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LUKE BARNICOTT.

BY
WILLIAM HOWITT.

AND OTHER STORIES.

Twenty-Eight Thousand.

CASELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:
LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE.

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After Young Luke.

THE STORY OF LUKE BARNICOTT

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

The village of Monnycrofts, in Derbyshire, may be said to be a distinguished village, for though it is not a city set on a hill, it is a village set on a hill. It may be seen far and wide with its cluster of red brick houses, and its tall gray-stone church steeple, which has weathered the winds of many a century. The distant traveller observes its green upward sloping fields, well embellished by hedgerow trees, and its clumps of trees springing up amongst its scenes, and half hiding them, and says to himself as he trots along, "a pleasant look-out must that hamlet have." And he is

right; it has a very pleasant look-out for miles and miles on three sides of it; the fourth is closed by the shoulder of the hill, and the woods and plantations of old Squire Flaggimore. On another hill some half-mile to the left of the village, as you ascend the road to it, stands a windmill, which with its active sails always seems to be beckoning everybody from the country round to come up and see something wonderful. If you were to go up you would see nothing wonderful, but you would have a fine airy prospect over the country, and, ten to one, feel a fine breeze blowing that would do your heart good. You would see the spacious valley of the Erwash winding along for miles, with its fields all mapped out by its hedges and hedgerow trees, and its scattered hamlets, with their church towers, and here and there old woods in dark masses, and on one side the blue hills of the Peak beckoning still more enticingly than Ives's Mill, to go there and see something wonderful. On another side you would see Killmarton Hall and its woods and plantations, and, here and there amongst them, smoke arising from the engine-houses of coal mines which abound there; for all the country round Monnycrofts and Shapely, and so away to Elkstown, there are or have been coal and ironstone mines for ages. Many an old coal mine still stands yawning in the midst of plantations that have now grown up round them. Many a score of mines have been again filled up, and the earth levelled, and a fair cultivation is here beheld, where formerly colliers worked and caroused, and black stacks of coals, and heaps of grey shale, and coke fires were seen at night glimmering through the dark.

Near this mill, Ives's mill, there is another hamlet called Marlpool, as though people could live in a pool, but it is called Marlpool, as a kettle is said to boil when only the water boils in it, because it stands on the edge of a great pool almost amounting to a lake, where marl formerly was dug, and which has for years been filled with water. The colliers living there call it the eighth wonder of the world, because they think it wonderful that a pool should stand on the top of a hill, though that is no wonder at all, but is seen in all quarters of the world. But the colliers there are a simple race, that do not travel much out of their own district, and so have the pleasure of wondering at many things that to us, being familiar, give no pleasure. So it is that we pay always something for our knowledge; and the widow Barnicott who lived on this hill near Ives's mill, at the latter end of the time we are going to talk of, used to congratulate herself when her memory failed with age, that it was rather an advantage, because, she said, everything that she heard was quite new again.

But at the time when my story opens, Beckey Barnicott was not a widow. She was the wife of Luke Barnicott, the millers man, that is, Ives's man. Luke Barnicott had been the miller's man at Ives's mill some time; he was a strapping, strong young fellow of eight-and-twenty. Old Nathan Abbot had the mill before Ives had it, and Luke Barnicott was Nathan Abbot's miller. There are many tales of the strength and activity of Luke Barnicott still going round that part of the country. Of the races that he ran on Monnycrofts' common side, and on Taghill Delves, amongst the gorse and broom and old gravel pits: of the feats he did at Monnycrofts and Eastwood wakes, and at Elkstown cross-dressing, where the old Catholic cross still stood, and was dressed in old Catholic fashion with gilded oak leaves and flowers at the wakes: of the wrestlings and knocking-down of the will-pegs, and carrying off all the prizes, and of jumping in sacks, and of a still greater jumping into and out of twelve sugar hogsheads all set in a row, and which feat Luke was the only one of the young fellows from all the country round that could do. Luke was, in fact, a jolly fellow when Beckey married him, and she was very proud of him, for he was a sober fellow, with all his frolics and feats, and Beckey said that the Marlpool might be the eighth wonder of the world, but her Luke was the ninth, because he could take his glass and be social-like, but never came home drunk. And, in fact, no millers get drunk. I can remember plenty of drunken fellows of all trades, but I don't remember a drunken miller. There is something in their trade that keeps them to it, and out of the ale-house. The wind and the water will be attended to, and so there is not much opportunity to attend to the beer or the gin-shop. Besides, if a miller were apt to get drunk, he would be apt to get drowned very soon, in the mill stream, or knocked on the head by a sail.

There's something pleasant and sober and serious in a mill. The wheel goes coursing round, and the pleasant water sparkles and plunges under it, or the great sails go whirling and whirling round, and the clear air of the hill top gives you more cheeriness than any drink; and the clapper claps pleasantly; and the mill keeps up a pleasant swaying and tremor, and the flour comes sliding down the hoppers into the sacks, and all is white and dusty, and yet clean; the mill and the sacks and the hoppers and the flour, and the miller's clothes, and his whiskers, and his hat; and his face is mealy, and ruddy through the meal, and all is wholesome and peaceful, and has something in it that makes a man quietly and pleasantly grave.

Luke Barnicott was now the staid and grey-haired man of sixty: he had no actual need of the hair-powder of the mill to make him look venerable. On Sundays, when he was washed and dressed-up to appear at church, his head seemed still to retain the flour, though it had gone from his clothes, and his ruddy face had no mealy veil on it. Beckey, his wife, was grown the sober old woman, but still hale and active. She came to church in her black gipsy hat, all her white mob cap showing under it, in large patterned flouncing gown, in black stockings, high-heeled shoes, and large brass buckles that had been her grandmother's. On week days she might be seen in a more homely dress fetching water from the spring below, or digging up the potatoes in the garden for dinner. At other times she sat knitting in the fine weather on a seat facing to the evening sun, but giving shade in the earlier part of the day, under a rude porch of poles and sticks over the door, up which she trained every year a growth of scarlet runners, whilst around and under the windows grew the usual assortment of herbs, rue and camomile, rosemary and pennyroyal.

The Barnicotts lived at the old Reckoning House, so called because, when the collieries were active, just in that quarter, the men were paid their wages there. It was a very ordinary-looking brick tenement, now divided into two dwellings, in one of which to the west lived Luke and Beckey, and on the east side lived Tom Smith, the stockinger or stocking-weaver, and Peggy his wife. Tom Smith's frame kept up a pretty constant grating and droning sound, such as you hear in many a village of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire, and in some parts of Normandy, and it was almost the only sound that you heard about the Reckoning House, for neither of the families had any children, except one boy, the young Luke Barnicott, the grandson of the old Barnicotts. The Barnicotts' only son Patrick had been a great trouble to his parents, the shadow-spot in their lives. He had got amongst a wild set of young fellows of the neighbourhood, had been sharply scolded by old Luke, and in a fit of passion had gone for a soldier. He had died in the war in Spain, and his wife had died soon after of a fever, caught in nursing somebody suffering under that contagious affection. They had left their only child to the old folks, who was now a lad of about fourteen, and as mercurial and mischievous an imp as the neighbourhood could furnish. From the moment that he could run about he was in some scrape or some danger. He strolled about the common, plaguing asses and sheep and cattle that were grazing there, hunting up birds' nests and wasps' nests, hanging over the sides of a deep pond just below the Reckoning House, surrounded by thick trees, and more than once had gone headlong in, and came home streaming with water like a spout on a rainy day. Old Luke said he would go after his father if he escaped drowning or tumbling into some pit; and poor old Beckey was just like a hen with a duckling with this one little vagabond. Sometimes he was seen climbing on the mill sails, sometimes on the very ridge of a house, and looking down the chimney for swallow nests, at other times he was up in trees so high, swinging out on a long bough after some nests, so dizzily, that it made his poor old granny's head ache for a week after. They put him as soon as possible to the school in Monnycrofts to keep him out of danger, but sometimes, instead of reaching the school, he had been wiled away by his love of rambling into some distant wood, or along some winding brook, and looking after fish, when he should be conning his lesson. At others, instead of returning home at night after school, he was got into the blacksmith's shop, watching old Blowbellows at the glowing forge, and often in danger of having his eyes burnt by the large flying sparks, or having a kick from a horse that was being shod. Sometimes poor old Beckey had to go to the village of a dark stormy winter's evening to hunt up the truant with her lanthorn, and would find him after all at one of the pits sitting by the blazing fire, in a cabin made of blocks of coal, listening to the talk of the colliers over their ale.

When, however, young Luke Barnicott had nearly reached the age of fourteen, and had been set to scare birds in the fields, and to drive plough for the farmers, and gather stones from the land, and had gleaned in the autumn, and slid on the Marlpool in the winter, he took a fancy to become a collier. He was arrayed in a suit of coarse flannel, consisting of wide trousers and a sort of short slop, with an old hat with the brim cut off, and was sent down sitting on a chain at the end of a rope into the yawning pit sixty yards deep. There he was sent to drive a little railway train of coal waggons drawn by a pony in these subterranean regions, from the benk or face of the coal stratum, where the colliers were at work, to the pit's mouth; but Luke soon grew tired of that. He did not fancy living in the dark, and away from the sun and pleasant fields, so one day, as the master of the pits was standing on the pit-bank, up was turned Luke Barnicott, as invalided. He was lifted out of the chain by the colliers, and as he writhed about and seemed in great pain, the coal-master asked where he was hurt. He replied, in his leg. "Show me the place," said the master. Luke, with a good deal of labour and a look of much distress, drew off a stocking and showed a leg black enough with coal dust, but without any apparent wound. "Where is the hurt?" asked the master. "Here," said Luke, putting his hand tenderly on the calf. The master pressed it. Luke pretended to flinch, but the master did not feel satisfied. "Bring some water and wash the leg," he said, and water was soon brought in an old tin. The leg was washed, but no bruise, no blueness were visible. "Pshaw!" said the master, "that is nothing to make a squeak about." "Oh, it is the other leg, I think," said Luke. "The other leg!" exclaimed the master. "What! the fox has a wound and he does not know where! Pull off the other stocking." The stocking was pulled off by the colliers, but no injury was to be found! "Come, Barnicott," said the master, "so you are playing the old soldier over us! Why, what is the meaning of it?" "To say the truth, master," said Luke, with a sheepish look, "the fact was—I was daunted!"

At this confession the colliers set up a shout of laughter; and the master, with a suppressed smile, bade him begone about his business. After this Luke was some time at a loose end; he had nothing to do, and nobody would employ him. The story of his being "daunted" flew all round the neighbourhood, and he was looked on as a lazy, shifty lad, that was not to be trusted to. He strolled about the common, the asses and the sheep, and the geese, and the young cattle grazing there had a worse time of it than ever. The old people were in great distress about him; the grandfather's prediction that he would go after his father seemed every day more certain of fulfilment. Luke was active enough in setting traps for birds, and digging out rabbits, and even in setting a snare for a hare, which came by night to browse in the pretty large garden of cabbage and potatoes that surrounded the Reckoning House. And he was pretty successful in noosing hares and unearthing rabbits, but neither his grand-parents nor Tom Smith would let them come into their houses, lest they should get into trouble, and because that would have wholly confirmed the lad in his wild habits. Luke got through his days somehow, and in the evenings he used to go up and play with the lads at the Marlpool, and here he found plenty of people ready to take in slyly the fruits of his poaching, and give him a share of the feast at night. Old Luke meantime went in his mealy garb and with his care-marked and powdered face, to his mill and back, and many an hour of sad cogitation he had, as his clappers knocked and his sacks filled, on

what was to become of this wild lad. Many a tear poor old Beckey shed over her knitting, and many a shake of his head gave Tom Smith, as he heard Beckey and Peggy talk of him.

One day Luke had found his way to the common, beyond the Marlpool, where the shaft of a new coal-pit was sinking. Nobody was to be seen on the ground about the pit as he approached, but when he came up and looked down, he saw a man at work in the bottom. The pit was sunk some thirty yards or so, and he recognised a man of the Marlpool, named Dick Welland, busy with his pick and shovel. It was evident that his butty or mate had gone away somewhere temporarily, probably for beer. There stood the windlass, with the rope depending, and the box at the bottom filled, ready to be drawn up at the man's return. Till then Dick Welland was a prisoner below.

Luke lay down on his stomach, and looked down the shaft. He called to the collier, and drew his attention to a brick which he held in his hand. "Dick," said he, "I've a good mind to drop a brick on thee!" The man in great terror cried out to him not to do it; for he had no means of escaping from the blow, which must kill him on the spot. There was yet no horizontal working under which he might run and take shelter. Luke was delighted with the opportunity of frightening the man, and laughing, still held the brick over the pit mouth, saying, "Now, now! it's coming. Look out!" The pitman was in agonies of terror; he entreated, he shouted, he moved from side to side of the pit, but still Luke, with the true spirit of a tyrant and an inquisitor, held aloft the brick, and cried, "I'll drop it, Dick. Now, it is coming!" This scene had continued for a quarter of an hour, during which time the man had endured ages of agony and terror, when Dick perceived the other man coming over the common with a little keg of beer: he quietly arose, and disappeared amongst the furze and broom.

It was time for Luke Barnicott to be going. No sooner did the man below perceive his butty above, than turning the earth out of the "cauf" or box, he sprang into it, and called to him to draw him up with all his might. Once on the bank, he cast a rapid glance round, and telling his mate in a few hurried words what had happened, they both dashed in amongst the furze bushes in quest of the culprit. They ran fiercely hither and thither; they doubled and crossed and beat over the whole common, as a sportsman beats for his game. But their game was nowhere to be found. Luke, aware of the vengeance that he had provoked, had securely hidden himself somewhere. His pursuers could discover him nowhere. They returned to the Marlpool, and related the atrocious deed. The whole place arose in a fury. All men and women vowed to pay the young tormentor off. Dick Welland's wife, a tall, stout amazon of a woman, the head taller than any woman of the whole country round; strong, good-looking, and accustomed to walk with the stout strides and the air of a virago, vowed merciless retribution on the culprit if ever she laid hands on him. Tarring and feathering are a trifle to what was promised him; he was to be dipped head foremost into the Marlpool, and held to within an inch of his life. He was to be flogged and cuffed, and pinched and nettled, and, in short, the whole blood of the Marlpool boiled and seethed in vengeful anticipation of horrors to be inflicted upon him.

But "no catch me, no have me!" A week went by and no Luke Barnicott re-appeared. Old Luke Barnicott went to his mill and back as usual, but with a much sadder and darker air; poor old Beckey's eyes were red with weeping, and her frame seemed all at once withered and grown shaky. The incensed colliers and the redoubtable virago, Doll Welland, his wife, had been seen watching the Reckoning House, night after night, suspecting that the culprit must steal there in the dark to get something to live on, for he could not live on the air. But Tom Smith solemnly assured inquirers that no Luke had been seen near home since the day when he flourished the brick over the pit-mouth; and that the old folks were miserable about him. How Luke lived or where, no one could guess; but those who knew him best imagined that he managed to keep soul and body together by nuts, and beech-nuts, and pig-nuts, which last he was very expert in digging out of pastures. Besides, farmer Palethorpe of the Youlgreaves, not far off, complained that his cows were heard running about one or two nights, and he believed somebody had been trying to milk them. "That's Barnicott!" said Welland, and he and his gigantic Doll carefully hunted over the woods and copses near Youlgreaves farm, but to no purpose. About a week after Luke's disappearance, and when his grandfather and grandmother began to think that he had gone quite off to seek his fortune, some boys who had been nutting in the Badger Dingles, near Youlgreaves, came racing home out of breath, saying they had either seen a ghost or Luke Barnicott, for he seemed to start out of the ground amongst the bushes, gave an unearthly shriek, and darted away through bush and "breer," and was gone. Poor old Beckey Barnicott swooned away, for she said she was sure the poor lad had been "clammed" to death in the woods, because he dared not come home; but Welland took another view of the matter, and starting off to the Badger Dingles, he and his strapping wife hunted the thickets again well over. They were near giving up their search when it occurred to them to examine an old hovel in a field up above the Dingles, and there they found a heap of fern in which somebody had evidently lain for some time, and in the very last night.

Sure that Luke was lurking somewhere not far off, they renewed their search with fresh eagerness. They hunted the dingles all over again, and just when they came to the end they saw something swing itself over a gate and disappear. The Marlpool boys would have run off, thinking it the ghost again, but Welland rushed forward, leapt the gate, and saw Luke Barnicott sure enough racing at full speed to gain the dense Hillmarton spruce plantations. Welland and wife gave chase. According to their account Luke plunged into the plantation before they could come up with him, but being hot on his trail they beat up the plantations, and again started him. In the afternoon the people of the Marlpool saw an extraordinary sight. It was Luke, ragged and haggard, without his hat, and his light brown hair flying in the wind, running for his life over the

common, and Welland and his wife panting after him as if half tired down, for they were people approaching their fiftieth year, though hale and active, and stimulated by their vengeance to run to the last. Luke was evidently aiming for the Reckoning House. All Marlpool was out to watch the race. There was loud shoutings, and cries of "Stop him!" and by others, "Nay, fair play! let the lad run." Old Luke Barnicott came out on his mill-stairs, and cried with a voice which was never forgotten by those who heard it to the day of their death, "Murderers! let the child alone."

Old Luke came down the mill-stairs like a frantic man and ran to meet and protect his grandson, who was now speeding along the banks of the Marlpool in a narrow larch copse that bordered the path's side, and was not two hundred yards from his grandfather, when Welland met and turned him. Young Luke wheeled like a hare, and dashing through the pool, for he could swim like a fish, reached the other side before Welland and his neighbours could recover from their surprise. Old Luke was in the midst of them; he aimed a blow at Welland which felled him to the ground, and then he dealt his blows round him with such effect, that five or six great fellows lay sprawling on the earth. Old Luke was too furious to speak at first, but he at length burst out with, "Shame on you, cowards! murderers!" Luke had such a reputation for strength and skill in the arts of wrestling and boxing that, though an old man, not one of the fellows whom he had felled dare touch him. But, meantime, Welland was up again, and scouring through the copse along the pool-side like a maniac. His tall wife was running along the other side of the pool after the lad. Old Luke threw off his mealy jacket and ran too. It was many a day since he had run before, but every one was amazed at the speed with which he went. Down the hill towards Askersick well, in the direction of the Hillmarton plantations, went Welland and his wife; down followed old Luke, stout and elderly as he was, but with a vigour that seemed wonderful. The young fugitive was seen to leap the fence into the plantations; Welland and his wife were seen to crush through the fence after him, and soon after old Luke followed headlong through the gap, and all disappeared.

The people of the Marlpool stood on their hill watching this chase, and when the flyers rushed into the plantation some ran down in that direction. But the chasers were lost for nearly half an hour, when young Luke was seen flying along the side of the Hillmarton dams—large reservoirs of water that stretched in a chain along the valley amongst woods and copses—and Welland was fagging after him like a dogged blood-hound after a tired stag, or rather fawn. But pursuer and pursued appeared dead beat with fatigue when they disappeared behind a mass of trees. No old Luke, no Doll Welland were seen anywhere, for that wily woman, as old Luke pursued through the plantation, had seized a pole that lay on the ground, and, standing amongst some bushes, suddenly poked it between the old man's legs as he ran, and caused him to tumble forward and fall with a heavy dash on the ground, where, exhausted by his unwonted exertion, and stunned by the shock, he lay breathless and almost senseless. The huge woman then, as he lay on his face on the earth, coolly seated herself upon him, and kept him there whilst her husband pursued the boy.

Meantime the young men from the Marlpool, running in the direction in which they had seen Luke and his pursuer, at length found Welland seated on the bank of the lake, intently watching a part of the water where a mass of reeds grew, and where the boughs of the wood overhung the water.

"Where's Luke?" cried the young men. "He's there!" said Welland, red and panting, and scarcely able to bolt the words from his chest. "He's in the reeds!" Some of the young men ran round into the wood, and looked down into the reed bed by climbing along the boughs of the trees, but nothing was to be seen there. "He's not there, Welland!" they shouted, but Welland stoutly maintained that he was there; he saw him go in, and that he could not go out again without his seeing him. To make all sure, one young fellow stripped and swam to the reeds, and beat all amongst them, and declared that there was no Luke there. "Oh! the cunning beggar is lurking somewhere up to the nose in the water!" shouted Welland; but the young man paddled all about, declared the place very deep of mud, but to the certainty nothing human was there. At this Welland rose up in great wrath but after going round into the wood, said, moodily, "The young scamp has done me again, but I'll settle him yet." And with that he turned homewards, and the young men with him.

Old Luke had before this recovered his breath somewhat, and, rolling his incubus from him with wonderful ease, had risen up and gone towards the dams, followed by the virago, who furiously abused him all the way, and flung stones and masses of turf at him. When old Luke reached a keeper's lodge near the dams, old John Rix, who lived there, told him Welland and a lot of men had gone up the field towards the Marlpool. Luke then hastened back, with the vengeful grenadier of a woman still following and saying all the evil things she could think of. She upbraided the old man for his bringing up of both this young Luke and of his father. "Bad crow, bad egg!" she said. "Old rogue! you were no great shakes, I reckon, in your young days, and the son was no better; no good came to him; and as for this wicked boy, he'll come to the gallows, I'll warrant, if a tree be left in the country to make one on."

Old Luke went on, as King David did in his time when Shimei was hailing stones and curses on him in his trouble, and took no notice. But he was mightily troubled in his mind as he went on in silence. All his former troubles with his son were brought back upon him, and he wondered how it was that he was so much the more afflicted than other people with his children. He began to think that he must have been a much more wicked man than he had thought himself, and so he said, "Let her talk; may-happen I've deserved it." But when he got home, and heard that young Luke had been chased into the lake by Welland, and that he could not be found, he sat down in his chair, and never stirred or spoke for an hour. Poor old Beckey, who had enough to bear of her

own, was terribly frightened, and laid hold on him, and shook him, saying, "Luke, man! Luke, speak! what ails thee? Hast a gotten a stroke?" But Luke neither spoke nor stirred, but continued looking hard on the ground. The poor woman was in the greatest distress, and began to call, "Peggy! Peggy! come here! Peggy Smith."

But at that old Luke suddenly rose. "Hold thy tongue! dunna bring anybody here. They've killed the lad, an' they've killed me!" and, giving a deep groan, he began to stagger upstairs, and soon undressed himself and went to bed. There was an end of old Luke. The violent agitation of his mind; the violent exertion that he had made; the fall that he had got; and, no doubt, the abuse and upbraidings that the great virago had heaped upon him, all had done their part. He never spoke after he was in bed: a stroke of apoplexy had indeed fallen on him, and, though the doctor came and bled him, he only opened his eyes for a moment, and then died.

When the death of old Luke was made known, there was a great sensation, and the more so that nothing further was seen or heard of young Luke. A great revulsion in the public mind took place immediately. These transactions were the sole topic of conversation, not only in Marlpool and Monnycrofts, and Shapely, but in every hall and hamlet and solitary farm-house, the whole country round. They were the theme of discussion in every ale-house, and at every barber's and blacksmith's shop, and in every street-parliament far and near. They got into the local newspapers, and assumed a variety of shapes the farther the rumours spread. The Marlpoolians and Monnycroftians who had called young Luke all manner of names as the most incorrigible of scapegraces, now pitied him as a very ill-used and persecuted lad. "Why, all lads are full of mischief," said Mrs. Widdiwicket of the Dog and Partridge public-house. "I would not give a potato for a lad without a bit of mischief in him. Poor lad! it was only his spirit, and what sort of a man is to grow out of a boy without a spirit?" "True," said old Pluckwell, the gardener, as he took his evening pot, "what's weeds in one place is flowers in another. Why, they tell me flowers here are weeds in other countries; and, as to this Luke, he must ha' grown into a prime spaciment with cultivation."

"Just so," said Nasal Longdrawn, the parish-clerk; "it seems to me that these Wellands had real downright mischief an' malice in 'em, to chase, and worry, and threaten a poor fatherless and motherless orphan so. Poor lad! he was often very aggravating when he got upo' th' church after th' starlings, and loosened the tiles, but I canna help feeling for th' poor chap, now he's gone."

"Gone!" said Mrs. Widdiwicket; "and where's he gone, thinken ye?"

All shook their heads, and Roddibottom, the schoolmaster, got up and strode about the house, and then suddenly turning round, facing the company, with his hands thrust into his waistcoat pocket,— "Where's he gone? why, ma'am, why, neighbours, if they put me into the jury box. I should give my verdict that Welland knows!"

"Oh, goodness me!" exclaimed Mrs. Widdiwicket; and all the rest again shook their heads, and said, "Likely enough; that Welland is a savage un. What but a hard un could chase a poor lad so?"

"And what was he doing sitting there by the bank, and pointing to the water, and saying, 'He's there!' and that he could not have got out without him seeing him? How do we know what happened after they were out of sight? A knock on the poor lad's head with a stick or a stone, and a plunge into the dam! Eh? eh? I think that pond should be dragged." And with that Roddibottom drank off his glass of ale, and walked out with an air of inconceivable sagacity, and leaving all the company in wonder and horror.

"By leddy! what the mester says is right," said Pluckwell. "Who knows what happened? and the boy has never been seen since."

"Ay, the dam should be dragged," said Longdrawn; "there's a mystery there." And looking full of mystery himself, he followed the schoolmaster out.

The feeling at the "Dog and Partridge" was the feeling everywhere. The poor boy was invariably pitied, old Luke was pitied, poor old Beckey was pitied, and the Wellands were looked upon as most savage and bloodthirsty wretches. The excitement became great as time went on. The dam was dragged where Welland had been seen sitting, but nothing was found; search and inquiry were made after young Luke all round the country, but not a trace of him could be found. The feeling that Welland had killed the poor lad, and secreted his body somewhere in the bushes, and only pretended for a blind that he had gone into the water, became very strong. The Wellands were both taken up and tried for the murder, his wife as accessory before the fact; and he was also charged with contributing to old Luke's death, for though he had never opened his mouth after his return but in one instance, it was—"They've killed him, and they've killed me."

Doll Welland had boasted how she had thrown the old man down by putting the pole between his legs, and having sat upon him after his fall, and what more she might have done nobody could tell. Besides, both her husband and herself had vowed most bitterly, or, as the country neighbours said, "most saverly," that they would finish the lad if they caught him. And the persevering animosity with which they had contrived to hunt him up, and to hunt him down at the last, betrayed a most murderous mind and intent. Luke never turned up, and, at the March assizes at Derby, the Wellands were tried; and numbers of the Marlpool people who had quite sided with them till after the boy was missing now gave fully their evidence against them, repeating the vengeful expressions which they had used against poor Luke, and that they had said twenty times, "They'd finish him, if they ever laid hands on him." All these things, and the general feeling of the country telling against them, both husband and wife were condemned for

the murder of the lad, though there was no direct evidence of the fact. Nobody would believe anything else after the fierce chase and the savage threats, and the disappearance of Luke just where Welland was found sitting. As the evidence, however, was but circumstantial, though very aggravated, the husband and wife were condemned to transportation for life, and were shipped off to Sydney, with the hearty expression of satisfaction of all Marlpool, Monnycrofts, Hillmarton Hall and hamlet, of the farmers, and all the world besides. As the Wellands had five or six children, there was a subscription in that part of the country to send them out with their convict parents, and thus to rid this happy land of the whole "seed, breed, and generation" of the bloodthirsty Wellands, according to the phraseology of the Marlpool.

Years went on: no Luke Barnicott ever re-appeared or ever was heard of; and though the body was never found—never rose to the surface of Hillmarton dam, nor was discovered in the wood—it became a settled feeling that Welland knew if he pleased to tell, where the remains could be found. But Welland and his family were broiling in the sandy fields of Paramatta, cultivating the hot ground, and planting orange and lemon orchards, which now embellish that neighbourhood, and show their dark masses covered with golden fruit in mile-long woods to the people sailing up the river past Kissing Point, and many another pleasant promontory, with their mangrove trees standing in the water, and their charming houses overlooking their rocky shores and well-kept lawns, dark and lustrous with the Indian and Moreton Bay figs, the India-rubber trees, and many a quaint Banksia and blooming shrub from sandy Botany Bay.

Years rolled on: the story of these events was forgotten everywhere except in the immediate neighbourhood, where it was getting less and less frequently adverted to. It was stereotyped in every one's mind of those of more than infantine years at that period; but it was only when some strange murder or some mysterious occurrence took place in the country at large that it was revived and talked of far around. Fifteen years had passed: poor old Beckey Barnicott was now between seventy and eighty. She was still living at the Reckoning House, but she was blind—stone blind. She lost her eyes soon after the shocking death of her husband and the loss of her grandson. It was supposed that she wept herself blind; and no doubt her grief of mind helped to produce this catastrophe. It was found that old Luke Barnicott had saved a small sum, which brought Beckey in ten pounds a year; and she had been advised by the clergyman of Monnycrofts to sink the sum in an annuity, as she had no one to succeed her, and so she had an income then of five-and-twenty pounds a year. She was well off in that respect; and she had a middle-aged woman, a widow out of the village, Amy Beckumshire, to live with her and take care of her. Tom and Peggy Smith were both dead, and the new miller, John Groats, used that part of the house to store corn in.

Poor old Beckey Barnicott used to get out into the garden by help of a long wand, with which she felt her way, and she had learned to know every part of the garden, and could feel the rosemary and lavender plants, and used to sit in the sun in the rude porch and bask herself; and when it was too hot, she took her place under a great elder tree, which hung from a high bank on the far side of the garden, where a seat was placed. There she used to knit diligently, for she could knit without her sight wonderfully; and there for many a long hour she used to think about old times, when her husband was full of health and strength, and used to keep the mill up above spinning round like a great giant, beckoning all the country round to come up and see something wonderful. And when Tom Smith and he used to read the "Nottingham Review," and all about Bonaparte, and Wellington, and Lord Nelson, and talked over the affairs of the country. And then her thoughts would turn on poor little Luke, as she called him, and her heart clung to his memory with a wonderful tenderness; for he seemed to have been misunderstood, and so cruelly used. She remembered many things that he had done for her, and how he used to bring her heaps of nuts and blackberries and mushrooms, and catch sparrows in winter to make nice dumplings, and she thought to herself, "Ay, poor thing, he wasna so bad after all! It was, Mrs. Widdiwicket always said, only his spirit; he wanted more room for his life than he got here, and should have been a soldier or a traveller, or something or another where he would always be moving." She had often dreamt of her husband, who appeared to her and said he was waiting for her in a very pleasant place; but he never mentioned little Luke, and she never dreamed of him except as racing before Welland and his giant wife, or plunging into Hillmarton dam, all amongst the dark weeds and deep, slimy mud.

It was a fine breezy summer's day, Mrs. Barnicott was sitting under the great hanging elder, and her knitting-needles were going very fast for so old a woman. She was stooping and wrinkled and lean, but there was a quick motion in her darkened eyes and their twinkling lids, and there was a motion about her withered mouth, and she gave every now and then deep sighs as she shifted her needles, and seemed to look down at her knitting, which she could not see, and then paused awhile, let her work fall on her knee upon her check-apron, and raised her sightless eyes towards the sky and seemed to think. Just then she heard an active step as if a young man came along the brick pavement along the garden to the house-door. There was a knock, and she heard a young man's voice—she was sure it was a young man—ask if Mrs. Barnicott was at home. Amy Beckumshire said, "Ay, there she sits, sir, knitting under the elder." The young man advanced, and old Beckey rose up in wonder who it could be.

"Good day to you, Mrs. Barnicott," said the young man. "You don't know me, but I have heard of you some years ago, and being in this part of the country, I thought I should like to see you."

"You're very good, sir, to come to see an old blind woman like me!" She guessed that it was all about the sad business of her husband and grandson that the gentleman had heard. "Pray you, sit down, sir," she added, "there's room on the bench."

"Thank you," said the young man. There was a little silence, and then the young man said, "I've often heard of this neighbourhood, and I always thought it must be very pleasant, and really I find it so. Why, I seem to know all about it, as if I had seen it. The old windmill, and the pool below here, and the Marlpool above, and the old church tower of Monnycrofts."

Beckey was silent and pondering. "And pray," she said, after a time, "where might you hear all this about this country place?"

"Well, it was very far from here. You must know Mrs. Barnicott, that I have been a sailor, and have sailed nearly all over the world; and we sailors make acquaintance in different ships with men from all parts. I was on board the Swallow, bound for Pernambuco, in South America, for a cargo of cotton and coffee, and I had a mate there that I took a great fancy to; he came from some part of this country, Cosser or Hawsworth, or some such place."

"Ay, ay," said Beckey, "these are places not far off; you may see 'em from th' mill up yonder. But it's many a year sin I seed 'em."

"Ay, more's the pity!" said the young man; "but you can hear, and I think I can tell you some good news."

"What good news?" said old Beckey, suddenly giving a start, and turning her blind eyes fixedly on him. "What good news can come to a poor old creature like me?"

"I should not like to agitate you," said the youth, "by going into things long past, and very dark things too; but this mate of mine told me several times of what happened here years ago; and I wonder," he used to say, "whether any of the Barnicotts be living, and if they ever heard of the lad that was lost?"

"What do you mean?" said old Beckey; "do you know anything of little Luke? is he alive? can he be alive? Speak, man! speak!"

"Well, this young man thought he was alive."

"What!" said old Beckey, "what! oh laws! you've made my heart jump into my mouth. What did he know? Did he know Luke, and had he seen him?"

"Well," he said, "he was alive and was a sailor."

"A sailor! alive!" Poor old Beckey trembled like an aspen leaf, and dropped her knitting from her knee. "Oh me! if this should be true!" she said; "but my strength fails me; it is more nor I can bear."

The young man took hold of her to support her, and bade her not agitate herself; he believed her grandson was alive, and that they should be able in time to learn more about him.

"And you dunna know where he is? Are you sure he is alive? are you sure?"

"Well, I feel pretty sure. I know my mate said he was alive and well, and a fine active sailor, five years ago; for he sailed to Ceylon, in the Indies, with him."

"Luke alive! oh laws! this is too much. Amy! Amy!" Amy Beckumshire, who was standing at the door all curiosity and astonishment, came the moment that old Beckey called, and the poor old woman, shaking and trembling as with the ague, said to her, "Dost hear? Luke's alive, and is a sailor, and has been i' th' Indies, and this gentleman has seen a sailor as knew him!"

"Is that so?" said Amy, in a voice of wondering inquiry, and looking in distant respect at the handsome young gentleman.

"I quite believe it is true, missis," said the young man; "I never knew Sam Birchin tell me a lie."

"He comes from Cosser or Hawsworth, that sailor does," said old Beckey, all eagerness, "and knows all about this country, and all the old doings here."

"Gracious me!" said Amy, "how wonderful!"

"O Lord," said old Beckey, lifting her sightless brow towards heaven, "only let me once see Luke, and then take me—take me—that I may tell my husband. But, laws-a-me! maybe he knows all about it."

Poor old Beckey then asked the stranger a hundred questions: if he knew what sort of a looking lad Luke was? how tall he was, and how he looked? if he had heard that he had blue eyes and a very fair skin, and hair very light coloured? To all these questions the young man said he could give no answer; but he would write to Sam Birchin, who would be in port soon, and ask him all about it. He then rose up and said he had ordered his dinner at the Dog and Partridge, and must go there, but that he meant to stay a few weeks in the country, and go and find out Birchin's relations at Cosser. He did not mean to go to sea again; he had been to Australia, and got enough gold to live on, and he meant to settle down somewhere in the country. He should often come and see her while he stayed.

Old Beckey prayed God to bless him for the good news he had brought; an angel from heaven could not have brought more blessed tidings; and as he went across the garden she tottered after him, leaning on her frail wand, and stood at the gate to listen to his steps going down the field. Then she had to tell the wonderful news all over to Amy, and to ask a hundred questions. What

sort of looking young man was he, light or dark? and how he was dressed, and how tall he was? Though he'd been a sailor, she was sure he was a gentleman by his talk. Amy said he was a handsome young man, and quite a gentleman in his dress. He was as finely dressed as young Squire Flaggimore himself. His eyes were dark blue.

"Blue, says ta?" broke in old Beckey. "Luke's were blue."

"They are dark blue or black," said Amy.

"And his hair very light?" asked Beckey.

"No. Light! ravenly black."

"Oh, then, he's not like Luke. Luke's hair," said Beckey, "was very light, and a little sandy."

"What! thou artna dreaming that this is Luke himself, Beckey"

"Oh laws, no!" said Beckey. "It's not Luke, Amy; I was only wondering whether it was like him. But thinkster I should not know Luke's voice? Ay, that voice I shall never forget; it's down in my heart as clear as a bell, though it's fifteen years come Michaelmas since I heard it, poor fellow! And to think as he's alive, and 's a been a sailing all over the world ever since! And now, thou sees, Amy, that's the reason that he never came, like his grandfayther, in my dreams. How could he come, and was alive all the time? But thou mun run, Amy, and tell the parson, and Mrs. Widdiwicket, and the schoolmaster, as Luke has been seen i' th' Indies."

Amy was in a hurry to throw on her shawl and bonnet, and away to the village; for we all like to tell a bit of news; it is a pleasure that we enjoy immensely, and yet don't reckon it amongst our pleasures. But we all feel like electric clouds charged with pleasant fire, and in haste to let it off. No sooner is the word dropped in one ear than it is out upon the tongue, and turns away to some other ear, and encircles round the world like sunshine. Amy had the pleasure of stopping two or three people before she got across the fields to the village, and telling them that Mrs. Barnicott had heard of Luke, and that he was a fine young sailor, and had been in the Indies and all over the world, and the young gentleman at the Dog and Partridge had brought the news, and had seen young Birchin of Cosser, who had sailed with him. Before Amy reached the clergyman's the news had slipped down the village, and was all over it, and flowing out at each end by people who were going to the neighbouring villages. Mrs. Widdiwicket had heard the news from the young gentleman in the parlour herself, and she said the young gentleman had hired her horse, and was gone to Cosser to see Sam Birchin's relations. As Amy issued into the street again, everybody was on the look-out for her, and she had to stop, to her great satisfaction, and tell the story again, and to correct some errors that had already got with it, for it was already said that the young gentleman, who had been at Mrs. Widdiwicket's all night, and had borrowed Mrs. Widdiwicket's horse, had been with Luke, and had sailed with him to the Indies and all over the world.

At the top of the village street stood Roddibottom, the schoolmaster, and Longdrawn, the clerk, and Sandy Spark, the blacksmith, discussing the whole affair, and they had already raised a great wonder how it happened that Luke had never sent word to his old grandmother that he was alive.

They were, moreover, now greatly disposed to lament the fate of Welland and his wife, who had been transported for life for having killed Luke when he was not killed, and were very near being hanged for it. The whole of Monnycrofts was in a state of ferment on this great discovery, and all the neighbouring villages soon partook of the excitement; and it very soon communicated itself to the county papers, and very wise reflections were attached to it on the dangers of condemning people on circumstantial evidence. It was thought that no time should be lost in recommending to Government to send out an order to recal Welland and his wife home. Meantime old Beckey herself had managed to hobble up to the mill, and thence to the Marlpool, where the story made the most amazing stir. All the people were soon out of doors discussing the affair, and those who had seen the chase on that memorable day pointed out all the incidents of it. They showed where little Luke was running when old Luke rushed down from the mill, and where he knocked down Welland and about twenty more, according to their account, and so they went through the whole story.

Beckey, and so indeed all the neighbourhood, was impatient for the return of the young man, but he had sent back Mrs. Widdiwicket's horse, and was staying a week with Sam Birchin's relations. When he re-appeared he was beset on all sides with questions regarding Luke, but he assured them he could not give them much further information, than that Luke was alive three years ago. He soon went to visit old Beckey again, who was delighted to see him, and had hoarded up a whole budget of questions to put to him. He informed her that his name was John Webster, that he came from Liverpool, and that he had sailed to many wonderful countries. He had been in the Indies, in North and South America, in China and Australia. As old Beckey sat and plied her knitting-needles, he asked her all the particulars about Luke, and about his death, as it was supposed to have been, and he assured her that he had written to Birchin to let him know all that he knew; everything about Luke Barnicott.

He continued to lodge at the Dog and Partridge, and had many conversations with Roddibottom, the schoolmaster, Nasal Longdrawn, the clerk, and all the rest of the village politicians who frequented that house; and he heard many different versions of the story of Luke from them, who all declared that, though he was very mischievous, he really had no ill in him, though they could not account for it why he had never let his poor grandmother know of his being alive. John Webster hired widow Widdiwicket's horse and rode about, and commended very much the

country. The clergyman and Squire Flaggimore invited him to dine with them, and were greatly entertained with his account of foreign countries. But Webster used to go up to the Reckoning House as much as ever, and talk to the old widow Barnicott, who was never tired of hearing about the sea and foreign parts, because then she could imagine what Luke had seen. Webster told her all about the enormous whales at sea; how they used to see them come up near the ship, huge and black, and rear themselves up almost as high as a house, and then souse down again, and spout water up from their nostrils ever so high. And all about sharks, and flying-fish, and dolphins, and the beautiful nautiluses, and Portuguese men-of-war, that resemble the nautilus, but are only like little ships of gristle, but are beautifully painted as a rainbow, and they float about when the sea is calm as glass in the hot climates, and look like beautiful flowers on a plain of crystal. And of the sea-fire that rushes and flickers all round the ship at night, and sails past like great lamps in the dark blue water; and of storms; and wonderful birds; and of the mountains and great islands of ice that float about as white as snow in the solitary ocean, thousands of miles from land. And Beckey would drink it all in with hungry ears, and say, "And all that Luke has seen! How wonderful! But I wonder whether he has quite forgotten his poor old grandmother?"

Webster did not believe that he had. Sailors did not forget their relations; but most likely he thought his grandfather and grandmother were dead, and so he thought he had no connexions left. Then Webster told her about all the wonders of India, of grand towns, and palaces, and temples; and of its great nations of black people, and their pearls and jewels; of elephants, and tigers, and serpents; of palm-trees; and of the wonderful flowers and birds. He told her of the rich fruits, bananas, and pine-apples growing in the fields, and wonderful orange-groves and fig-trees. And then he told her of China and Japan, and the strange swarming yellow people, and all about the tea-plantations, where the tea she drank came from; and of the people who always live in boats; and of birds' nests that they make soup of. He told her at another time of the beautiful countries of South America and the West Indies, and all their palm and cocoa-nut, and bread-fruit trees; of their custard apples and sweet mangoes, and yams instead of potatoes, and a hundred of luscious fruits, and such beautiful flowers in the hedges—finer by far than in our gardens, or those Squire Flaggimore had in his conservatory.

"All these," said the wondering Beckey, "thou has seen, and my Luke has seen!"

"To be sure he has," said Webster; "and then the monkeys and apes as big as men, and great snakes that wrap themselves round bullocks, and squeeze them to death; and all the black men that are brought to those countries from Africa to cultivate the cotton, and sugar, and coffee, and spices, because it is too hot for white men."

Old Beckey was in a dream of wonder and of delight to hear what a world this was—how big, and strange, and beautiful, and how little the people of Monnycrofts and Marlpool knew about it; and yet Luke had seen it all. "And I would not be surprised if Luke had got a good deal of gold, for Birch in said he talked of going to Australia when he left the ship they had sailed in together to India." Beckey did not know exactly, nor Amy Beckumshire, who was always an eager listener to these stories, whereabouts Australia was, and Webster told them that it was down on the other side of the world, just under their feet.

"Lauks!" the women exclaimed, "why, the folks must stand on their heads there, or at least with their heads downwards;" and it was in vain that he endeavoured to explain to them, by showing them an apple, that if you stick little pegs in it they would all have their heads outwards at least. Beckey could not see this, but she felt very particularly at the apple and the pegs, and she insisted that the Australians *must* have their heads downwards, because ours always *were* upwards. It was useless endeavouring to make them understand that anybody's head was always upwards, except when they were in bed; and so Webster told them all about the strange things in Australia. The kangaroos, with tails as big as bedposts, and that could leap across Beckey Barnicott's garden at two leaps. He told them all about the trees that never shed their leaves, but shed their bark instead; about the black swans, and the cherries with stones outside, and possums and flying-squirrels and flying-mice, and a kind of cuckoo that sings at nights instead of days, and of all the gold that lies in the ground, and in the rivers there; and Beckey and Amy wondered that everybody was not as rich as the Queen of England, if they could dig up gold out of the ground, and fish it up out of the brooks. Beckey was proud to think that Luke had seen all this too; and she felt sure that he would manage to bring home a ship-load of gold, for he was, as a lad, as sharp as a needle with two points.

One day old Beckey had a nice jug of curds sent her up from farmer Flamstead's, of Langlee, and she said, "Ah! that is that good Sally Flamstead's doing. She is always very good to me." And she made Amy get some sugar, and they had a delicious dish of cherry-curds, all three of them, under the old elder. "Flamstead!" said Webster, that reminds me that Birch in used to say, "Why, she must be as handsome as Sally Flamstead," when any handsome woman was spoken of. And when I asked him who Sally Flamstead was, he said, "Oh, that he had learned of Luke Barnicott." For, whenever he saw a pretty woman, he was sure to say, "Why, she is almost as handsome as Sally Flamstead." And now, I remember Birch in told me that Barnicott had stated to him often when they were on the night-watch together, quite a romantic story of his falling in love with this Sally Flamstead when he was quite a little boy. He used to go to Flamstead's farm at—at—where did he say? Lang—Lang—Lang—what was it?

"Langlee?" asked old Beckey.

"Langlee! Langlee! ah, that was the name," exclaimed Webster. "He used to go to Langlee, wherever that is."

"Oh," said Beckey, "you may see it as you sit here. There, down the slope, all amongst a mass of apple-trees. You may see the chimneys and the thatch-roof. I can't see them; only in my mind's eye I see them there well enough."

Webster stood up and said, "Yes, he saw the place." Well, Barnicott told Birch in that he used to go there to scare birds off the corn, and to gather stones in spring off the pastures, and to watch young turkeys as they fed in the field, and to fetch and carry in harvest time, and all sort of things of that kind. And there was little Sally Flamstead, just about his own age, something younger; and she Luke thought a regular cherubim. All the ideas of angelic beauty that ever he had he got, he said, by looking at Sally Flamstead. And she was such a good, kind, little thing. You know, Luke used to say, that she was far above a poor lad like me; she was the farmer's only child, and the old man was rich for a farmer; he had flocks of sheep and cattle, and great fat teams, and such corn and hay-stacks, and geese, and turkeys, and fowls, and pigeons. Oh, he seemed to Luke quite a king. Yet little Sally Flamstead took quite a fancy for Luke, and used to give him good advice; for, she said, everybody said he was wild. Luke used to collect nuts and mushrooms for her, and she used to give him ripe cherries and plums, and often she would save her plum-cake and give him. She could always find him, without seeming to seek him, when he was about the yard; for she used to go skipping about to feed the pigeons, and ducks, and to chase round and round with her little dog Tiny. Sometimes when he was going out to scare birds on a very cold day in the wheat fields, she would put some matches in his hat, that he might light a fire; or she would be standing inside of the orchard hedge as he went by, and say, "Luke, look under the bramble-bush by the paddock-gate," and there he would find a good piece of pork-pie, or a little bottle of beer, or something of that sort. Luke would have run his legs off to have obliged little Sally Flamstead, and a regular courtship grew between these children. He used to be sent to Monnycrofts to fetch Sally on an evening when she went to take tea with her Aunt Heritage and her cousins, and Sally, as they walked along, used to tell him wonderful stories about the Babes in the Wood, and Robinson Crusoe, and Luke said that he declared he should like nothing so well as to be on a desolate island, and have Sally there for his man Friday. At length he got so enamoured that he vowed if ever he should become a king, which did not seem at all improbable after the wonderful things that happened in the world, according to what Sally Flamstead told him, he would marry Sally, and that she should be his queen. And Sally said she should like nothing so well. "But, Lord bless you!" Luke used to say, "only to think of my foolishness. Why, Sally Flamstead was far enough above me, and if she's grown up half as handsome as she was then, she's married some great gentleman since then, and rides a coach."

When Webster had finished telling this, old Beckey suddenly started up, laid hold of him, and put her hand on his face and felt down it, and then, as suddenly, she gave a great cry, "It's my Luke! it's Luke! it's Luke!" and she hugged him with a force that he did not think had been in her old arms. The next moment she released her grasp, gave a deep sigh and a sort of groan, and fell in a swoon. Luke—for it was Luke sure enough—caught her up and set her on the bench, and while he held her, he shouted with all his might for Amy. Amy came running, and was greatly frightened; but Luke told her not to be alarmed: she had only fainted, and would come round by and by. He bade her fetch a cup of water, and by the time it came poor old Beckey was recovering. She never stayed to drink the water, but she laid hold on Luke again, and began to laugh and cry; and Amy said, "So! so! Mrs. Barnicott, restrain yourself, or you'll go into high-sterics. And, mi! don't pull the young gentleman so; he'll think you are going 'utick," meaning lunatic.

Beckey took no notice, but catching Luke round the neck, to Amy's great horror, for she thought now she was gone "utick" in reality, she began kissing him, and then she laughed and said, "Amy, woman, it is Luke—my own lad Luke. Oh! where were my eyes?"—Beckey always talked of seeing, though she could not see—"where were my ears? But I reckon it's because my own Luke has now gotten his man's voice and his man's look, and he had only his lad's voice and his lad's look when he went. Black is his hair, says thou, Amy? and it was as light and shiney as tow when he was a lad. But so was his father's. When he began to tell me about Sally Flamstead, all at once I heard his father speaking and himself speaking, and my heart went with a great jump, and I knew it all. Ay, I'm blind and deaf too, or I should ha' fun' that out before this. Luke, lad! Luke, it is thee; thou wanna deny it?"

"No, dear granny," said Luke, using the old familiar term, "I won't deny it; I am your own Luke, and I am come to live near you while you are left to us."

"And yet, Luke," said the trembling old grandmother, "thou went away and left us to think thou was dead, drowned, murdered; and all these years, thou has neither written nor asked after me."

"Oh, granny," said Luke, "that's been a bitter thing to me. I was forced to run away, for I saw that those Wellands would never cease till they had made an end of me. I went right off, and begged till I found myself at Hull. There a ship captain met me in the street, and eyeing me awhile, he said, 'For shame, young scamp, to go about begging, a clever-looking, active lad like you. Come, I'll take you with me to sea. Eh? what say you?' I thanked him heartily, for of all things I was delighted to go to sea, where I expected to find some Robinson Crusoe's island, or the like fine country, such as Sally Flamstead had told me of. He took me on board a great ship, and there I was stripped and tumbled into a great tub of water, and well washed, and my old rags were flung overboard, and I was togged out in a sailor's suit, and set to work to sweep out the cabin and swab the deck, and do all that kind of thing, with two or three lads of my own age. In a short time we set sail for the Cape of Good Hope; but before I went I told the captain that I wanted my grandad and grandmam to know where I was, and I begged him earnestly to write for me, and he

said he would; but one day he called me into the cabin, and said, 'I have seen a gentleman here from Derby, who has come to buy whale oil to light his factory with, and he says, 'That young fellow's history is known all over our part of the country. Look to it, captain, for he is the very imp of mischief, and had to run away for trying to kill a collier down a pit with a brick, and when he was missing the collier was charged with having murdered him, and he's transported for it, and his wife too. I heard him tried at Derby Assizes, and the young rogue's grandfather and grandmother are both dead of grief.'

"When the captain told me this I was ready to sink on the floor. Nobody can tell how I felt. To think I had killed both my grandfather and grandmother by my foolishness! As for Welland and his giant wife, I was glad that they were transported, for they seemed to me to be so malicious, and to have caused your deaths. At first I was stunned, and then I burst out crying, and I thought my heart would break. I had killed my only friends in the world; I was a wretch without a relative or soul on earth that cared for me.

"Don't stand blubbering there,' said the captain, 'but go and show yourself handy, and turn out a farrently fellow. You may if you will; and if not, there's a rope-end and the yard-arm for you. Quick! make yourself scarce!' That was a bitter voyage for me. I suffered dreadfully from sickness and from cold in the southern latitudes; and I got plenty of kicks and cuffs from the mates and the sailors, and plenty of dousing and sousing with salt water that came sweeping over the ship's sides, and with hail and rain as we had to turn out of our hammocks at night when storms were raging, and we had to go up into the shrouds, and out along the slippering, reeling yards, hanging over the dark, boiling, roaring seas below. Oh! I often thought of these pleasant fields and farms, and all my old favourite nooks in the woods and dells, at those times, and I was often tempted just to drop off the yard-end, and bury all my troubles in the raging ocean. But I got better of that; the captain began to notice me for an active, and, as he said, clever fellow, and I began to like the sea. I've told you, granny, of some of my wanderings in India, and America, and Australia, and we can talk these over at our leisure now."

"But," said Beckey, "what made thee think of coming here if thou thought us dead?"

"I thought I'd come and see your graves, dear granny. That was all I could do; and I thought I'd put a handsome stone at your heads, such as I used to see, when I was a lad, in Monnycrofts churchyard, with a nice verse at the bottom, and a golden angel at the top, with a long golden trumpet blowing for the resurrection. But when I got to Mrs. Widdiwicket's, and began to ask about the old people that used to be here in my time, just in a roundabout way, that I might not be known by asking about you too soon, I really thought all the people in the place were dead. Old Squire Flaggimore and Madame Flaggimore, and old Parson Simion and Mrs. Simion, and old Johnson, and Broadbent, and Cullycamp the mole-catcher, and Shears the tailor, and Kettlebender the cobbler, and such a tribe,—all gone! And the Barnicotts of the Reckoning House, I said, are, of course, gone too. But what a start went through me when the landlady said, 'Nay, poor old Luke died directly after the affair about his grandson, which is a long story, but the old grandmother is living still.'

"Living still!" said I, starting up so that the landlady gave a jump, and then she looked at me with such a look.

"You seem acquainted, sir,' she said, 'with these parts;' and she continued looking at me, as much as to say, Who in the world are you?"

"I said, 'Oh, yes! I once was through here, and I was but a lad then, and I heard an extraordinary story of a boy being killed by a collier, or drowned in a dam or something.'

"Ay, drowned, sure enough!' said Mrs. Widdiwicket, or smothered and buried alive somewhere—he never was found—no, never.'

"I said I should take a walk and have some talk with you, for I was curious about such things, and I inquired the way here. Now, I wonder that Derby man never thought of telling somebody here about his having heard of me being alive and on shipboard; but such men, with their great mills and businesses, have so much to think of, they don't trouble their memories with such things."

"We never heard a rumour of such a thing," said poor old Beckey, who kept fast hold of Luke's hand, as if she could not be sure enough that she had him.

"And what made thee pretend to be another, Luke, when thou came here?" asked Beckey.

"Oh, granny! that was only to break it easy to you. I did not want to frighten you all at once with the news, when you thought me dead so long. That was all."

"Ah! that was good of thee, my Luke. 'And now, Lord, let me depart in peace, since my eyes have seen thy salvation,'" and the happy old woman again kissed her grandson, and shed some quiet tears.

"Luke! Luke!" she then said, "as soon as thou began to talk of Sally Flamstead, that's my Luke's voice, I said—it's him, it's him, and nobody else, for how should anybody else know all about those things? And dost ta know, Luke, Sally has not forgotten thee? She has aullis been kind to me, and often comes up with a bit or a sup, a nice pot of preserves, or a jug of cream, or a nice plate of pickellets; and she will bring her sewing, and sit and talk for hours, and she is sure to turn the subject to the time when you were children. She's never married, though she's as handsome a wench as any lady in all the country-side, and rich she is, and manages her farm like

a man, for the old Flamsteads are dead; and as for followers and sweethearts, heaven love me! she has had them all, I think, dangling after her in their turns. Nay, there came a very fine gentleman from London here, and he offered to keep her a coach and settle a fine estate on her; but no, thank you, she would not have him. No, she'll never marry, Luke, unless thou marries her. She has often said, 'Luke would be a fine young fellow if he was alive, and a good fellow too. They say he was wild and mischievous, but he never was with me. No, he was always as good as pie, and would have jumped into a coal-pit to do me any kindness.'

Luke said, "God bless her! I knew she was one in ten thousand, and if I were—," but here Amy, who was as full of the news of Luke's being alive and being come as an egg is of yolk, and had been out at the garden gate to catch the first person going down the field-path and let off her steam, came running out of breath, "Wist! wist! here is Miss Flamstead coming up the field with a little basket in her hand, and a nice white cloth on it. She's bringing you something nice, Missis Barnicott; don't let us say who the young gentleman is, and see what she will say. I warrant you she'll soon have an inkling of it."

Sally Flamstead was already in the garden. She came on lightly in her nice light muslin dress, and her pretty white bonnet with a red rose in it, and her little blue parasol dangling loosely in her left hand. But as soon as she saw the stranger she blushed, and coming forward timidly, she said, "Oh! Mrs. Barnicott, I did not know you had company." Her sweet face was all blushes and roses, but it was smiling and charming. Luke rose, took off his hat, and made her a polite bow. Sally returned a respectful curtsy, and going up to Mrs. Barnicott, kissed her, and sat down beside her. Poor old Beckey had hard work to contain herself. She trembled, and tears rushed from her blind eyes, and she kissed Miss Flamstead again and again. Luke and Amy stood; Luke gazing with a respectful but fascinated gaze on the smart young farmeress, and Amy looking nobody could tell how—half smiling a suppressed smile, and half curious, and fit to burst out with, "It's Luke, Miss Flamstead, it's Luke!"

"I hope you have no bad news, my dear Mrs. Barnicott," said Miss Flamstead, wondering at her agitation.

"No! no!" said old Beckey. "Good news! good news!" and she shook her head as with an agony of emotion, and then burst out, "Luke's alive! I've heard of him—this—this—oh! he's seen him! he's seen him in th' Indies!"

Miss Flamstead sprang to her feet, gave a look at Luke, and then uttering a sort of shriek, she clasped her hands, and crying, "Oh! it is he!" she sank on the seat. Luke sprang forward, seized her clasped hands, kissed them passionately; and then Miss Flamstead standing up and looking at him in wonder and as in a dream, they thus stood for some time holding each others hands, while poor old Beckey and Amy cried silently and plentifully for joy.

We may leave them awhile under the old hanging elder tree, and let some days and weeks roll on, as they did roll joyously at the Reckoning House, and at Langlee farm. All the old courtship of childhood was renewed. Luke and Sally Flamstead have strolled about the old farm-yard and the old fields. They have laughed as they stepped by the old bramble-bush, by the paddock-gate, and remembered the hidden pork-pie, and the hidden little bottle of beer, and of cold days there. The bells have rung out merrily from the tall stone tower of Monnycrofts church, and a gay wedding party has descended the long churchyard steps, and taken its way through the swarming villagers, along the village street, and down the lane to Langlee farm. There Luke and Sally live as happily as if they were in a Robinson Crusoe's island, or more so; and more so than if he had been a king and had made Sally a queen. Luke has bought the old mill on the hill, Ives's old mill, and it still swings its great arms as if beckoning everybody up to see something wonderful. Old Beckey still lives in the Reckoning House, and Luke always looks in as he goes up the hill to the mill, and often the old woman is fetched down to Langlee farm to pass whole days and weeks with him. There she has a nice tall-backed cushioned chair set for her in a sunny corner, and she delights to ramble about the garden and smell the flowers, and about the farm-yard, and listen to the fowls and ducks and geese and pigeons, and fancy that she sees them.

"There's only one thing that troubles me," said old Beckey soon after Luke had been recognised, "and that is, that Welland and his wife were transported for nothing. Thou'st plenty of money, Luke, and if I were thee, I'd send for them back."

"Granny," said Luke, "they would not thank me to do that. If I sent, they would not come."

"No!" said Beckey, "do they like slavery better than Old England?"

"Slavery!" said Luke. "Why, granny, they live in a finer house than Squire Flaggimore, keep a fine carriage, and their children are finer gentlemen and ladies than the Flaggimores by half."

"Ah, say'st thou so!" exclaimed old Beckey in wonder. "How in the world have they managed that?"

"I will tell you, granny," said Luke. "When I was in Australia, and had got a good lump of gold, the first thing I did was to set sail for Sydney in order to find out the Wellands and set them free, and send them home. When I got there I found a very fine city, fine as London, though not so big. There were fine shops, and carriages driving about, and fine ladies and gentlemen riding and walking about, and fine streets; and all round the city were the most beautiful gardens and plantations, and houses like palaces, with beautiful lawns running down to the sea-side. 'This a fine city,' I said to a decent man who stood at a shop-door, 'but where are the convicts lodged?'

The man smiled and said, 'It just makes all the difference as to what convicts you mean. If you mean those who are lately come, you may find some in the convict barracks in the old town there, and some everywhere working on the quays, and in warehouses, and many are up the country farming and shepherding. But if you mean the convicts that came out ten or twenty years ago, look round. They inhabit the greater part of the palaces you see. 'There!' said he, pointing to a very fine carriage with a handsome pair of greys, and a coachman and two footmen before and behind in rich liveries, 'that is the equipage of a convict of past days. There! and there! and there! all those are carriages of quondam convicts.'

"I was astounded. I then asked him if he knew a convict of the name of Welland.

"Do I know him?' said the man. 'Do I know the governor, or the chief-justice? Do you want to see him?'

"I replied I did.

"Come along then,' said he, 'I want a little walk; and he led the way across a very fine street, called George Street, and up a hill, and past the governor's castle, and so along the parks and garden beyond, and then he stopped at a grand gate with a grand lodge, and said, 'Here lives your man.'

"I stood in astonishment. 'Can it be true?' I said.

"How long has he been out?' asked the man.

"Something like fourteen years," I replied.

"Just so,' said he; 'and has he a very little wife?'

"A very great one," I said.

"That's your man then,' he rejoined, and he bowed and bade me good day.

"I stood some time in doubt what I should do. I questioned how I might be received by my old enemy, who had manifested to me so much malice, and whom I had been the occasion of banishing into slavery. But I thought, well, the transportation has been a lucky thing for him, and so I will venture. I went in at the lodge gate, a woman told me the family were at home. I advanced up a very fine gravel coach road, through the most beautiful woods, and came at length into an open lawn and fine flower-garden, where stood a grand white stone palace. 'Can this be the mansion of Welland of the Marlpool?' I said to myself. 'Can the collier have developed into a grandee like this, and through the chain-gang too?'

"But I ascended a fine flight of steps, and rang the bell. A servant in rich embroidered livery, and profusely powdered, came to the door. I inquired for Mr. Welland, and was shown into a noble library, where an old white-haired gentleman sat reading the papers. A magnificent Highland greyhound, here called the kangaroo hound, crouched on the superb Turkey carpet near his feet, and the spaces of the walls which were not covered with books were filled with fine paintings. The old gentleman politely rose, and bowing, begged me to take a seat on the opposite side of the magnificent marble mantelpiece.

"I was puzzled how to begin my reason for calling. I looked in the old gentleman's face, now calm and grave, and I was at a loss to determine whether I was not mistaken after all. I thought I could trace a likeness to the collier of the Marlpool, even amid that handsome suit of clothes, that delicately fine linen, and under that snowy hair, but—could it be? The old gentleman interrupted my speculations by mildly requesting that I would oblige him by stating why I honoured him with a call. I paused again for a moment. I grew still more confused, but I broke through my restraint by an effort, and said, 'Was I right in opining that Mr. Welland was a countryman of mine—from Derbyshire?'

"A cloud fell on his brow, and he replied, but coldly, 'I am from that county.'

"Then,' said I, reassured, 'you will not have forgotten the name of Barnicott?'

"A flush passed over his features—a fierce one, it seemed to me. His eyes flashed, and he demanded, in a short, stern tone, what was the purport of my inquiry.

"Because,' I said, 'I am that Luke Barnicott who was supposed to be drowned in Hillmarton dam.'

"As I said these words, the old gentleman gave me a startled look, turned unusually pale, and then springing towards me, seized my hands convulsively, and exclaimed, 'Thank God! what a weight you fling from my soul! Is it, can it be true, that you are that boy?'

"I am he,' I said, 'and I have come six hundred miles to seek to make amends for the unintentional misfortune of causing you'—I hesitated to bring out the words of ignominy.

"Of causing my transportation!' he said promptly. 'Thank God for that, now I know that I am not guilty of your death; but all these years I have borne in my soul the feeling that you were rotting in the bottom of that dam.'

"The old man shook me vehemently by the hand. 'Thank God!' he ejaculated again. 'Now all is right; now I shall live and die in peace. Now I can say, Luke Barnicott, you did me the grandest day's work imaginable when you caused my transportation, or rather when I caused it myself by

mad anger against you.' I asked his pardon a thousand times for my folly in tantalizing him with the brick at the pit.

"Don't mention it,' he said; 'we have both of us something to forget and to forgive. God, I trust, has forgiven us both. He has prospered me beyond all conception. I am one of the richest men in this colony. I have lands that would make estates for half-a-dozen noblemen, and I have ships on half-a-dozen seas. My story is no secret; everybody knows who are emancipists here, and who are not. But we have wealth, and friends, and rising families who will one day rank with the first people of the colony in education and worth. As for me, I feel I am no longer the poor collier of the Marlpool. By trade, by study, by associating with men of intelligence and mind, my own mind and views have expanded. I have grown out of a black, crawling, ignorant caterpillar into a something more noble—into a man and a Christian. I rank with a marked class here, it is true, but I have wealth and friends, and a fine virtuous family; and I have laboured hard to subdue that fierceness and rancour which once disgraced me. You are the cause of this, and I bid you ten times welcome. But come, I must introduce you to Mrs. Welland.'

"He led the way through a spacious hall into an equally spacious and richly-furnished drawing-room, where I saw sitting a venerable lady, reading with spectacles, and, like her husband, with hair white as snow. She rose at our entrance, and I instantly recognised that remarkable stature. But it was no longer the lofty, strapping figure, with a bold, handsome face, and with an old slouched man's hat on, and arrayed in dirty and negligent dress, as I recollected Doll Welland. The old and venerable lady had the air of an ancient dowager empress. I could have fancied her the Czarina of all the Russias.

"My dear,' said Mr. Welland, 'I introduce to you a friend, who comes, as it were, from the dead. You must go back to past times, to the Marlpool, to the windmill, to—Luke Barnicott.'

"The venerable and stately lady stood in silent wonder. She gazed on her husband, and then on me. 'What words, my dear, are these?' she said 'You tear open old and very deep wounds.'

"Let them all be closed and healed for ever, for this is the boy Barnicott, who "was dead and is alive, who was lost and is found."

"I will not," said Luke, "attempt to describe the venerable lady's agitation, and, as that subsided, her joy. Like her husband, she seized and held my hands, and wet them with streaming tears, and kissed them in her emotion. All bitter feeling had long passed out of her bosom. They had made a sharp expiation for their crime in persecuting me, during their early years in the colony, and in the deep-lying sense of my destruction in their souls up to this moment. This had softened and ameliorated their hearts; they had become strongly religious; prosperity had not spoiled them; and my arrival, and my errand to make a full amends for my folly, now needless, cast a stream of heavenly sunshine on the evening of their days.

"I was constrained to take up my quarters with them during my stay. They explained to their sons and daughters, now all grown up, and some of them married, and with mansions and equipages of great splendour, who I was,—for my story was familiar to them all. I found myself at once amongst a set of fine young men and women, highly educated, and in every respect most estimable and charming. I visited them at their houses, and accompanied them to those of their friends situated on the woody shores and promontories that surround the delightful Bay of Sydney. I rode with them across the sandy tract, carpeted with flowers and thicketed with blooming shrubs of rare beauty, to Botany Bay. There we sometimes took boats, and enjoyed the dangerous and exciting sport of killing sharks. In that water, clear as crystal, we could see the terrible monsters come with rapid sweeps up to the sides of our boats, which they would seek to overturn, in which case we should probably all have been snapped asunder and devoured. But throwing them a piece of meat on a hook, they caught at that, and we drew them up to the boat, and stunned them by striking them on the nose with the boat-hooks, and dragged them in triumph to land.

"Sometimes we made a party at snake-hunting in the woods and thickets around the houses of Mr. Welland, or of his sons or daughters, leading down to the bay. Armed with whips, the ladies as well as the gentlemen, and our legs defended with tall boots, we rushed into the wilderness of shrubs, and starting the lurking serpents, most of them of deadly venom, we gave chase, and soon cut them to pieces with our whips. Sometimes we made long rides into the forests and encamped there in huts, and spent whole days in shooting and in hunting the kangaroo. We visited the palmy hills of Illawara, and saw the giant nettle trees, large as oaks, and capable of killing a horse very quickly by their stings; or we roved amongst the orange and lemon groves of Paramatta, and wondered how all this enchanted life had sprung out of the collieries and the events of the Marlpool, in Derbyshire. I can only say," Luke added when he closed his narrative, "that I quitted my old cronies, the Wellands and their children, with profound regret, and I feel that the regret was mutual. The old collier of the Marlpool, now the millionaire of Sydney, has not forgotten his old friends and native place. I have brought with me £500 to build and partly endow a school on the spot where his humble cottage once stood; and I shall feel it my duty and my pleasure to state the facts that this is the gift of the Wellands, fifteen years ago transported on the charge of having murdered me in consequence of my disappearance. That, innocent of the charge, God has wonderfully prospered them in their distant exile; that they have grown rich and esteemed, and have sent by me, whom they were supposed to have destroyed, this handsome token of their remembrance to their native place. That is due to their justification, and to the wonderful means of compensation existing in the immensely-extended British empire, where even the man unjustly condemned at home, can find, in his unjust punishment, the way to far superior

fortune; and where those justly condemned may expiate their offences against society by returning to virtue, and by attaining to a position and a power which enables them to diffuse the most salutary hopes and the most substantial benefits around them."

This is the story of Welland the collier and Luke Barnicott, whom may Heaven long preserve!

THE CASTLE EAST OF THE SUN.

AN OLD STORY, FROM THE DANISH.

There was once a king who had been very prosperous and happy, but he was growing old. He had six sons and one daughter. His sons were very gay and jovial young men, who spent their days very merrily; and when the old king saw their vigorous sports and their enjoyment of life, he sighed to think that he could not be young once more. His daughter was beautiful and mild, and devoted all her days to amuse the old king, and to make him forget that he was growing old. But there came a very handsome prince from a far-off country, and he fell in love with the old king's daughter, and asked her in marriage, and desired to take her away with him to his own kingdom.

Now, the prince was very handsome, and had a very beautiful carriage, and very fine horses, and many servants, and plenty of gold and jewels, and everything which belongs to a prince. But the old king desired to know where lay the kingdom of the prince, and what was its name. But the prince said that it was the island which lay east of the sun and west of the world, and that was its name; and that it was so far off that nobody had ever been to it from this country, nor had any one come to this country from it besides himself.

Then the old king was not willing that his daughter should marry a prince from a country so far off that nobody ever before heard of it. The young princes, his sons, were also opposed to the marriage. They did not like the prince because he was so much handsomer than themselves, and had more money, and appeared with so much more splendour than they could. They said he was probably some adventurer and impostor, for no one had ever heard of the country he pretended to come from, nor could they see how any one could get thither from a place east of the sun and west of the world.

Now, the princess felt a great affection for the strange prince, for he was the handsomest man who had ever come to her father's court, and was passionately in love with her; but she would not consent to leave her father in his old age. Then said the prince, that he was bound not to return to his own country, nor to take upon him its government, for three years, and for that time he would stay in this country; and when they went away at length, he would send the old king some of the water which played in the fountain in the court of his castle, and some of the apples which grew over the sides of the fountain, and were wetted daily with the dew of its spray. This fountain was the fountain of immortality, and the apples were the apples of youth; and whoever drank of that water and ate one of those apples would be instantly young again, and enjoy once more all the buoyancy and ardour of his freshest years.

When the old king heard that, he was very glad, and gave his consent for the prince to marry his daughter, for above all things he wished to be young again, and to enjoy his life as he had done in his youthful years. The princess, too, on learning this, was willing to marry the prince, for she thought if her father could be young again he would find plenty of sources of happiness, and she herself would not grieve to go away to such a far-off country, if by that means she could thus purchase for her father the great desire of his heart, and the renewal of his life.

So the prince and princess were married, and they lived in a splendid palace near the old king, and were very happy. Every day the princess found the prince more amiable and sensible, and desirous to add to her felicity, and he promised himself a long and joyous life with her in his own beautiful island east of the sun and west of the world—so long, that nobody could tell the end of it, for they could drink of the fountain of life and eat of the apples of youth daily.

But the old king was so impatient for a draught of this water, and a taste of one of those apples, that he forgot that the prince said that he was bound not to return to his kingdom for three years. He was impatient for the prince and princess to begone, and to send some of the apples and the water, for he longed with a longing unto death for the renewal of his youth, which in his memory seemed so beautiful.

When the prince heard this he was very sorrowful, and said it could not be done, for no one knew the way to his kingdom but himself, and that if he returned before his time he should become a captive instead of a king, and be miserable for ever. But the old king became very angry, and redoubled his demands that the prince and princess should set out. The old king's sons also insinuated that the prince did not go because he had no kingdom to go to, but that he was what they had always asserted, an adventurer and impostor.

The princess was very unhappy, and besought the prince to tell her the way to his kingdom, and let her go and bring the apples of youth and the water of life; but he told her that it could not be done. It was more than both their lives were worth. He begged the princess to promise him that she would never urge this again till the three years were up, or it would cost them then happiness for ever. But the old king was very pressing. He said he might be dead in less than

three years, and then he should lose the beautiful renewal of his youth for which his soul longed, and of which he had made himself sure when he consented that his daughter should marry the prince. He urged his daughter to prevail on her husband to set out, and the princess, between the commands of the old king and the assurance of the prince that to press him further was the total ruin of their happiness, was the most miserable of women, and wept day and night. For many months she resisted, however, all desire to penetrate into the secret of the prince, and all the importunities of the old king, her father, and the taunts of the princes, her brothers. But when she saw how the gloom of despair hung heavier and heavier on the king's brow, and heard him say that if she loved him she could help him, she was ready to break her heart of grief. But her brothers' words sank deeper into her soul, for they derided the prince, her husband, as a mock prince and a pretender, and said that he was the Prince of Nowhere, for no one had ever heard of his pretended country. At length her anguish grew to that pitch that she burst out in her husband's presence with the words, "O that I could but know where your kingdom is, that I might go and save the life of my father!"

At these words the prince turned deadly pale, sprang up, and embraced his wife passionately, saying, "Alas! alas! it is all true! We must part, and for ever!"

With a deep groan he escaped from her arms, and issuing out of the door was seen no more. It was a dark, wild night, but he passed hastily out of the palace, followed by all his servants. The princess, in a state of distraction, ran after him to detain him, but he and his followers had already disappeared, and from that day no man saw them again.

Then the old king and the princes said that the pretended prince was in reality a troll (wizard) or an evil spirit, and that they were well rid of him. But the princess would not believe anything but that he was a true and noble prince, who was bound by some solemn oath, and she was overwhelmed with sorrow that she had thus broken his commands, and lost him for ever. She hid herself long in the depths of her palace, and wished that she were dead.

But the old king, though he had said that the prince was a troll or an evil spirit, began soon again to hanker after the golden apples and the water of life, and bade his sons go and seek for the island east of the sun and west of the world. The sons declared that they did not believe there was any such island, or any such apples or water, but that they were willing to go forth and make a quest after them. They were indeed glad to have plenty of money put into their hands, and to be able thus to go from country to country, and see the world.

So the old king furnished two of them with money, and sent them out, and they went away but never returned. Weeks and months, and then a whole year went round, and the two sons neither returned, nor did there come any news of them. Then the old king sent out two more, and they also went out, but never returned. Weeks and months, and a whole year went round, and they neither came back, nor any news of them. Then the old king, whose desire for the golden apples and the water of life was only become the stronger from his longings and disappointments, sent out his last two sons, and bade them in Heaven's name to do their utmost, for if they failed all failed him, and he had no son left to succeed him. So they went, and, like the rest, they neither returned nor was there any news of them.

Three years had now gone, the time to which the prince had limited his stay, and now the old king thought that he might have had the apples of youth and the water of immortality, and by his impatience he had lost them and all his sons into the bargain. There was nobody now left him but his daughter, the princess, and she too now declared that she also would set out to seek her husband, and the apples of youth and the water of life at the same time. The old king was rejoiced to let her go, for he thought of nothing but of renewing his youth, and no price seemed too great to pay it. He had lost all his sons in the quest, and now he was willing to risk the loss of his daughter and sole child, the prop and last comfort of his age.

So the princess kissed the old king, her father, and bade him be of good cheer, for that if she was in life she would come back to him, and, if possible, with the precious apples and water in her hands. Then she set forth with the old king's blessing, and after she had wept herself weary as she walked along, she wiped the tears from her eyes, looked steadfastly into the wide world before her, and wandered on many, many days, till finally she came to a mountain by which an old woman sat and played with a golden apple. The princess asked the old woman if she knew the way to the prince who lived with his stepmother in a castle east of the sun and west of the world?

"How camest *thou* to know him?" asked the old woman. "Art thou, indeed, the maiden that he should have married?" "Yes," replied the princess; "I am she."

"So! thou art really she!" said the old woman. "Yes! my child," continued she, "I would gladly help thee, but I know no more of the castle than that it is east of the sun and west of the world, and thither canst thou not go, I fear. But I will lend thee my horse, and on that thou canst ride to my sister, and perhaps she can tell thee. When thou comest to my sister, then strike the horse behind the left ear, and let it come home again. Thou canst also take with thee this golden apple, for it may probably be useful to thee. But before thou settest out, thou must stay all night with me."

The princess thanked her, and stayed all night, and when it was early morning the old woman said, "Stay a moment, I am queen of the beasts, and we will find out if any of them know where the castle lies that is east of the sun and west of the world." So the old woman went out before the door, and whistled aloud three times; and there came the beasts hurrying from all quarters—lions, and bisons, and wild horses, and many another creature, great and small; but none of them

could tell the way to the castle.

Then the princess mounted on the horse, and rode on and on for an immense way. She rode over vast grey heaths, and over stony hills, and through ancient mossy woods, till she came to a very old woman who sat at the foot of a mountain with a golden reel. The princess asked her whether she was not the sister of the queen of beasts, and whether she could tell her the way to the castle that was east of the sun and west of the world.

The old woman replied that truly she was sister to the queen of the beasts, but that she knew no more of the castle than that it was east of the sun and west of the world, and that the princess would not, she feared, easily get there. But, added she, "I am queen of the birds, and in the morning I will ask them if any of them know the way to the castle, for some of them fly very far. But, for my part, I have lived here while the trees have grown up and rotted down several times, and no one ever asked me the way to this castle before. However, I will lend thee my horse, and on that canst thou ride to my other sister, the queen of the fishes, if the birds know nothing. When thou comest to my sister, strike the horse behind the left ear, and bid it come home again. And, besides this, thou canst take this golden reel with thee, for it may prove useful to thee."

In the morning the old woman went out before the door, and whistled three times aloud, and from all quarters of the sky, from wood and mountain, came the birds flying—hawk and eagle, swallow and swift, the travelling cuckoo, and the ancient phoenix, came sweeping down with a great rush of pinions, but none of them could tell the way to the castle. The phoenix had once seen it, but so long ago, and in a former life, that she remembered nothing more than that she was dreadfully weary with her flight from it homewards.

The princess mounted the horse, and again rode on for days and weeks, over huge, huge grey heaths and stony mountains, and through mossy woods. At length she came to where another old woman sat at the foot of a mountain, and spun from a golden distaff. The princess asked if she were the sister of the queen of the birds, and whether she could tell her anything of the prince who lived in the castle east of the sun and west of the world?

"Yes," replied the old woman, "I am the sister of the queen of the birds; and art thou indeed the princess that the prince married?" "Yes," said the princess; but the old woman knew nothing of the way more than the two former ones. "East from the sun and west of the world lies the castle," she said, "that is true, but thither canst thou never go. Three times have the trees grown up and rotted down here, since I lived on this spot, and thou art the first person that has asked the way to the castle. Wait, however, till morning, and we will ask the fishes, for I am queen of the fishes, and some of them swim very far."

So in the morning the old woman took the princess down to the sea-shore, and she whistled three times, and the fish came swimming from all quarters. The herrings which travel the shores of sunny countries came, and the shark, and the huge whale, but none of them had ever travelled so far; only the whale had heard that he had relations very far south, and that there was an island east of the sun and west of the world that they sometimes sailed round, but the way to it the whale knew not.

"So then," said the old woman, "there is nothing for it but to inquire of the winds, for they travel farther than beast, or bird, or fish; and first thou shalt go to the east wind, which is nearest. I will lend thee my horse to ride thither, and when thou comest to the east wind, strike the horse behind the left ear, and bid him come home; and take this golden distaff with thee, for it may probably be of great use to thee. God speed thee on thy journey, for it is a long one, and I know not how thou canst get there, but shouldst thou ever travel this way again, I pray thee let me know how it went with thee."

So the princess thanked the queen of the fishes for all her kindness, promised if she lived to let her know what befel her, and, mounting the horse, rode away to the east wind. Over many a moor and mountain, and through many a mossy wood she rode on for a long, long time before she came to the east wind. But at length she arrived, and asked him whether he could tell her how she might come to the prince who lived in the island and in the castle which lies east of the sun and west of the world?

"Of the prince," said the east wind, "I have indeed heard, and of the castle too, but the way can I not tell thee, for I have never blown so far. But I will take thee to my brother, the west wind; very likely he may know, for he is much stronger than I am, and blows farther. Thou canst seat thyself on my back, and I will bear thee thither."

The princess seated herself on his back, and away he went. When they came to the west wind, the east wind said, "I have brought thee a maiden who has married the prince who lives in the castle east of the sun and west of the world—canst thou tell her the way thither?"

"Nay," said the west wind, "so far have I never blown. But if thou wilt, maiden, set thyself on my back, and I will carry thee to the south wind, for he is far stronger than I am, and blows and wanders about everywhere."

The princess seated herself on his back, and it was not long before they were at the south wind; and the west wind said, "I have brought thee a maiden who has married the prince of the castle east of the sun and west of the world—canst thou bear her thither?"

"Nay," said the south wind, "I know not the way. In my time I have blown about a good deal, but

so far as that I never reached. But I will carry the maiden to my brother, the north wind, who is the oldest and strongest of us all, and if he cannot tell thee the way, then never wilt thou find it."

The princess seated herself on the back of the swift south wind, and away he went at such a rate that the very heath trembled. They were quickly at the north wind, but he was so wild and furious, that long before they reached him he blew actual snow and ice in their faces.

"What do you want?" growled he out, so that a shudder went through them like cold water.

"Oh! thou must not be so rude with us," said the south wind, "for it is I, thy brother, and this is a maiden who has married the prince who lives in the island castle east of the sun and west of the world. Thither will she, and would now ask counsel of thee how to yet there."

"Well," said the north wind, "I know the place well where it lies. I once blew an aspen leaf thither, but I was so fatigued that I was not able to blow again for many a blessed day. But if thou really wilt go thither," said he to the princess, "and art not afraid, I will take thee on my back, and see whether I cannot blow thee thither."

The princess said she must and would go if there were any possible way. That she was not in the least afraid, and would dare everything, let it be as terrible as it might.

"Here, then, must thou stay all night," said the north wind; "for we must have the whole day before us if we mean to reach the place."

Early in the morning the north wind awoke her; blew himself up, and made himself so huge and strong that it was quite terrible; and away they went through the air as if they would drive to the end of the world. There arose so tremendous a storm, that whole villages and woods were blown down; and when they came over the great sea the ships sank by hundreds. Away they went over the waters, and that so far that no mortal could conceive the distance. But the north wind began to grow weaker and weaker, so immense was the way, that he could scarcely blow any more; and he sank lower and lower down, till he at last flew so low that the waves of the ocean struck his feet.

"Art thou afraid?" demanded he of the princess.

"No, not in the least," said she.

And now they were not far from land. There lay the island, all beautiful with pleasant palm and cocoa trees, lifting their airy heads in the sunshine, and with green and flowery forests coming down to the edge of the clear sparkling water. There stood the lofty castle with its pleasant gardens and soft lawns sweeping to the sea, and many bright birds and wonderful flowers all about. They had really reached the island and the castle that lies east of the sun and west of the world. But the north wind had scarcely strength left to reach the land, and, in fact, he alighted on a rock which rose out of the sea at some distance from the strand.

"Here will I lie and rest myself a little," said the great rough north wind, "and, to tell the truth, I would fain be excused going any nearer to the island, for they are not used here to such rough visitors as I, and were I to settle as softly as possible, I should chill many of these gorgeous flowers and trees to death, and make those birds and butterflies fall senseless to the ground. Ho! there I see our friend the whale I will ask him to carry you over. Ho there! friend whale," said the north wind hoarsely, "come hither, and carry over to the island the princess who has married the prince there."

The whale came somewhat surlily to the task, and blowing up a huge stream of water to clear his voice, said,—

"If she go with me she mast go quickly, for I am in danger here. I have pursued some tender herrings to this side of the island for my breakfast; but if I am seen the people will shoot their arrows into me, and probably come off in boats and with harpoons after me. It is rather provoking that one cannot seek one's breakfast in peace without being called on to become a ferryman."

"Be civil, friend whale, as becomes thee," said the north wind. "I have blown along all day and night with the maiden, and surely it cannot hurt thy strong back just to bear her to the shore."

"Waste no more words," said the whale, edging his huge bulk to the side of the rock, "for there will soon be somebody spying us out."

So the north wind bade the princess good speed, and she began to climb upon the whale's back; but it was so steep and slippery, that she found it very difficult to ascend. Several times she slipped down again to the rock, and the whale began to snort and blow with impatience. At length the princess accomplished the ascent, and thanking the north wind, she was borne away towards the island. Before they reached it, however, the whale plunged down under water, and swam so far under the waves, that the princess thought she should certainly never come up alive. At length, however, the huge creature emerged, and the princess recovering her breath, and wiping the brine from her eyes and nostrils, asked the whale why he treated her so rudely?

"Why were you so long in getting up?" asked the whale. "Every minute of your delay might prepare an arrow for my hide; and methinks that great savage north wind, whom nobody can hurt, might just as well have carried you to the shore, when he had brought you so far; but these northern creatures are only barbarians."

The princess thought she knew which was the more civilized of the two; but she was too prudent to speak, as she might have this time gone to the very bottom of the sea. So she was silent, till the whale rubbed the green edge of the island with his side, when she leaped down, and spite of his rudeness, thanked him kindly for his good office.

The princess now approached the front of the castle, and seating herself under the windows, played with the golden apple, and the first person that she saw was the witch stepmother.

"What wilt thou have for thy golden apple?" demanded she of the princess as she threw open the window.

"That is not to sell, neither for gold nor money," said the princess.

"If thou wilt not sell it for gold nor for money, what then wilt thou take for it?" asked the stepmother. "I will give thee whatever thou desirest."

"Oh, then!" said the princess, "if thou wilt do that, thou shalt have it; and the price is, that I am admitted for an hour to see the prince who lives in this castle."

"That shalt thou," said the stepmother, and took the golden apple. But when the princess came into the prince's room, there he lay in such a deep sleep that the princess could not wake him. She called to him, shook him, wept and lamented aloud and passionately, but all in vain. She saw that he was held fast under a spell; and as soon as the hour was past came the stepmother, and chased the princess from the room and from the castle.

The next day the princess seated herself again before the castle, put yarn upon the golden reel, and began to wind it off into a ball. And now it happened just as it had done the day before. The stepmother asked what she would take for the golden reel, and she replied that it was not to be sold for money or gold; but if she might for just one hour more see the prince, she would give her the reel. The stepmother gladly agreed, took the reel, and conducted the princess into the hall where the prince was. But he was, just as the day before, in so deep a sleep, that, spite of all that the princess could do, she could not wake him. She called to him, and shook him, and wept and lamented bitterly, but all in vain; and the moment that the hour was up, the stepmother came and chased her from the room and the castle.

The next day the princess seated herself with her golden distaff before the castle, and the instant that the stepmother saw her she longed to have the golden distaff. The princess would not sell it for money or gold, but again bargained for one hour more in the presence of the prince. But now the servants of the prince, who had heard the lamentations of a woman in his presence on the two former days, had told him, and the prince was full of wonder. He was under the power of the witch stepmother, because in three years' wandering through the world he had not found a woman who loved him sufficiently to ask him no questions as to whence he came and what he was. Therefore must he alternately sleep twelve hours a magic sleep, and twelve hours keep awake; during all which time the stepmother ruled over his kingdom and did as she pleased. But now, the servants having awoke his curiosity, when the stepmother brought him the wine at breakfast which locked him for twelve hours in unbreakable sleep, he pretended to drink it, but in reality poured it behind him. He was, therefore, awake when the princess entered, and was astonished and rejoiced beyond all bounds to see his wife again. She then related to him how it had gone with her, and how she had managed to reach the castle.

When she had told him all this, he said:—"Thou art come precisely at the right time, for the stepmother has been exercising her witchcraft to occasion me to marry another princess, which must have taken place if she could have retained her power over me for a week longer. But now is her power at an end, for it can endure no longer than till a true woman asserts her right as wife in this castle. Henceforth must she flee to her own kindred in the mountains of the mainland, and we are now free to do whatever we please."

Then the prince called in all his servants and showed them his true wife, and there was great rejoicing, but the false stepmother had already fled away. The prince held a great banquet of ten days, and showed the princess all the beauties of the castle and island.

After this she told him how her father, the old king, still longed for a draught of the fountain, and a taste of the apples which grew in his court, and begged that she might go and carry them. But the prince asked how she could go, for the north wind had long blown himself back to his place; and when the princess thought on this, and saw not how she was ever to quit the island, she was very sorrowful. Then the prince smiled, and said he would show her how she should go, and that he would go with her. He therefore ordered provisions and wine for a long journey, and commanded them to be carried down to the shore. But there was neither boat nor ship to be seen. Yet the prince took the princess by the hand and said, "Now we say farewell for the present to the island east of the sun and west of the world, and we will set sail to see the old king, thy father."

At this the princess wondered more and more. But when they were come down to the waters edge, the prince took from his pocket a small thing like a folded skin, and said, "This is the ship in which we shall sail." The princess laughed and thought it a jest, but the prince opened it, and behold it was like a small boat. He stretched it out so long as his arms could reach, and then set it upon the water, commanding one of his people to step into it. He did so, and there was then room for two. Another stepped into it, and there was immediately room for two more. Thus it continued to expand till twenty men were in it, when the prince ordered the provision and

awnings for the voyage to be carried in, and then stepped in with the princess. And now the princess saw that there was ample room for all, and she and the prince sat under a canopy of blue and gold, and the ship seemed instinct with life, and impatient to set sail.^[1]

Then said the prince to the ship, "Away, over land and water to the queen of the fishes!"

And the ship cut smoothly away over the sunny waves without oar or sail, fleet as an arrow, till it reached the coast where the queen of the fishes lived. She was greatly delighted to see the princess return with the handsome prince, and in so wonderful a ship. The princess thanked her for her kindness in enabling her to reach her husband, and gave her one of the apples of youth, and a cup of the water; and no sooner had the old woman eaten the apple and drunk the water, than her wrinkles vanished from her skin, her hair from grey became black as the raven's plumes, and she stood there as a beautiful and stately maiden. The princess was not the less delighted than the queen of the birds, for she now saw that her father would certainly regain his youth. With many thanks on the part of the now beautiful queen of fishes, the prince and princess took their leave, assuring her that they should call on her sisters, the queen of birds and the queen of beasts, and give them also the same youth-renewing fruit and drink. Thither the wonderful ship sailed, and thence took its way at the prince's command to the court of the old king.

The old king was now become very weak, and lay at the point of death. All his six sons had returned, having spent all their money in riotous living in a distant city, and declared that they had been all round the world, and had inquired in all lands, and that nobody had ever heard of the castle east of the sun and west of the world. They protested that there was no such place, and no prince of such a place, and that his daughter would never return.

At this news the old king groaned bitterly, and lay helpless and sorrowful unto death. All his beautiful hopes of ever renewing his youth died in his heart; and while he was about to give up the ghost, his sons watched for his last breath, that they might seize on his treasures and spend them in riot and folly.

But just as they thought the old king's breath was departing, the prince and princess came sailing over the land in the ship, and stopped, to the amazement of all the courtiers, at the castle gate. Then entered the prince and the princess, who was weeping for joy. She bore in one hand a crystal flagon of the water of the fountain, and in the other a golden salver of the apples of youth; and kneeling by the old king's couch, she kissed him with many tears, and wet his lips with the water. All at once the old man's eyes gleamed with a sudden brightness; he raised himself on his elbows, and saw his daughter, with the prince by her side, stand weeping for joy, with the salver of fruit and the crystal flagon in her hand. Then he knew that she had reached the castle east of the sun and west of the world, and had come back for his sake. He eagerly stretched out his hand for the fruit, and having eaten one apple, he sprang from his couch with a bound such as he used when springing into battle, and then drinking a cup of the glittering water, he stood before them a stately man in wonderful beauty and strength. In his joy he stretched forth his arms and strode across the floor, and laying his hands on his sides as if to make sure how well he felt, he laughed and said, "Now again I am a king!"

Then he embraced and kissed his daughter, and also embraced affectionately the prince, praising them as the best of children that ever king had. But suddenly his face darkened with a frown, and he said, "What shall we do with those six niblings (worthless fellows) who call themselves my sons? They shall all be put to death."

But the prince and princess said, "Not so. They would buy their lives as the reward for having brought the king the renewal of his youth." The prince also requested that he might have the six sons delivered to him, engaging to make useful men of them in less than five years. To this the king, no longer called the old, readily consented; and when the feast of rejoicing was ended, the prince again took the wonderful ship from his pocket, and placing in it the six unworthy brothers, he bade the ship sail away to a region of wild and far-off mountains, where he delivered them to the keeping of the Dwarfs, who made them hew stone in the quarries, fell timber and shape it in the forests and work at the anvil in their smithies. There they laboured from day to day severely, and lived on the coarsest fare, till wisdom and better thoughts by degrees came into them, and they sent and petitioned that the king, their father, would forgive them, and place them in one of the lowest offices in his kingdom, where they might practise before all men the humility and gravity which they had acquired from the Dwarfs, and the solitude, the labour, and the frugal fair.

The king, having consented to this prayer, and found them true to their word, divided his kingdom amongst them, and sailed away with the prince and princess in the wonderful ship to the island east of the sun and west of the world, where he eats freely of the apples of youth, and drinks daily of the fountain of immortality, and feels that he is a king indeed.

[1] Odin had his ship of this kind, called Skidbladnir, or the skating leaf, and in the Scandinavian Sagas such convenient vessels are frequently mentioned.

THE HOLIDAYS AT BARENBURG CASTLE.

BY OTTILIE WILDERMUTH.

CHAPTER I.—BREAKING UP.

It was very hot in the school-room at Steinheim, almost as hot as in an oven, although the faded green blinds were drawn down. Neither learning nor teaching goes forward satisfactorily on such days; and, indeed, it was as much as the good schoolmaster could do, especially during this hot summer, to keep himself and his dear children awake over their books. When he walked up and down the narrow space between his tall chair and the school-benches, like a caged lion, the children asked one another anxiously, "Do you think he is angry?" not knowing that he only did so to prevent himself from falling fast asleep in his chair. There was not much danger of this happening among the children, for if any one of them dropped his head somewhat over his book, another was sure to tickle him under the nose with a pen-feather, so that he suddenly woke up again.

To-day, however, the children were not sleepy, but neither were they industrious. Whilst they were reading, they kept looking up continually from their books to the door, as if expecting somebody, and yet at this time there seldom came any one, unless now and then an over-anxious mother who thought that her Michael or little Jacob had been too hardly dealt with. To-day, however, according to old custom, the schoolmaster's daughter Mina, and the bailiff's Emma, were gone to the clergyman's to ask about the breaking-up. For always as the time of the holidays approached, Mr. Erdmann, the schoolmaster, drew up a very politely expressed document in the name of the children, in which the clergyman was requested, "now the harvest season was at hand," that he would give permission to the children to discontinue their attendance at school "in order," said the writing, "that we may be able to assist our parents in the laborious business of the field."

These petitions were then beautifully copied out by the best-writer in the school, and two little girls chosen to present them to the clergyman, because they were so much gentler and better-behaved than the unmannerly boy population.

It was never known that the clergyman had returned a negative to these petitions for the school vacation, and yet there was always an uneasiness and an excitement amongst the children which could not be allayed. They might now almost have been on the eve of a little revolution; even Fritz, the schoolmaster's son, could not keep himself quiet, but fidgeted restlessly hither and thither. And yet Fritz was the best and cleverest scholar in the school; he was destined for the church, and had been instructed in Latin and Greek by the clergyman; therefore it was his duty to set a good example to all the others. This honourable post, it is true, had cost him an extra number of canings from his father, till finally he was advanced so far that the schoolmaster was able to say, with fatherly pride, when the others were lazy or behaved ill, "There, look at my Fritz!"

At length the door opened, and the girls entered, who had on this occasion an especial importance in the eyes of the boys, and who, with their smooth, beautifully plaited hair and pink frocks, looked very pretty.

"We are to break up!" said they, delivering thus to the schoolmaster, with beaming countenances, the answer to the embassy. "We are to break up!" was whispered loud and low throughout the school; but the master struck a blow with the hazel stick upon his desk, and amidst an instantaneous silence he said in a clear voice, "Silentium! that is to say, keep your tongues still! The clergyman has consented to the breaking up. Fritz, say it in Latin."

"Hodie feriæ habemus!" proclaimed Fritz in a shrill voice.

"Good! That is to say, to-day we break up," explained the schoolmaster. "But you must, every one of you, write three beautiful copies; farther, you must commit to memory the six hymns that are marked, and two pages of selections, as well as 'Tis harvest time, the nodding corn!' Now, behave well, all of you, and be industrious; and go very quietly home, every one of you, like well-conducted children."

Yes, indeed, very quietly and well-conducted! The little troop burst forth like a wild herd into the open air, as soon as the door was opened.

"Hurrah! Breaking up!" shouted they, wild with joy; even the exemplary Fritz set up such an unbecoming shout of exultation that his father, who, however, was well pleased himself, thought it right to give him an admonitory pluck by the hair. Soon after the wild herd dispersed; many amongst them entering into such poor, joyless homes, that in comparison the school must have appeared a paradise, and yet they rejoiced that they had broken up, and we cannot be angry with them. It is the fact of labour, of regular occupation, which makes the feeling of liberty so like a golden blessing; the neglected lad, who lounges about idly one day after another, certainly never experiences the happy sense of a breaking up.

Arrived at home, the schoolmaster exchanged his thin school-coat for his house-doublet, and seated himself comfortably on the wooden squab, for which his wife had made a cushion, for he had neither a house-coat nor yet a sofa.

"Now, thank Heaven, for again a short pause," said the weary and hard-working man; "it will do me good to have a little rest, and look after my garden; and the bailiff has promised me some beautiful carnation-layers, it is not yet too late for them; we'll have it very beautiful, won't we, mother?"

"Yes, yes, father," replied the acquiescent wife; "only early in the morning, and not in the blazing heat of noon."

In the meantime, Fritz was earnestly and mysteriously whispering to Mina in a corner. "Do *you* ask," at length said Mina. "Nay, *you* had better," returned he.

Mina, who had this day been with the clergyman, might surely venture a word with her father, and she began therefore, at first shyly, and then more boldly, "But, father, is it true?"

"What true?" asked he.

"May we?" asked she again slowly.

"May you what?" inquired he again.

"Go to see Mrs. Dote at the castle!" exclaimed Fritz, now speaking quite boldly, and astonished at his own courage.

"Yes, oh yes, father!" now besought Mina, earnestly and in a winning tone. "You have no objection, mother, have you?" asked she, addressing her mother; "and if mother is willing, father, you won't say no, will you?"

"And Mrs. Dote has invited us," said Fritz decisively; "and you promised, you know, father, and you always keep your word."

"Why, yes; what do you think, mother?" said the good-natured father, somewhat undecidedly.

"I don't know what to say," replied the mother, thoughtfully, "whether Mrs. Dote really meant it; and it is such a long way."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Fritz, "five hours' walk, the nearest way fifteen miles; we can do that very well."

"But you can't spare Mina, can you?" suggested the father.

"Well, as far as that goes," said the mother smiling, "I think I can manage; little Paul will soon run alone, and Adolf plays about nicely in the garden. If you have no objection, father, we might give them the pleasure for once; I can soon have their few things ready."

"Oh, mother, how kind and good you are!" exclaimed little Mina joyfully; Fritz threw his cap in the air, and shouted, "Hurrah! all the world over!"

The father's consent was silently given, and preparations for the journey began as if it really were round the world that they were going.

CHAPTER II.—THE JOURNEY.

Before daylight, on the following morning, the children were already up. Mina combed and plaited her long hair by herself, in order to prove to her mother that she was fit to be trusted alone amongst strangers. Fritz also was washed and his hair combed, and he himself carefully dressed by the same hour, for on those hot summer days it was necessary to set out early.

The schoolmaster had given the children a very exact description of the road and all the places through which they must pass; the mother put bread and early pears in Mina's basket as refreshment by the way, together with some nice fresh butter, carefully laid in damp green leaves as a little present for Mrs. Dote. Fritz's knapsack was packed as full as it could hold, with his Sunday clothes, a clean frock for Mina, and a change of linen, and all else that was necessary for them both, on so great and unexampled a journey. Mina was to carry the little basket, and a large red umbrella, a piece of old family property, which the mother gave them in case of need. They made a hearty breakfast of new milk and bread, and this over Fritz took his cap and his newly-cut hazel stick in his hand, whilst Mina, having put on her round straw hat, took the little basket on her arm. Their hearts felt a little heavy on this the first great leave-taking of their lives, and the good mother seemed as if she could never make an end of her admonitions and warnings, her messages and compliments to Mrs. Dote. But at length the last farewell was spoken, and the brother and sister, their young hearts throbbing with the excitement of adventure, set forth on their way. The parents gazed after them till they had turned the corner, and then the father went into his beloved flower-garden, and the mother into the house, to look after her yet sleeping children.

Mina's heavy heart was soon light, as she walked on in the clear freshness of the morning air, which heralded a fine day. These children were not accustomed to parties of pleasure or to amusements; their journeyings hitherto had never extended beyond three or four miles from home, as far as Elsingem, where the grandmother lived, and yet now they had set out on such a long journey on a visit to Mrs. Dote, the lady-housekeeper of a royal castle! How joyously their

hearts beat, how brilliantly their imaginations coloured the glories that awaited them!

Mrs. Dote, the castle housekeeper, was once lady's maid in the noble family of Erlichhofen, where, also, the schoolmaster had held his first appointment; she had, in consequence, become very friendly with the schoolmaster's family, and had been greatly looked up to, as a person of much experience, by the schoolmaster's young wife, so that the black-eyed Fritz, who was her godson, had an especial claim to her regard. Years went on; the schoolmaster was ordered to a distant place, and they heard nothing for a long time of Miss Lisette, till at length she surprised them by a visit with her husband, an old man, keeper or house-steward of the royal hunting-castle of Barenburg, whom she, not then by any means young herself, had married. The schoolmaster and his wife returned the visit, and there it ended; for the distance was too great for the wife, who was delicate, to go on foot, and driving was too expensive an affair for a schoolmaster. Soon afterwards, also, the house-steward fell ill, and his wife was wholly engaged in attending him; and after his death, being herself advanced to his office, and the care of the castle entirely confided to her, she could not be absent from her trust even for a single day. She had, however, long since invited her godson and his sister to pay her a visit, and now at length it was about to be accomplished.

The children walked onward, beguiling the way with merry talk; they had soon passed the familiar scenes which lay between them and the next village, and thenceforth it was wholly a land of new discovery. "But, look, that little brook runs along a good deal merrier than our slow Steinbach at home!"

"Just look there, on the hillside lies a churchyard, with nothing but white crosses!" said Mina, in a melancholy tone.

"A beautiful churchyard!" laughed out Fritz, "it's nothing but a flock of geese; hark how they are cackling!"

"Oh yes!" returned little Mina, sorry that she had felt melancholy without any need. "But what a queer church-tower! Do you see, there are four little towers round one great old one! And just look there, they have got the stork's nest on the town-house! how foolish! A stork's nest belongs to the church."

By degrees, however, the spirit for making new discoveries cooled; the cheerful talk ceased, and their steps became more and more weary; the sun was very hot, and the children were unaccustomed to long walks. They had, before setting out, said so much about their own strength, that they now felt ashamed of confessing to each other how tired they were, till at length Mina said, "But, I say, Fritz, how far have we yet to go?"

"We must sit down for a little while that I may study our travelling-map," said Fritz consequentially; and they looked out for a nice, shady place, on the grassy edge of the field, under some willows, which having found, it was with a great sense of relief that the boy threw down his knapsack and stretched himself on the soft green turf. "Mossigheim, a mile and half," read he from the paper on which his father had noted down the distances; "we have passed that; Erlach, three miles—that was the place with the queer church-tower; Rothenhof, three miles—that must be the beautiful farm-house yonder, all amongst the fruit trees; next comes Disselsburg, where father said we were to take our first rest. Now, however, we must quietly study the travelling-map; but we will, in the first place, rest a little while."

"Oh yes!" sighed little Mina, who was thoroughly tired; "but shall we be soon at the castle?"

"Not just yet," said Fritz, in a low voice; "we have only come about seven miles and a half, and we have now ten and a half to go."

"Oh, that is impossible!" exclaimed Mina, "for it is only fifteen miles altogether."

"Well, see," said Fritz, drawing out with great importance his father's silver watch, as large and as thick almost as a warming-pan, and which had been lent to him for this journey; "we set out at five o'clock, now it is eight; we will only go a little farther, as far as to where the guide-post stands."

"Is it eight o'clock, and so hot already!" sighed Mina; "dear Fritz, I should so like to go to sleep for a little while!"

"Go to sleep," said he, in a fatherly tone, "and I'll take care of you the while; when you have had half-an-hour's sleep, we shall be able to reach Mrs. Dote's by noon."

Mina folded the shawl that her mother had given her in case of cool evenings, laid it under her head, and dropped into a sweet sleep. Fritz thought he could look at the country far better if he lay down, and his well-filled knapsack making a splendid pillow, he, too, was soon fast asleep by his sister, they, neither of them, having slept well the preceding night. They forgot the heat, the weariness, and the oppressive thirst, which the pears they had eaten, and which were not very juicy, had rather increased than otherwise. Fritz forgot also that he had not only his sister, but his father's precious watch to guard, and slept as sweetly and as soundly as in his bed at home.

"Nay, what sort of tramps have we got lying here!" was the exclamation which Fritz heard, as he at length awoke out of a long sound sleep. He looked up with amazement and rubbed his eyes, as he saw the green trees and the blue sky above him, instead of the white-washed ceiling at home, and a tall respectable-looking countryman standing before him, who again spoke: "Eh, my young

fellow, where do you come from?"

Fritz was now wholly master of himself, and whilst Mina slowly awoke, and like himself gazed round her with astonishment, he related to the farmer where they came from, and the journey they were upon, in proof of which he showed him his father's silver watch and the map of the journey which he had drawn.

"Indeed! you are going to Barenburg, then; I know the housekeeper very well; she is a very good lady; but it is twelve full miles there, every inch! In what condition are your feet for walking?"

Fritz sprang up, and felt himself again ready for the march; Mina's limbs, however, were stiff from the rest; and when she began to walk, it was with difficulty.

"Nay, that young lass is not used to such long walks," said the farmer good-naturedly; "she can get as far as my house down yonder, and then we must see what is to be done."

And what a beautiful, substantial farm-house they were taken to, with the pretty garden in front, and the splendid meadow behind, and the nice cool parlour, which was shaded from the sun by the projecting thatch; and then what a kind farmer's wife she was, who set before them delicious butter-milk and new-baked cakes, for they had that morning been baking. The children were overjoyed. Mina had heard and read a great deal about the dangers of the world, but if everywhere throughout the world people were as good as these, it could not be so very bad. The farmer's wife, who had been born and brought up at this farm, and had never in all her life been farther from home than Disselsburg, felt great compassion for the children, who had come such a long way. She would not therefore hear of them again setting out before dinner, although they had partaken so largely of cake and butter-milk that they were in no condition to do much honour to the excellent buttered oatmeal porridge, of which the dinner principally consisted.

The children of the farmer, who also came hot and tired from the school, beheld with great astonishment the young travellers, who appeared to them to have such polished town manners, though Steinheim was anything but metropolitan. Before long, however, they became quite familiar, took them into the stable and showed them a calf and a young kid.

It was very agreeable to the children in this hospitable house, but the twelve full miles, of which the farmer had spoken, lay like a weight on Mina's soul. How could it possibly be so far to Barenburg Castle?

"Do you know what?" said the farmer, when, after dinner, they were thinking of again setting out. "I promised some time ago to take a waggon-load of straw to Kochendorf; I shall not be doing anything with the horses this afternoon, I will therefore have the straw loaded; you can ride nicely upon it, and from Kochendorf down to Barenburg is only a nice little mile and half, and in the cool of the evening I can drive home, and you reach the end of your journey."

No sooner said than done! Fritz thought it was rather a pity that the pedestrian journey upon which they had calculated so much had now dwindled down to a mere nothing; but Mina, not being ambitious in this way, accepted with the greatest delight a lofty seat on the soft bundles of straw. The beautiful butter that her mother had sent by them for Mrs. Dote was becoming soft from the heat by this time, therefore the kind farmer's wife exchanged it for some of her own, which was fresh, of a much finer colour and quality, and quite firm from having been kept in ice-cold water.

Towards evening, a little shaken, but at the same time nicely rocked as in a cradle, for the waggon travelled slowly, the children reached Kochendorf. The waggoner helped them down from their lofty throne-like seat; Mina carefully picked off from Fritz and herself all the straws that hung dangling about them, then taking up their knapsack and basket, after a friendly leave of the kind farmer, they followed in the cool of the evening, with renewed strength and cheerful hearts, the road that was pointed out to them.

It was at first a narrow green path between thick hedges, where they could scarcely see many paces in advance; before long, however, it opened into a broad, magnificent avenue of old lime-trees, which, now in flower, filled the air with a delicious fragrance. With beating hearts and full of a strange expectation, the children pursued this road which seemed already very grand, and unlike anything they had been accustomed to.

CHAPTER III.—MRS. DOTE.

There,—all at once, the road again expanding, the castle stood before their astonished gaze, in its ancient splendour! Two gigantic bears, carved in stone, which gave name to the castle, stood like sentinels before it; whilst bounding deer on the pillars, and a pair of monstrous stag's horns on the pediment, showed it to be, as of old, a hunting castle. Lofty gates opening upon broad flights of steps led to a green turfed front court, where, in the midst of flowering shrubs, a splendid fountain threw aloft its silvery jet of water. The last golden beams of the setting sun lit up the beautiful old building, and the children stood enraptured, seeming almost to have entered into Fairyland.

"Now, where are you going?" inquired in a somewhat surprised, but not unfriendly voice, an old

gentleman handsomely dressed in blue uniform with white facings, who was pacing slowly up and down with a thick cane, to which was attached a thick tassel. Fritz supposing that at least he must be a general, and hardly knowing what title sufficiently elevated to give him, replied, "Your pardon, dear prince!" this being a style of address to dignified persons, which he had met with in an old almanac,— "Your pardon, but we are only going to Mrs. Dote, the housekeeper. You know Mrs. Dote, perhaps," he added, with a certain degree of consequence.

"Oh, yes, to Mrs. Housekeeper Walter," returned he graciously, and smiling to himself at the grand title which had been given, for he was no greater a personage than the porter. "You must simply ring at the little side-door yonder. Mrs. Housekeeper told me that she was expecting some visitors;" and he pointed out with his stick the direction in which they must go.

Encouraged by this gracious reception, and yet anxious, nevertheless, the children advanced to the wing of the castle which had been indicated, and which opened into the inner court, where again they had another view of the castle, which on this side, lying in deep shadow, looked still more imposing and mysterious than in the front. Here, seated on a bench in a little garden, sat a stately lady, with her hands lying gracefully one upon the other in her lap, and who had turned her head towards the shyly-advancing children.

"So, so, there comes at last my little schoolmaster!" exclaimed she in a pleasant voice as they approached. "Well, it is nice that you are come! Yes, yes, mountain and valley cannot meet, but people can! How little I thought that the baby Fritz that I carried in my arms to be baptized, and dandled so nicely to keep him from crying, would one day come to see me such a fine young fellow! But now, come in with me, you must be hungry."

Anything more charming than Mrs. Dote's little parlour could not be imagined; the children thought that the princess herself could not live in one more beautiful. It was full of all such old, carved furniture as was superfluous in the castle; a little sofa and high-backed chairs of faded blue silk damask; a cabinet and table of marqueterie and ormolu; a splendid fire-screen, on which figured, in faded embroidery, a shepherdess with her flock of sheep feeding around her. By the stove stood a basket lined with wool, in which lay a fat lap-dog, so soundly asleep as only to make a little grumbling as the children entered; a beautiful cage hung in the window, in which was a canary bird, now too aged to sing; vases of artificial flowers; portraits of princely personages; every kind of splendour, in short, which was not wanted elsewhere, gave to this apartment a princely appearance; and the children, who had never in their lives seen anything more beautiful than the bright sofa which stood in the parsonage parlour, were dumb with reverential wonder.

But it was not possible to remain very long silent with Mrs. Walter, as she was called at the castle; she was lively and talkative, and knew how to win the children's confidence. She led them to talk to her about their life at home, about their parents and their little brothers, and she in her turn told them of the time when she and their parents lived such near neighbours.

"I had not such a very easy life in those days," she said. "I had been left an orphan when very young, and for many years was knocked about amongst strangers. The lady I then lived with was very queer-tempered and proud; for it often happens, that those who have only riches to boast of, are not nearly so affable and considerate as the truly nobly born. I had no parents, no brothers nor sisters, and felt myself quite alone in the world. Then came your parents, and as I myself was the daughter of a schoolmaster, I had naturally a liking for schoolmasters. Your mother is of a timid, gentle nature. I was much older, and had, as a matter of course, much more experience than she; I therefore was able to help her in many ways, and, in short, I found quite a home with your parents. We had very nice times together, and sympathized with each other in joy and in sorrow. I could not have stayed in my place when they left if I had not become acquainted with my blessed late husband, the castle house-steward, who, when we married, brought me here, where it was quite another thing to living in the house merely of a wealthy baron."

"Was your gentleman-husband, the castle house-steward, as elegant as the gentleman out there in the blue coat?" asked Fritz.

"As he?" asked Mrs. Walter, with offended pride. "Get along with you! He is a simple porter, and was my husband's underling! You should have seen my husband in his grand official uniform, with his beautiful white hair and his bunch of keys, going through the castle before the grandees, and relating everything from the days of the late prince up to the time of the ever-blessed Emperor Charlemagne! I learnt it all off from him, and it is to me just as if I had been born and brought up in the castle. But now, children, you must have your suppers. Barbett has made us some currant-marmalade; to-night you must go to bed early; to-morrow you shall see everything."

The children would gladly have seen something of the castle that night. Through the window they could see only in the moonlight mysterious-looking marble statues, and hear the splash of the fountain; but they expressed their acquiescence, and after they had eaten the currant marmalade, which did great credit to Barbett, they were conducted to their beds, where a new delight awaited them.

For Mina a bed had been prepared in the lady housekeeper's own pretty chamber, whilst that for Fritz was in a small room adjoining, where all kinds of curiosities were stowed together. But they did not forget, according to the promise they had made their mother, before going to sleep, to thank their Father in heaven, who had brought them safely to the end of their journey. Mina, in going to sleep, looked upon a large portrait of some princely child in a rose-coloured laced coat, and with high-dressed hair. Fritz, on the other hand, was faced by an ancient folding-screen,

upon which an Indian princess was riding on an elephant. They both, however, soon dropped asleep, to pass into a world of wonderful dreams.

CHAPTER IV.—BARENBURG CASTLE.

But the waking next morning was still more wonderful. They opened their eyes, and did not know where they were, and thought they were still at home at Steinheim, in their little tiny chambers, till all at once they remembered that they had now actually and truly awakened in a castle. Then Mina found a beautiful china basin ready for her to wash in, whereas, at home, they had each to fill the iron dish with water from the well before they could wash; and the breakfast-table, with its handsome old-fashioned blue and white china service, and aniseed bread, because they had not fresh bread every day at Barenburg Castle; indeed, everything was just like a fairy tale.

And yet that was only the beginning of the glorious things which were displayed to their enraptured gaze, when, after breakfast, Mrs. Walter took the important bunch of keys, and conducted the children through the chambers and state apartments of the castle. Softly, very softly and carefully, with a sort of reverential awe, they stepped along the narrow line of carpet which was laid on the polished inlaid floors, only now and then allowing an exclamation of pure astonishment to escape their lips, as when, for instance, they beheld their own figures advancing at full length, to meet them in the lofty mirror-doors, or when some other object of more than ordinary magnificence, or of an unusual character, caught their eyes.

The flight of steps which led from the garden, through the lofty glass doors, opened into the dining-hall, in which the gentlemen were accustomed to dine on their return from the chase. The walls were painted with a series of beautiful pictures, representing a forest, through the thick underwood of which a slender roe glanced forth here and there, or where, on the margin of some splendid lake, the noble stag was quenching his thirst, or a mighty boar whetting his tusks on the trunk of some old forest tree. Above, on the ceiling, the gallant falcon and the heron seemed to be floating under masses of well-painted clouds. The dishes and drinking vessels of the table, which were exhibited in a large antique glass cupboard, were all formed from stags' horn, or were ornamented therewith; splendid and immensely large deers' antlers were fastened upon the walls, and under each pair was an inscription stating that the noble animal which had worn these antlers had been killed by this or that royal prince, now long deceased. To this hall succeeded small apartments, the one more beautiful than the other, the favourite suite of rooms of the late princess, furnished with sky-blue silk; a dancing hall, with splendidly painted walls, representing ladies and gentlemen in antiquated costume, who were making stately bows and curtsies to each other, and a gloomy chamber furnished with dark red silk damask, containing an immense richly gilded bed, in which a persecuted emperor had once slept. Mina felt frightened in this room, and pressed still closer to Mrs. Walter.

"There, sit down," said the old lady, "you are tired, poor child;" and she pointed to a handsome arm-chair, covered with blue silk, which stood beside the bed. Mina timidly seated herself, but she started up again terrified, for that very moment, from the seat of the chair, was heard in the sweetest, flute-like notes, the melody, "Rejoice ye in life!" which her father, when he was not too weary, played so often to them on the old spinnet at home. That was the most wonderful thing of all—a chair which could play music more beautifully even than her father himself! After this they walked on more quietly still, looking continually round, in the expectation of some other wonderful surprise.

Mrs. Walter, through her late husband, the son of a yet older house-steward, who had been brought up in the castle, had herself so completely entered into the spirit of the place as almost to regard it as her own property, and she was therefore as much gratified by the delight and astonishment of the children as if it had been a personal compliment to herself.

"Now, is it not beautiful?" asked she of Mina, as she turned the key in the last door.

"Very beautiful to look at," replied Mina, "but I don't know whether I should quite like to live in it. I don't know a single little nook where I could sit with my knitting."

But such little nooks abounded all the more beautifully and sweeter in the garden, where the children found a new world of wonder. According to their ideas, derived from the garden at home, which was celebrated, not only in the village itself, but through the whole neighbourhood, they imagined, under the name of a garden, a beautiful smooth piece of ground, divided into accurately-formed vegetable-beds, which were bordered and adorned with lovely flowers, and in the very middle of all a green painted garden-house covered with creepers. Here, however, it was quite different.

Adjoining the castle was "the garden in the pig-tail style," as Mrs. Walter said, with ornamental twisted borders, the paths strewn with bright gravel, and planted all about with box-trees clipped into the strangest shapes, balls, pyramids, and even the human form, and, in the middle of all, a fountain which threw up water almost higher than the one in the front. For a great distance also beyond the castle extended, too, what was called "the park," with shrubberies, in which stood wonderful statues; where, amidst lawns of fine turf, shone forth the most gloriously brilliant beds of flowers, where was a little lake, with its red and white painted little vessel, and a cottage built of tree-stems, in which sat an old hermit in a brown gown, with a white beard, and a large open

book before him, who turned his head and lifted his spectacles when any one opened the door.

Mina, and even the courageous Fritz, ran away screaming at first, until at length, accustomed by degrees to the miracle, and assured by Mrs. Walter that the old man was only a painted figure, they took heart, though the machinery remained a great wonder to them.

There was many a charming little nook amongst the shrubs on the soft green sward in front of the lake, on which two old swans belonging to former times swam about, where the children could sit side by side and tell each other stories and fairy tales. Nor yet had they come to an end of the discoveries in the garden, nor yet had Fritz wholly completed the accurate description of the journey which he had promised to send his father.

The children had been accustomed to a simple, laborious life, therefore their holidays appeared to them a season of the purest enjoyment. Mina, brought up to very early rising, was every morning ready dressed, and put her head within her brother's little chamber to summon him, whilst he was yet generally asleep; and every morning Fritz asked her, "But, I say, Mina, isn't it a dream?" and she replied laughing, "No, it isn't a dream."

Amidst all the pleasure and the delight of their beautiful surroundings, they also endeavoured to do all they possibly could to be of use to Mrs. Dote. Fritz cut small firewood for her, and piled it up neatly in the kitchen; they both helped her to look after the little garden which she had for her own especial pleasure. Mina threaded her needle, which was not always easy for her old eyes to accomplish; and Mrs. Dote, on her part, taught her all kinds of beautiful stitches in needlework, and described to her the magnificent dresses which she made, and of which she had the care when she was lady's-maid.

"Ah! what good times the gentlefolks have!" sighed Mina; "when I think how my mother has to consider before she buys a cotton gown, and countesses have satin and velvet and silk gauze."

"Never trouble yourself about that, child," said Mrs. Walter, "there are often heavy hearts under the light gauzes and the shining silks. I was right glad over my lowly condition, when I came to understand thoroughly this high life."

"Yes, I must say," remarked Fritz, who was sitting at a side-table engaged over the history of his travels, "the porter below there seemed to me at first very high-bred and elegant; but if I had every day of my life to walk up and down in front of this beautiful castle——"

Here he was interrupted, for at that moment a knock was heard at the door, and in came, to Fritz's great surprise and embarrassment, the very porter, the burden of whose life he had been compassionating. It was very seldom that he quitted his post, although there was now nothing to attend to at the castle door, where, frequently for months together, not a soul approached the place excepting the few servants who now were kept there. Mrs. Walter therefore looked with inquisitive wonder at the large letter which he held in his hand.

"There, read, Mrs. Housekeeper," he said, "it is just come; there will now be work enough for us."

"Really!" exclaimed Mrs. Walter, "the Princess Clotilde, with her children! Now, that is charming! It has always grieved me so that the beautiful castle should stand unoccupied, and I am glad that it is precisely that excellent lady who is coming. To-morrow? Well, I must look about me. Everything is in order, however; nothing but the beds want getting ready. Good, very good, Mr. Schnallenberger."

Mr. Schnallenberger retired with a dignified mien. Mrs. Walter rose up with an air of business, and took up the important bunch of keys, saying, "Come, Mina, you shall go with me; you can be of some use."

"Ah! a real, living princess," said Mina, "I shall be frightened if I meet her."

"I shall not," said Fritz boldly, "all men are equal before God, prince or peasant or nobleman; it makes no difference."

"You talk as you know, foolish boy," said Mrs. Dote, now for the first time really angry; "it is true that God created all men equal, but the Lord himself has appointed to each one his particular place; one in a lofty position, another humbler, and the humble must never fail in respect; and the lofty will one day be called to answer before the Lord for his stewardship, whether he have done well or evil, with that which was intrusted to him."

"But in that world," persisted Fritz in a somewhat low voice, "there will be no distinctions of rank."

"In that world," returned Mrs. Walter warmly, "our Lord, it is true, will not judge according to rank and station, but according to every one's work, according to the obedience of faith with which the will of the Father has been done. And the will of the Father is, that every one abide submissively in his own place without envy and without pride; remember that, you conceited boy, with your equality!"

Fritz thought it wisest to remain silent, after this reproof, although really what he meant was not so bad, after all.

Mina accompanied the old lady to the large press which contained the delicate, though somewhat yellow, bed-linen trimmed with fine lace; and that which was necessary was given out for the

beds, and the chambers were made ready for their new inhabitants.

CHAPTER V.—THE PRINCESS.

The princess arrived at Barenburg Castle on the evening of the following day. The housekeeper, in her most splendid attire, a violet silk dress and a splendid lace cap, together with the rest of the household, solemnly received her at the foot of the flight of steps leading into the castle. The children witnessed the arrival from the little window of the porter's room, and even the free-minded Fritz felt a reverential throbbing of the heart, as he saw the carriage-step let down, and the princess alight, wholly different in appearance to what he had expected; not a lofty, magnificent lady in a crimson silk dress and a little crown on her head, like Queen Esther or Pharaoh's daughter in the picture Bible, but a somewhat small, slender lady, in a grey silk dress and simple white bonnet, which she took off, as she stood on the castle-steps, gazing with agreeable surprise, as it seemed, on the beautiful ancient structure and its charming surroundings. Her brown hair was simply parted under a small blond cap, and her blue eyes glanced so mildly from the delicate, pale countenance, that the children, seeming to forget that they had expected anything different, Mina whispered softly to Fritz, "But she must be very, very good, though."

Whilst they were watching the princess, the servants assisted two beautiful children from the carriage, who now joyously, and with an exclamation of astonishment, sprang up the castle steps; a boy and a girl, somewhat younger than Fritz and Mina, so richly and so elegantly dressed, that they could not have been mistaken for other than princely children.

"But, mamma, is it not lovely? And shall we live here?" exclaimed the little girl.

"Yes, my child," said the princess, and kissed her on the forehead.

"Are there yet stags in the park," demanded the boy with a princely air from the respectful porter; "and can I have a gun here to shoot them?"

The mother smiled, and seemed half-embarrassed by the commanding tone which her young son assumed.

"There are the park-grounds belonging to the garden," said the revenue-warden of the district, who had come to the castle to receive the princess, "and beyond lies the deer-park; the keeper who lives there will be able to assist the young prince in the shooting of game."

"That must be an arrogant young fellow," thought Fritz; yet he felt, as it were, attracted to him as he saw the handsome, frank countenance of the young Hugo, as, with his hand in his mother's, he entered the castle.

It was late before Mrs. Walter, who had been in attendance on the princely guests in the suite of rooms prepared for their reception, returned to her own parlour.

"The gracious lady," said she, in a business-like tone, "has only brought with her a single waiting-woman for herself and a maid for the children; there was everything to do, therefore, and I was needed to help."

"No ladies of the court, and no servants?" asked Mina, astonished.

"What sort of a princess is she, then, Mrs. Dote?" asked Fritz, who had been studying in the calendar the genealogy of the princely house. "She is not, after all, then, the wife of the reigning prince; and there is no wife mentioned as belonging to the late prince."

"Well, children," said Mrs. Walter, after a moment's silent consideration, "you have sense enough for me to explain to you exactly how it is with the princess. She is really the wife of the crown-prince, now deceased, and is herself of a noble house, though not noble enough to please the old prince, and therefore he would never acknowledge the marriage. His son, however, always believed he would do so. He thought his papa would yield his prejudices, because the lady was so lovely and a very angel for goodness. But it was not, and never will be right, when children go counter to the will of their parents, and when young people think they know what is best;—you remember that as long as you live! However, they were married whilst the old prince was on a long journey abroad; when he returned, therefore, he was dreadfully angry, and would not acknowledge the marriage. The noble young crown-prince would not leave his wife; so, for the sake of peace and quietness, they lived abroad, where he died of nervous fever two years ago, without being reconciled with his father, from which misfortune our Lord preserve all young people! The princess returned to this country and lived very retired, and I have heard that the old prince would not even hear the children spoken of. However, as this old castle is now appointed for their residence, I think it a good sign."

That which Mrs. Walter thus related made the princess very interesting to the children.

"Do you know, Mina," said Fritz to his sister that same evening, "I shall never be envious of

anybody in this world again."

"Were you envious, then?" asked she.

"Well, it was in this way," returned he. "When I saw those handsome children, in their beautiful dresses, bounding up the castle-steps, I thought to myself, 'They are quite at home now, where we dare only take a little peep; they have everything so nice, yet I don't know that they are any better than we.'"

"Did you really think so!" said Mina amazed.

"Now, however, I think," returned he, "how well off we are. Father and mother are happy together, grand-parents, and everybody love one another, but those poor things have lost their father, and they dare not see their grandfather."

"Perhaps it will all come right," said Mina consolingly "I should like to see that lovely princess again."

"But she must be only addressed as—most gracious lady," said Mrs. Dote.

CHAPTER VI.—THE PRINCELY CHILDREN.

Spite of his views of freedom and equality, Fritz walked somewhat more timidly with Mina in the garden the following day.

"You may go without any fear," Mrs. Dote had said encouragingly; "only you must keep rather in the side walks than in the broad alleys. You can go and gather me a beautiful nosegay and fresh green for the little hall where the family will dine. And if you should meet the young grandees and they should speak, you must answer prettily and politely; only mind, don't you speak first."

"He is, however, nothing but a boy, like me, only somewhat younger," Fritz was again ready to reply, but he checked himself and remained silent.

They had not been long in the garden before they saw the two handsome children coming hand in hand down the broad alley.

"Oh, how charming it is!" exclaimed the little girl, delighted. "I never saw anything so charming!"

"And is it not charming," said the boy, "that your governess is still poorly, and that my tutor is gone a journey, and so we have a holiday?"

At this moment they saw Fritz and Mina, who stepped somewhat embarrassed aside.

"Do you live in the garden?" inquired the little girl.

"No, young gentry," returned Mina, to whom no other title suggested itself, and she curtseyed.

"My name is Meta," said the little girl with frank simplicity; "and his name is Hugo," added she, pointing to her brother, "but where, then, do you live?"

"At Steinheim, fifteen miles from here," said Fritz, in his straightforward manner, and perfectly self-possessed. "We are now on a visit to my godmother, Mrs. Dote, the castle housekeeper, during our holidays."

"Indeed! we also have holiday," said Hugo. "Do you know of any bird nests? I have never seen a bird's nest."

"I know of one," returned Fritz, somewhat hesitatingly, "but——"

"Well, where is it?" inquired Hugo, with a little impetuosity.

"I'll show it you, but—you must promise——"

"What must I promise?" interrupted the young prince, reddening with anger and impatience.

"That you will only look at it, and not touch it, even with your little finger," returned Fritz, now speaking firmly, "else the old birds will never come back again, and the young ones will die."

"Yes, I know that," said the fair-haired Meta. "Mamma once told me that the young birds would die if the old ones did not attend to them," and she looked very sorrowful; "but you will not touch it, will you, Hugo?"

"Upon my honour. I will not!" declared the young cavalier so earnestly that Fritz was ready to venture, and led him to a low fir-tree which stood in some thick plantations, where lay between the boughs a little nest, in which were five lovely greenish-speckled eggs. He lifted up Meta, so that she could peep in, and both children were delighted at the sight.

"But the next time we must not come so near," said Fritz, "the little hen-bird is sitting; but we may come every day and see it from a distance, till the young birds are hatched."

In this joyful hope the four children became good friends, although Hugo had a something of

princely pride in his bearing which did not quite harmonize with the liberal turn of Fritz's mind. The boys rambled together from the garden into the deer-park, visited the old keeper who lived there, and learned to shoot under his instructions; nay, they even one day brought home a hare which had been shot, though it could not exactly be ascertained by whom. Still more delightful was the entertainment which the two girls found together. Meta had a very wonderful doll, beautiful beyond anything which Mina had conceived possible. It had a lovely waxen face, and could shut its eyes; it slept upon a cushion trimmed with lace, and had a little bassinet lined with blue silk; it wore the daintiest little cap and a little knitted jacket. Mina, it is true, had quite grown out of dolls, and at home only brought out hers, which had a shining face of papier-maché, and wore a plain pink cotton frock, when her little friend Matilda came to see her; but she would not have been a girl if she had not been delighted with this miracle of a baby. It had, however, no name, and Mina assisted in the choice of one, which, after long deliberation, it was decided should be Rosalinde, because it was so beautiful. Meta was regarded as the mother of the little Rosalinde, and Mina acted as nurse-maid, but was called the Bonne, and she fondled, and carried, and rocked, and fed the darling baby to her heart's delight. The little Rosalinde was a very quick-growing child, however, and already on the second day wore her short frocks, and on the fourth a little dress and socks of Mina's making from some splendid material which Mrs. Dote produced from her wonderful old stores, and which had, once upon a time, been a part of a grand court dress. Now and then, however, again the little one became a baby, and was laid upon its cushion, and as such carried about. Many lovely little nooks, too, there were in the garden, on the green sward, and amongst the bushes, which were exactly suitable for nurseries; then, too, Meta took many great journeys with her little daughter through the gardens, Mina, in the meantime, decorating the green nursery with flowers, and setting out a pretty little feast of summer fruit in little baskets which she wove of rushes; whilst Meta, on her return, brought, from her mother, in fact, a pretty ribbon or a nice little bag as a present to her faithful Bonne.

Lightly and softly, as a sunbeam, the Princess Clotilde glided in her grey silk dresses here and there through the garden, appearing to the country children almost like a being from some higher world. She had kept a much stricter supervision over them than they had any idea of, in order that she might ascertain whether they were fitting companions for her children. Her children had hitherto lived in such deep retirement and seclusion, that now, finding these young strangers so admirable in every respect, she rejoiced that her children should become acquainted through them with other relationships and other classes in life, and happy in the thought that they could thus thoroughly enjoy their golden freedom before the return of the governess and tutor. The castle housekeeper, Mrs. Dote, was therefore on the very pinnacle of bliss because of the honour which was done to her young guests.

CHAPTER VII.—THE DEPARTURE.

Mrs. Dote had already twice obtained a prolongation of the holiday term, but now the father wrote that it could be no further extended; it was high time, he said, for Fritz to recommence his studies. Mina, also, was not only required in the school, but was indispensable to her mother. Therefore a definite day was fixed by him for their return home.

The children, who knew perfectly well that such a time of festal enjoyment could not last for ever, prepared themselves without opposition for their departure. And then, what a great deal they would have to tell at home; how their father and mother would be astonished, and the clergyman's Carl, and the bailiff's Matilda! And then, it sounded so very nice in the diary which Fritz had kept, "I and the prince."

Meta and Hugo were almost more cast down about the parting than their friends, and the tutor and the governess seemed to them anything but a compensation for the loss of such pleasant companions.

On the day before they left, Hugo wished to perform an especial deed of heroism. The old keeper had betrayed to him that in a cleft of a tolerably lofty rock in the deer-park a screech-owl had built a nest.

"Oh, a living owl!" exclaimed Hugo; "we must have him!"

"Don't you trouble yourself about that, noble sir," said the keeper; "besides, it is more dangerous than it seems; the rock is steep and crumbly, and just below is a stony hollow, where, in ancient times, they got stone. Wait, sir, till I've got rid of the rheumatism in my feet, and then I myself will try to catch the creature for you. You must not run such a risk."

"Listen, Fritz," said Hugo to him after this conversation, "we'll get the beast ourselves, spite of everything!"

"No," returned Fritz thoughtfully, "we'd better not; think how distressed your mother would be if anything happened to you, and my godmother would be shockingly angry with me if I should let you go."

"I don't care for your godmother, not I!" exclaimed Hugo in a tone of defiance, for he could very ill brook contradiction, and without another word he walked down towards the castle.

Early the next morning, Hugo stole away quietly by himself towards the cliff in the park; he did

not find it very difficult to clamber up so as to bring himself near to the cleft in the rock, which contained the coveted nest; when, all at once, away went a piece of rock from under his foot; he held himself fast, however, by a small bush, but there he hung, like the Emperor Maximilian of old, on the Martinswand, below him the deep stony hollow, and feeling it impossible to advance a single step forward. There was an end now of all his defiant courage and princely pride, and he uttered a loud piercing cry for help; but, ah! he then remembered with horror that the old keeper, the only person who lived near, was a most totally deaf.

The next moment the cry of "Hugo!" sounded from the wood.

"Fritz, Fritz!" shouted he, overjoyed; "make haste, Fritz, and help me!"

And Fritz, who had been for some time seeking for the prince in vain, rushed forth out of the wood, and though he was naturally of a deliberative character, and one which did not inconsiderately rush into danger, yet he now climbed up, and with all that courage and agility which a sudden sense of danger often gives birth to, seized hold of Hugo, and half-scrambling and half-tumbling, down they both came to the ground, with torn hands and trousers, yet holding still firmly together.

Hugo, whose haughty bravery was considerably damped by the terror he had felt, and the danger he had been exposed to, lay half-fainting on the ground and gazed with emotion at Fritz, who, well pleased with the result of his intervention, yet seemed to regard it as nothing very remarkable.

"Fritz," said he at length, "I should not much like to tell my mother, because she is often so sorrowful, and she will weep so bitterly over a misfortune which might have happened, just as if it had happened; but I shall not forget you!" and with a princely bearing he drew a beautiful ring, in which was set a red stone, from his finger, saying, "There, take this ring from me, it belonged to my father; and if you show me again this ring, whether it be soon or in years to come, it will remind me how you have helped me to-day."

Fritz, who, as I said, did not regard the affair as one of such grave importance, nevertheless was delighted with the gift, until an idea suddenly occurring to him, he said, "But if your mother should make inquiries after the ring?"

"Then I will tell her what you have done for me," replied Hugo, who had now recovered his self-possession, "and she will say it was right."

The gentle, warm-hearted Meta took a tearful leave of Mina; she wished very much to give her, as a parting present, her beloved Rosalinde, but Mina would, on no account, allow of so great a sacrifice, and the Princess Clotilde gave her instead a pretty silk apron and a beautiful book. Fritz also received presents of books and handsome writing-apparatus from Hugo. Mrs. Dote, who had conceived a cordial affection for the children, did not know how to give them enough for themselves and as presents to carry home to their parents. She was, however, raised to the very summit of felicity, when the princess ordered the carriage to be got ready, in order that her children might accompany their young friends at least half-way home. Fritz and Mina had not the slightest objection to be driven back in so stately and agreeable a manner, in a comfortable carriage, along the very road which they had traversed thither so timidly and humbly with their knapsack and basket.

Of course, these glories also came to an end, although the kind coachman drove much farther than the half-way, so that they could now see the hospitable farm-house in the fields below them. Then came the leave-taking, which, as a rule with children, consists of not many words. Hugo pressed significantly the hand upon which Fritz wore the ring, and Meta kissed Mina with tears in her eyes. The princely children drove back to the castle, and the schoolmaster's children went on foot to their modest home, but warm hearts and kind greetings they knew awaited them there, and they walked forward with cheerful steps, without lamenting over the glories which were departed.



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