatening danger....

A curule chair not being just then in the monastery, Heribald pushed a huge oak stem towards the gate which led into the court-yard. "For what end have we studied secular history, if we cannot even take counsel by it?" said he, seating himself quietly on his block, in expectation of that which was to come.

Opposite on the near shore, a troop of horsemen had stopped. With their reins slung round their arms, and their arrows ready fastened on their bows, they had gone on ahead, to reconnoitre the land. When no ambuscade came out from behind the willows bordering the lake, they stopped a while to rest their horses. Then the arrows were put back into their quivers; the crooked sabres taken between the teeth, and pressing the spurs into the horses sides, they went into the lake. Quickly the horses crossed the blue waves. Now the foremost men had touched the land, and jumping from their saddles, shook themselves three times, like a poodle coming out of its bath, and then with piercing, triumphant shouts they approached the monastery.

Like an image of stone, Heribald sat at his post, gazing undauntedly at the strange figures before him. As yet he had never passed a sleepless night, musing over the perfection of human beauty, but the faces which now met his view, struck him as being so very ugly, that he could not

suppress a startled, "Have mercy upon us, oh Lord!"

Partly bent, the strange guests were sitting in their saddles; their shrunk, meagre little bodies dressed in beasts' skins. From their square-shaped skulls, black, shaggy hair hung down in wild disorder; and their unshapely yellow faces, glistened as if they had been anointed with tallow. One of the foremost had enlarged his coarse-lipped mouth considerably, by a voluntary cut at the corners, and from their small, deep-set eyes they looked out suspiciously at the world.

"To make a Hun, one need only give a square shape to a lump of clay, put on a smaller lump for a nose, and drive in the chin"--Heribald was just thinking, when they stood before him. He did not understand their hissing language, and smiled complacently, as if the whole gang did not regard him in the least. For a while they kept staring with unbounded astonishment, at this puzzling specimen of humanity,--as critics are apt to do at a new poet, of whom they do not as yet know, in what pigeonhole of ready made judgments they are to put him. At last one of them beheld the bald place on Heribald's pate, and pointing at it with his sabre,--upon which the others raised a hoarse laugh,--he seized his bow and arrow to aim at the monk. But now Heribald's patience had come to an end, and a feeling of Allemannic pride coming over him as he confronted this rabble, he jumped up calling out: "By the tonsure of St. Benedict, the crown of my head shall not be mocked at, by any heathenish dog!" He had seized the reins of one of the foremost riders, and snatching away his sabre, was just going to assume an aggressive attitude, when quicker than lightning, one of the Huns threw a noose over his head and pulled him down. Then they tied his hands to his back, and were already raising their death-bringing arms, when a distant tramping was heard, like the approach of a mighty army. This occurrence for the moment completely drew off their attention from the idiot. They threw him like a sack against his oak-trunk, and quickly galloped back to the shore. The whole body of the Hunnic legion had now arrived on the opposite shore. The vanguard, by a shrill whistle, gave the signal that all was safe. At one of the extremities of the island, overgrown with reeds, they had spied a ford, which could be crossed on horseback with dry feet. This they showed to their friends, who now swarmed over like wild bees; many hundred horsemen. Their united forces had availed nothing against the walls of Augsburg and the Bishop's prayers; so, divided into several troops, they now ravaged the land. Their faces, figures and manner of sitting on horseback were all alike, for with uncultivated races, the features are mostly cast in one mould; indicating that the vocation of the individual lies in conforming itself to the mass, instead of contrasting with it.

In the orchards and gardens, where the monks used to recite their breviaries, Hunnic arms now glistened for the first time. In serpentine lines, their armed ranks now came up towards the monastery; a wild din of music, a mixture of cymbals and violins, preceded them; but the sounds were shrill and sharp, as the ears of the Huns were large, but not sensitive, and only those, who from some reason or other were unfit for the duties of a warrior, became musicians.

High over their heads floated their standard, showing a green cat in a red field, around which some of the chieftains were gathered; Ellak's and Hornebog's tall figures towering above the rest.

Ellak, with clear features and a straight nose, very unlike that of a Hun, had had a Circassian mother, to whom he was indebted for his pale intelligent face with penetrating eyes. He represented the ruling intellect of the mass. That the old world must be ploughed afresh with fire and sword, and that it was better to be the plough-man, than to serve as manure, was his deep-rooted conviction. Hornebog, lean and lank of figure, wore his long black hair in two solitary curls, one at each side. Above these, rose the glittering helmet, adorned with two widely spread out eagles' wings, the emblem of Hunnic horsemanship. To him the saddle served as home, tent and palace. He shot the bird flying, and with his sabre could sever the head of an enemy from its trunk, while galloping past. At his side, hung the six-corded whip, an ingenious symbol of executive power.

On the backs of the horses belonging to the chieftains, beautifully woven carpets, as well as chasubles were hanging; a clear proof that they had already paid visits to other monasteries. The booty was transported in several waggons, and a considerable and motley crowd of followers closed the train.

In a cart drawn by mules, amongst copper camp-kettles and other kitchen-utensils, an old wrinkled woman was sitting. She was shading her eyes with her right hand, looking towards the sun, in the direction where the mountain peaks of the Hegau rose into the air. She knew them well, for the old hag, was the woman of the wood. Banished by Ekkehard, she had wandered away into stranger lands; vengeance being her first thought when she awoke in the morning, and her last before she fell asleep in the evening. Thus she came as far as Augsburg. At the foot of the hill on which the wooden temple of the Suabian Goddess Zisa had once stood, the Huns' camp-fires were burning, and with them she remained.

On a prancing black steed, by the side of the old woman, a young maiden was gaily riding along. Her skirts were looped up, and she also, seemed to feel herself perfectly at home in the saddle. Under her short little nose, there was a lovely pair of red lips; her dark eyes were bright and sparkling, and her long raven hair hung down in wavy tresses, interwoven with red ribbons, which merrily floated in the air, like the streamers of a ship. Over her loose bodice, bow and arrow were hanging, and thus she managed her horse, a true Hunnic Artemis. This was Erica, the flower-of-the-heath. She was not of Hunnic origin, having been picked up as an abandoned child, by some Hunnic riders on the Pannonian heaths. Thus she had accompanied the Huns and had

grown up, hardly knowing how. Those whom she liked, she caressed, and those who displeased her, she bit in the arm. Botund the old Hunnic chieftain had loved her, and was killed for this reason by Irkund the young one. But when Irkund wanted to enjoy the fruit of this deed, Zobolsus' sharp lance did him the same service which Irkund had rendered Botund, without the latter asking for it. Thus Erica's fate had been varied, new ways! new countries! and new loves!--and she had become part and parcel of her troop. She was its good spirit and was held in high veneration.

"As long as the flower-of-the-heath, blooms in our ranks, we shall conquer the world," said the Huns. "Forwards."

Meanwhile, poor Heribald was still lying in his fetters at the monastery gate. His meditations were very sad. A big gad-fly, which he could not drive away with his bound hands, was buzzing round his head. "Heribald has behaved with dignity," thought he. "Like one of the old Romans he has sat at the gate to receive the enemy, and now he is lying bound on the stones, and the gad-fly may sit on his nose quite unmolested. That is the reward of dignified behaviour. Heribald will never again be dignified! Amongst hedgedogs, dignity is a most superfluous thing."

Like a mountain-torrent when the flood-gate has been removed, the Hunnic tide now streamed into the cloister-yard. At this spectacle, the good Heribald began to feel really uncomfortable. "Oh, Camerarius," continued he in his meditation, "and if thou wouldst refuse me the next time even the shirt and habit, besides the shoe-leather, then should I fly nevertheless, a naked man!"

Some of the vanguard then reported to Ellak in what state they had found the solitary monk. He made a sign for them to bring the prisoner up before him, upon which they loosened his cords, set him on his feet, and indicated the direction in which he was to go, by heavy blows. Slowly the poor wretch advanced, emitting a complaining grunt.

An unspeakably satirical smile played round the Hunnic chieftain's lips, when the idiot at last stood before him. Negligently dropping his horse's reins on its neck, he turned round. "See, what a representative of German art and science looks like," called he out to Erica.

On his numerous piratical expeditions, Ellak had required a scanty knowledge of the German language. "Where are the inhabitants of this island?" asked he in a commanding voice.

Heribald pointed over to the distant Hegau.

"Are they armed?"

"The servants of God are always armed, for the Lord is their shield and sword."

"Well said," laughed the Hun. "Why hast thou remained behind?"

Heribald became embarrassed. He had too much pride to betray the true reason, viz. his torn shoes, so he replied: "Heribald is curious, and wanted to see what the sons of the Devil were like."

Ellak translated the monk's polite speech to his companions, who struck up a loud guffaw.

"You need not laugh," cried Heribald angrily. "We know very well what you are! Abbot Wazmann has told us."

"I shall have thee killed," said Ellak carelessly.

"That will only serve me right," returned Heribald. "Why did I not fly with the others?"

Ellak, casting a searching look at the queer fellow, was struck with another idea. He made a sign to the standard-bearer, who approached, swinging in the air his flag with the green cat, which had once appeared to King Attila in his youth. In a dreamy mood, he was sitting in his uncle Rugilas' tent, reflecting whether he had not better become a Christian and serve God and science, when the cat came in. Amongst the treasures of Rugilas, it had found the golden imperial globe, which had made part of the booty at Byzantium; this it held in its paws and played with it, rolling it about on the floor. And an inward voice said to Attila: "Thou shalt not become a monk, but thou shalt play with the globe of the universe, as the cat does with that golden bauble." Then he became aware that Kutka, the god of the Huns, had appeared to him, and so he swang his sword in the direction of the four quarters of the world,--let his finger-nails grow, and became what he was destined to become, Attila, King of the Huns, the scourge of God!...

"Kneel down, miserable monk," cried Ellak, "and worship him, whom thou seest in this flag!"

But Heribald stood immovable.

"I don't know him," said he with a hollow laugh.

"Tis the God of the Huns!" angrily cried the chieftain. "Down on thy knees cowlbearer, or" ... he pointed to his sword.

Heribald laughed once more, and putting his forefinger to his forehead, said: "If you think that

Heribald is so easily imposed upon, you are vastly mistaken. It has been written, when God created Heaven and Earth, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, He said: let there be light! Now if God were a cat he would not have said: let there be light! Heribald will not kneel down ..."

A Hunnic rider, who had stealthily approached the monk, now pulled his garment, and whispered in an excellent Suabian dialect in his ear: "countryman, I would kneel down, if I were in your place. They are dangerous people." The warner's real name was Snewelin, and his birthplace was Ellwangen in Riesgau, but in the course of time he had dropt his Suabian nationality and had become a Hun; which transformation had rather improved his outward fortunes. When he spoke, his voice had something windy about it, which was caused by his having lost four front-teeth, besides several back ones; and this had been the principal reason why he had become a Hun. In his younger days namely, when he was still earning a peaceful livelihood in the capacity of cart-driver of the Salvator convent, he had been sent northwards, with a cart-load of choice Neckar-wine, to the great market at Magdeburg; a well armed escort, accompanying him. To that town, the priests of the heathenish Pomeranians and Wends, always resorted to buy their libation-wine, and Snewelin made an excellent bargain, when he sold his wine to the white-bearded upperpriest of the three-headed God Triglaff, for the great temple at Stettin. But afterwards, he remained sitting over the wine with the white-bearded heathen, who, being a great friend of the Suabian nectar, soon became enthusiastic, singing the praises of his native land, and saying that the world was infinitely more advanced in their parts, between the Oder and the Spree. He tried moreover to convert Snewelin to the worship of Triglaff the three-headed one, and to that of the black and white Sun-god Radegast, as well as to Radomysl, the Goddess of lovely thoughts,—but this was rather too much for the man of Ellwangen. "You infamous heathenish swindler," exclaimed he, first upsetting the wine-table, and then flying at him—as the young knight Siegfried did at the wild, long-bearded dwarf Alberich,—he wrestled with him, and at one strong tug pulled out the half of his grey beard. But his antagonist, calling on Triglaff to help him, dealt him a blow on the mouth with his iron-plated staff, which for ever destroyed the beauty of his teeth; and before the toothless Suabian cart-driver had recovered from the blow, his white-bearded antagonist had vanished, so that he could not take revenge on him. But when Snewelin walked out of the gates of Magdeburg, he shook his fists northwards, and said: "we two shall meet again, some day!"

In his native town, he was much laughed at on account of his lost teeth, and so, to escape the continual ridicule, he went amongst the Huns, hoping that perhaps some day, when these should direct their steps northwards, he would be able to settle a heavy account with the three-headed Triglaff and all his worshippers.

Heribald, however, did not heed the curious horseman's warning. The woman of the wood had meanwhile got down from her cart, and approached Ellak. With a sinister grin she looked at the monk. "I have read in the stars, that by the hands of such bald-headed men, evil will befall us," cried she. "To prevent the coming danger, you ought to hang up this miserable creature before the cloister-gate, with his face turned towards yonder mountains!"

"Hang him up," echoed many voices in the crowd, the pantomime of the old woman, having been understood. Ellak once more turned his head towards Erica. "This monster has also got principles," said he tauntingly. "It would save his life, and yet he refuses to bend his knees. Shall we have him hanged, flower-of-the-heath?"

Heribald's life was hanging on a very slender thread. Round about, he saw nothing but stern pitiless faces; his courage began to fail him, and the tears came into his eyes; but in the hour of danger, even the most foolish are often guided by a happy instinct. Like a star, the red-cheeked face of Erica shone before him, and with frightened steps he quickly approached her. To kneel before her, was not such a difficult task to him; her sweet looks inspiring him with confidence. With outstretched arms he implored her assistance.

"There!" cried the flower-of-the-heath, "the man of the island is by no means so foolish as he looks. He prefers kneeling to Erica, instead of the green and red flag." She smiled graciously on the pitiful suppliant, and jumping from the saddle, she patted him as if he were some half wild animal. "Don't be afraid," said she, "thou shalt live, poor old black-coat!" and Heribald could read in her eyes, that she meant what she said. He pointed to the woman of the wood, who had frightened him most. Erica shook her head; "she shall not harm thee." Then Heribald briskly ran to the wall, near which lilacs and spring-roses were already blooming, and hastily tearing off some of their branches, he presented them to the Hunnic maiden.

A loud shout of delight rang through the cloister-yard. "Hail to the flower-of-the-heath," cried they all, clashing their arms together.

"Why don't you shout likewise," whispered the man from Ellwangen into Heribald's ear. So he also raised his voice to a hoarse "hurrah!" with tears glistening in his eyes.

The Huns had unsaddled their horses, and very much resembled a pack of hounds, which, in the evening at the end of the sport, are waiting for the entrails of the deer which has been killed. Here and there, one is pulling at the cord that restrains him,—there another is barking fiercely with impatience. With similar feelings the Huns stood before the monastery. At last Ellak gave the signal, that the pillage might begin. In wild disorder they then ran forwards, up the staircase,

and along the passage into the church. Confused cries, of expected booty and disappointed hopes, resounded everywhere. Then they examined the cells of the brotherhood, but here also, nothing was found, except the scanty furniture.

"Show us the treasury," said they to Heribald, who complied with this wish willingly enough, as he well knew that all that was precious had been taken away. Only a few plated candlesticks, and the big emerald of coloured glass, was still there.

"Miserable convent! The set of beggars!" called out one, giving a kick with his iron-clad foot to the false jewel, so that it became cracked. Heribald was rewarded by sundry heavy blows, so he stole sorrowfully away, as soon as an opportunity offered.

In the cross-passage he met Snewelin, who accosted him, with: "countryman, I am an old wine-merchant, tell me where your cellar may be?" Heribald led him down and chuckled contentedly when he saw that the chief entrance had been walled up. With a knowing look he winked at the fresh lime, as if to say, that he well knew its secret. The man of Ellwangen without much ado, now cut off the seals on one of the tuns, tapped it and filled his helmet. This he raised to his lips, and took a long, long draught. "Oh Hahnenkamm and Heidenheim!"<sup>[11]</sup> exclaimed he, shivering as with the ague, "for this beverage, I verily need not have become a Hun!" He then ordered his companions to carry up the vats, but Heribald stepping forwards, pulled his gown, and anxiously said: "Allow me, good man, but what am I to drink when you are gone away?"

Snewelin laughingly reported the monk's scruples to the others. "The fool must keep something," they said, putting back the smallest tun unopened. This kindness touched Heribald so much, that he fervently shook hands with them.

Upstairs in the court-yard, a wild shouting was now heard. Some, who had searched the church, I had also lifted a grave-stone, from under which a bleached skull grinned at them, out of its dark cowl. This spectacle frightened even the Huns. Two of the gang went up to the belfry, the steeple of which was adorned with a gilt weathercock, according to custom. Whether they took it to be the protecting God of the monastery, or imagined it to be real gold, they climbed up the roof, and audaciously sitting there, tried to bring the cock down with their lances. But now a sudden giddiness came over them. One, let his raised arm sink;--a stagger;--a cry; and he fell down, quickly followed by the other. With broken necks they lay in the cloister-yard.

"A bad omen," said Ellak to himself. The Huns uttered a dismal howl, but a few moments later, the accident was entirely forgotten. The sword had ravished so many of their companions from their side; so what mattered two more, or less? The bodies were carried into the cloister-garden. With the logs which Heribald had upset in the early morning, a funeral-pile was erected; the books which had been left in the libraries, were thrown down from the windows, and were made use of in filling up the gaps between the logs;--an excellent burning material!

Ellak and Hornebog were walking together through the ranks. Squeezed in between the logs, a neatly written manuscript with shining golden initials, peeped out. Hornebog, drawing his sword, pierced the parchment with it, and presented it to his companion, stuck on the point of the blade.

"What do these hooks and chickens' feet mean, Sir Brother?" asked he.

Ellak took the manuscript, and glanced over some of its pages. He also knew Latin.

"Western wisdom," replied he. "A man, named Boëthius, wrote it, and it contains many fine things about the comfort of Philosophy."

"Phi-losophy," slowly repeated Hornebog, "what does that mean, Sir Brother?"

"It does not mean a fair woman, nor yet firewater either," was Ellak's reply. "It will be difficult to describe it in the Hunnic language ... but if a man does not know wherefore he is in the world, and stands on his head to find out the reason, that is near about what they call Philosophy in these western lands. He, who comforted himself with it, in his tower at Pavia, was after all killed for it." ...

"And that served him right!" exclaimed Hornebog. "He, who holds a sword in his hand, and feels a horse between his thighs, knows why he is in the world; and if we did not know the reason better than those, who smear such hooks on asses' skins, then *they* would be on our heels at the Danube, and our horses would not drink their fill out of the Suabian sea."

"Don't you think, that it is very lucky that such trash is made?" continued Ellak, throwing back the manuscript on to the funeral-pile.

"Why so?" asked Hornebog.

"Because the hand which guides the pen is never fit to handle the sword so as to make a good gash in the flesh; and when once the nonsense which is concocted by one single head, is written down, then at least a hundred others will muddle their brains with it. A hundred blockheads more make a hundred soldiers less, which is clearly enough our advantage, whenever we choose to make an invasion. 'As long as they write books and hold synods in the West, my children may

safely carry their tents forwards!' that's what the great Attila himself said."

"Praised be the great Attila!" said Hornebog, reverently, when a voice called out, "Let the dead rest!" and with dancing steps, Erica came towards the two chieftains. She had mustered the cloister-booty, and an altar-cloth of red silk, finding grace in her eyes, she put it on like a mantle; the corners lightly thrown back over her shoulders.

"How do I look?" said she, turning her little head complacently about.

"The flower-of-the-heath does not require any tinsel belonging to Suabian idolators, to please us," sternly replied Ellak. Upon this, she jumped up at him, to pat and stroke his lank black hair, and then called out, "come along, the meal is ready prepared."

Then they went all three to the court-yard. All the hay which could be found, the Huns had strewn about, lying down on it and waiting for the repast. With crossed arms, Heribald stood in the background, looking down at them. "The heathenish dogs cannot even sit down like Christians, when they are about to eat their daily bread," he thought, taking good care, however, not to utter his thoughts aloud. The experience of former blows, had taught him silence.

"Lie down blackcoat, thou mayest eat also," cried Erica, making a sign to him to follow the example of the others. He looked at the man of Ellwangen, who was lying there with crossed legs, as if he had never known what it was to sit otherwise. So Heribald tried to follow his example; but he very soon got up again, as this position seemed too undignified to him. So he fetched a chair out of the monastery, and sat down upon it.

A whole ox had been roasted on a spit, and whatever else they had found in the cloister-kitchen, served to complete the repast; and they fell to, ravenously. The meat was cut off with their short sabres, the fingers serving as knife and fork. In the middle of the court-yard, the big wine-tun stood upright, everyone taking as much as he liked. Here and there, a finely wrought chalice was used as a drinking cup. Heribald also, had as much wine as he wished for, but when with inward contentment he was just beginning to sip at it, a half gnawed bone flew at his head. With a sorrowful look of surprise, he gazed up, and beheld that many another met with the same fate. To throw bones at each other, was a Hunnic custom, which served as dessert.

When the wine was beginning to tell on them, they began a rough and unmelodious singing. Two of the younger horsemen sang an old song in honour of King Attila, in which it was said, that he had not only been a conqueror with the sword, but also a conqueror of hearts. Then followed a taunting verse, on a Roman Emperor's sister, who, charmed with him by hearsay, fell in love with him at a distance, and offered her heart and hand to him, which however he refused.

The chorus which followed it, strongly resembled the screeching of owls and the croaking of toads. When this was finished, some of the men approached Heribald, and made him understand that he also was expected to give them a song. He began to refuse, but this availed him nothing. So he sang in an almost sobbing voice, the antiphon in honour of the holy cross, beginning with the "*sanctifica nos.*"

With mute astonishment, the drunken men, listened to the long-drawn notes of the old church-music, which sounded like the voice of the preacher in the wilderness. With rising anger, the woman of the wood, sitting beside the copper-kettle, heard it. Grasping her knife, she stealthily approached Heribald from behind, and seizing his hair, wanted to cut off his curls,—the greatest insult that could be offered to a consecrated head. But Heribald vigorously pushed her back, and chanted on, nothing daunted, which mightily pleased the assembly, so that they gave a shout of delight. Cymbals and violins also resounded again, and now Erica, who had become tired of the monotonous chant, approached Heribald. With a look that combined both archness and pity, she seized him by the arm, and drawing him into the midst of the wild dance which was now beginning, she called out. "Singing must always be followed by dancing!" Heribald did not know what to do, while the flower-of-the-heath was all eagerness to begin. "It matters little whether Heribald dances or not, it will be only another small link in the chain of abominations," he finally thought; so he bravely stamped the ground with his sandal-clad feet, his habit flying about him. Tighter and tighter he pressed the Hunnic maiden's waist, and who knows what might still have happened, if she had not, with heightened colour and panting bosom, finally stopt herself. Giving her partner a little parting slap in the face, she ran off to the chieftains, who with serious faces were looking on at the frolics.

The shouts were dying out now; the fumes of the wine being danced off. So Ellak gave the order to burn the dead. In a moment's time, the whole troop were seated on horseback, and riding in closed ranks to the funeral-pile. The horses of the two deceased men, were then stabbed by the eldest amongst the Huns, and laid beside their late masters bodies. Calling out some monstrous conjurations, he lifted the firebrand and lighted the pile. Boëthius' "comfort of Philosophy," pinelogs, manuscripts and corpses vied with each other, which could burn the brightest, and a mighty pillar of flames and smoke, rose up to the sky.

With wrestling, warlike exercises and races, the memory of the dead was celebrated. The sun had sunk far down in the west, and so the whole body of Huns entered the monastery, there to pass the night.--

It was on the Thursday before Easter, when all this happened on the island of Reichenau. The tidings of this invasion soon reached the fishermen's huts around Radolfzell. When Moengal, the parish-priest, held the early morning-service, he still counted six of his flock, but in the afternoon, there were only three; including himself.

Gloomily he sat in the little room in which he had once hospitably entertained Ekkehard, when the pillar of smoke from the Hunnic funeral-pile rose into the air. It was dense and black enough for him to suppose the whole monastery to be in flames, and the scent of burning came over the lake.

"Hihahoi!!" cried Moengal, "*jam proximus ardet Ucalegon*, already it is burning at neighbour Ucalogon's! Then it is time for me also to get ready. Out with ye now, my old Cambutta!"

Cambutta, however, was no serving maid, but a huge bludgeon, a real Irish shilelah, and Moengal's favourite weapon. The chalice and ciborium, he packed up and put into his leathern game-bag. This was all he possessed of gold or silver. Then he called his hounds, his hawk and two falcons together, and giving them all the meat and fish his pantry boasted, he said: "Children, eat as much as ever you can, so that nothing is left for those cursed plagues, when they come!"

The vat in the cellar, he knocked to pieces, so that the sparkling wine streamed forth. "Not a drop of wine shall the devils drink, in Moengal's house." Only the jug which contained the vinegar, was left in its place. On the fresh, delicious butter in the wooden tun, he emptied a basket full of ashes. His fishing-tackle and other sporting-utensils he buried in the ground; then he smashed the windows, and strewed the fragments about in the room. Some he even put into the chinks of the floor, with the points turned upwards,--all in honour of the Huns! Hawk and falcons then received their liberty. "Farewell!" cried he, "and keep near, for soon you will get dead heathens to pick!"

So his house was put in order. Hanging the game-bag, as well as a Hibernian canteen, over his shoulders, with two spears in his hands, and Cambutta fastened on his back,--thus old Moengal walked out of his parsonage, which had been his home for so many years; a valiant champion of the Lord!

He had already gone on a few paces through the smoke-darkened atmosphere, when he suddenly stopped short, saying: "Wait a bit, I have forgotten something."

So he quickly retraced his steps, murmuring: "The yellow-faced rascals shall at least find some written words of welcome."

Arrived at his door, he drew a piece of red chalk from his pocket, and therewith wrote in large Irish characters a few words on the grey sandstone slab over the portal. Later rains have washed them away, and nobody has ever read them, but no doubt it was a significant greeting, which old Moengal left behind him in Irish runes.--Quickening his pace, he then took the direction of the Hohentwiel.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### The Battle with the Huns.

Good Friday had come; but the anniversary of our Saviour's death, was not kept on the Hohentwiel this time, in the silent way which the prescriptions of the church require. By the arrival of old Moengal all doubts about the enemy's approach were dispersed. Late in the night a war-council was held, at which it was determined that they should go out to meet the Huns in open battle.

The sun rose drearily on that day; soon being hidden again in mist. A fierce gale was blowing over the land, chasing the clouds along, so that they sank down on the distant Bodensee, as if water and air were to mingle together. Now and then, a solitary sun-beam struggled through. It was the as yet undecided battle which Spring was waging against the powers of Winter. The men had already risen, and were preparing for a serious day's work.

In his closet, up in the watch-tower, Ekkehard was silently pacing up and down, his hands folded in prayer. A highly honourable commission had devolved on him. He was to preach a sermon to the united forces before they went out to battle, and so he was now praying for strength and inspiration, that his words might be like sparks, kindling the warlike flame in each breast. Suddenly the door opened, and in came the Duchess, unaccompanied by Praxedis. Over

her morning-dress she had thrown an ample cloak, to protect herself against the cool air; perhaps also that she might not be recognized by the stranger guests, while going over to the watch-tower. A faint blush mantled on her cheeks, when she thus stood alone, opposite her youthful teacher.

"You are also going out to battle, to-day?" asked she.

"Yes, I go with the others," replied Ekkehard.

"I should despise you, if you had given me any other reply," said she, "and you have justly presumed, that for such an expedition, it would not be necessary to ask my leave. But have you not thought of saying Good-bye?" added she, in low reproachful accents.

Ekkehard was embarrassed. "There are many nobler and better men leaving your castle to-day. The Abbots and knights will surround you;--how then could I think of taking a special leave of you, even if ..." his voice broke off.

The Duchess looked into his eyes. Neither said a word.

"I have brought you something which is to serve you in battle," said she after a while, drawing out a precious sword with a rich shoulder-belt, from under her mantle. A white agate adorned the hilt. "It is the sword of Sir Burkhard, my late husband. Of all the arms he possessed, he valued this the most. 'With that blade one could split rocks, without breaking it,' he said many a time. You will wear it to-day with honour."

She held out the sword to him; Ekkehard received it in silence. His coat-of-mail he had already put on under his habit. Now he buckled on the shoulder-belt, and then seized the hilt with his right hand, as if the enemy were already facing him.

"I have got something else for you," continued Dame Hadwig. On a silk ribbon, she wore a golden locket round her neck. This she now drew forth. It was a crystal, covering an insignificant looking splinter of wood.

"If my prayers should not suffice, then this relic will protect you. It is a splinter of the holy cross, which the Empress Helena discovered. Wherever this relic is, wrote the Greek patriarch who attested its genuineness, there will be peace, happiness and pure air.--May it now bring a blessing to you in the coming battle."

She leaned towards him, to hang the jewel round his neck. Quickly he bent his knees to receive it; but it had long been hanging round his neck, and still he knelt before her. She passed her hand lightly over his curly hair, and there was a peculiarly soft and half sad expression on the usually haughty countenance.

Ekkehard had bent his knee at the name of the holy cross, but now he felt as if he must kneel down a second time before her, who was thus graciously thinking of him. A budding affection requires some time to understand itself clearly, and in matters of love, he had not learned to reckon and count, as in the verses of Virgil, or he might have guessed, that she who had taken him away from his quiet cloister-cell,--that she who on that evening on the Hohenkrähen, had looked on him so tenderly, and now again on the morning of battle, was standing before him, as Dame Hadwig was at that moment, might well have expected some words out of the depth of his heart,--perhaps even more than words only.

His thoughts quickly followed each other, and all his pulses were throbbing. When on former occasions anything like love had stirred his heart, then the reverence for his mistress had driven it back, nipping it in the bud, as the cold winds of March wither and blight the early spring-flowers. At this moment however, he was not thinking of that reverence, but rather how he had once carried the Duchess boldly over the cloister-yard. Neither did he think of his monastic vow, but he felt as if he must rush into her arms, and press her to his heart with a cry of delight. Sir Burkard's sword seemed to burn at his side. "Throw aside all reserve, for only the bold will conquer the world." Were not these words to be read in Dame Hadwig's eyes?

He stood up; strong, great and free,--she had never seen him look so before, ... but it lasted only a second. As yet not one sound betraying his inward struggle had escaped his lips, when his eye fell on the dark, ebony cross, which Vincentius had once hung up on the wall. "It is the day of the Lord, and thou shalt open thy lips to-day before his people,"--the remembrance of his duty drove away all other thoughts....

There once came a frost, on a bright summer-morning, and grass and leaves and blossoms became black and seared, before the sun rose over them....

Shyly as in former times, he took Dame Hadwig's hand. "How shall I thank my mistress?" said he in broken accents.

She cast a searching look at him. The soft expression had vanished, and the old sternness had returned to her brow, as if she meant to say: "if you don't know how, I am not going to tell you," but she said nothing. Still Ekkehard held her hand in his. She drew it back.



"Be pious and brave," said she, turning to leave the chamber. It sounded like mockery....

Scarcely longer than a person needs to say the Lord's prayer, had the Duchess been with him, but far more had happened in that time, than he knew of.

He resumed his walk up and down his small abode. "Thou shalt deny thyself and follow the Lord," thus St. Benedict's rules began, and Ekkehard felt almost proud of the victory he had won; but Dame Hadwig had gone away with wounded feelings; and if a haughty mind believes itself to be disdained, evil days must follow.

It was the seventh hour of the morning, and in the court-yard on the Hohentwiel they were all attending divine service, before setting out. The altar had been erected under the old linden-tree, and on it were placed the sacred relics, to comfort the hearts of all believers. The court-yard was entirely filled with armed men, standing in close, orderly groups, just as Simon Bardo had arranged them. Like the roll of distant thunder arose the introductory chaunts of the monks. The Abbot of Reichenau, wearing the black pall with the white cross, celebrated high-mass.

After him, Ekkehard mounted the altar-steps. With deep emotion his eye glided over the crowded assembly; once more the remembrance of how he had but a short while ago, stood face to face with the Duchess in the solitary chamber, passed through his mind,--and then he read the gospel of the suffering and death of our Saviour. As he read on, his voice became always clearer and more distinct, and when he had finished, he first kissed the book and then handed it to the deacon, for him to put it back on its silk cushion. For a moment he looked up heavenwards, and then began his sermon.

The assembly listened to his words with breathless attention.

"Almost a thousand years have come and gone," cried he, "since the Son of God, bent his head on the cross, saying: 'it is finished!' but we have not yet prepared our souls to receive the redemption, for we have lived in sin, and the offences which we have committed through the hardness of our hearts, cry out against us, towards Heaven. Therefore a time of affliction has come upon us; glittering swords are raised against us; heathenish monsters have invaded the christian territories.

"But instead of angrily enquiring, 'how long will the Lord forbear, before He interferes and delivers our beloved homes from the hands of such heathenish idolaters,' let everybody strike his own bosom and say: on account of our sins this chastisement has been sent upon us. And if ye would be delivered from them, think of our Saviour's painful death, and as he took up his cross, bearing it himself to the place of skulls, seize the sword, and choose your own Golgotha!" ...

Pointing over to the shores of the lake, he poured out words of comfort and prophecy, strong and powerful, as the lion's call in the desert.

"The times are coming of which it has been written: 'And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up, on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God, out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.'<sup>[12]</sup>

"And all this, which the seer beheld and revealed at Patmos, is for us a promise of the victory that is to come, if we go out with purified hearts, to meet the enemy. Let them come, on their swift horses; what does it matter? The Lord has marked them as the children of the devil, therefore their face is but a mockery of the human countenance. They can destroy the harvest on our fields, and desecrate our altars, but they cannot resist the powerful arms of those, whom God himself has inspired. Therefore keep in mind, that we Suabians, must always be in the foremost ranks, when the fatherland has to be defended; and if in other times, it would be a dire sin in the eyes of the Lord, to buckle on the sword on His holy day,--to-day He will bless our weapons, and send down his saints to assist us, and fight Himself in our ranks; He the Lord of hosts, who sends down his destroying lightnings, and opens the bowels of earth itself, when the right time has come."

With choice examples of glorious warlike deeds Ekkehard then tried to inspire his auditors; and many a hand fiercely grasped the spear, and many a foot was lifted impatiently from the ground, when he spoke of Joshuah, who with the Lord's help had conquered thirty-one kings, on the other side of the Jordan;--and of Gideon, who with loud sounding trumpets, entered the camp of the Midianites, and drove them before him unto Bethesda and Tebbath;--and of the sally of the men of Bethulia, who after Judith's glorious deed, smote the Assyrians with the edge of the sword.

But at the end, he quoted the words, which Judas Maccabæus, had spoken to his people, when they erected their camp at Emaus, before going out to fight the army of King Antiochus. "Arm yourselves and be valiant men, and see that ye be in readiness against the morning, that ye may fight with these nations, that are assembled together against us to destroy us and our sanctuary."

For a moment, after he had ended, there was perfect silence, but soon arose a great stir among the men, and a rattling and clashing of arms was heard. Swords and shields were knocked together, spears lifted and badges waved in the air; all, as signs of hearty approval, according to old custom. "Amen," was repeated from all sides, whilst the whole assembly fell on their knees, as the high-mass was reaching its close. The wooden rattles, instead of the usual church-bells, thrilled them with awe. Everyone who had not yet taken the holy sacrament, went up to the altar, to receive it. But now from the watch-tower was suddenly heard the cry, "to arms! to arms! the enemy is coming! A dark mass of riders and horses are moving towards us from the lake!" and now there was no longer any possibility of keeping back the eager men, who were all pressing towards the gate; Abbot Wazmann having scarcely time to pronounce a blessing over them.

So, in our days does the fisher-man of the north, run out of the church on a Sunday, at the time when the shoals of herrings are approaching. "The fish are coming," cries the watch-man on the shore, and the moment afterwards, every man is hurrying away, towards the boats. Forsaken and alone, stands the clergyman,--so his devotions are also at an end and he seizes the nets likewise to wage war upon the scaly tribe.

Thirsting for the coming battle, the troops left the court-yard; each heart swelling with the soul-stirring conviction, that a great and important moment was at hand. The monks of St. Gall, mustered sixty-four, those of the Reichenau ninety, and of the arrier-ban men, there were above five hundred. Close by the standard of the cross of the brotherhood of St. Gall, walked Ekkehard. It was a crucifix, veiled in black crape, with long black streamers; as the monastery's banner had been left behind.

On the balcony stood the Duchess, waving her white handkerchief. Ekkehard, turning round, looked up at her, but her eyes evaded his, and the parting salutation was not meant for him.

St. Mark's coffin had been carried down to the lower castle-gate, by some of the serving brothers. Everyone touched it with the points of his lance and sword, and then silently passed on.

In the wide plain, stretching out towards the lake, Simon Bardo drew up his troops, and one could see how pleased the old field-marshal was, that his scar-covered breast again wore the accustomed mail, instead of the monk's habit. His head was covered by a strangely shaped, pointed steel morion; his broad, jewel-set girdle, as well as the gilt handle of his sword, indicated the ancient general.

"You read the classics, on account of the grammar," said he to the Abbots, "but I have learnt my *handicraft* from them. With the military advice of Frontinus and Vegetius, one may still achieve something even now-a-days. First we will try the battle-array of the Roman legions; for in that position one can best await the enemy, and see what he means to do. Afterwards, we are still at liberty to change our tactics, for affairs will not be settled between us in half an hour."

The light corps of the archers and sling-bearers were ordered to occupy the border of the wood, where they would be sheltered by the fir-trees, against any attack on horseback. "Take low aims," said he, "for even if you should merely hit the horse instead of the rider, it is always something." At the sound of the bugle, the troop advanced to execute his commands. As yet, nothing was to be seen of the enemy.

The men of the arrier-ban, he arrayed in two close ranks. With levelled lances they slowly advanced; a space of a few steps remaining between the two files. The knight of Randegg, and the gaunt Friedinger, commanded them.

The monks, Simon Bardo collected into one compact body, placing them in the rear.

"Why this?" asked Abbot Wazmann, inwardly hurt, at losing the honour of heading the attack. But Bardo, experienced in war, smilingly replied: "Those are my Triarians; not because they are veteran soldiers, but because they are fighting for their own warm nests. To be driven out of house and home and bed, makes swords cut deepest, and spears thrust fiercest. Don't be afraid, the tug of war, will yet draw the disciples of St. Benedict into the strife."

The Huns had left the monastery of Reichenau at early dawn. The provisions were all consumed, the wine drunk, and the cloister pillaged; so, their day's work was done. Heribald's forehead lost many a wrinkle, when the last of the Hunnic riders had passed out of the cloister-gate. He threw after them a golden coin which the man from Ellwangen, had secretly thrust into his hand. "Countryman, if thou shouldst hear that a mishap has befallen me," said Snewelin, "I trust that thou wilt let a dozen masses be read for my poor soul. I have always befriended you and your fellow-monks, and how I have fallen amongst the heathens, I scarcely can understand myself. The soil of Ellwangen is unfortunately too rough and stony, for producing saints."

Heribald, however, would have nothing to do with him. In the garden, he shovelled up the bones and ashes of the burnt Huns and their horses, throwing them into the lake, whilst the Huns were still visible on the other side. "No heathen dust shall remain on the island," said he. Then he went to the cloister-yard, and thoughtfully stared at the place, where he had been forced to dance on the day before.

Meanwhile, the Huns were riding through the dark fir-wood towards the Hohentwiel. But as they were thus cantering along, heedless of all danger, here and there a horse began to stagger,

and arrows and other sharp missiles flew into their ranks, sent by invisible hands. The vanguard began to slacken rein and to halt; but Ellak, giving the spurs to his horse, cried out: "Why do you care for the stinging of gnats? forwards, the plain is a better field of battle!"

A dozen of his men were ordered to stay behind, in order to protect the baggage and camp followers, against their hidden enemies. The ground echoed with the tramp of the advancing horde, and as soon as they reached the plain, they spread their ranks, and uttering a wild howl, advanced to meet the approaching column of the arrier-ban.

Far ahead rode Ellak, accompanied by the Hunnic standard-bearer, who was waving the green and red flag over his head. Uttering a piercing cry, the chieftain now lifted himself high in the saddle, and then shot off the first arrow, thus opening the battle according to old custom; and now the bloody fight began in good earnest. Little availed it to the Suabian warriors, that they stood firm and immovable like a wall of lances; for although the horses recoiled before it, a shower of arrows were sent at them from the distance. Half raised in the stirrups, with the reins hanging over their horses necks, the Huns took aim, and generally their arrows hit the mark.

Others, came on from the sides, and woe to the wounded, if his companions did not take him into the centre.

Then the light troops intended to come out of the fir-wood, and attack the Huns from behind. The sound of the bugle again collected them together; they advanced,--but quick as thought, their enemies' horses were turned round, and a shower of arrows greeted them. They staggered, only a few advanced, but these also were thrown back, so that finally Audifax was left alone, bravely marching along. Many an arrow whizzed round his head, but without minding them, or once looking back, he blew his bag-pipe, as was his duty. Thus he came right into the midst of the Hunnic riders. But now his piping stopped suddenly, for in passing, one of the Huns had thrown a noose over his head. Trying hard to resist, Audifax looked around, but not a single man of his troop was to be seen. "Oh Hadumoth!" cried he mournfully. The rider took pity on the brave fair-haired boy; so instead of splitting his head, he lifted him up into the saddle, and galloped away to the place where the Hunnic train had stopped, under the shelter of a hill. With erect figure, the woman of the wood stood on her cart, intently gazing at the raging battle. She had dressed the wounds of the first Huns who fell, pronouncing some powerful charms over them, to stop the bleeding.

"Here I bring you someone to clean the camp-kettles!" cried the Hunnic rider, throwing the boy over, so that he fell right into the cart, and at the feet of the old woman.

"Welcome, thou venomous little toad," cried she fiercely, "thou shalt get thy reward sure enough, for having shown the way up to my house, to that cowl-bearer!" She had recognized him at once, and dragging him towards her, tied him fast to the cart.

Audifax remained silent, but scalding tears fell from his eyes. He did not cry though on account of being taken prisoner, but he cried from another heavy disappointment. "Oh Hadumoth!" sighed he again. Yesterday at midnight he had sat together with the young goose-driver, hidden in a corner of the fire-place. "Thou shalt become invulnerable," Hadumoth had said, "for I will give thee a charm against all weapons!" She had boiled a brown snake, and anointed his forehead, shoulders and breast with its fat. "To-morrow evening I shall wait for thee in this same corner, for thou wilt surely come back to me, safe and sound. No metal can do anything, against the fat of a snake." Audifax had squeezed her hands, and had gone out so joyously into battle,--and now!...

The fighting was still going on in the plain, and the Suabian combatants not being used to battle, began to get tired already. With an anxious expression Simon Bardo was watching the state of affairs; and with an angry shake of the head, he grumbled to himself: "the best strategy is lost on these Centaurs, who come and go, and shoot at a distance, as if my threefold flanks stood there only to amuse them. It would really be well, if one were to add a chapter to Emperor Leo's book on tactics, treating of the attack of the Huns."

He now approached the monks, and dividing them again into two bodies, ordered the men of St. Gall to advance on the right, and those of Reichenau, on the left; then wheeling about, so that the enemy, having the wood at his back, was shut in by a semicircle. "If we do not surround them, they will not let us get at them," cried he, flourishing his broad sword in the air. "So now to the attack!"

A wild fire was gleaming in all eyes; and on the point of starting, they all dropt down on their knees; each took up a clod of earth, and threw it over his head that he might be consecrated and blessed by his native earth; and then they rushed on to battle. Those of St. Gall struck up the pious war-song of "*media vita*." Notker the stutterer, once passed through the ravines of the Martistobel, in his native land, when a bridge was just being built over the yawning precipice. The workmen were hanging suspended over the giddy height, and at that sight, the idea rose in his soul, how in our life we are always walking on the edge of the abyss of Death, and so he composed those verses. Now they served as a sort of magic song, which was to protect them, and bring death to their enemies. Solemn, sounded its strains from the lips of the men going into battle:

"Though yet we live, by Death we are surrounded,  
And ever near, his messengers are staying.  
Whom could we choose, to help us in great danger,  
But Thee, oh Lord! The judge of all the living!  
Almighty God!"

And from the other wing the monks of the Reichenau were singing:

"Long our fathers for Thy coming panted,  
And Thou redeemedst them from sin and sorrow,  
Up to Thy throne arose their wailing voices,  
And Thou didst not reject their tears and prayers,  
Thou Lord of hosts!"

And from both sides, was then heard together:

"Forsake us not, when our strength is failing,  
He our staff, when courage is departing,  
Oh, not to bitter Death, give up Thy children,  
Almighty God, in whom we all are trusting,  
Merciful God, great God of all the Heavens,  
Oh Lord forsake us not! Have mercy on us!"

Thus they stood in close combat. With unmitigated surprise the Huns had beheld the approaching columns. Howls, and the hissing, devilish cry of "hui! hui!" was their response to the "*media vita*." Ellak likewise, now divided his horsemen for a regular attack, and the fighting continued fiercer than ever. The Hunnic horsemen soon broke through the ranks of the small body of the monks of St. Gall, and a close fight then began. It was strength, wrestling with swiftness, German awkwardness, against Hunnic cunning.

The earth of the Hegau was then dyed red, with the blood of many a pious man. Tutilo, the strong, was slain. He had pulled down a Hun from his horse by the feet, and swinging the wry-faced wretch through the air, split his skull against a stone; but a moment afterwards, an arrow pierced the temple of the hoary warrior. Like the victorious hymns of the heavenly host, it sounded through his wounded brain,—then he fell down on his slain foe. Sindolt the wicked, atoned for many a bad trick which he had played his brothers in former times, by the death-wound in his breast; and nothing did it avail Dubslan the Scot, that he had made a vow to St. Minwaloius, to go bare-foot to Rome, if he would protect him in this battle,—for he also was carried dead out of the tumult.

When the blows rained down on the helmets like hail-stones on slate-roofs, old Moengal drew his hood over his head, so that he could look neither to the right nor to the left; then throwing away his spear, he cried, "out with thee now, my old Cambutta." Unbuckling his beloved shilalah, which had accompanied him, fastened to his back, he now stood like a thrasher on the barn-floor. For some time a horseman had capered around him. "*Kyrie eleison*" sang out the old man, breaking the horses' skull at one blow. With both feet the rider jumped to the ground: grazing Moengal's arm with his crooked sabre. "Heigho," exclaimed he, "in spring 'tis a good thing to be bled; but take care, little surgeon!" aiming a blow at him, as if he wanted to strike him ten fathom deep into the ground. But the Hun evaded the blow, and whilst doing so, the helmet fell off and disclosed a soft and rosy face, framed in by long wavy tresses, interwoven with red ribbons. Before Moengal could think of aiming another blow, his antagonist jumped up at him like a tiger-cat; the young, fresh face approached his, affording him as it were in his old days an opportunity of culling a kiss from coral lips; but the moment after, he received a sharp bite on his cheek. Claspng his assailant, he felt a soft and slender waist. "Take thyself away, goblin," cried he. "Has hell sent out her she-devils also?" Here, another bite, for the sake of symmetry, saluted him on the left cheek. He started back, but before he had raised his bludgeon again, Erica had jumped on a horse which had lost its rider, and gaily laughing she rode away, swift as a dream that vanishes at cockcrow....

In the middle of the arrier-ban fought Master Spazzo the chamberlain, heading a troop. The slow advance had rather pleased him, but when the fight seemed to come to no conclusion, and men were clinging to each other, like the hounds to the deer in a chase,—then it became rather too much for him. A dreamy, pensive mood came over him in the midst of the raging battle, and only when a passing rider pulled off his helmet, as an acceptable booty, was he roused from his meditations, and when the same, renewing the experiment, tried to drag off his mantle, he cried out angrily: "is it not yet enough, thou marksman of the Devil?" dealing him at the same time a thrust with his long sword, which pinned the Hun's thigh to his own horse. Master Spazzo then thought of giving him the deathblow, but on looking into his face, he found it so very ugly, that he resolved to bring him home to his mistress, as a living memento of the battle. So he made the wounded man his prisoner. His name was Cappan, and putting his head under Master Spazzo's arm, in sign of submission, he grinned with delight, showing two rows of shining white teeth, when he perceived that his life had been spared.

Hornbog had led his troops against the brothers of the Reichenau. Here also, grim Death was reaping a rich harvest. The cloister-walls glistened in the distance over the lake, like an appeal to the combatants to exert their utmost strength; and many a Hun who came within reach of their swords, found out that he was treading on Suabian ground, where heavy blows are as plentiful as wild strawberries in summer. But the ranks of the brothers also were considerably thinned. Quirinius the scrivener was resting for ever from the writing-cramp, which had caused the spear in his right hand to tremble. Beside him, there fell Wiprecht the astronomer, and Kerimold the master of salmon-fishing, and Witigowo the architect;--who knows them all? the nameless heroes, who met a glorious end, on that day!

Only one of the monks had reason to be grateful to a Hunnic arrow, and that was brother Pilgeram. He was born at Cologne on the Rhine, and had carried his thirst of knowledge, as well as a mighty goitre to St. Pirmin's isle; where he was one of the most learned and most pious monks; but his goitre increased and he became hypochondriac over the ethics of Aristotle, so that Heribald had often said to him: "Pilgeram I pity thee." But now a Hunnic arrow pierced the excrescence on his throat. "Farewell, friend of my youth!" cried he on sinking down; but the wound was not dangerous, and when his consciousness returned, he felt his throat as well as his head considerably lightened, and from that moment, he never opened Aristotle again.

Round the standard of St. Gall, a select body of men had rallied. The black streamers still floated in the air from the image on the cross; but the contest was doubtful. With word and action, Ekkehard encouraged his companions not to give way, but it was Ellak himself who fought against them. The bodies of slain men and horses cumbered the ground in wild disorder. He, who survived had done his duty, and when all are brave, no single heroic deed can claim its special share of glory. Sir Burkhard's sword had received a new baptism of blood in Ekkehard's hands, but in vain had he fiercely attacked Ellak the chieftain; for after having exchanged a few blows and thrusts, they were separated again by other combatants. Already the cross, towering on high, began to stagger, aimed at by unceasing arrows, when a loud cry of surprise rang through the ranks; for from the hill on which stood the tower of Hohenfriedingen, two unknown horsemen in strange looking armour, came galloping at full speed towards the scene of battle. Heavily one of them, who was of mighty bulk, sat on his steed. Both shield and harness were of antiquated shape, but the faded golden ornaments indicated the high birth, of the wearer. A golden band encircled his helmet, from which a tuft of red feathers waved. His mantle fluttering in the wind, and his lance levelled, he looked like a picture of the olden times; like King Saul in Folkard's psalm-book riding to meet David. Close by his side rode his companion, a faithful vassal, ready to succour and protect him.

"Tis the archangel Michael!" cried some in the christian ranks, and with this their strength rallied. The sun was shining brightly on the strange rider's arms,--like an omen of victory,--and a few moments later the two were in the midst of the battle. He, with the gilt armour was looking about for a worthy antagonist, which he soon found, for when the Hunnic chieftain's keen eyes had spied him out, his horse's head was turned towards him. The spear of the stranger knight passed harmlessly by him, missing its aim; and Ellak's sword was already raised to deal him the death blow, when the vassal threw himself between the two. His broad sword merely struck the enemy's horse, so, bending his head forwards, to catch the blow meant for his master, the faithful shield-bearer found his death.

With a loud, clattering sound Ellak's horse fell to the ground, but before the sound had quite died out, the Hun had already recovered his feet. The unknown knight raised his mace, to break his enemy's head, but Ellak, with his left foot placed tightly on the body of his dead courser, pressed back the raised arm with his sinewy hands, trying at the same time to pull him down. Then, face to face, the two mighty ones began wrestling, so that those around them ceased fighting, to look on.

With a cunning movement, Ellak now seized his short sword, but just when he lifted his arm, his antagonist's mace came down slowly but heavily on his head. Yet his hand still dealt the thrust, and then lifting it up to his forehead, over which the blood was running in streams, Ellak reeled back on his war-horse, on which a moment later the Hunnic chieftain angrily gave up the ghost.

"Here, sword of God and St. Michael!" triumphantly rose again the joint cry of monks and arrier-ban-men! Rallying their strength, they rushed on to one last despairing attack. The knight in the gilt armour was still the foremost in the fight. The death of their leader, caused such a panic to the Huns, that they turned round, and sped away in wild, disorderly flight.

The woman of the wood, had already perceived the unfavourable turn which the battle was taking. Her horses were ready harnessed, and casting one last angry glance at the victorious monks and the rocky mountain which had once been her home, she drove on the horses at a quick pace, in the direction of the Rhine, followed by the rest of the train. "To the Rhine!" was the watch-word of the flying Huns. Hornbog was the last, who, unwillingly turned his back on the battle-field, and the Hohentwiel.

"Farewell, till next year!" cried he tauntingly.

The victory was gained; but he, whom they believed to be the archangel Michael, sent to their rescue, now let his heavy head sink down on his horse's neck. Reins and arms, had both fallen

from his hands, and whether the cause was the last thrust of the Hunnic chieftain, or suffocation in the heat of the battle, he was lifted down from his horse, a dead man. On opening his visor, a happy smile was still visible on his wrinkled old face, and from that hour the headache of the old man of the Heidenhöhlen, had ceased for ever.

A black dog ran about searching on the battlefield, till he found the old man's body. Dismally howling he then licked his forehead; Ekkehard standing near, with a tear in his eye, saying a prayer for the welfare of his soul....

The conquerors returned to the Hohentwiel, their helmets adorned with green fir-twigs, and leaving twelve of the brothers behind, to watch the dead on the battle-field. Of the Huns, one hundred and eighty had fallen in battle, whilst the Suabian arrier-ban had lost ninety six; those of the Reichenau eighteen, and those of St. Gall twenty, besides the old man and Rauching his bondsman.

With a handkerchief tied round his face, Moengal stalked over the field, using his shilalah like a staff. One by one he examined the dead. "Hast thou not seen a Hun amongst them, who in reality is a Hunnic woman?" asked he of one of the watchkeeping brothers.

"No," was the reply.

"Then I may as well go home," said Moengal.

## FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1](#): The *Allemannic* land or *Allemannia* as it was then called, consisted of part of the present Württemberg, Baden and Lothringen; where a dialect, called "*Allematmisch*" has been preserved to the present day.

[Footnote 2](#): These notes, for the greatest part have been omitted, as being of no possible interest to the English reader.

[Footnote 3](#): Old German words.

[Footnote 4](#): Chriemhilde and Brunhilde.

[Footnote 5](#): This fable has its origin in the "*historia naturalis*" of Plinius.

[Footnote 6](#): A peculiar kind of fish in the Bodensee.

[Footnote 7](#): This it had, surely enough; for when lately a learned son of the emerald isle, paid a visit to the library of St. Gallus, there to inspect the work of his pious countryman, he soon burst into a merry laugh, and then the Rector of Dublin, translated some of the Irish comments as follows:

"God be thanked that it is getting dark!" "St. Patrick of Armagh release me from this book-writing." "Oh, that I had a glass of good old wine beside me" etc.

[Footnote 8](#): Ausonius. Idyll. 7.

[Footnote 9](#): The curious custom, that by this act, called the "*Chrene Chruda*," the debt passed on to the next relation by blood, who was able to pay it, is described in Merkel's "*lex Salica*." The origin of "*Chrene Chruda*" has not yet been sufficiently explained.

[Footnote 10](#): A kind of caterpillars, migrating in large numbers.

[Footnote 11](#): Places notorious for their sour bad wines.

[Footnote 12](#): Revelation XX, 7.

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