





VOLUME XIV

GOTTFRIED KELLER
CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER
JOSEPH VICTOR WIDMANN
CARL SPITTELER



PEMBER PHOTOGRAPHISCHE UNDR. HURTCH.

THE GERMAN CLASSICS

Masterpieces of German Literature

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH



THE ISLE OF THE DEAD

Patrons' Edition

IN TWENTY VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

THE GERMAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY
NEW YORK

From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS volume is devoted to the foremost Swiss novelists and poets of the last fifty years, exclusive, however, of the most recent writers. Naturally, the largest space is given to Gottfried Keller, one of the most original figures of German literature since Goethe, a master of style worthy to be classed with the great names of all ages, who thus far has remained strangely inaccessible to the English speaking world. It seems fitting that he should appear here accompanied by Arnold Böcklin, the greatest Swiss painter of the 19th century, akin to him in exuberant imagination and joyous vitality.

The rest of the volume is illustrated by representative paintings of Giovanni Segantini, the most powerful artistic interpreter, in our time, of Alpine scenery and life.

KUNO FRANCKE.

THE LIFE OF GOTTFRIED KELLER

By JOHN ALBRECHT WALZ, PH.D.

Professor of the German Language and Literature. Harvard University



THE works of Gottfried Keller form the most valuable contribution that Switzerland has made to German literature during the nineteenth century. Numbering less than five per cent. of the German-speaking inhabitants of Europe the Swiss have at all times contributed to the sum total of German culture out of all proportion to their small numbers. Political freedom is the secret of their superiority. The Swiss are the only Germans that have succeeded throughout the centuries in maintaining the old Germanic principle of self-government. They show the effects of free political institutions in the same way as the English, though on a smaller scale. They are practical, sober, self-reliant, even, at times, pugnacious. Their patriotism is intense, almost religious, but it is tempered by the consciousness of the small size of their country, and unlike the English love of country, does not degenerate into contempt for other nations. Gottfried Keller in his life and in his works shows these qualities. They served to restrain and to prune his powerful imagination, they guarded him against the literary and moral extravagances that have spoiled so much of the work of the German Romanticists, they gave to his romantic moods a solid background of reality.

Gottfried Keller's life is undramatic but full of human interest. He was born in Zurich in the year 1819 of good Swiss stock. The father, a turner by trade, died when Gottfried was only five years old, leaving his wife and two

children in straightened circumstances. By dint of great economy and untold personal sacrifices the mother succeeded in giving to her son as good an education as the canton of Zurich provided at that time for the children of its citizens. Keller's youth, thanks to the mother, was not unhappy. In his great autobiographical novel *Green Henry* (*Der grüne Heinrich* is the nickname of the hero, Keller himself, because as a boy he wore a green suit which the thrifty mother had cut out of a coat of the father) Keller has given us a fascinating picture of his boyhood. It is full of the poetry of childhood, but the boy had his share of the sorrow and suffering that come to every thoughtful and sensitive child. Keller was a normal boy, in no way precocious, but he was endowed with an unusual imagination. It is this imagination and a certain natural stubbornness that were at the bottom of most of his juvenile transgressions.

Keller's course at the cantonal school in Zurich came to a sudden end in 1834, when he was expelled for participating in a boyish disturbance aimed at an unpopular teacher. The punishment in no way fitted the offense, especially as the ringleaders went free. He keenly felt the injustice of the treatment which for years he bitterly resented. The schools of the canton were now closed to him and he was unexpectedly confronted with the necessity of choosing an occupation. For some time he had been interested in painting, and since the annual exhibitions in Zurich had fostered this interest, he promptly decided to become a landscape painter.

Now began what must seem to us in looking back over Keller's life a most pathetic spectacle: a ten-year struggle of a gifted youth to master an art which was beyond his reach and which lured him away from the path that alone could lead him to the full realization of his innate powers. The mother had serious misgivings about her son's choice, not that she doubted his ability, but because she feared the expense and the uncertainty of an artist's career. Yet when

she saw his determination she yielded, and henceforth was ready to make any sacrifice to assist him. After a summer spent at the house of an uncle in Glattfelden near the Rhine, where he practiced drawing and painting from nature, he entered the studio of a so-called artist in Zurich, in reality a manufacturer of colored prints and engravings. His task was to copy and color views of Swiss scenery. In his spare time he attempted original compositions on a large scale, though he had not yet mastered the rudiments of his art. Later he took lessons of an artist of real talent and worked at home. He studied the *Letters about Landscape Painting* of his celebrated fellow-countryman of a hundred years before, Salomon Gessner, equally noted for his poetry and his etchings. Gessner recommends to the young landscape painter the diligent study of the poets, a suggestion which Keller eagerly followed. About this time Keller began a diary and wrote stories for his own amusement. Unconsciously the poet within him began to assert himself. His sketchbooks, too, contain more word-pictures than drawings. His favorites were the two poets who more than any others kindled in German youth of the first half of the nineteenth century the love of the ideal and the spiritual, Schiller and Jean Paul.

Keller felt that Zurich was not the place for a student of painting. To realize his ambition he must attend one of the great academies of fine arts. He chose Munich, which through the efforts of the Bavarian king Ludwig I. was rapidly developing into the centre of German art. Keller's mother, always hopeful, was willing to make the financial sacrifice. In the spring of 1840 Keller went to Munich, firmly resolved to study the art of landscape painting from the bottom. Unfortunately, landscape painting was not in favor at Munich. It was not even taught at the Royal Academy, where neo-classicism and the historical genre reigned supreme. Moreover Keller's means were so slender that he was unable to take lessons of any of the teachers of reputation. Just as in Zurich, he was largely left to

himself, but he found stimulus and inspiration in the company of young fellow artists, in visiting galleries and studios. The first few months were a happy time. The city offered a great deal more than his native Zurich and he was conscious of rapid progress. But expenses soon outran his meagre allowance. His letters to his mother repeat with monotonous regularity the request for money joined with the assurance of independence and reputation soon to be attained through his art. His finances finally became so desperate that he went hungry for days at a time, but not until all his sketches had been sold and when he had nothing left did he make up his mind to return to Zurich. His life in Munich is vividly portrayed in *Green Henry*.

From November, 1842, to October, 1848, Keller stayed in Zurich with his mother and sister. In later times he referred to these six years as the lost years of his life. They were years of slow development away from painting to literature. Upon his return he established a studio in his mother's house, where he worked diligently for a time, but his interest gradually waned. The diary for the year 1843 indicates a growing attachment to literature. The forties were the time of the great democratic movement that swept over Europe, culminating in the revolution of 1848. The noblest minds of Germany united in the struggle against the absolutism of Austria and Prussia. Republican Switzerland became the asylum for many expatriated Germans. But Switzerland itself was rent by two opposing factions, the liberal and progressive element represented chiefly in the Protestant city cantons, and the aristocratic-reactionary element which found its main support among the Catholics. Keller strongly sympathized with the liberal party. He found congenial friends among the German democrats that had fled to Zurich, he eagerly read the new poetry that voiced the political aspirations of the German people. Two poets of liberty and democracy kindled in him the flame of poetry, Georg Herwegh and Anastasius Grün. Here there

was a new note, a new poetic vocabulary, here was reality, life, inspiration. Keller's first poems were political, for it was impossible in those days to be a German poet without taking sides in politics. They show great vigor and strong convictions but lack artistic restraint. When the canton of Lucerne invited the Jesuits to establish themselves within its boundaries, Keller joined a band of volunteers who invaded Lucerne in order to overthrow the Catholic-reactionary government. The invaders, however, lacked discipline and a plan and were forced to disband. In the novel *Frau Regel Amrain and Her Youngest Son*, one of the stories in *The People of Seldwyla*, Keller has given us a picture of those times full of humor and good-natured irony. In 1846 he published his first collection of poems, but little attention was paid to them. Most of these poems he later excluded from his collected works as crude and immature. He wrote some articles for a German periodical and began a novel in which he wished to give an account to himself of his own life and ideals. That this novel would eventually develop into the great work of his life did not occur to him.

To all outward appearances Keller was leading a life of idleness at the expense of his mother, but his friends knew the latent worth of the man. Through their influence he received in 1848 from the cantonal government of Zurich a stipend of 800 francs to study abroad. It was suggested to him to go to the Orient but Keller decided to go where he could learn and develop the most,—to Germany, “to happy or unhappy Germany, the poor Sleeping Beauty,” or, as he later expressed himself, to the land “where there is solidity, power, and light.”

In the autumn of 1848 Keller left Switzerland a second time, to be gone for more than seven years. Painting he had now definitely abandoned as a profession though until late in life he handled the brush occasionally for his own enjoyment. He went to Heidelberg to study history, philosophy, and natural sciences. At first the old university

town on the Neckar hardly seemed the place for quiet, intellectual work. The whole grandduchy of Baden was ablaze with the revolution. Citizen-soldiers occupied Heidelberg and the surrounding country until driven away by the Prussian regulars; lectures were suspended a good part of the time; life itself was not safe. Keller followed the political development with great interest and with the proud feeling that his own countrymen had handled their political difficulties much more successfully than the Germans, but his chief task was to fill out the gaps in his own training and to prepare himself for the life of a writer.

Three men became his intellectual guides and intimate friends in Heidelberg: Jakob Henle, the pathologist, whose lectures on anthropology opened up a new view of life and mankind; Hermann Hettner, the historian of European literature of the eighteenth century, with whom he discussed dramatic and esthetic questions; Ludwig Feuerbach, the philosopher, who profoundly affected his ethical and religious views. Keller's was a religious nature. His mother's brave courage in the troubles of life was anchored in a never-failing faith in God. She had instilled the same faith into the souls of her children. Like many Germans of his time and today, Keller, as he grew up, had become indifferent and even skeptical toward the established church, but God and immortality remained for him sacred truths of great personal moment. Feuerbach denied the existence of God and immortality. To him the idea of a supreme being was the creation of the human mind; body and spirit were inseparable. Feuerbach's teaching came to Keller like a shock, but he accepted it. According to his own statement it did not lead him to pessimism, but it gave him a new conception of the greatness and nobility of the human mind, of the beauty of the world and of the value of human life. To his friend Freiligrath, however, he confessed that the new philosophy had made him neither better nor worse but that he had in all things remained the same Keller. Dortchen Schönfund, the charming maiden

in the fourth book of *Green Henry*, with her joyous love of life, her eagerness to do good and her naïve aversion to the fundamental teachings of Christianity is the embodiment of Feuerbach's atheism as conceived by the artist Keller. Few readers, however, will find Dortchen an altogether convincing character. Later in life Keller returned to the religious views of his earlier years.

In Heidelberg Keller worked on his autobiographical novel, wrote lyrics and attempted play writing. The drama attracted him more and more. When his stipend was renewed for another year, he decided to go to Berlin where he hoped a flourishing stage would help him to master the technical side of dramatic art. Keller spent nearly six years in Berlin, from April, 1850, to December, 1855. Letters of introduction and his own budding reputation gained for him access to the literary circles and salons of the Prussian capital, but for the most part he lived the life of a recluse, associating with a few literary friends and the fellow countrymen who happened to be in Berlin. The years in Berlin were without question the hardest years in Keller's life, partly through his own fault, it is true. It was a period of constant struggle and disappointment, of much suffering and even starvation, but during these years Keller ripened into the great artist of modern Germany. As he had been too proud in Munich to daub pictures for a living, so he disdained to do literary hackwork in Berlin to keep off starvation.

In 1851 he published a new volume of poems, but like his first collection it had no sale. Finally in 1854 appeared three volumes of *Green Henry*, followed by the fourth and concluding volume in 1855. It was the novel on which he had been engaged for twelve years since his return from Munich, the writing of which he had put off again and again until forced to it by dire necessity and the demands of the publisher. The work was well received by his friends in Switzerland and Germany, the publisher had paid a liberal royalty, much of it in advance, but the public remained indifferent.

Keller had often expressed in the letters to his mother and sister the desire to return home but he had put off his return from month to month, from year to year with that procrastination which had become characteristic of him. He felt ashamed to return as poor as he had left and with debts. The publication of his novel changed matters. If he had not obtained independence and popularity, he had at least established his claim to be taken seriously. He had a new standing in the eyes of his friends and in his own eyes. There was no reason why he should stay longer in a place which he had never learned to love, whose intellectual and political atmosphere had never been congenial to him. Once more, however, he had to ask his mother for money to pay his debts before leaving Berlin.

Keller's firm conviction of ultimate success as a writer and his intellectual honesty may be seen in his declining, in 1854, the offer of a professorship of fine arts and literature at the newly founded Federal Polytechnicum in Zurich. The salary, though not large, would have enabled him to live without financial worries, but he felt that the duties of the professorship would interfere with his chosen work and that he did not measure up to his own standard of scholarship.

In one thing Keller had failed in Berlin, the very thing that had made him choose that city in preference to any other, he had not become a dramatist. He had made plans, he had written scenes and acts, but he had not completed a single play during nearly six years. He had discovered in time that the art of painting was beyond his grasp; the delusion that he could achieve distinction in the drama followed him to the end of his life.

The next six years Keller lived with his mother and sister in Zurich. But there was no evidence of the rapid production that he had so often assured his mother from Berlin would come with the peace and comfort of home life. He was a frequent visitor at the cafes and restaurants of his native town, a welcome guest in its literary and musical

circles, he associated with many men of distinction, he took a keen interest in politics, but he produced little to justify the time and labor that he had seemingly spent in preparation for a literary career. In 1856 he published the first volume of *The People of Seldwyla*, a collection of stories, the proofsheets of which he had brought with him from Berlin. It had the usual fate of Keller's books: a few recognized its excellence, the general public remained indifferent.

Keller was always a slow writer. He was a dreamer. In the solitude of his room he loved to associate with the forms and phantoms that his ever active brain brought forth in endless variety, but when it came to the laborious task of reducing the fantasies of his imagination to definite form, he hesitated and procrastinated. While working on *Green Henry* he assured his publisher time and again that the novel would be complete in a few weeks or months, but it took years before it was actually put on paper. Rarely has a writer put the patience of his publisher to a severer test.

Those who knew Keller did not lose faith in him. In 1861 the Executive Council of Zurich appointed him Clerk of the Canton (*Staatsschreiber*). It was one of the best paid government positions which conferred upon the incumbent great responsibility and dignity. There was a general outcry in Zurich. A much coveted important position had been given to a man who had shown no aptitude for the work, who had no legal or other training fitting him for such a place. The newspapers of the canton were full of sarcastic comments on the unfortunate choice. Keller himself was greatly surprised. It is true such an appointment would have been impossible in a country with a bureaucratic form of government, with a hierarchy of officials, but Keller had the good fortune to be citizen of a republic where the people managed their own affairs. Keller did not betray the trust his friends in the government had placed in him. For fifteen years he attended to the duties of his office with the greatest efficiency and integrity and to the satisfaction

of all. There was no dreaming, no indolence, no procrastination in the office of the cantonal clerk. Some have regretted that Keller should have spent so much of his life in signing official documents, making reports and doing administrative work, but for Keller with his peculiar temperament this office proved a blessing: it was the steadying influence that enabled him to reap the fruit of his many years of preparation.

As cantonal clerk with days full of official work Keller accomplished more than during the preceding six years of unlimited leisure. In 1872 he published *Seven Legends*, and for the first time achieved immediate success. A new edition of *The People of Seldwyla* with several additional stories appeared in 1874. Both works were recognized as real contributions to German literature. Keller's fame was now well established, but he was advancing in years and to do full justice to his genius he had to seek relief from his official duties. He resigned in 1876, an action which proved to be as wise as fifteen years before his acceptance of the position had been.

Keller's mother had died in 1864. She had lived long enough to see that her sacrifices for her son had not been made in vain. The greatest satisfaction to her had been her son's appointment. For practical and patriotic as she was, a position of honor and emolument in the service of the republic seemed to her the highest distinction and the most substantial reward. The relation of mother and son is frequently portrayed in Keller's novels, as it was the most potent factor in his personal life.

Keller was a confirmed bachelor, not by choice but by necessity. He had been in love several times, but all he received in return was friendship and respect. As he lacked true passion to be a dramatist, so he lacked that indefinable something which would have gained for him the devotion of a woman. This doubtless contributed to the acerbity of temper and moroseness that grew on him with advancing years, but it did not affect the sunniness of his

writings. In *The Governor of Greifensee*, one of the *Zurich Novels*, the hero, Salomon Landolt, the noble and impartial judge and governor, hits upon the grotesque plan of inviting all his former sweethearts to a festival at his castle. The five ladies accept the invitation not knowing that the others would be there. They are sincerely glad to see their old friend again; for it was not he who had deserted or injured any of them, they all for one reason or another had rejected the hand of the worthy suitor. It was Keller's own experience. The novel is a fine example of Keller's humor and art of story-telling. The five love affairs of the governor are told with exquisite grace and subtle characterization.

The leisure Keller had after resigning his position was put to good use. In 1877 came out *Zurich Novels*, a series of novels dealing with the history of Zurich and Switzerland; in 1880 a new edition of *Green Henry*, altogether revised and much improved; in 1881 *The Epigram*, a collection of stories within a story; in 1883 *Collected Poems*, with many new poems; in 1886 his last work, *Martin Salander*, an animated portrait of contemporary Swiss life. Except its abrupt ending *Martin Salander* marks the highest development of Keller's narrative art; there are no signs of declining power as some would have it. The constant demand for new editions of these as well as of earlier works, testified to the increasing fame of the author. His seventieth birthday was celebrated throughout German Switzerland almost as a national event. When he died a year later, in 1890, he was regarded as the foremost writer in the German language.

A writer must be judged by his works. Keller's personality was not such as to arouse enthusiasm. In his boyhood he had been left much to himself, the years of loneliness and privation in Munich and Berlin had not sweetened his disposition, his bachelor life could not soften the crust that was forming around his natural kindheartedness. His conviviality and fondness for story-telling made him

at all times a welcome guest at the restaurant table or at the gatherings of his friends, but even his best friends were not safe from an occasional outbreak of ire or moodiness. Yet no writer has ever written more charming letters to his friends than Keller; few have had more devoted and loyal friends. The roguish humor, the childlike simplicity, and the absolute sincerity of these letters make them delightful reading.

Sincerity is the keynote of Keller's life and work. He never sought popularity, he never cared for literary cliques or schools, he was loyal to his art as he conceived it and to himself. The demands of the public he disregarded if they were at variance with his convictions. In consequence, recognition and fame came late, but they have been all the more permanent.

Keller has been called an optimist. If optimism means that we accept the world and life as God-given, Keller was an optimist. Yet evil is to him as much a part of life as good. There are no ideal characters in his novels just as there are none in life. Various literary classifications have been applied to Keller. He has been called a realist, a romanticist, a romantic realist. It is impossible to reduce to a literary formula a writer whose work shows such independence and individual art.

Realism is certainly a striking characteristic of Keller. His men and women live before us in a world that we recognize to be a real world. They are no hazy figures, no personified abstractions, such as we find so often in the novels of the German Romantic School. Even where the background is unreal and the atmosphere romantic, as in the *Seven Legends*, Keller succeeds in giving his characters human interest. If we once accept the impossible premises, the characters act and speak consistently and in accordance with human experience.

In most cases Keller's background is the Switzerland of his own time. He knows and loves his Swiss from the poor peasant to the councillor and burgomaster, the aristocrats

of the republic. His characters, like Keller himself, are firmly rooted in the social and political life about them. This adds to their reality and human attractiveness. Goethe attributes the excellence of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* in a large measure to the fact that the characters form an integral part of the social and political life of England in which the humblest citizen has a part to play, however modest. This background of national and social life has been the strength of the English novel, the lack of it the weakness of the German. Swiss life afforded Keller a similar advantage. Civic activities for the good or for the bad impart to many of his characters a touch and a strength rarely found in German novel literature.

The Swiss sobriety of intellect—the romanticist, would have called it philistinism—saved Keller from the vagaries and extravagances of the German romanticists and from his own powerful imagination. Keller loves the phantastic, the unusual, the characteristic; but the individual, however gifted, will suffer shipwreck if he does not establish a proper balance between himself and the outside world. Unlike the romanticists Keller has no contempt for this outside world, the mass of the people and their moral and intellectual ideals. He was brought up in a democracy which he loved. Switzerland was no soil for the excessive cult of the individual so characteristic of German romanticism. Moreover, instead of the self-destroying romantic irony Keller possessed a quality which put him in touch with all mankind—humor.

Keller is the great German humorist. His humor has not the tearful sentimentality of Jean Paul—Keller always disdained to work upon the lachrymal glands of his readers—his humor has the breadth and depth of the English humorists of the eighteenth century without their coarseness. Humor presupposes a certain optimism, it implies a general acceptance of the outward conditions of life, of the social and political status. That is the reason why German literature in the eighteenth century in spite of its

wonderful development did not produce a great humorist. German writers could not possibly take satisfaction in the life about them, they were thrown back upon the inner life. Jean Paul's humor is indeed based upon the acceptance of the narrow, stunted conditions of the German life of his time, but just on that account it has lost all interest for modern Germans. The best examples of Keller's humor are found among the stories of *The People of Seldwyla*, though his other works are by no means without it. Humor touches upon the finest cords of national character and sensibility; hence the difficulty of appreciating fully the humorous works of another nation. *The People of Seldwyla* is little known in England and America, yet it may be doubted whether there is anything in the literature of any nation to compare with the quaintness, grotesqueness and withal inner truth of *The Three Righteous Comb-makers*.

There is a didactic vein in Keller's works characteristic of the literature of German Switzerland since the middle ages. But only in a few cases does the moralist get the better of the artist. Keller's ethical teaching is brought out in the results of the actions as determined by the character of his men and women. For his humor does not prevent him from letting the inexorable laws of life take their straightforward course even at the risk of offending the tender-heartedness of his readers. The characters in *The People of Seldwyla* are frequently men who are cured of their faults and follies, of their romantic dreams and natural indolence, by the hard teaching of life. They end by becoming useful and respected citizens or, if they do not mend their ways, they are completely wrecked, like the two peasants in *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, who gradually sink to the lowest level of human existence.

Love is necessarily an important element in all imaginative literature, but with Keller it does not overshadow all other aspects of life. Great passion we do not find in his works, since Keller himself did not possess it. Even in



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STAUFFER-BERN

A Village Romeo and Juliet, it is not all-consuming love that makes the two young people seek death, but the bitter realization of life's law, as they understood it, which made it impossible for them ever to be united. The story is a fine illustration of what a great artist may make out of his raw material. Keller had read in a newspaper a report of the suicide of two young people, the sort of tragedy that we may read almost daily in American papers; he seized upon the possibilities of the situation and the result was this story, perhaps the best he ever wrote.

Keller is particularly happy in the portrayal of women. His women seem to be superior to the men in most of the practical affairs of life; they often control the course of events and possess the faculty of bringing out the best in their lovers, husbands and sons. We see the unconscious influence of Keller's mother, but we are also filled with respect for a country whose women afforded the artist such models.

It has often been observed that Keller gives to his readers a sense of color. The very title of his great novel suggests color. There is color in his landscape, in the dress and appearance of his peasants and townsmen, in the groups of men that march through the open country on a Sunday morning to take part in some patriotic festival, in the description of artist life in *Green Henry*. As a painter Keller had been a failure, but his eye saw color everywhere and he had the power of making his readers see it. It would be hard to say by what means he produced this effect.

Keller's chief fault is a certain diffuseness which is at times trying to the reader. Lack of conciseness and verbosity were according to Goethe the besetting sin of German writers of the middle of the eighteenth century, and it is a fault to which German writers have always been peculiarly liable. The fault appears more in Keller's longer novels than in his short stories. On the other hand, we do not find the jerkiness and incoherence which in many modern novels affect the nerves of the reader. Keller's

style is always epic, it has poise and warmth. In *Green Henry* there are many passages which have no direct connection with the narrative. The average reader may skip them without losing anything of the story. In English and French novels this would usually be considered a grievous fault, though some of the older novelists, Fielding for instance, liked to insert matter foreign to the subject. But ever since Goethe published his *Wilhelm Meister*, German novelists have looked upon the novel not merely as a narrative of events but also as a medium for expressing their views of life either directly or through the characters. It is a difference in national literary tradition and Keller naturally took the German view of the novel. This accounts for the subjectivity and disregard of plot in certain parts of *Green Henry*.

Keller is least known as a poet. For years the general public was not aware that the novelist was also a poet of great power. We find in his poems the same rich individuality, the same poise and depth of feeling as in his prose. There are no conventional phrases, no worn formulas, no hackneyed sentiments. To old themes he gives new life. His verse is sometimes lacking in music and rhythm but the best of his poems will forever belong to the golden treasury of German lyrics. His love of nature is as marked in his poetry as in his novels. It is characteristic of Keller that we do not meet in his works the majestic but forbidding beauty of the Alps which we are accustomed to associate with Switzerland. He loves the smiling lakes, the green forests, the fertile plains with the snow-capped giants in the dim distance.

Keller is no Shakespeare, no Goethe, but his works will live as the embodiment, in the form of literary art, of the foibles and virtues, the inner strength and the ideals of the Swiss people and the German race.

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A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET (1856)

TRANSLATED BY PAUL BERNARD THOMAS



O tell this story would be an idle imitation, were it not founded upon an actual occurrence showing how deeply rooted in human life is each of those plots on which the great works of the past are based. The number of such plots is not great, but they are constantly reappearing in new dress, and then they constrain the hand to hold them fast.

Near the beautiful river which flows by Seldwyla at half a league's distance rises an extensive ridge of well cultivated land, which merges into the fertile plain. Far off at its foot lies a village, comprising several large farm-houses; and there some years ago were three splendid long fields lying side by side and stretching afar over the gentle slope, like three gigantic ribbons. One sunny morning in September two farmers were out plowing in two of these fields—to be explicit, the two outside ones. The middle one had apparently been lying there untilled and desolate for years, for it was covered with stones and high weeds, and a world of little winged creatures were buzzing about in it undisturbed.

The farmers, who were following their plows on either side, were tall, rugged men of about forty years, whose appearance proclaimed at the first glance the self-reliant, well-to-do countryman. They wore short knee-breeches of strong twill, in which each fold had its own unchangeable place and looked as if it were chiseled out of stone. When-

ever their plows struck an obstacle, causing them to grip the handles tighter, the light shock made the sleeves of their coarse shirts quiver. Their well-shaven faces, calm and alert, but squinting a little in the glare of the sun, looked steadily ahead and measured the furrow, except perhaps now and then when they would turn around to see whence came some far-off noise that interrupted the stillness of the countryside. Slowly and with a certain natural grace they put forward one foot after the other, and neither said a word, unless it was to give some direction to the hired-man who was driving the magnificent horses.

Thus from a little distance they looked exactly alike, for they represented the original type of the region; and at first sight one could have distinguished them only by the fact that the one wore his white cap with the peak tipping forward over his brow, while the other's fell back on his neck. But even that distinction alternated between them, depending upon the direction in which they were plowing; for when they met and passed each other on the crest of the ridge, where there was a fresh east wind blowing, the one who was facing it had the peak of his cap thrown back, while that of the other, with the wind behind him, stuck out in front. In between there was each time a moment when the gleaming caps stood upright, fluttering in the breeze and shooting skyward like two tongues of white flame.

And so the two men plowed calmly on, and it was a beautiful sight in that quiet, golden September landscape to watch them pass each other on the ridge slowly and silently, and gradually draw apart, ever farther and farther, until they both sank, like two setting constellations, behind the brow of the hill and finally vanished from sight, to appear again after some time. Whenever they came across a stone in the furrow, they would hurl it with a sluggish, powerful fling into the waste field; this, however, happened but rarely, for the latter was already nearly covered with all the stones that had ever been found on the two adjoining fields.

Thus the long morning had partly passed, when a cunning little vehicle, hardly visible as it started up the gentle slope, drew near from the direction of the village. It was a child's cart, painted green, in which the children of the two plowmen, a boy and a little mite of a girl, were together bringing out their fathers' luncheon. There lay in the cart for each a fine loaf of bread wrapped in a napkin, a jug of wine with glasses, and also some little delicacy which the fond housewife had sent along for her industrious husband. There were also packed in it all sorts of strangely shaped apples and pears, which the children had gathered on the way and bitten into; likewise a doll, absolutely naked and with only one leg and a dirty face, which was sitting like a young lady between the two loaves and enjoying the ride. After many a jolt and halt, the vehicle finally came to a stop on the crest of the ridge in the shade of a linden copse that stood on the border of the field.

It was now possible to obtain a closer view of the two wagoners. One was a boy of seven years, the other a little maid of five, and both were healthy and bright. Otherwise there was nothing remarkable about them, except that both had very pretty eyes, and the little girl also a brownish complexion and very curly dark hair, which gave her a fiery, frank appearance.

The plowmen, who had once more arrived at the top, put some clover before their horses, left their plows in the half-finished furrows, and betook themselves like good neighbors to their joint repast, greeting each other now for the first time; for as yet they had not exchanged a word that day.

While the two men were comfortably eating their luncheon and sharing it contentedly and benevolently with the children, who did not leave the spot as long as the eating and drinking continued, they cast sweeping glances over the landscape far and near, and saw the little city among the mountains in the smoky, sunlit haze; for the abundant meal which the people of Seldwyla prepared every noon was wont to send up over their roofs a cloud of far-gleaming, silvery smoke, which floated gaily along their mountains.

“The rogues in Seldwyla are hard at their cooking again!” said Manz, one of the farmers.

And Marti, the other, answered:

“One of them came around yesterday to see me about the field.”

“From the District Council? He came to me too,” said Manz.

“So? And he told you too, I suppose, that you ought to use the land and pay the gentlemen rent for it?”

“Yes—until it’s decided who owns the field, and what’s to be done with it. But I had no mind to put the wild waste in order for somebody else. I told them they ought to sell the land and lay aside the proceeds until the owner has been found—which will probably never happen, for anything that’s brought to court in Seldwyla lies there a good while, and besides the matter is a hard one to settle. Meanwhile the rogues would like only too well to get a rake-off from the rent, though, to be sure, they could do that with the money got by selling it. But we’d take care not to bid too high for it, and then we’d know at any rate what we had and who owned the land.”

“That’s what I think too, and I gave the idle gadabout a similar answer!”

They were silent for a moment, and then Manz began again:

“But it’s too bad just the same that the good land must lie there that way and be an eyesore. It has been so for some twenty years, and not a soul bothers his head about it! For there’s nobody here in the village who has any claim at all to the field, and no one knows what ever became of the vagabond trumpeter’s children.”

“Hm!” said Marti, “it’s a queer business! When I look at the black fiddler, who is one day living among the vagrants and the next playing for a dance in one of the villages, I could swear that he’s a descendant of the trumpeter, though, to be sure, he doesn’t know that he still has a field. But what would he do with it?—spree it for a month,

and then go on as before! Besides, who has any right to talk when we can know nothing for sure?"

"That might start a pretty business!" answered Manz. "We have enough to do disputing this fiddler's right to make his home in our community, now that they are forever trying to unload the vagabond on us. Inasmuch as his parents once cast in their lot with the vagrants, let him stay with them too, and saw his fiddle for the tramps. How in the world can we know that he's the trumpeter's grandson? As for me, even when I'm sure I recognize the old trumpeter in the fiddler's black face, I say: To err is human, and the smallest piece of paper, a mere scrap of a certificate of baptism, would satisfy my conscience better than ten sinful human faces!"

"Why, of course!" said Marti. "He says, to be sure, that it was not his fault that he wasn't baptized. But are we supposed to make our baptismal font portable and carry it around in the woods with us? No, it stands immovable in the church, and instead we have a portable bier hanging outside on the wall! We're already over-populated in the village; we'll soon have to have two schoolmasters!"

With this the meal and the conversation of the two farmers came to an end, and they rose to finish their forenoon's work. The two children, on the other hand, who had already made plans to return home with their fathers, drew their cart under the shelter of the young lindens, and betook themselves on an excursion into the waste field, which to them, with its weeds, bushes and heaps of stones, represented an unfamiliar and fascinating wilderness. After they had wandered hand in hand for a little while in the midst of this green waste, and had amused themselves by swinging their joined hands above the high thistles, they finally sat down in the shade of one of these, and the little girl began to make a dress for the doll out of long plantain-leaves, so that it was presently decked out in a beautiful, green, scalloped skirt. A solitary red poppy, which was still blooming there, was drawn over its head as a hood and

fastened on with a blade of grass; all of which made the little figure look like a witch, especially after it had acquired, in addition, a necklace and belt of little red berries. Then it was placed high up on the stalk of a thistle, and contemplated for a while with united glances, until the boy had looked at it long enough and brought it down with a stone. This completely disarranged the doll's toilet, and the girl speedily disrobed it in order to dress it anew. But the moment the doll was again quite naked and rejoiced only in the red hood, the wild youngster snatched the plaything away from his companion and threw it high into the air. The girl ran after it with a cry, but the boy got it first and gave it another fling. He continued to tease her in this way for a long time, the little girl all the while struggling vainly to get hold of the flying doll, which suffered considerable damage at his hands, especially to the knee of its one leg, where a small hole appeared, allowing some bran to trickle out. As soon as the tormentor noticed this hole, he stopped still as a mouse and with open mouth eagerly began to enlarge the hole with his finger-nails, in order to ascertain the source of the bran. His standing still seemed highly suspicious to the poor little girl; she crowded up close to him and with horror was compelled to witness his wicked proceeding.

“ Oh, look! ” he cried, and jerked the leg around before her nose, so that the bran flew into her face. And when she made a grab for the doll and screamed and begged, he ran away again and did not stop until the whole leg was empty and hung down limp, like a pitiful husk. Then he flung down the much-abused toy once more and assumed a very impudent and indifferent air, as the little girl, crying, threw herself upon the doll and covered it with her apron. Presently she drew it out again and sadly contemplated the poor thing. When she saw the leg she began to cry afresh, for it hung down from the body like the tail of a salamander. The evil-doer, seeing her crying so violently, finally began to feel badly about it and stood anxious and repentant before the wailing child. When she became

aware of this, she suddenly stopped crying and struck him several times with the doll. He made believe that it hurt him and cried ouch! so naturally that she was satisfied, and they now resumed together the destructive dissection. They bored hole after hole into the little martyr's body, letting the bran run out from all sides. Then they carefully gathered it into a little pile on a flat stone, stirred it around, and looked at it intently.

The one intact member which the doll still retained was its head, and of course this now attracted their chief attention. They severed it carefully from the eviscerated body and peeped with amazement into the hollow interior. When they saw the ominous hole and also the bran, their next most natural idea was to fill the head with the bran. And so the children's small fingers began to vie with one another in putting the bran into the head, which now, for the first time in its existence, had something in it. The boy, however, probably still regarded it as dead knowledge, for he suddenly caught a large blue fly, and holding it, buzzing, in the hollow of his hands, he ordered the girl to empty the head of bran. The fly was then imprisoned in it and the hole stopt up with grass, and after both the children had held the head to their ears, they solemnly put it down on a stone. As it still had on the red-poppay hood, the resonant head now resembled a prophet's poll, and the children with their arms around each other listened in profound silence to its oracles and fairy-tales.

But prophets always awaken terror and ingratitude; the bit of life in the poorly formed image aroused the children's human propensity to be cruel, and it was decided to bury the head. Without asking the imprisoned fly's opinion about it, they dug a grave, laid the head in it, and erected an imposing monument of field-stones over the spot. Then a gruesome feeling came over them, as they had buried something with life and form, and they went some distance away from the uncanny place. On a little spot completely overgrown with green weeds the girl, who was now very tired, lay down on her back and began to sing, monotonously re-

peating the same words over and over again, while the little boy, who was feeling so drowsy and lazy that he did not know whether to lie down or not, squatted beside her and joined in. The sun shone into the singing girl's open mouth, lighting up her dazzlingly white teeth, and suffusing her round, red lips. The boy saw the teeth, and, holding the girl's head, examined them with curiosity.

"Guess," he cried, "how many teeth we have?"

The girl bethought herself for a moment, as if counting up deliberately, and then said at random:

"A hundred!"

"No, thirty-two!" he exclaimed. "Wait, I'll count them."

Then he counted the little girl's teeth, and as the number did not come out thirty-two, he kept beginning all over again. The girl held still a long time, but as the eager counter did not seem to be going to stop, she got up hurriedly, exclaiming:

"Now let me count yours!"

The boy then lay down among the weeds, and the girl leaned over him, putting her arms around his head. He opened his mouth and she began to count:

"One, two, seven, five, two, one,"—for the pretty little creature had not yet learned to count.

The boy corrected and prompted her, however, and she too began all over again a great many times. This game seemed to amuse them more than any they had tried that day.

Finally, however, the girl sank down completely on the youthful arithmetician, and the two children fell asleep in the bright midday sun.

In the meantime their fathers had finished plowing their fields, having converted the surface into brown, fresh-smelling loam. But when they reached the end of the last furrow and one of the farm-hands started to quit for the day, his master called out:

"What are you stopping for? Turn about again!"

"But I thought we were through," said the man.

“ Hold your tongue and do as I say! ” cried the master.

And they turned around and plowed a deep furrow in the middle, ownerless field, making the weeds and stones fly. These latter, however, the farmer did not stop to throw aside; he very likely thought there would be time enough for that later, and for the present was content to do the work in a very rough way.

And so the man plowed swiftly up in a gentle curve, and when he reached the crest and the fresh wind again blew back the tip of his cap, whom should he pass on the opposite side but the other farmer, who, with the tip of his cap forward, was likewise plowing a deep furrow in the middle field and throwing the clods of earth aside. Each probably saw what the other was doing, but neither seemed to see it, and they disappeared from each other's sight, each constellation silently passing the other and sinking below this round world. Thus the shuttles of fate pass one another, and “ what he is weaving, no weaver knoweth.”

Harvest followed harvest, and each saw the children grown larger and handsomer, and the ownerless field grown narrower between its widened neighbors. With every plowing it had lost on either side the width of one furrow, and not a word had been said about it, and seemingly no human eye had noticed the crime. Each year the stones had been thrown in closer together, so that they now formed a regular backbone up and down the entire length of the field; and the wild weeds on it were now so high that the children, although they too had grown, could no longer see each other when they walked on opposite sides. For they no longer went out to the field together, since the ten-year old Salomon, or Sali, as he was called, now sturdily kept company with the larger boys and men; while the brown Verena,* though now a fiery girl, was constrained,

* Keller usually calls his heroine Vrenchen, a diminutive of Verena, which is the name of a saint; but occasionally he uses the “ pet ” forms, Vreeli and Vrenggel. As these forms look odd in English, and hardly suggest the girl's real name, it has seemed best to call her Verena, and to sacrifice whatever effect is due to the German diminutive.—TRANSLATOR.

in order to avoid being teased by the other girls as a tom-boy, to go about under the guardianship of her own sex. Nevertheless once during each harvest, when everybody was in the fields, they regularly took occasion to climb up the wild stone barrier that separated them and push each other down from it. Although this was the only intercourse they ever had with each other, this annual ceremony was cherished all the more carefully, as their fathers' fields came together nowhere else.

It was finally announced, however, that the field was to be sold and the proceeds provisionally taken in charge by the authorities. The auction took place on the field itself, where, however, with the exception of Manz and Marti, only a few idlers appeared, as nobody had any desire to buy and till the strange tract between the two neighbors. For, although the latter were among the best farmers of the village and had done only what two-thirds of the others would have done under the same circumstance, nevertheless people now eyed them askance for it, and nobody wanted to be hemmed in between them in the diminished orphan-field. Most men are capable of doing, and are ready to do, a wrong which is in the air, when they poke their nose right into it; but as soon as one of them has done it, the others are glad that it was not they who did it or were tempted to do it, and they look upon the chosen man as a vice-gage of their own characters, and treat him with timid awe as the divinely-marked diverter of wrong, while all the time their own mouths are watering for the advantages he enjoys from his crime.

Manz and Marti, therefore, were the only ones who bid for the field in earnest, and after some rather obstinate overbidding it was knocked down to Manz. The officials and onlookers left the field and the two farmers finished their day's work. On their way home they met and Marti said:

“I suppose now you'll put your new and old land together and divide it into two equal strips. At any rate that's what I should have done if I had got it.”

“And I shall certainly do that too,” answered Manz,” for in one piece the field would be too large for me. But, as I was going to say, I have noticed that you’ve lately plowed diagonally across the lower end of this field, which now belongs to me, and that you’ve cut off a good big triangle from it. Perhaps you did so thinking that you’d sooner or later own the whole field anyway. But as it now belongs to me, you of course understand that I have no use for and cannot tolerate any such unseemly bend, and you will surely have no objection to my making the strip straight again. That oughtn’t to cause any disagreement between us!”

Marti replied just as coolly as Manz had addressed him:

“Neither do I see why we should quarrel about it! As I understand it, you bought the field just as it lies. We looked it over, all of us, and in the course of an hour it hasn’t changed a hair’s breadth!”

“Nonsense!” said Manz. “We won’t rake up the past. But too much is too much, and everything must at last be properly straightened out. These three fields have always lain there side by side, as if marked off by a straight-edge. It’s a very curious joke of yours to bring such a nonsensical, ridiculous crook between them. We’d get nicknames if we let that crooked end stay there—it must go, I tell you!”

Marti laughed and said:

“It’s remarkable, the way you’ve suddenly become afraid of ridicule! However, it can be managed. The crook doesn’t bother me at all, but if it annoys you, all right—we’ll make it straight! But not on my side! I’ll hand you that in writing, if you like!”

“Don’t be so funny!” said Manz. “It shall be made straight, and on your side. You may count on that!”

“We’ll see about that!” said Marti, and the two men separated without looking at each other again. They preferred to gaze off into the blue in various directions, as if they saw something remarkable and were obliged to look at it with all their might.

The very next day Manz sent a farm-boy, a hired girl, and his own little son Sali out to the field to clear away the wild weeds and underbrush and stack it into piles, in order to facilitate the subsequent work of carting off the stones. This was something new for him to send out the boy despite his mother's protests, for Sali was not yet quite eleven years old and had never been held to any work. As he spoke with serious and unctuous words, it seemed as if this severity toward his own flesh and blood were intended to stifle his consciousness of wrong-doing, which was now quietly beginning to show its effects.

Meanwhile the little company he sent out worked merrily at clearing away the weeds, and hacked with gusto at the curious bushes and plants of all kinds that had been growing rankly there for years. For, inasmuch as it was an unusual and in a sense disorderly task, requiring no rule and no care, it counted as a pleasure. The wild stuff, dried by the sun, was piled up and burned with great glee, so that the smoke spread far and wide, and the young people ran about as if possessed. This was the last joyous occasion on the unlucky field, and little Verena, Marti's daughter, also came stealing out and took part. The unusualness of the event and the joyful excitement offered her a good opportunity to join her young playmate once more, and the children were very happy and lively around the fire. Other children came too, and a very jolly company assembled. But whenever Sali got separated from Verena he would immediately seek to rejoin her, and she likewise, smiling happily all the time, would contrive to slip up to him. To both children it seemed as if this glorious day must not and could not end.

Toward evening, however, old Manz came out to see what had been accomplished, and, although they were all through with the work, he scolded them for their jollity and broke up the company. At the same time Marti appeared on his own land, and, seeing his daughter, whistled so shrilly and imperiously to her through his fingers that she ran to him

in alarm. Without knowing why, he boxed her ears several times. And so both children went home crying and in great grief—really knowing just as little why they were now so sad as why they had been so happy before. For harshness on the part of their fathers, in itself rather new, was not understood by the unsuspecting creatures, and so could not make a very deep impression upon them.

The following days, when Manz had the stones picked up and carried away, the work became more strenuous and required grown men. It looked as if there would be no end to it, and all the stones in the world seemed to be gathered there. Manz, however, did not have them carted away from the field, but had each load dumped on the contested triangle, which Marti had neatly plowed up. He had previously drawn a straight line as a boundary, and now covered this little plot with all the stones which both men from time immemorial had thrown into the middle field, so that an enormous pyramid arose, which he felt sure that his rival would be slow to remove.

Marti had expected anything but this; he supposed that Manz would go to work with his plow in the same old way, and had therefore waited to see him setting out as plowman. Not until it was almost completed did he hear about the beautiful monument which Manz had erected. He ran out in a rage, took a look at the pickle he was in, and then ran back to fetch the magistrate, in order to get a preliminary injunction against the pile of stones and to have the plot attached. And from this day forth the two farmers were in litigation with each other, and did not rest until they were both ruined.

The thoughts of these hitherto sensible men were now cut as fine as chopped straw, each being filled with the strictest sense of justice in the world. Neither could or would understand how the other, with such manifest and arbitrary injustice, could claim for himself the insignificant corner in question. Manz also developed a remarkable sense for symmetry and parallel lines, and felt himself

truly wronged by the foolish obstinacy with which Marti insisted on preserving that most nonsensical and capricious crook. But each held to the conviction that the other, in trying with such downright insolence to defraud him, must necessarily take him for a contemptible blockhead; one might try that sort of thing on some poor, helpless devil, but never on a shrewd and sensible man, able to take care of himself. Each felt that the other was injuring his precious honor, and each gave himself over without restraint to the passion of strife and the resulting decadence.

Thenceforward their life was like the torturing nightmare of two condemned souls, who, while floating down a dark stream on a narrow board, fall into a quarrel, thrash the air, and clinch and try to annihilate each other, each thinking that he has hold of the cause of his misfortune. As they had a bad case, both fell into the bad hands of the worst sort of shysters, who inflated their distorted fancies into enormous bubbles and filled them with the most baneful notions. These men were chiefly speculators from the city of Seldwyla, to whom this affair meant easy money. It was consequently not long before each of the rivals had behind him a following of go-betweens, informers, and advisers, who contrived in a hundred ways to get away with all the cash. For the little piece of land with its stone-pile, on which a forest of nettles and thistles was again blooming, was merely the germ, or the foundation, of an involved history and a new mode of life, in which the two men of fifty acquired habits and manners, principles and hopes, that were alien to their former experience. The more they lost, the more they wished and longed for money; and the less they had, the more obstinate they were in expecting to get rich and gain an advantage over each other. They allowed themselves to be seduced into all sorts of swindles, and every year they put money into all the foreign lotteries, tickets for which circulated abundantly in Seldwyla. Never once, however, did they set eyes on a thaler won, although they were always hearing about the

winnings of other people, and how they themselves had almost won. Meanwhile this passion was a constant drain upon their money. Occasionally the people of Seldwyla amused themselves by inducing the two farmers, without their knowing it, to buy shares in the same ticket, so that each would base his hope for the other's ruin and downfall upon one and the same lot.

They spent half their time in town. Here each had his headquarters in a miserable dive, where he would get excited and allow himself to be lured into making the most absurd expenditures and into a wretched and inept carousing, which secretly made his heart ache. Thus both of them, really keeping up the quarrel only to avoid being considered blockheads, as a matter of fact were excellent representatives of that type and were so regarded by everybody. The other half of their time they spent sullenly lounging at home, or going about their work and seeking to make up for lost time by a mad, ill-advised rushing and driving which frightened away every decent and trustworthy workman.

And so their affairs went backward at an alarming rate, and before ten years had elapsed they were both heels over head in debt, and stood like the storks, on one leg, at the threshold of their possessions, to be blown over by any breath of air. But however they fared, their hatred for each other increased daily, since each regarded the other as the originator of his misfortune, as his hereditary enemy, his absolutely senseless antagonist, whom the devil had sent to earth on purpose to ruin him. They would spit at the mere sight of each other; no member of either household was permitted, under penalty of the grossest maltreatment, to say a single word to the wife, child, or servants of the other.

Their wives behaved quite differently during this impoverishment and debasement of their entire existence. Marti's wife, who was of good stock, was unable to endure the decline; she pined away and died before her daughter

was yet fourteen years old. Manz's wife, on the other hand, adapted herself to the changed mode of life. In order to develop into a bad partner, she had only to give free play to a few feminine faults she had always had and let them grow into vices. Her fondness for dainties developed into inordinate greed; her volubility into a radically false and deceitful habit of flattery and slander, so that every moment she said the exact opposite of what she thought, kept everything in a turmoil, and threw dust into the eyes of her own husband. The candor she originally displayed in more or less innocent gossip developed now into an obdurate shamelessness of mendacity. Thus instead of suffering at the hands of her husband, she hoaxed him. When he acted badly, she raised Cain and denied herself nothing; and thus she thrived to richest bloom as mistress of the decadent house.

And so the poor children were now in a sorry plight. As there was everywhere nothing but quarreling and anxiety, they could neither cherish pleasant hopes for their future nor rejoice in a pleasant and gladsome youth. Little Verena was apparently in an even worse position than Sali, since her mother was dead and she was left alone in a dreary house under the tyranny of a debased father. At the age of sixteen she had already developed into a slender and graceful girl; her dark-brown curls always hung down almost to her lustrous brown eyes; the dark-red blood shone through her brownish cheeks and gleamed, in a way rarely seen, as a deep scarlet on her fresh lips—all of which gave the dark child a peculiar and marked appearance. Ardent love of life and joyfulness quivered in every fibre of her being; she would laugh and was ready for jest and play whenever the weather was the least bit pleasant, that is, whenever she was not too greatly tormented or harassed by her many cares. These, however, distressed her often enough; for she had not only to bear the grief and the increasing misery of the home, but she had herself to look out for as well; and she liked to dress herself half-

way decently and neatly, while her father would not give her the slightest means for it. So little Verena had the greatest difficulty in adorning her charming person after a fashion, in supplying herself with a very modest dress for Sunday, and in keeping together some gay, almost worthless neckerchiefs. The beautiful cheery young girl was therefore tied down and humiliated in every way, and there was little or no chance of her falling into proud ways. Besides this, she had seen at an age of awakening intelligence her mother's suffering and death. The memory of this laid a further restraint upon her joyous and fiery nature; so that it was very lovely, innocent, and touching to see the good child cheered by every glimpse of the sun and ready to smile in spite of all her trouble.

At first sight Sali did not seem to fare so ill; for he was now a handsome, strong young fellow, who knew how to look out for himself, and whose very bearing made bad treatment inadmissible. He saw, indeed, the bad domestic management of his parents, and thought he could remember a time when things were different; yes, the earlier picture of his father still lingered vividly in his memory—the strong, wise, calm farmer, the same man whom he now saw before him as a gray-haired fool, a quarreler and an idler, who with mad swagger was treading a hundred absurd and deceitful paths and going backward, like a crab, every hour. If all this displeased Sali and often filled him with shame and sorrow, it not being clear to his inexperience how matters had got into such a state, his anxiety about it was quieted by his mother's flattering treatment. For, in order to be less disturbed in her evil life and to have a good partisan in it, and also in order to gratify her braggart vanity, she let him have whatever he wanted, dressed him neatly and showily, and supported him in everything that he undertook for his pleasure. He accepted all this without much gratitude, since his mother tattled and lied to him far too much for that; and while he found but very little pleasure in it, he did in a sluggish and thoughtless

way whatever he pleased, without its ever being anything bad. For he was as yet uninjured by the example of his parents, and still felt the youthful necessity of being, upon the whole, simple, calm, and fairly capable.

Thus he was very much as his father had been at the same age, and this fact imbued the latter with an involuntary respect for his son, in whom, with a confused conscience and pained memory, he respected his own youth. But in spite of this freedom which Sali enjoyed, his life was after all not happy; he probably felt that there was nothing worth while in store for him, and that he was not learning anything worth while — for there had been no such thing as systematic and serious work in Manz's house for a long time. His greatest comfort, therefore, was to take pride in his independence and temporary good name, and in this pride he defiantly idled away the days and turned his eyes away from the future.

The only constraint to which he was subjected was his father's enmity toward everybody that bore the name of Marti or called him to mind. All he knew was that Marti had done his father some injury, and that everybody in Marti's house was equally malevolent; hence he did not find it very hard to look neither at Marti nor at his daughter, or to assume the rôle, for his own part, of an incipient, but still rather mild enemy. Little Verena, on the other hand, who had more to put up with than Sali and was much more forlorn in her home, felt less disposed to open enmity, and only thought herself despised by the well-dressed and apparently happier Sali. For this reason she kept out of his sight, and whenever he was anywhere near her she would hurry away without his taking the trouble to look after her. The result was that several years had passed without his having seen the girl close at hand, so that he had no idea how she looked, now that she was grown up. And yet now and then he wondered about it exceedingly, and whenever anything was said about the Martis, he involuntarily thought only of the daughter, of whose present

appearance he had no clear mental picture, and whose memory was not at all odious to him.

But now his father, Manz, was the first of the two enemies to be compelled to give up and abandon house and home. This priority was the result of his having a wife to help him, and a son who likewise made some demands, whereas Marti had been the only consumer in his tottering kingdom, in which his daughter had been allowed to work like a dog, but not to use anything. Manz knew of nothing else to do but to move into town, on the advice of his "friends" in Seldwyla, and set up there as an inn-keeper. It is always a pathetic sight when a quondam farmer who has grown old in the fields, moves with the remnants of his property into town and opens a tavern or saloon there, in order, as a last hope, to play the part of the friendly and clever landlord, when as a matter of fact he feels anything but friendly.

When the Manzes moved away from their farm, people saw for the first time how poor they had already become; for they loaded on the wagon nothing but old, dilapidated furniture, which obviously had not been renovated or replenished for years. But none the less the wife was decked out in her best finery as she took her seat upon the cart-load of truck, making a hopeful face, and already, as the future town-lady, looking down with contempt upon the villagers, who were filled with compassion as they peered out from behind hedges at the dubious procession. For she proposed to charm the whole town with her amiability and shrewdness, and whatever her stupid husband could not do, she herself was going to do, just as soon as she occupied the dignified position of "Mine hostess" in an imposing tavern.

This tavern, however, in which another man had already failed, was a miserable hole in a narrow, out-of-the-way alley, which the people of Seldwyla leased to Manz, knowing that he still had a few hundred thalers coming to him. They also sold him a few little casks of adulterated wine

and the furnishings of the establishment, consisting of a dozen poor bottles, an equal number of glasses and some fir tables and benches which had once been covered with red paint, but were now bare in spots as the result of scouring. In front of the window an iron ring creaked on a hook, and in the ring a tin hand was pouring red wine out of a mug into a glass. There was furthermore hanging over the door a dried-up sprig of holly, all of which was included in Manz's rent.

In view of all this Manz did not feel as cheerful as his wife, but was filled with wrath and evil forebodings as he urged along the lean horses that he had hired from the new farmer. His last shabby little farm-hand had left him several weeks before. As he drove off in this way he did not fail to see that Marti, full of scorn and malicious joy, was pretending to be at work not far from the road, and cursed him, regarding him as the sole cause of his misfortune. As soon as the wagon was under way, however, Sali quickened his steps, hurried on ahead, and went into town alone by side-paths.

"Here we are!" said Manz, as the wagon drew up in front of the dingy hole. His wife was horrified, for it was indeed a sorry-looking tavern. The people hurried to their windows and in front of their houses to see the new farmer-landlord, and with their Seldwyla air of superiority put on a mien of mock sympathy. Angry and with wet-eyes, madam climbed down from the wagon and, sharpening her tongue in advance, ran into the house to keep out of sight for the rest of the day, like a fine lady; for she was ashamed of the dilapidated furniture and worn-out beds that were now unloaded. Sali too was ashamed, but he was obliged to help, and he and his father made a strange layout in the alley, in which the children of all the bankrupts were presently running about and making fun of the ragged rustic crew. Inside the house, however, it looked even more dismal and resembled a regular thieves'-den. The walls were of badly-whitewashed, damp masonry, and aside from the

dark, uninviting guest-room with its once blood-red tables, there were only a few wretched little rooms; and the departed predecessor had left behind him everywhere the most discouraging dirt and sweepings.

So it began and so it continued. In the course of the first few weeks there came in now and then, especially in the evening, a tableful of guests, curious to see the country landlord, and to find out whether there was any fun to be had there. In the landlord they found little to look at, for Manz was awkward, silent, unfriendly, and melancholy, and neither knew, nor cared to know, how to conduct himself. He would fill the mugs slowly and clumsily, set them down sullenly before his guests, and try to say something, but without success. All the more zealously did his wife throw herself into the breach, and for a few days she really held the people together—but in a sense quite other than she herself thought. The rather stout woman had put together a singular house-dress, in which she thought herself irresistible; in addition to an undyed country-skirt of linen, she wore an old, green-silk spencer, a cotton apron, and a shabby white collar. Over her temples she had curled her hair—no longer thick—into funny-looking spirals and had stuck a high comb into the knot behind. Thus she pranced and danced about with an effort to be graceful, puckered up her mouth comically to make it look sweet, tripped elastically to the table, laid down the glass or plate of salted cheese, and said with a smile:

“La, now! Isn’t that nice? Fine, gentlemen, fine!” and more such stupid nonsense. For although she generally had a glib tongue, she was now unable to say anything clever because she was a stranger and did not know her guests. The people of Seldwyla, those of the worst kind who hung about there, held their hands over their mouths and nearly choked with laughter; they would kick one another under the table and say:

“God o’ mercy! but she’s a peach!”

“An angel!” said another. “By thunder! It’s worth

the trouble to come here — it's a long time since we've seen one like that."

Her husband observed it all with a frown, gave her a poke in the ribs, and whispered:

"You old cow! What are you doing?"

"Don't bother me!" she replied indignantly. "You old blockhead! Don't you see what trouble I'm taking, and how I understand dealing with people? But these are only scamps of your following! Just let me go ahead and I'll soon have more respectable customers here!"

This scene was illuminated by one or two small tallow candles. But Sali, the son, went out into the dark kitchen, sat down on the hearth, and wept over his father and mother.

But the guests soon grew tired of the spectacle which the good Mrs. Manz afforded them, and staid where they were more at ease and could laugh at the wonderful inn-keeping. Only now and then a single customer appeared, who drank a glass and yawned at the walls; or, by way of exception, there came a whole crowd to deceive the poor people with a short-lived, noisy carousal. They grew anxious and uneasy in the narrow hole-in-the-wall, where they hardly saw the sun, and Manz, who had become accustomed to lounging in town for days on end, now found it intolerable between these walls. When he thought of the free expanse of the fields, he would brood and stare gloomily at the ceiling or at the floor, or run out of the narrow front-door and back again, while the neighbors gaped in amazement at the ugly landlord, as they already called him.

But it was not very long before they were reduced to penury and had absolutely nothing left. In order to get anything to eat they had to wait until somebody came and paid a little money for some of the wine they still had on hand; and if he asked for a sausage or the like, they often had the greatest trouble and distress in procuring it. Before long they had no wine save what was kept in a large bottle which they secretly had filled in another saloon, so

that they were now called upon to play the host without wine or bread, and to be genial on an empty stomach. They were almost glad when nobody came in, and so they crouched in their little tavern, unable to live or yet to die.

The effect of these sad experiences upon Mrs. Manz was to make her take off the green spencer, and again set about making a change in herself; as formerly the faults, she now allowed some of the virtues of womankind to sprout and grow a little,—for it was a case of necessity. She exercised patience, sought to keep the old man on his feet and to direct the boy into good ways, denying herself many things in so doing. In short, she exerted in her way a kind of beneficent influence, which, to be sure, did not reach far or improve things much, but was nevertheless better than nothing or the reverse method, and at any rate helped to pass the time, which otherwise would have come to a crisis much sooner for these people. She was able, according to her light, to offer considerable advice in their miserable plight, and if the advice appeared to be worthless and did no good, she willingly bore the anger of the men. In short, now that she was old she did a great many things which would have served better, had she done them earlier in life.

To have a little something to chew on, and a means of passing the time, father and son resorted to fishing, that is, with the rod, wherever the river was free to all for angling. This was, indeed, the chief occupation of the Seldwyla bankrupts. In fair weather, when the fish were biting well, one would see them strolling out by the dozen with rod and pail, and if one walked along the river-bank, one would find a squatting fisherman at every step; here, a man in a long, brown citizen's coat, his bare feet in the water; there, another, standing on an old willow, in a blue swallow-tail, his old felt hat cocked over one ear; yonder, still another, fishing away in a ragged large-flowered dressing-gown, since it was all he had, his long pipe in one hand, his rod in the other. When one followed around a bend in the

river, there would be standing on a stone, fishing without a stitch of clothing on him, an old bald-headed pot-belly, whose feet, in spite of his being so near the water, were so black that one would think he had his boots on. Each one would have beside him a can or box of squirming angle-worms, which they used to dig up at odd times. When the sky was overcast with clouds and the weather was murky and sultry, foretelling rain, then these forms would be standing there by the meandering river in the greatest numbers, motionless, like a picture-gallery of saints and prophets. The country people passed by them with wagons and cattle without noticing them; even the boatmen on the river paid no attention to them, while the fishermen would grumble softly about the troublesome boats.

Had anybody prophesied to Manz twelve years before, as he was plowing with a fine span of horses on the hill above the river-bank, that he would one day join these curious fellows and catch fish with them, he would have been not a little enraged. Even now he hurried past behind their backs and hastened up the river like a self-willed shade of the underworld, seeking for his doom a comfortable, lonely place beside the dark waters. Meanwhile neither he nor his son had the patience to stand still with their rods; they recalled the many other ways in which peasants catch fish at times, when they are lively and playful, especially that of taking them by hand in the brooks. Hence they took along their rods merely for appearance, and walked up along the banks of the brooks where they knew there were precious fine trout.

Meanwhile Marti, who had remained in the country, fared worse and worse, and his life grew very tedious too; so that, instead of working his neglected field, he likewise resorted to fishing and spent entire days splashing around in the water. Little Verena, who was not allowed to leave his side, had to carry his pail and tackle after him through wet meadows, over streams and marshes of all kinds, in rain or sunshine, and was thus compelled to neglect the

most urgent matters at home. For there was not another soul there, nor any one needed, since Marti had already lost the most of his land, and now owned only a few acres, which he and his daughter cultivated in a very slovenly way or not at all.

So it happened one evening when he was walking along the bank of a rather deep and rapid stream, in which the trout were leaping up constantly, the sky being overcast with storm-clouds, that he unexpectedly met his enemy Manz, who was coming along the opposite shore. The moment he saw him a terrible feeling of anger and scorn came over him; for years they had not been so close to each other, except before the bar of justice, where they were not allowed to abuse each other. Filled with fury, Marti now called out:

“What are you doing here, you dog? Can't you stay in your dirty hole, you Seldwyla cur?”

“You'll be coming there yourself pretty soon, you scoundrel!” cried Manz. “I see you've taken to fishing too, so you won't have to wait much longer!”

“Shut up, you vile dog!” Marti yelled, for here the current of the stream roared louder. “You got me into this fix!”

And now, as the willows by the stream began to rustle noisily in the rising wind, Manz was obliged to shout still louder:

“If that were only so, I'd be glad of it, you miserable wretch!”

“Oh, you cur!” Marti called over, and Manz yelled back:

“Oh, you ass!—what a fool you are!”

And Marti ran like a tiger along the bank, seeking a place to cross. The reason why he was the more furious of the two was this: he supposed that Manz, being a landlord, had at least enough to eat and drink, and was leading a fairly pleasant life, while for him in his dilapidated home it was unfair that life should be so tedious. Meanwhile Manz too was furious enough as he strode along on his side of the

stream. Behind him followed his son, who, instead of listening to the angry quarrel, gazed in curious amazement across at Verena, who was following her father and looking down at the ground in shame, so that her brown curly hair fell over her face. She was carrying a wooden fish-pail in one hand, her shoes and stockings in the other, and had pinned up her dress to keep it from getting wet. Since Sali was walking on the opposite side, however, she had modestly let it drop again, and was now trebly encumbered and bothered; having all the fishing paraphernalia to carry, her dress to hold up, and the quarrel to worry about. Had she glanced up at Sali, she would have discovered that he no longer looked fine or very proud, and that he himself was very much troubled.

While Verena, abashed and confused, was thus gazing down at the ground, and Sali had his eyes fixed on that slender form, charming in all its wretchedness, that was struggling along in such meek bewilderment, they failed to notice that their fathers had become silent, and that both, with increased anger, were making for a wooden foot-bridge which led across the stream a short distance away and was just coming into sight. Lightning began to flash, strangely illuminating the dark, melancholy waterscape; there was also a muffled roar of thunder in the gray-black clouds, and large rain-drops began to fall. The two savage men rushed simultaneously on the narrow bridge, which shook beneath their weight, clinched and drove their fists into each other's faces, which were pale and trembling with wrath and bursting resentment.

It is not a pleasant sight and anything but pretty, when two ordinarily sedate men, through arrogance or indiscretion or in self-defense, come to blows among a mass of people who do not particularly concern them. But this is innocent child's play in comparison with the profound misery that overwhelms two old men, who know each other well and have known each other for years, when, in fierce enmity and with the obduracy begotten of a lifetime, they

clinch with bare hands and pummel each other with their fists. Thus did these two gray-haired men do now. Fifty years before, as boys, they had perhaps had their last fist-fight; but since then neither of them, in the course of fifty long years, had laid hand on the other, except perhaps in their friendly period, when they had greeted each other with a handshake — and even this they had done but rarely, being naturally gruff and self-sufficient.

After they had exchanged one or two blows they stopped, and quivering with rage, silently wrestled with each other, now and then groaning aloud and ferociously gnashing their teeth, while each sought to throw the other over the cracking rail into the water. The children had now come up and saw the pitiful scene. Sali made a leap toward them to assist his father and help him dispatch his hated enemy, who seemed to be the weaker anyway and on the point of succumbing. But Verena, too, throwing down everything and uttering a long scream, sprang up and threw her arms around her father, thinking to protect him by so doing, but really only hindering and encumbering him. The tears were streaming from her eyes, and she looked imploringly at Sali, who was also on the point of seizing and completely overpowering her father. Involuntarily he laid his hand on his own father and tried with firm arm to separate him from his opponent and to calm him. Thus for a moment the fight stopped, or rather the entire group strained restlessly back and forth without separating.

Meanwhile the young people, pushing further in between their fathers, had come into close contact with each others. At that moment a rift in the clouds let through a bright evening ray, illuminating the girl's face. Sali looked into the face that was so well known to him, yet now so different, so much more beautiful. Just then Verena, too, saw his surprise, and in the midst of her terror and tears she gave him a short, quick smile. But Sali, aroused by his father's efforts to shake him off, braced up and finally, by dint of urgently imploring words and a firm attitude, succeeded in

separating him completely from his enemy. The two old fellows drew a deep breath and began to rail and shout at each other as they turned away; but the children were as quiet as death, scarcely even breathing. As they turned to leave, however, unseen by the old men, they quickly clasped each other's hands, which were still damp and cold from the water and fish.

By the time the two growling men went their ways, the clouds had again overcast the sky; it grew darker and darker, and the rain poured down in streams. Manz jogged on ahead in the dark, wet paths with both hands in his pockets, ducking his head under the down-pour. His features were still twitching and his teeth chattering, and unseen tears, which he let drip rather than betray them by wiping them off, trickled into his bristly beard. His son, however, had noticed nothing, for he was lost in blissful visions as he trudged along. He was aware of neither rain nor storm, darkness nor misery. Everything within him and without him was light, bright, and warm, and he felt as rich and well-born as a prince. He constantly saw that momentary smile on the beautiful face near his own, and now for the first time, a good half hour later, returned it. Filled with love, he laughed through night and storm into the dear face, which appeared out of the darkness on every side, causing him to believe that Verena, on her way, must of course see him and become aware of his laughter.

The next day his father was as if crushed, and would not leave the house. The whole quarrel and the long years of misery assumed today a new and more definite form, which spread itself out dimly in the oppressive air of the tavern, so that both Manz and his wife slunk languidly and timidly about the spectre, dragged themselves from the bar-room into the little dark bed-rooms, from there into the kitchen, and from this back into the public room again, in which now no guest ever appeared. Finally both of them slunk down in a corner and spent the day in weary, lifeless quarreling and contending with each other. Sometimes

they would fall asleep and be molested by restless day-dreams, which would rise from their consciences and wake them again.

But of this Sali neither saw nor heard anything; he thought only of Verena. He still felt, not only as if he were inexpressibly rich, but also as if he had learned something worth while and knew about an infinitude of goodness and beauty, since he now recalled so definitely and distinctly what he had seen the day before. This knowledge seemed to him as if it had fallen from heaven, and his mind was in a state of incessant happy amazement over it. And yet it seemed to him as if he had in truth always known and realized that which now filled him with such wonderful sweetness. For there is nothing like the wealth and the unfathomable depth of that happiness which comes to a man in such a clear and distinct form, baptized by the parson and well-provided with a name of its own, which does not sound like other names.

On this day Sali felt neither idle nor unhappy, neither poor nor hopeless. On the contrary he was busily engaged in picturing to himself Verena's face and form, which he did incessantly, hour after hour. But during this excited activity the object itself vanished before him almost completely; that is, he finally imagined that after all he did not know exactly how Verena looked; that he had indeed a general picture of her in his memory, but that if he were called upon to describe her, he would be unable to do so. This picture was constantly before his eyes, as if it were actually standing there, and he felt its pleasant impression. And yet he saw it as something that one has seen but once and come under the power of, and does not yet know. He remembered exactly the features of her childhood, but not those he had seen the day before. Had he never caught sight of Verena again, his memory would of course have managed somehow to reconstruct the dear face deftly, so that not a single feature should be missing. Now, however, it cunningly and obstinately refused to perform its

function, because his eyes demanded their right and pleasure.

In the afternoon, when the sun was shining warm and bright upon the upper floors of the black houses, Sali strolled out of the gate toward his old home, which now seemed to him like a heavenly Jerusalem with twelve shining gates and made his heart throb as he drew near to it. On the way he met Verena's father, who was apparently going to town. His appearance was very wild and slovenly, his beard, now grown gray, had not been trimmed for weeks, and he looked like a very bad, bankrupt farmer who has lost his land through folly and is now going to make trouble for others. Nevertheless Sali no longer regarded him with hatred as they passed each other, but with fear and awe, as if his life were in Marti's hands and he would prefer to secure it by entreaty rather than by defiance. But Marti measured him from head to foot with an ugly glance and went his way. That, however, was agreeable to Sali, to whom the sight of the old man leaving the village gave a clearer vision of his own purpose. He stole around the village on old, well-known paths and through blind alleys, until he finally found himself in front of Marti's house.

For several years he had not seen this place so near by; for even while they were still living here the two enemies took care not to trespass on each other's property. For that reason he was now astonished, though he had had much the same experience in his own home, and stared with amazement at the desolate scene before him.

One piece after another of Marti's arable land had been mortgaged away, so that he now owned nothing but the house, the yard in front of it, a bit of garden, and the field on the height above the river, which he tenaciously persisted in retaining longest of all. There was no longer any thought of systematic farming, however, and on the field, where uniform crops of grain had once waved so beautifully at harvest-time, all sorts of poor, left-over seed—

turnips, cabbages, a few potatoes, and things of that kind, swept together out of old boxes and torn bags — had been sown and had sprouted up, so that the field now looked like a very badly kept vegetable garden. It was a curious exhibit of samples, adapted for living from hand to mouth, where one could pull up now a handful of turnips if one were hungry and knew of nothing better, now a mess of potatoes or cabbages, and let the rest grow on or rot, as the case might be. Furthermore, everybody ran about on it at pleasure, and the beautiful broad strip of land now looked almost like the ownerless field of yore, the origin of all the trouble.

Consequently there was not a trace of orderly farming around the house. The stable was empty, the door hung on one hinge, and innumerable spiders, grown to half their full size during the summer, had spun their shining webs in the sunlight before the dark entrance. Beside the open barn-door, through which the fruits of the solid ground had once been carted in, there now hung some worthless fishing-tackle, bearing witness to Marti's bungling aquatic operations. In the yard there was not a hen or a dove, not a cat or a dog to be seen. The spring was the only thing there showing signs of life, and even that no longer flowed through the pipe, but gushed out through a crack over the ground and formed little pools all about the place, creating the very symbol of laziness; for although it would have given her father but little trouble to stop up the hole and replace the pipe, Verena was now put to it to get even pure water out of this desolation, and had to do her washing in the shallow pools on the ground, instead of in the trough, which was dried up and full of cracks.

The house itself was just as pitiful to behold. The windows were broken in many places and had paper pasted over them, but even so they were nevertheless the pleasantest feature of the dilapidation. For even the broken panes were washed bright and clean, yes, actually polished, and they shone as bright as Verena's eyes, which in a like

manner had to compensate the poor girl for lack of other finery. And just as Verena's curly hair and orange cotton neckerchiefs went well with her eyes, so did the wild, green vegetation, growing in rank confusion about the house, the small, waving forest of beans, and a fragrant wilderness of orange wall-flower, go well with these shining windows. The beans clung as best they could, some to a rake handle or the stub of a broom stuck in the ground upside down, others to a rusty halberd, or sponton, as it was called when Verena's grandfather as sergeant had carried the very thing which she now, from necessity, had planted among the beans; and yonder still others were merrily climbing up a weather-beaten ladder, which had been leaning against the house since time immemorial, and from there were hanging out over the bright windows, as Verena's curly hair hung over her eyes.

This rather picturesque than prosperous farmhouse stood somewhat apart and had no near neighbors; at this particular moment, moreover, there was not a living soul to be seen anywhere about. Sali, therefore, feeling perfectly safe, leaned against an old shed some thirty paces distant, and gazed fixedly across at the quiet, desolate house. He had been leaning and gazing in this way for some little time when Verena came to the door and stood there looking out, her thoughts seemingly concentrated on one object. Sali did not stir or turn his eyes away from her. Finally, chancing to look in his direction, she caught sight of him. They looked at each other for a moment, as if observing an aerial phenomenon, until finally Sali straightened up and walked slowly across the road and the yard toward Verena. When he was near her, she stretched out her hands to him and said, "Sali!" He seized her hands and gazed steadfastly into her face; tears gushed from her eyes, and she turned crimson under his glance.

"What do you want here?" she said.

"Only to see you," he replied. "Can't you and I be good friends again?"

“And our parents?” she asked, turning away her face to hide the tears, since her hands were not free to cover it.

“Are we to blame for what they’ve done and become?” said Sali. “Perhaps the only way to repair the damage is for us two to stick together and be right fond of each other.”

“It’ll never turn out well,” answered Verena with a deep sigh. “In heaven’s name go your way, Sali!”

“Are you alone?” he inquired. “May I come in for a moment?”

“Father has gone to town to make trouble, as he said, for your father. But you cannot come in, because later on perhaps you won’t be able to get away unseen as you can now. Everything is still quiet and there’s nobody around—I beg of you, go now!”

“No, I won’t go like that. Ever since yesterday I’ve had to think about you all the time, and I won’t go away so. We must have a talk together, at least half an hour or an hour—it’ll do us good.”

Verena bethought herself a moment and said:

“Toward evening I go out to our field—you know which, we have only the one—to get some vegetables. I know that nobody else will be there then, because the people are reaping elsewhere. If you wish, meet me there. But go now, and take care that no one sees you; for though nobody associates with us here any more, people would nevertheless make so much talk that my father would be sure to hear about it.”

They now let go each other’s hands, but immediately joined them again as both said simultaneously:

“And how are you, anyway?”

But instead of answering they both asked the same question over again, and the answer lay only in their eloquent eyes, since, as is the way with lovers, they were no longer able to manage words. Without saying anything more they finally separated, half happy, and half sad.

“I’ll come out very soon — only go at once,” she called out after him.

Sali went directly out to the quiet, beautiful height over which the two fields extended. The magnificent, quiet July sun, the passing white clouds floating above the ripe, waving corn, the blue shimmering river flowing by below — all this filled him once more, for the first time in years, with happiness and contentment, instead of pain, and he stretched out his full length in the transparent half-shade of the corn, on the border of Marti’s desolate field, and gazed blissfully toward heaven.

Although it was scarcely a quarter of an hour until Verena joined him, and he had thought of nothing but his happiness and its name, nevertheless it was with an unexpected suddenness that he saw her standing before him and smiling down upon him. Joyfully startled, he jumped up.

“Verena,” he cried, as with a quiet smile she gave him both hands. Hand in hand they walked along beside the whispering corn down to the river and back again, without saying very much. They walked back and forth the same way two or three times, quiet, happy and calm; so that this united couple now also resembled a constellation passing up over the sunny crest of the hill and disappearing behind it, as once their steady-going fathers had done in plowing.

But once, happening to look up from the blue cornflowers on which their eyes were fixed, they suddenly saw another dark star, a swarthy fellow, walking along ahead of them. Whence he had come so unseen, they did not know; he must have been lying in the corn. Verena was startled, and Sali said in alarm:

“The black fiddler!”

In fact the fellow who was strolling along before them was carrying a bow and fiddle under his arm, and he did, moreover, look very black. Besides a little black felt hat and a black sooty smock-frock he wore, his hair, too, was black as pitch, and so was his untrimmed beard, while his face and hands were likewise blackened; for he did all sorts

of hand-work, chiefly kettle-mending, and he also helped the charcoal-burners and pitch-boilers in the forests. He took his fiddle out with him only when he saw a good chance of business, in case the countryfolk were merrymaking somewhere or celebrating a festival.

Sali and Verena walked along behind him, as quiet as mice, thinking that he would turn away from the field and disappear without looking around. And this indeed seemed to be his intention, for he acted as if he had not noticed them. Furthermore they were under a strange spell—they did not dare leave the narrow path and involuntarily followed the uncanny fellow until they reached the end of the field, where that iniquitous pile of stones covered the still disputed corner. A countless number of poppies had settled on it, so that the little mountain at that time looked as red as fire.

Suddenly the black fiddler sprang with a single bound up on the red pile of stones, turned and looked around. The young couple stopped and gazed up in confusion at the dark fellow above; for they could not pass him, because the road led into the village, and they did not like to turn around before his very eyes. He looked at them sharply, and called out:

“ I know you—you’re the children of the men who’ve stolen my land here! I’m glad to see how well you’ve fared—and I shall certainly live to see you go the way of all flesh. Look at me, you two sparrows! Do you like my nose, eh? ”

He had, in fact, a terrible nose. It stuck out from his withered, black face like a big square, or really looked more like a stout cudgel or club which had been thrown into his face. And under it a small, round hole of a mouth, through which he was all the time puffing and blowing and hissing, puckered itself up and contracted in a strange way. The little felt hat, moreover, looked positively uncanny, being neither round nor square, but of such a peculiar shape that, although it lay motionless, it seemed every moment to be

changing its form. Of the fellow's eyes there was scarcely anything to be seen but the whites, since the pupils were incessantly making lightning-like movements and frolicking around zigzag, like two hares.

"Just look at me," he continued; "your fathers know me well, and every man in this place knows who I am, if he just looks at my nose. Years ago it was proclaimed that a bit of money was lying ready for the heir to this field; I've applied for it twenty times, but I haven't any certificate of baptism or papers of citizenship, and the testimony of my friends, the homeless folk who witnessed my birth, has no legal validity. And so the time expired long ago and I lost the wretched pittance with which I could have emigrated. I've besought your fathers to bear witness for me,—their consciences must tell them that I'm the lawful heir. But they chased me out of their houses, and now they themselves have gone to the devil. Oh, well, that is the way of the world, and it's all the same to me. I'll fiddle for you, if you want to dance.

With that he scrambled down on the other side of the stone-pile and made off in the direction of the village, where toward evening the harvest was brought in and the people made merry. When he had disappeared the couple sat down on the stones, very spiritless and sad. They released each other's hands, and supported their sorrowful heads on them. For the fiddler's appearance and his words had aroused them from the happy forgetfulness in which they had been wandering back and forth like two children. And when they sat down on the hard ground of their misery, the bright light of life grew dim and their spirits became as heavy as stones.

Then Verena, happening to recall the fiddler's remarkable figure and nose, suddenly burst out laughing and cried:

"The poor fellow looks too funny for anything! What a nose!" And a charming, sunny merriment spread over the girl's face, as if she had waited for the fiddler's nose to drive away the gloomy clouds.

Sali looked at Verena and noticed this gaiety. She had already forgotten the cause of it, however, and now laughed in his face only on her own account. Puzzled and astonished, Sali stared into her eyes with involuntary laughter, like a hungry man who has caught sight of a delicious loaf of bread.

“By heaven, Verena,” he cried, “how beautiful you are!”

Verena only laughed at him more, emitting besides from her resonant throat a few short mischievous notes of laughter, which to poor Sali seemed exactly like the song of the nightingale.

“Oh you witch!” he cried. “Where did you learn to do that? What diabolical arts are you practicing now?”

“Oh, goodness gracious!” said Verena in a coaxing tone, as she took Sali’s hand. “That isn’t witchcraft. How long it is that I’ve wanted to laugh! Now and then, perhaps, when entirely alone I’ve had to laugh at something, but it wasn’t real laughter. But now I want to laugh at you for ever and ever, as often as I see you, and I’d like to see you all the time too. Do you really love me just a little bit?”

“Oh, Verena,” he exclaimed, gazing into her eyes with honest devotion, “I’ve never yet looked at a girl, without feeling that I must love you some day, and without my wishing it or realizing it, you’ve always been in my mind.”

“And you in mine even more,” replied Verena, “for you never looked at me, and didn’t know what I had grown to be like; but I took a good look at you from afar now and then, and secretly even from close by, so that I knew all along how you looked. Do you remember how often we used to come out here as children? And the little cart? How small we were then, and how long ago it was! One would think we were quite old.”

“How old are you now?” asked Sali, filled with happy contentment. “You must be about seventeen.”

“Seventeen and a half I am,” she replied. “And how old are you? But I know already,—you’ll soon be twenty.”

“How did you know that?” Sali asked.

“Oh, but that’s telling!”

“Then you won’t tell me?”

“No!”

“Positively no?”

“No, no!”

“You shall tell me!”

“Do you think you’re going to make me?”

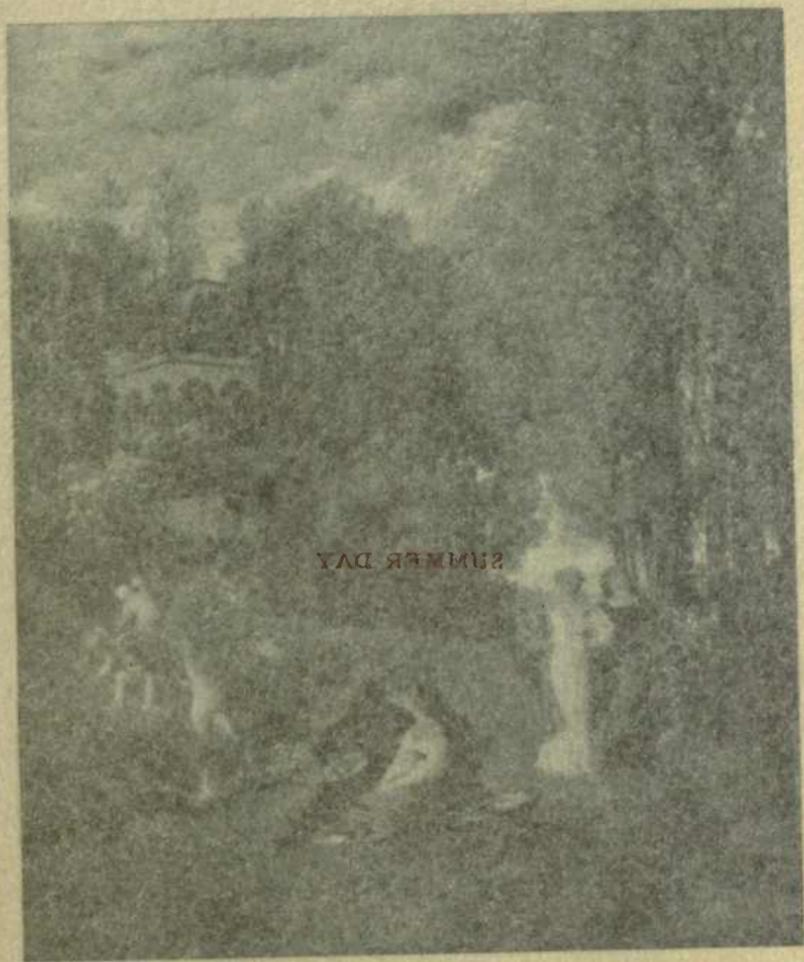
“We’ll see about it.”

Sali carried on this foolish talk while his hands were occupied in pestering the beautiful girl with awkward caresses intended to look like punishment. Defending herself, she likewise protracted with great endurance the silly altercation, which seemed quite witty and sweet to both of them in spite of its emptiness, until Sali became vexed and bold enough to seize Verena’s hands and force her down among the poppies. There she lay, her eyes blinking in the sunlight; her cheeks shone like purple, and her mouth was half open, permitting two rows of white teeth to gleam through. Delicate and beautiful, the dark eyebrows interfused, and the young breast rose and fell capriciously under all the four hands which caressed and struggled with one another in helter-skelter fashion. Sali was beside himself with joy to see the slender, beautiful creature before him, and to feel that she was his own — it seemed to him a kingdom.

“You still have all your white teeth,” he laughed. “Do you remember how often we once counted them? Can you count now?”

“These are not the same ones, you child,” said Verena. “Those came out long ago.”

In his simplicity Sali now wanted to play the old game again, and count the shining, pearly teeth. But Verena suddenly closed her red mouth, straightened up, and began to twine a wreath of poppies, which she placed on her head. The wreath was thick and broad and gave the brownish girl a wonderfully charming look, and poor Sali held in his



From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin

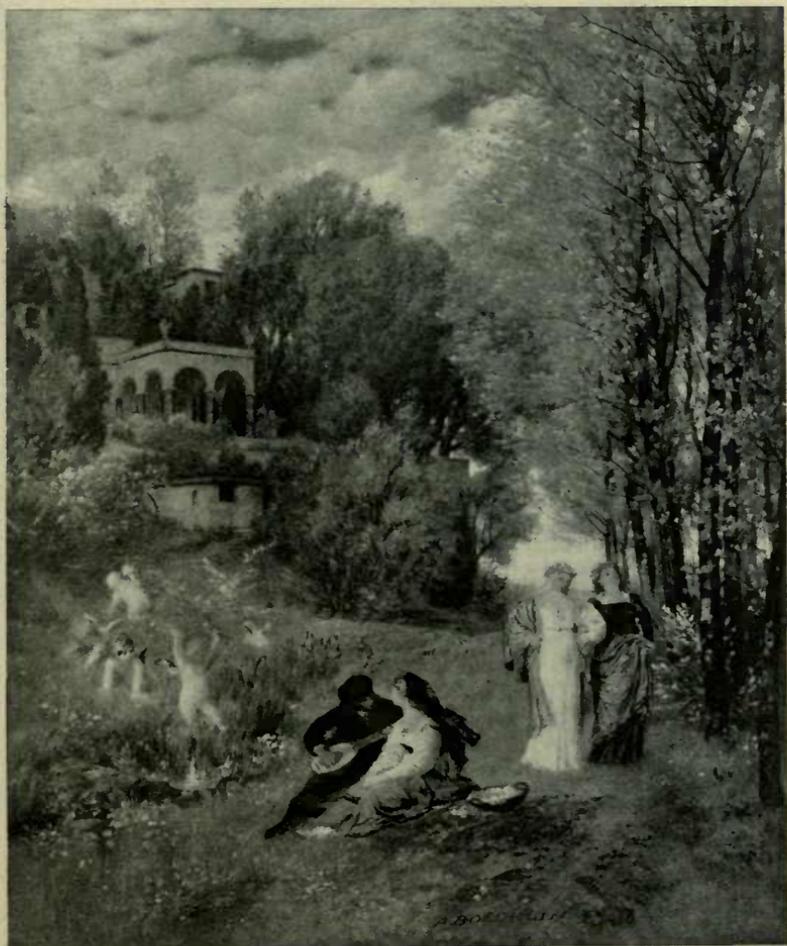
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arms something which rich people would have paid a great deal to have as a painting on their walls.

Now, however, she sprang up and cried:

“Heavens, how hot it is here! Here we sit like two fools and get scorched! Come, my dear—let’s sit in the high corn.”

They glided in with such a light and nimble tread that they scarcely left a footprint behind them, and built themselves a little prison in the golden grain, which towered up so high above their heads when they sat down that they could see nothing in the world but the azure sky above. They embraced and kissed each other incessantly, until they finally became tired, or whatever one chooses to call it when the kissing of two lovers outlives itself for a moment or two and, right in the intoxication of the flowering season, ominously suggests the transitoriness of all life. They heard the larks singing high above them and watched for them with their sharp eyes; when they thought they caught a fleeting glimpse of one gleaming in the sun like a star that suddenly flashes in the blue heavens or shoots out of sight, they kissed again as a reward and tried to get ahead of and defraud each other as much as they could.

“See, there’s one!” whispered Sali, and Verena replied with like softness:

“Yes, I hear it, but I don’t see it.”

“Yes you do. Look sharp, there by that white cloud—a little to the right of it.”

And they both looked eagerly in that direction, and, like two young quails in a nest, opened their bills wide with expectation, to fasten them upon each other as soon as they imagined they had seen the larks.

Suddenly Verena paused and said:

“And so it’s settled, then, that we’ve each got a sweetheart? Doesn’t it seem so to you?”

“Yes,” said Sali, “I think so too.”

“Then how do you like your little sweetheart?” asked Verena. “What kind of a thing is she? What have you to say about her?”

“ She’s a very nice little thing,” said Sali. “ She has two brown eyes, and a red mouth, and walks on two feet; but of her mind I know less than I do of the Pope at Rome. And what have you to say of your sweetheart? ”

“ He has two blue eyes, a good-for-nothing mouth, and makes use of two bold, strong arms; but his thoughts are stranger to me than the Emperor of Turkey! ”

“ It’s really true,” said Sali, “ that we don’t know each other as well as if we had never seen each other — the long time since we’ve grown up has made us such strangers. What all has been passing through your little head, my dearie? ”

“ Oh, not much. A thousand foolish things have tried to start, but my life has always been so gloomy that they could not get a-going.”

“ You poor little sweetheart! ” said Sali. “ But I rather think you’re shrewder than you look — aren’t you? ”

“ That you can find out gradually — if you love me very much! ”

“ When you’re once my wife? ”

Verena trembled slightly at this last word, and, nestling deeper into Sali’s arms, gave him another long and tender kiss. Tears came into her eyes as she did so, and both of them suddenly became sad when they thought of the hopelessness of their future and of the enmity of their fathers. Verena sighed and said:

“ Come, I must go now.”

And so they rose, and were walking out of the cornfield hand in hand, when they saw Verena’s father peering around in front of them. With the petty shrewdness of idle misery he had curiously wondered, on meeting Sali alone, what he was looking for in the village. Remembering the occurrence of the previous day, he finally, as he trudged toward the city, hit upon the right track from sheer ill-will and idle malice. When his suspicions began to assume a definite form, he turned around in the very alleys of Seldwyla and strolled out again into the village, where

he looked about in vain for his daughter in the house and yard and among the hedges. With increasing curiosity he ran out to the field, and seeing on the ground Verena's basket, in which she was in the habit of carrying the vegetables, but failing to catch sight of the girl herself anywhere, he went spying around in his neighbor's corn just as the frightened children were coming out of it.

They stood as if petrified, and at first Marti also stood still and looked at them with wicked glances, as pale as lead. Then he began to rave fearfully, making wild gestures and calling them names, and at the same time he reached out furiously to seize the young lad, intending to strangle him. Sali, terrified by the wild man, dodged aside and retreated a few steps, but rushed up again when he saw the old man seize the trembling girl in lieu of himself, give her such a box on the ear that the red wreath fell off, and twist her hair around his hand in order to drag her away and ill-treat her more. Without thinking what he was doing, he picked up a stone and, half in fear for Verena and half in anger, struck the old man on the head. Marti first staggered a little and then sank down, unconscious, on the stone-pile, dragging with him Verena, who was screaming pitifully. Sali freed her hair from the unconscious man's hand and lifted her up; then he stood there like a statue, helpless and vacant-minded.

When the girl saw her father lying there as if dead, she passed her hands over her pale face, shook herself, and said:

“Have you killed him?”

Sali nodded mutely and Verena cried out:

“Oh, God! It's my father! The poor man!” Out of her senses, she threw herself on him and raised his head, from which, however, no blood was flowing. She let it sink back again. Sali knelt on the other side of the man, and both gazed into his lifeless face, silent as the grave, and with lamed, motionless hands.

Merely to break the silence, Sali at length said:

“Surely it can't be that he is really dead so soon? That isn't at all certain.”

Verena tore off the petal of a poppy and laid it on the pale lips — it moved feebly.

“He still breathes!” she cried. “Run to the village and bring help.”

When Sali jumped up and started to go, she held her hand out toward him and called him back.

“But don’t come back yourself, or say anything about how it happened. I’ll keep silent too — they shan’t find out anything from me,” she said, and her face, which she turned toward the poor, helpless boy, was suffused with painful tears. “Come, kiss me once more! No, be off! It’s all over, all over for ever — we can never marry!”

She pushed him away, and he ran mechanically toward the village. He met a little boy who did not know him, and charged him to fetch the nearest people, describing to him the exact place where help was needed. Then he made off in despair and wandered about in the woods all night.

In the morning he crept out to the fields to see what had happened. He heard from early-risers, who were discussing the affair, that Marti was still alive, but unconscious, and what a remarkable thing it was, since nobody knew what had happened to him. Now at last he returned to town and hid himself in the dark misery of the house.

Verena kept her word; they could get nothing out of her except that she herself had found her father in that condition. And since he was moving and breathing again quite freely on the following day, though, to be sure, without consciousness, and since furthermore no accuser appeared, people took it for granted that he had been drunk and had fallen on the stones; so they let the matter drop. Verena nursed him, never leaving his side, except to get medicine from the doctor or perhaps to cook some thin soup for herself; for she lived on almost nothing, although she was obliged to stay awake day and night and had nobody to help her.

It was almost six weeks before the sick man gradually recovered consciousness, although he began to eat again long before that and was quite cheerful in his bed. It was not, however, his old consciousness that he now regained. On the contrary, the more he talked, the more evident it became that his mind was affected, and what is more, in a most remarkable manner. He could recall but dimly what had happened, and then it seemed to strike him as something jolly which did not particularly concern him; and he was all the time laughing foolishly and in good spirits. While he was still lying in bed he would give utterance to a hundred foolish, senseless, and wanton speeches and whims, make faces, and draw his peaked cap of black wool down over his eyes and nose, so that the latter looked like a coffin under a pall.

Verena, pale and care-worn, would listen to him patiently, weeping over his silly behavior, which worried his poor daughter even more than his former badness. Occasionally, when the old man did something too funny, she had to laugh aloud in the midst of her grief; for her suppressed nature, like a drawn bow, was ever ready to spring up for pleasure, whereupon a sadness all the more profound would follow. But when the old man was able to get up, there was absolutely nothing to be done with him. He did one silly thing after another; he would laugh and rummage about the house, sit down in the sun and stick out his tongue, or deliver long speeches to the beans.

By this time, moreover, it was all up with the few remnants of his previous property, and the general disorder had reached such a point that even his house and the last field, which had been mortgaged for some time, were now judicially sold. For the farmer who had bought Manz's two fields took advantage of Marti's sickness and his complete demoralization, and with quick resolution made an end of the old lawsuit concerning the contested stony tract. And the lost case completely knocked the bottom out of Marti's tub, while he, in his imbecility, no longer knew anything of these matters.

The auction took place; Marti was provided for by the community in an institution conducted for such poor wretches at the public expense. This institution was located at the capital of the little country. The healthy and voracious lunatic was first well fed, then loaded on a little wagon drawn by oxen, and driven to the city by a poor farmer, who was going to sell one or two sacks of potatoes at the same time. Verena took a seat in the wagon beside her father, to accompany him on this final trip to a living burial. It was a sad and bitter ride, but Verena watched over her father carefully and let him want nothing; nor did she look around or become impatient when the unfortunate man's antics attracted the attention of people, causing them to run after the wagon as it bumped along.

Finally they reached the rambling building in the city, where the long passages, the courts, and a pleasant garden were enlivened by a throng of similar wretches, all of whom were dressed in white blouses and wore durable leather caps on their thick heads. Marti was also dressed in this attire, before Verena's very eyes, enjoyed it like a child, and began to sing and dance.

"God greet you, worthy gentlemen!" he cried out to his new companions. "You have a beautiful house here. Go home, Verena, and tell your mother I'm not coming back again, for I like it here, by Jove! Hey? 'A hedgehog's creeping o'er the way, I'm sure I heard him bellow; O girlie, kiss no gray-haired jay, But kiss some nice young fellow!' 'All the brooks flow into the Rhine; The girl with the blue eyes, She must be mine.' Are you going already, Verena? You look like death in the pot, and yet I'm so happy. 'The she-fox yelps on the plain-y-o, heigho, She must be in terrible pain-y-o, ho ho!'"

An attendant bade him be silent, and gave him some light work to do, while Verena returned to find the wagon. She sat down in the vehicle, drew forth a little piece of bread and ate it; then she slept until the farmer came and drove her back to the village.

They did not arrive until night. Verena went to the house in which she was born—she could remain there only two days. For the first time in her life she was entirely alone in it. She made a fire to boil the last bit of coffee that she still had left, and sat down on the hearth, for she felt quite wretched. She longed and pined to see Sali just once more, and thought of him passionately. But cares and grief embittered her longing, and this in turn made her cares much heavier.

She was thus sitting and resting her head in her hands, when somebody entered through the open door.

“Sali!” cried Verena, looking up; and she threw her arms around his neck. Then they looked at each other in alarm and cried:

“How miserable you look!” For Sali, no less than Verena, looked pale and emaciated.

Forgetting everything, she drew him down to her on the hearth and said:

“Have you been ill, or have you had such a hard time too?”

Sali answered:

“No, I am not exactly ill, only homesick for you. We’re having a high old time at our place nowadays. My father’s running a resort and a refuge for rabble from other parts, and from what I see I judge that he’s become a receiver of stolen goods. So there’s enough and to spare in our tavern now, until they’re caught, and it all comes to a fearful end. My mother helps it along from a bitter eagerness merely to see something in the house, and thinks she can make the mischief acceptable and useful by a certain orderly supervision. They don’t ask me about it, and I couldn’t bother over it much anyway, for day and night I can think of nothing but you. As all sorts of vagabonds come into our place, we’ve heard about what has been happening here, and my father rejoices over it like a child. We also heard about your father being taken to the asylum today. I thought you’d be alone, and so I’ve come to see you!”

Verena now poured out to him all her troubles and sufferings, but with a tongue as glib and confidential as if she were describing a great happiness—for she was, indeed, happy to see Sali beside her. Meanwhile she got together a meager bowlful of warm coffee, which she constrained her lover to share with her.

So you've got to leave here the day after tomorrow?" said Sali. "What in heaven's name is going to become of you then?"

"I don't know," answered Verena, "I shall have to go into service somewhere. But I shan't be able to stand it without you, and yet I can never have you, even if there were nothing else in the way—simply because you struck my father and deprived him of his reason. That would be a bad basis for our marriage, and neither of us would ever be care-free, never!"

Sali sighed and said:

"A hundred times I've wanted to enlist as a soldier, or else hire out as a farm-hand in some distant part. But I can't go away as long as you're here, and after this it'll use me up. I believe my misery makes my love for you stronger and more painful, so that it's a life-and-death matter. I had no idea of anything like that!"

Verena looked at him with a loving smile. They leaned back against the wall and said nothing more; but they gave themselves up in silence to the blissful feeling, which rose above all their sorrow, of being very deeply in love and knowing that it was returned. In that thought they fell asleep on the uncomfortable hearth, without pillow or bolster, and slept as peacefully and quietly as two children in a cradle.

Morning was already dawning when Sali awoke first; he tried as gently as he could to rouse Verena, but she kept falling back against him drowsily and would not wake up. Then he kissed her ardently on the mouth, and she started up, opened her eyes wide, and seeing Sali, cried:

"Heavens! I was just dreaming about you! I dreamt

that we were dancing together at our wedding, for long, long hours, and were ever so happy and neatly dressed, and lacked nothing. Finally we wanted very much to kiss each other, but something kept pulling us apart, and now it turns out that you yourself were the disturbing element. But, oh, how nice it is that you're right here!"

Eagerly she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him as if she would never stop.

"And what did you dream?" she asked, stroking his cheeks and chin.

"I dreamt that I was wandering through the woods on an endlessly long road, with you in the distance ahead of me. Now and then you would look around, motion to me and laugh, and then I was in heaven. That's all."

They stepped to the unclosed kitchen door, which led directly into the open air, and had to laugh when they saw each other's faces. For Verena's right cheek and Sali's left, which had been resting against each other in their sleep, were bright red from the pressure, while the other two were paler than usual because of the cool night air. They gently rubbed each other's faces on the cold, pale side in order to make them red too. The fresh morning air, the dewy, quiet peace which lay over the landscape, and the early morning glow made them happy and self-forgetful. Verena especially seemed possessed by a cheerful spirit of freedom from care.

"And so tomorrow night I must get out of this house and seek another shelter," she said. "But first I want to be right merry once more, just once, and with you. I'd like to have a good long dance with you somewhere, for I can't get my dream-dance out of my thoughts."

"At any rate I shall be on hand to see where you find shelter," said Sali, "and I'd gladly dance with you, my darling — but where?"

"Tomorrow there's a kermess in two places not very far from here," replied Verena, "where people won't be likely to know or to notice us. I'll wait for you out by the

river, and then we can go wherever we like and enjoy ourselves once, just once. But, dear me, we haven't any money!" she added sorrowfully. "So we can't do it after all!"

"Just leave that to me," said Sali, "I'll bring some money all right!"

"Surely not from your father's,—from the—the stolen goods?"

"No! Never fear! I've still kept my silver watch, and I'll sell that."

"I won't advise you against it," said Verena blushing, "for I think I should die if I couldn't dance with you tomorrow!"

"It would be best if we could both die!" said Sali.

They embraced in a sad and painful farewell, but as they separated they laughed cheerily in the assurance of hope for the next day.

"But when'll you come?" cried Verena.

"By eleven o'clock in the morning at the latest," he replied. "We'll take a good hearty dinner together."

"Good, good! Come rather at half past ten!"

But after Sali had started to go, she once more called him back, her face suddenly taking on an expression of despair.

"Nothing will come of it after all," she said, crying bitterly. "I have no Sunday shoes any more—I even had to put on these clumsy ones yesterday to go to town. I don't know how to get any shoes!"

Sali stood helpless and puzzled.

"No shoes?" he said. "Then you'll just have to go in those."

"No, no, I can't dance in these."

"Well then—we'll have to buy some!"

"Where? With what?"

"Oh, there are shoe-stores enough in Seldwyla, and I'll have money in less than two hours."

"But I can't go around with you in Seldwyla, and you won't have money enough to buy shoes too."

“There'll have to be enough! I'll buy the shoes and bring them with me tomorrow!”

“Oh, you foolish boy! The shoes you buy won't fit me.”

“Then give me one of your old shoes, or wait—better still, I'll take your measure. That won't require any witchcraft.”

“Take my measure? Why, of course! I hadn't thought of that!” Come, come, I'll find you a string.”

She sat down on the hearth again, drew back her skirt a little and slipped a shoe from her foot, on which she still wore the white stocking put on for the journey of the previous day. Sali knelt down and took the measure as well as he knew how, spanning the length and breadth of the dainty foot with the string, in which he carefully tied knots.

“What a shoemaker!” cried Verena, blushing and laughing down at him fondly.

Sali blushed, too, and held the foot firmly in his hands longer than was necessary, so that Verena drew it back with a still deeper blush. Then, however, she once more passionately embraced and kissed the embarrassed Sali before sending him away.

As soon as he reached the city he took his watch to a watchmaker, who gave him six or seven gulden for it; for the silver chain he also got a few gulden. He now thought himself rich enough, for never since he had grown up had he possessed so much money at once. If only this day were over and Sunday were here, he thought, so that he could buy with it the happiness which he promised himself on that day. For even if the day after tomorrow loomed up so much the more dark and uncertain, the longed-for jollity of the morrow only gained a more novel splendor, an enhanced brilliancy.

Meanwhile he passed the time fairly well looking for a pair of shoes for Verena; this was the pleasantest business he had ever undertaken. He went from one shoemaker to another, made them show him all the women's shoes they had, and finally bought a light, elegant pair, prettier than

any Verena had ever worn. He hid the shoes under his vest, and did not take them out the rest of the day; he even took them to bed with him and laid them under his pillow.

As he had already seen the girl early that morning, and was going to see her again the following day, he slept soundly and peacefully. But he was awake very early and began to put his scanty Sunday attire in order, and to smarten it up as best he could. This attracted the attention of his mother, and she asked him in astonishment what he was going to do, for he had not dressed with such care for a long time. He was going to take a little jaunt and look around a bit, he replied,—otherwise he would get sick in the house.

“He’s been leading a strange life of late,” muttered his father. “This gadding around—”

“Oh let him go,” said the mother. “Perhaps it’ll do him good—he looks miserable now!”

“Got any money for your trip? Where did you get it?” asked his father.

“I don’t need any,” said Sali.

“There’s a gulden for you,” replied the old man, throwing one down to him. “You can go into the village tavern and spend it there, so they won’t think we’re so badly off here.”

“I’m not going to the village, and don’t need your gulden—keep it yourself.”

“Well, you’ve had it! It would be a pity if you had to keep it, you pig-head!” cried Manz, shoving the gulden back into his pocket.

But his wife, who did not know why she was so touched with sadness on her son’s account today, brought him a large black Milanese neckerchief with a red border, which she herself had seldom worn, and which he had long coveted. He tied it around his neck, leaving the long ends loose. Moreover, in an access of rustic pride he now for the first time put up over his ears in manly dignity the shirt-collar, which hitherto he had always worn turned down.

Shortly after seven o'clock, with the shoes in the breast pocket of his coat, he set out. As he left the room a strange feeling impelled him to offer his hand to his father and mother, and on the street he turned around and looked at the house once more.

"I believe after all," said Manz, "that the boy is running after some woman. That's the one thing we need!"

His wife said:

"Oh, I wish to heaven he would make a lucky strike! That would be nice for the poor lad!"

"Right!" said the husband. "It'll come! That'll be a fine piece of luck if he happens to run afoul of another such a chatterbox. That would be nice for the poor lad, oh yes!"

Sali first directed his steps toward the river, where he intended to wait for Verena; but on the way he changed his mind and went directly to the village to call for her in her own house. It was too long to wait until half past ten.

"What do we care about people?" he thought. "Nobody helps us, and I am honest and fear nobody!"

And so he stepped into Verena's room before she expected him, and was himself no less surprised to find her completely dressed. She was sitting there in fine array, waiting for the time of departure—only her shoes were still wanting. But Sali stopped, with open mouth, in the middle of the room when he saw the girl—she looked so beautiful!

She wore only a simple dress of blue linen, which, however, was fresh and clean, and fitted her slender form very well; and over that a snow-white muslin neckerchief, and this was her whole attire. Her brown, curly hair was in very good order, and the locks which were usually so unruly, now lay neatly and prettily about her head. As she had hardly been out of the house for many weeks, her color had now become more delicate and transparent, which was also a result of grief and worry. But into this transparency love and joy poured one crimson tint after another, and on her breast she had a lovely bouquet of rosemary,

roses, and splendid asters. She was sitting by the open window, and breathing in sweet silence the fresh, sunny morning air; but when she saw Sali appear, she held out both of her pretty arms, which were bare to the elbows, and cried:

“You did quite right to come so early, and to come here. But have you brought me some shoes? Truly? Then I won’t stand up until I have them on!”

He drew the longed-for articles out of his pocket and gave them to the eager, beautiful girl; she flung the old ones away and slipped into the new ones, which fitted her very well. Now she rose from her chair, balanced herself in the new shoes, and eagerly walked up and down a few times. She drew back her long blue skirt a little, and contemplated with satisfaction the red woolen bows which adorned the shoes, while Sali gazed uninterruptedly at the delicate and charming form which was stirring joyously in lovely excitement before him.

“You’re looking at my bouquet?” asked Verena. “Didn’t I gather a pretty one? You must know, these are the last flowers I could find in this desolation. Here there was still a little rose, there an aster, and to look at them all in a bunch one would never think that they were gathered from a ruin. But now it’s time for me to go—not a flower left in the garden, and the house empty, too.”

Sali now looked around and observed for the first time that all the movable property that had been there was gone.

“You poor girl,” he said, “have they taken everything away from you already?”

“Yesterday,” she replied, “they took what could be moved and hardly left me my bed. But I sold it right away, and now I’ve got some money too, see!” She drew some new and shining silver pieces from the pocket of her dress and exhibited them. “The probate judge,” she continued, “has been here too and he told me to take this money and set out at once to look for a position in the city.”

“But there’s absolutely nothing more left,” said Sali, after he had glanced into the kitchen. “I see no wood, no pan, no knife! Haven’t you had any breakfast yet?”

“Nothing!” said Verena. “I could have got myself something, but I thought I’d rather stay hungry so that I could eat a lot with you; for it makes me so happy to look forward to it, you can’t imagine how happy it makes me!”

“If I might only touch you,” said Sali, “I’d show you how I feel, you beautiful, beautiful creature!”

“You mustn’t—you’d ruin all my finery, and if we spare the flowers a little, perhaps it will be a good thing too for my poor hair, which is apt to fare badly at your hands.”

“Come then, let’s be off!”

“We must wait until the bed is taken away; for after that I am going to close up the empty house and never come back here! My little bundle I’ll give to the woman to keep for me—the woman who bought the bed.”

Accordingly they sat down opposite each other and waited. The woman came soon; she was a robust farmer’s wife with a loud mouth, and had a boy with her to carry the bedstead. When she saw Verena’s lover and the girl herself dressed up so finely, she opened her mouth and eyes wide, set her arms akimbo, and cried:

“Well, just look, Verena! You’re getting on finely, I see. You’ve got a caller and are decked out like a princess!”

“Well, rather!” replied Verena with a friendly laugh. “Do you know who he is?”

“Oh, I suppose it’s Sali Manz. Mountains and valleys, they say, don’t come together, but people—But take care, child—remember the story of your parents.”

“Oh, that’s all changed now, and everything’s all right,” replied Verena, with a friendly and confiding smile, yes, even condescendingly. “You see, Sali is my intended!”

“Your intended? You don’t say so!”

“Yes, and he’s a rich man. He won a hundred thousand gulden in the lottery! Just think of it!”

The woman gave a jump, clapped her hands together in utter amazement, and screamed.

“A hun—a hundred thousand gulden!”

“A hundred thousand gulden!” repeated Verena with solemn assurance.

“Bless my soul! But it isn’t true—you’re lying to me, child!”

“Well, believe what you like!”

“But if it’s true and you marry him, what are you going to do with the money? Are you really going to be a fine lady?”

“Of course! The wedding will take place in three weeks!”

“Get out! You’re a wicked story-teller!”

“He’s already bought the most beautiful house in Seldwyla, with a large garden and a vineyard; you must come and call on me when we’re settled. I’m counting on it.”

“Of course I will—little witch that you are!”

“You’ll see how beautiful it is there! I’ll make a splendid cup of coffee and serve you with fine bread and butter and honey!”

“Oh, you little rogue! You may count on my coming!” cried the woman with an eager face and a watering mouth.

“But if you come at noon, when you’re tired after marketing, there’ll always be a strong broth and a glass of wine ready for you.”

“That’ll just suit me!”

“And there won’t be any lack of sweetmeats and white rolls for your dear children at home, either.”

“I’m beginning to feel quite famished!”

“And a dainty little neckerchief, or a remnant of silk, or a pretty old ribbon for your dresses, or a piece of cloth for a new apron, will also be sure to come to light, when we rummage through my boxes and chests in a confidential hour!”

The woman turned on her heel and shook her skirts in exultation.

“And if your husband should have a chance to make a good trade in real estate or cattle, and should need some ready money, you know where to knock. My dear Sali will always be happy to invest a bit of cash safely and profitably; and I myself expect to have a spare penny now and then to help an intimate friend!”

By this time the woman was completely daft. She said feelingly:

“I’ve always said that you were a fine, good, beautiful girl! May the Lord prosper you at all times, and bless you for what you do for me!”

“In return, however, I demand that you do the fair thing by me!”

“Most assuredly you may demand that!”

“And that you’ll always bring your wares and offer them to me before you take them to market,—I mean your fruit, potatoes, or vegetables—so that I may be sure of having a genuine farmer’s wife at hand, one on whom I can rely. I’ll certainly give whatever anybody else offers you for your wares, and with the greatest of pleasure. You know me! Oh, there’s nothing finer than when a well-to-do city-woman, sitting so helpless within her walls, yet needing so many things, and an honest, upright country-woman, with knowledge of all the important and useful things, form a good and lasting friendship! It comes handy in a hundred cases, in joy and sorrow, at christenings and weddings, when the children are instructed and confirmed, when they’re apprenticed, and when they must go out into the world, and in case of poor harvests and floods, fires and hailstorms—from which may God protect us!”

“From which may God protect us!” said the good woman, sobbing and drying her eyes with her apron. “What a sensible and thoughtful little bride you’ll be! Yes, things will go well with you, or else there can’t be any justice in the world! Handsome, tidy, clever, and wise you are, industrious and skilful at all things! There isn’t a finer or better girl than you in the village or out of it, and the one

who has you must think he's in heaven — or else he's a scoundrel and will have me to deal with. Listen, Sali! See that you treat my Verena right nicely, or I'll show you who is master! Lucky boy that you are to pluck such a rose!"

"So then take along my little bundle now, as you promised me, and keep it until I send for it. Perhaps, however, I'll come in the carriage for it myself, if you've no objection. I suppose you won't refuse me a little mug of milk, and I'll be sure to bring along a nice almond-cake or something to go with it!"

"You little witch! Give me the bundle!"

On top of the bed, which was tied together, and which the woman was already carrying on her head, Verena now loaded a long sack, into which she had stuffed her knick-knacks and belongings, so that the poor woman stood there with a swaying tower on her head.

"It is almost too heavy for me to carry all at once," she said. "Couldn't I make two loads of it?"

"No, no, we must go immediately, for we have a long journey ahead of us to visit some aristocratic relatives who have turned up since we became rich. You know, of course, how it is."

"I understand. Well then, God keep you, and think of me in your grandeur!"

The woman went away with her towering bundle, which she had difficulty in keeping balanced, and behind her followed her little farm-boy, who placed himself under Verena's once gaily-painted bedstead, bracing his head like a second Samson against its tester, which was covered with faded stars, and grasping the two ornamentally carved posts which supported this tester in front.

As Verena, leaning against Sali, gazed after this procession, and saw the moving temple between the garden plots, she said:

"That would make a nice little summer-house or arbor, if one were to plant it in a garden, set a little table and a bench inside it, and sow some morning-glories around it. Would you like to sit in it with me, Sali?"

“Yes, Verena, especially if the morning-glories were grown up!”

“But what are we waiting for?” said Verena. “There’s nothing to detain us any longer!”

“Come then, and close up the house. To whom are you going to turn over the key?”

Verena looked around.

“We’ll have to hang it here on the halberd. I’ve often heard father say it’s been in this house for more than a hundred years, and now it stands there as the last watchman!”

They hung the rusty house-key on a rusty scroll of the old weapon, up which the beans were climbing, and started off. Verena, however, grew paler, and for awhile hid her eyes, so that Sali was obliged to lead her until they had taken a dozen steps. But she did not look back.

“Where are we going first?” she asked.

“We’ll take a regular country walk,” replied Sali, “where we can enjoy ourselves all day long without hurrying, and toward evening I’m sure we’ll find a good place to dance.”

“Good,” said Verena. “All day long we’ll be together, and go wherever we please. But I feel miserable now—let’s go at once to the next village and have a cup of coffee.”

“Of course,” said Sali. “Just hurry up and let’s get out of this village.”

Presently they were out in the open country and walking in silence across the fields, side by side. It was a beautiful Sunday morning in September; there was not a cloud in the sky, the hills and woods were clothed in a delicate gossamer haze, which made the landscape more mysterious and solemn. On all sides the church bells were ringing, here the deep, harmonious peal of a rich locality, there the garrulous, tinkling of the two little bells of a poor village. The loving couple forgot what the end of the day had in store for them, and with a sense of relief gave themselves up completely to the speechless joy of wandering,

neatly dressed and free, like two happy people who belong to each other by right, out into the glorious Sunday. Every sound that died away in the Sabbath stillness, and every distant call, sent a thrill through their souls; for love is a bell which echoes back the most indifferent and the most distant sound, converting it into a peculiar music.

Although they were both hungry, the half hour's walk to the nearest village seemed to them but a stone's throw, and they entered hesitatingly the tavern at the entrance to the place. Sali ordered a good breakfast, and while it was being prepared they sat as still as mice and observed the orderly and pleasant proceedings in the large tidy guest-room. The landlord was also a baker, and the last baking filled the entire house with a pleasant odor. Bread of all kinds was being brought in, heaped up in baskets; for the people got their bread or drank their morning glass here after church. The hostess, a genial and neat-looking woman, was calmly and good-naturedly decking out her children, and as soon as one of them was dismissed it would run up confidently to Verena to display its finery and tell her all about the things in boastful glee.

When the strong fragrant coffee came, the young couple sat down shyly at the table, as if they were invited guests. Presently, however, they grew more lively and whispered quietly, but blissfully, to each other. Oh, how the blooming Verena enjoyed the good coffee, the rich cream, the fresh, warm rolls, the delicious butter and honey, the pancakes, and all the other delicacies that were there! They tasted good to her because she could look at Sali while eating them, and she ate with as much relish as if she had been fasting for a year. She was also delighted with the fine dishes and the little silver coffee spoons; for the hostess seemed to take them for honest young folks who were to be served nicely. Now and then she would sit down by them to talk, and they gave her sensible answers which pleased her.

The good Verena was in such an undecided frame of

mind that she did not know whether she had rather go out into the open air again and wander alone with her sweetheart through meadows and woods, or remain there in the tavern in order to dream of being, at least for a few hours, in an elegant home. But Sali facilitated her choice by gravely and busily making preparations for departure, as if they had a definite and important destination to reach. The landlord and landlady accompanied them outside the house and took leave of them in a most benevolent manner for their good behavior, in spite of their obvious poverty; and the poor young creatures said farewell with the best manners in the world, and walked away with decorous propriety.

But when they were out in the open again and had entered an oak wood, an hour's walk in length, they continued to stroll along dreamily side by side in this decorous manner, not as if they came from wretched, quarrelsome, ruined homes, but were children of well-to-do people and were roving about in a cheery and hopeful state of mind. Verena dropped her head pensively on her breast, which was covered with flowers, and with her hands solicitously laid on her dress, walked along on the smooth, damp ground of the forest; Sali, on the other hand, strode swiftly and thoughtfully, his slender form erect, his eyes fixed on the strong oak trunks, as if he were a farmer considering which trees he could fell most advantageously.

They finally awoke from these futile dreams, looked at each other, and discovered that they were still walking in the same dignified manner as when they left the inn. They blushed and sadly hung their heads. But youth is youth; the forest was green, the sky blue, they were alone in the wide world, and they soon gave way to this feeling again.

But they did not continue to be alone much longer; for the beautiful forest road presently became animated with pleasure-seeking groups of young people, as well as with individual couples who were passing the time after church jesting and singing. For country folk, as well as city people, have their favorite walks and parks, the only differ-

ence being that theirs cost nothing for maintenance, and are even more beautiful. They not only take Sunday walks through their blooming and ripening fields with special appreciation, but they also have very choice promenades through the woods and along the green hillsides; here they sit down on a pleasant eminence offering a wide view, there at the edge of a forest, where they sing songs and enjoy the wild beauty. And, as they obviously do this not for penance but for pleasure, it may doubtless be inferred that they have a feeling for nature — a feeling not utilitarian. They are forever breaking off green twigs, young boys, as well as old women seeking out the familiar paths of their youth; and even stiff countrymen in the best years of their busy lives, when they walk out in the country and pass through a forest, like to cut a slender switch and trim off the leaves, leaving only a green tuft at the end. Such a switch they carry before them like a sceptre, and when they enter an office or a court, they respectfully stand the switch up in a corner, but never forget, even after the most serious negotiations, carefully to pick it up again and take it home uninjured, where it is turned over to the youngest son to be ruined.

When Sali and Verena saw the numerous pleasure-seekers, they laughed in their sleeves and rejoiced that they too were a couple; but they slipped aside into narrower forest-paths and lost themselves in the deep solitude. They stopped at the pretty spots, hurried on and rested again, and, just as there was not a cloud in the clear sky, so not a care troubled their spirits at this time. They forgot whence they had come and whither they were going, and withal behaved themselves with such nice propriety, in spite of all the glad emotion and commotion, that Verena's neat and simple adornment remained as fresh and tidy as it had been in the morning. Sali conducted himself on this walk, not like an almost twenty-year-old country-lad or the son of a ruined innkeeper, but as if he were some years younger and had been very well brought up; it was almost

comical, the way he kept looking, all tenderness, solicitude and respect, at his dainty, merry Verena. For on this one day which had been granted to them the poor young creatures had to experience all the moods and phases of love; to make up for the lost time of its tender beginnings, as well as to anticipate its passionate ending in the surrender of their lives.

Thus they walked until they were hungry again, and were glad when they saw gleaming before them, from the top of a shady hill, a village where they could have dinner. They descended rapidly, but entered this place as decorously as they had left the other. There was nobody around to recognize them; for Verena, in particular, had not been out among people during the past few years, and still less had she been in other villages. For that reason they were taken for an agreeable, respectable couple out on some pressing errand. They entered the first tavern of the village, where Sali ordered a substantial meal. A separate table was laid for them in Sunday style, and again they sat down with quiet modesty and gazed at the beautifully wainscoted walls of waxed walnut, the rustic, but polished and well-appointed sideboard of the same wood, and the clean, white curtains.

The landlady came up with an obliging air and put a vase of fresh flowers on the table.

“Until your soup comes,” she said, “you can feast your eyes on the bouquet, if you wish. To all appearances, if one may guess, you’re a bridal pair on your way to town to be married tomorrow?”

Verena blushed and did not venture to look up; Sali too said nothing, and the landlady continued:

“Well, to be sure, you’re both still young, but it’s a common saying that early marriage means long life. At any rate you look nice and pretty and don’t need to hide yourselves. Decent folk can get somewhere when they marry so young if they’re industrious and true. But, to be sure, they have to be that, for the time is short and yet

long, and there are many, many days to come! Ah, well, they're fine enough and entertaining too, if one employs them well. Pardon my saying so, but it does me good to look at you—you are such a trim little pair!"

The waitress brought the soup, and as she had heard a part of these words, and would have preferred to be married herself, she looked askance at Verena, who seemed to her to be getting on so well in the world. In the adjoining room the disagreeable girl gave vent to her ill-humor, saying to the landlady, who was busy there, in a voice loud enough to be overheard:

"There again you have a couple of fools running off to town to get married just as they are, without a penny, without friends, without a dowry, and without any prospects but begging and poverty. What's the world coming to when such young things get married, that can't put on their own jackets or make a coup? I'm so sorry for the handsome young fellow—he is well taken in by his citified young Miss Vanity!"

"Hush! Keep still, you spiteful thing!" said the landlady. "I won't have anything bad said of them. No doubt they're two decent folk from the mountains, where the factories are. They're dressed poorly but neatly, and if they only love each other and are industrious, they'll get along better than you with your vicious tongue. You'll wait a long time before anybody comes and takes you, unless you're more agreeable, you vinegar jug!"

And so Verena enjoyed all the delights of a girl on the way to her wedding, the kind and encouraging words of a very sensible woman, the envy of a spiteful "would-be-married," who from sheer vexation praised and pitied her lover, and an appetizing midday meal beside this lover. Her face shone like a red carnation, her heart throbbed, but she nevertheless ate and drank with a good appetite, and treated the waitress all the more civilly, although at the same time she could not refrain from looking tenderly at Sali and whispering to him, so that his own head began to whirl.

Meanwhile they sat comfortably at the table for a long time, as if they hesitated and feared to pass out from the lovely illusion. The landlady brought some sweet pastry for dessert, and Sali ordered with it some choicer, stronger wine, which flowed through Verena's veins like fire when she drank a little of it. But she was careful and merely took an occasional sip as she sat there, modest and bashful as a real bride. She played this rôle partly out of roguery and a desire to see how it felt, and partly because she was actually in that mood. Her heart was almost breaking with anxiety and ardent love, so that she felt oppressed inside the four walls and expressed a desire to go.

It seemed as if they were afraid to be so alone and off the road again; for they tacitly took the highway and went on through the midst of the people, looking neither to the right nor to the left. But when they were out of the village, and making for the next one, where the kermess was, Verena took Sali's arm and whispered, trembling:

"Sali, why shouldn't we have each other and be happy?"

"I don't know why, either!" he replied, fixing his eyes on the mild autumn sunshine which glinted over the meadows, and puckering up his face comically in a forced effort to control himself. They stopped to kiss each other, but some people appeared and they refrained and went on.

The large village where the kermess was being held was already animated with merry people. From the imposing hotel sounded pompous dance-music—for the young villagers had started to dance already at noon—and in the space before the hotel a small fair had been set up, consisting of a few tables loaded with sweetmeats and cakes, and a couple of booths covered with cheap finery, around which was a crowd of children and those people who for the present were better satisfied with looking on.

Sali and Verena also went up and took a good look at the splendors; for they both had their hands in their pockets, each wanting to give the other some little present, now that for the first and only time in their lives they were at a fair

together. Sali bought a large house of gingerbread, which was nicely whitened with icing, and had a green roof with white doves perching on it, and a little Cupid peeping out of the chimney in the rôle of a chimney-sweep. At its open windows chubby-cheeked little people with tiny red mouths were hugging, and actually kissing each other; for the hasty practical painter had made with one daub two little mouths which thus flowed into each other. Black dots represented bright little eyes.

On the pink house-door these verses were to be read:

“Walk in, my dear, but mark you:
That in my house today,
We reckon and pay with kisses;
There is no other way.”

She answered: “Oh, my dearest,
I’m not the least afraid,
I’ve thought the thing all over,
In you my fortune’s made.”

“And if my memory serves me,
That’s why I came this way!”
“Come in then with my blessing,
And be prepared to pay!”

In conformity with these verses a gentleman in a blue coat and a lady with a very high bosom, painted at the left and right on the wall, were bowing each other into the house.

Verena, in turn, gave Sali a heart, on one side of which was pasted a piece of paper with the words:

“An almond sweet is hidden in this heart, you’ll see,
But sweeter than the almond is my true love for thee!”

and on the other side:

“When thou this heart hast eaten, remember this from me,
That my brown eyes shall fade before my love for thee.”

They eagerly read the verses, and never has any printed rhyme been more highly appreciated or more deeply felt than were these gingerbread mottoes; for they regarded what they read as something written especially for them, so well did it seem to fit them.

“ Oh! ” sighed Verena, “ you give me a house! I’ve given you one too, and the only real one; for our hearts are now the houses we live in, and so we carry our homes around with us, like two snails. We have no other! ”

“ But then we are two snails, each carrying the other’s house, ” said Sali.

And Verena replied:

“ Then there’s all the more reason why we should cling together, so that each of us may be near home! ”

But they did not know that they were making just such witticisms in their talk as were to be read on the many-formed cookies, and they went on studying this sweet and simple literature of love which lay spread out there, pasted for the most part on variously decorated hearts of different sizes. They thought everything beautiful and uniquely applicable. When Verena read on a gilded heart, which was covered with strings like a lyre:

“ My heart is like a lyre string,
Just touch the thing,
It at once begins to sing, ”

she herself began to feel so musical that she thought she could hear her own heart singing. There was a picture of Napoleon, which was likewise called upon to bear an amorous motto; for there was written under it:

“ A hero great was Bonaparte,
Of steel his sword, of clay his heart;
A rose adorns my lady leal,
Yet is her heart as true as steel. ”

While they seemed to be absorbed in reading, each took occasion to make a secret purchase. Sali bought for Verena a gilded ring with a green-glass stone, and Verena for Sali a ring of black chamois-horn with a golden forget-me-not inlaid on it. They very likely had the same idea, to give each other these poor tokens at parting. With their minds concentrated on these things and oblivious of all else, they did not notice that a wide ring of people had gradually formed around them, and that they were being intently

and curiously watched. For, since there were many young lads and girls from their village there, they had been recognized; and now these people were all standing around the well-dressed couple and looking at them in amazement, while they in their reverent devotion seemed utterly oblivious to the world around them.

“ Oh, look! ” somebody said. “ That is actually Verena Marti and Sali from the city. They’ve found and joined each other in fine style! And just look, won’t you!—what tenderness and friendship! I wonder what they’re going to do? ”

The astonishment of these spectators was due to a strange combination of sympathy for their misfortune, contempt for the demoralization and depravity of their parents, and envy of the happiness and oneness of the couple, who had a singular, almost grand, air in their amorous agitation, and whose unrestrained devotion and self-forgetfulness seemed as strange to the rough crowd as did their loneliness and poverty.

So when they finally woke up and looked around, they saw nothing but gaping faces on all sides. Nobody spoke to them, and they did not know whether or not to speak to any one else. But this estrangement and unfriendliness was due on both sides more to embarrassment than to intent. Verena felt anxious and hot, turned pale and blushed; but Sali took her hand and led the poor girl away, she following willingly with her house in her hand, although the trumpets in the hotel were already blaring merrily, and she was so eager to dance.

“ We can’t dance here, ” said Sali, when they had withdrawn some distance. “ We should evidently find but little pleasure here. ”

“ I suppose, ” said Verena sadly, “ it’ll be best for us to give up the idea entirely, and I will try to find a lodging. ”

“ No! ” cried Sali. “ You shall dance once! That’s why I bought you the shoes. We’ll go where the poor people are having a good time, for that’s where we too

belong now. They won't look down on us there. Whenever there's a kermess here they always dance in Paradise Garden, because it belongs to the parish. We'll go there and you can spend the night too if need be.

Verena shuddered at the thought of sleeping in a strange place for the first time in her life; but she unresistingly followed her escort, who was now all that she had in the world.

Paradise Garden was a tavern, beautifully situated on a lonely mountain-slope and commanding a wide view of the country, but frequented on such days of pleasure only by the poorer people, the children of the petty farmers and day-laborers, and even by all sorts of vagrants. It had been built a hundred years before by an eccentric rich man as a small country-house. Nobody had cared to live there after him, and since the place was good for nothing else, the queer country-seat began to run down, and finally fell into the hands of an innkeeper, who made a hotel of it.

But the name and its corresponding architecture had clung to the house. It consisted only of a single story, surmounted by an open platform, the roof of which was supported at the four corners by sandstone figures representing the four archangels, now badly weather-worn. All around the corners sat small, music-making angels, likewise of sandstone, with thick heads and bellies, playing the triangle, the violin, the flute, the cymbal, and the tambourine, which instruments had originally been gilded. The ceiling, the parapet of the platform and the remaining walls of the house were covered with faded frescoes, representing merry bands of angels, and singing and dancing saints. But it was now all blurred and indistinct, like a dream, and furthermore profusely covered with grapevines, while blue grapes were ripening everywhere in the foliage. All around the house stood neglected chestnut-trees, and strong, gnarled rose-bushes, living on without care, were growing here and there as wild as elder-trees grow elsewhere.

The platform served as the dance-hall. As Sali came

along with Verena they saw from afar couples whirling under the open roof, and a throng of merry guests carousing boisterously around the house. Verena, who was devoutly and sadly carrying her love-house, resembled one of the old paintings of a holy patron-saint holding in her hand the model of a cathedral or cloister which she has founded; but nothing could come of the pious foundation which lay in her mind. As soon as she heard the wild music coming from the platform, however, she forgot her grief, and her only desire was to dance with Sali. They pushed their way through the guests who were sitting in front of the house and in the bar-room—ragged people from Seldwyla enjoying a cheap outing, and poor folks from all parts—ascended the stairs and immediately began to whirl in a waltz, not once taking their eyes from each other.

Only when the waltz was over did they look around. Verena had crushed and broken her house, and was ready to cry over it, when the sight of the black fiddler close beside them gave her an even more violent shock. He was sitting on a bench, which had been placed on a table, and he looked as black as ever; only today he had stuck a sprig of green fir into his little hat. At his feet he had set down a bottle of red wine and a glass, which he never upset, although he kept working his legs as he fiddled, thus executing a sort of an egg-dance. Beside him sat a handsome, but sad-looking young man with a French horn; and a hunchback was playing a bass viol.

Sali was also startled when he saw the fiddler. The latter, however, greeted them most amiably, calling out:

“I knew I’d play for you some time! So have a right good time, you two sweethearts, and drink my health!”

He offered Sali a full glass, and Sali drank his health.

When the fiddler saw how frightened Verena was, he assumed a friendly manner and made her laugh with some jests that were all but graceful. She took courage again, and now they were glad to have an acquaintance there, and

to be, in a certain sense, under the special protection of the fiddler. They danced without cessation, forgetting themselves and the world in the whirling and singing and reveling that was going on inside and outside the house and sending its noise from the mountain far out into the country, which had gradually become veiled in the silvery haze of the autumn evening. They danced until it grew dark, and the majority of the merry guests went off, staggering and shouting, in all directions.

Those that still remained were the rabble proper, who had no homes, and proposed to follow up their pleasant day with a merry night. Among these there were some who seemed to be well acquainted with the fiddler, and who looked strange in their motley costumes. Particularly striking was a young fellow who wore a green corduroy jacket and a crumpled straw hat, around which he had bound a wreath of mountain-ash berries. He was dancing with a wild girl who wore a skirt of cherry-colored calico, dotted with white, and had a garland of grapevine wound around her head with a cluster hanging down over each temple. This couple was the most exuberant of all; they danced and sang untiringly and were everywhere at once.

Then there was also a slender, pretty girl in a faded black silk dress, who had tied around her head a white cloth, the ends of which fell down her back. The cloth had red stripes woven into it and was a good linen towel or napkin. Beneath it shone a pair of violet-blue eyes. Around her neck and on her breast hung a chain of six strands made of the mountain-ash berries strung on a thread, making a most beautiful coral necklace. This girl danced all the time alone, and obstinately refused to dance with any of the men. None the less she moved about lightly and gracefully, and smiled every time she passed the melancholy horn-player, whereat the latter each time turned his head away. Several other merry women were there, with their escorts, all of poor appearance, but all the more gay and congenial.

When it was quite dark the landlord refused to light any candles, asserting that the wind would blow them out; besides, the full moon would soon be up, he said, and moonlight was good enough, considering what they paid. This announcement was received with great glee; the entire company gathered near the parapet of the merry hall and watched for the rising moon, whose glow was already visible on the horizon. As soon as it appeared and cast its light obliquely across the platform of Paradise Garden, they went on dancing by moonlight, and did it as quietly and properly, and with as much contentment, as if they had been dancing in the brilliancy of a hundred wax candles.

The strange light made everybody more familiar, so that Sali and Verena could not help taking part in the general merriment and dancing with others. But every time they were separated for a little while, they flew together again and were as glad to be reunited as if they had been seeking each other for a year and had met at last. Sali made a sad and ill-natured face whenever he danced with anybody else, and was continually turning his face toward Verena, who did not look at him when she floated by, but glowed like a red rose and seemed to be supremely happy, whoever her partner might be.

“Are you jealous, Sali?” she asked him, when the musicians grew tired and stopped playing.

“Not a bit of it!” he said. “I wouldn’t know how to be!”

“Then why are you so cross when I dance with others?”

“It isn’t that that makes me cross—it’s because I have to dance with some one else myself. I can’t bear any other girl,—I feel as if I were holding a piece of wood in my arms, when it isn’t you! And you? How is it with you?”

“Oh, I am always in heaven when I’m dancing, and know that you are here! But I think I should drop dead if you were to go away and leave me here.”

They had gone down stairs and were standing in front of the house. Verena threw both arms about him, nestled her slender, quivering form close to him, pressed her burn-

ing cheek, which was wet with hot tears, against his face, and said, sobbing:

“ We can't stay together, and yet I can't leave you, not a minute, not an instant! ”

Sali caught the girl in his arms and hugged her passionately, covering her face with kisses. His confused thoughts were struggling to find a way out, but he could see none. Even if the misery and hopelessness of his origin could be overcome, his youth and inexperienced passion did not fit him to enter upon and endure a long period of trial and renunciation; and then there was the prime difficulty of Verena's father, whom he had made miserable for life. The feeling that happiness could be had in the middle-class world only in an honorable and irreproachable marriage was just as strong in him as it was in Verena, and in both of the forlorn creatures it was the last flicker of that honor which had formerly glowed in their houses, and which their fathers, each feeling himself secure, had blown out and destroyed by a trifling mistake, when they so thoughtlessly appropriated the land of a missing man, thinking to up-build this honor by increasing their property, and believing themselves safe in so doing. That very thing happens, to be sure, every day; but now and then fate makes an example of two such upbuilders of their family honor and property by bringing them into collision, when they infallibly ruin and consume each other, like two wild beasts. For it is not only on thrones that “ increasers of the realm ” make mistakes, but also at times in the lowliest huts; and then they reach an end the exact opposite of that which they were trying to attain, and the obverse of honor's shield is a tablet of disgrace.

Sali and Verena, however, had seen the honor of their houses as little folk, and now recalled what well-nurtured children they had been, and that their fathers had looked like other men, respected and self-reliant. Then they had been separated for a long time, and when they met again they at once saw in each other the vanished happiness of

their homes, whereby the affection of each was made to cling all the more tenaciously to the other. They were so eager to be gay and happy, but only on a solid basis, and this seemed to them unattainable; while their surging blood would have preferred to flow together at once.

“It’s night now,” said Verena, “and we must part!”

“I go home and leave you alone?” cried Sali. “No, that I can’t do!”

“Then day will dawn and find us no better off!”

“Let me give you a piece of advice, you silly creatures!” cried a shrill voice behind them, and the fiddler stepped up to them. “There you stand,” he said, “not knowing what to do and wanting each other. I advise you to take each other as you are, without delay. Come with me and my good friends into the mountains; there you need no pastor, no money, no papers, no honor, no bed—all you need is your own good will. It isn’t so bad with us—healthy air and enough to eat, if you’re up and doing. The green forests are our house, where we love each other in our own way, and in the winter we make ourselves the warmest little nests, or else creep into a farmer’s warm hay. So decide quickly: get married here at once and come with us; then you’ll be free from all cares, and will have each other forever and ever, at any rate, as long as you please. For you’ll grow old living our free life—you can believe that. Don’t think I’ll take out on you what your fathers did to me. Not at all! It gives me pleasure, to be sure, to see you where you are—but with that I’m content, and I’ll stand ready to help and serve you, if you’ll follow me.”

He said this in a really sincere and kindly tone.

“Well, think it over a bit—but if you’ll take my advice, follow me! Let the world go, marry each other, and ask nothing of anybody. Think of the jolly bridal bed in the depths of the forest, or on a hay-mow, if it’s too cold for you!”

With that he went into the house. Verena was trembling in Sali’s arms, and he said:

“What do you think? It seems to me it wouldn't be a bad idea to throw everything to the winds and just love each other, without let or hindrance!” But he said this more as a despairing jest than in earnest.

Verena, however, kissed him and replied very candidly: “No, I shouldn't like to go there; for things aren't according to my mind out there either. The young fellow with the horn and the girl with the silk dress belong to each other in that way, and are said to have been very much in love. Now it seems that last week the girl proved false to him for the first time, and he couldn't believe it; that is why he is so sad, and so cross with her and the others who laugh at him. She pretends to be doing penance for it by dancing alone and talking to nobody, and is just making fun of him all the time. But you can tell at once by looking at the poor musician that she'll make up with him this very day. But I shouldn't like to be where things go on in that way; for I should never want to be untrue to you, although I'd be willing to endure everything else to get you.”

Meanwhile, however, poor Verena's love grew more and more ardent on Sali's breast; for ever since noon, when that landlady had taken her for a betrothed girl, and had introduced her as such without correction, the bridal feeling had flamed in her blood, and the more hopeless she was, the wilder and the more uncontrollable it became. Sali's case was just as bad, since the fiddler's talk, however little he was inclined to heed it, had nevertheless turned his head, and he said in a halting, irresolute voice:

“Come inside; we must at least have something more to eat and drink.”

They entered the guest-room, where there was nobody save the small company of the vagrants, who were already sitting around a table and partaking of a meagre meal.

“Here comes our bridal pair!” cried the fiddler. “Now be merry and jolly and get married!”

They were constrained to sit down at the table, and took

refuge from their very selves by so doing; for they were happy merely to be among people for a moment. Sali ordered wine and more eatables, and a gay time began. The sulky man had become reconciled with his unfaithful companion, and they were caressing each other in amorous bliss. The other wild pair were also singing and drinking, nor did they fail to show signs of mutual affection; while the fiddler and the hunchback bass made noise at random.

Sali and Verena kept still with their arms about each other. Suddenly the fiddler commanded silence and performed a jocose ceremony intended to represent a wedding. They were told to join hands, and the company arose and approached in procession to congratulate them and welcome them into the brotherhood. They submitted without saying a word, regarding it as a joke, though meanwhile hot and cold thrills coursed through them.

The little gathering, inflamed by the stronger wine, was now growing more and more noisy and excited, when suddenly the fiddler insisted upon their breaking up.

“We have a long way to go,” he cried, “and it’s past midnight! Come! We’ll escort the bridal pair, and I’ll march ahead and fiddle to beat the band!”

As the helpless and forsaken pair knew nothing better to do, and were quite distracted anyway, they once more allowed things to take their course. They were stationed in front and the other two couples formed a procession behind them, the hunchback bringing up the rear with his bass viol over his shoulder. The black fiddler went ahead down the mountain, fiddling as if possessed, while the others laughed, sang, and leaped along behind.

Thus the wild nocturnal procession marched through the quiet fields, and through the native place of Sali and Verena, the inhabitants of which had long been asleep. When they entered the quiet streets and passed by their lost parental homes, a wild humor came over them in their pain, and they tried to outdo the others in dancing behind the fiddler, and kissed each other and laughed and cried. They also

danced up the hill where the three fields were, as the fiddler led them thither. On the crest the black fellow sawed his fiddle twice as wildly, and jumped and hopped about like a ghost. His companions did not let him outdo them in boisterousness, so that the quiet hill was converted into a veritable Blocksberg. Even the hunchback sprang about with his burden, panting, and they all seemed no longer to see one another.

Sali grasped Verena's arm more firmly and forced her to stand still; for he was the first to regain his senses. To silence her he kissed her vehemently on the mouth, for she had quite forgotten herself and was singing wildly. Finally she understood him, and they stood still and listened, while their wedding escorts rushed on madly along the field and passed out of sight up the stream without missing them. The fiddle, the laughter of the girls, and the shouts of the men, however, continued to sound through the night for a long time, until finally it all died away and quiet reigned.

"We've escaped them," said Sali, "but how shall we escape ourselves? How avoid each other?"

Verena was unable to answer, and lay panting on his breast.

"Shan't I take you to town and wake up somebody and have them give you shelter? Then tomorrow you can go your way, and you'll certainly prosper — you get along well everywhere!"

"Get along without you?"

"You must forget me!"

"That I shall never do! Could you?"

"That's not the question, my love," said Sali, caressing her hot cheeks as she tossed about passionately on his breast. "The only question now is you. You're quite young, and all may yet go well with you!"

"And not with you, you aged man?"

"Come," said Sali, drawing her away; but they took only a few steps and stopped again, so as to embrace each other more conveniently. The stillness of the world sang

and made music in their souls; they could hear nothing but the soft, pleasant gurgling of the river below, as it slowly flowed by.

“How beautiful it is around us! Don’t you seem to hear something like a beautiful song and a ringing of bells?”

“It is the swish of the water in the river. Everything else is still.”

“No, there’s something else—here, there, everywhere!”

“I believe we hear our own blood roaring in our ears.”

For awhile they listened to these sounds, imaginary or real, which proceeded from the intense stillness, or which they confounded with the magic effects of the moonlight playing near and far over the white, autumnal mist that lay deep on the lowlands.

Suddenly something occurred to Verena; she felt in her bodice, and said:

“I bought you another keepsake that I meant to give you.” She gave him the simple ring and put it on his finger herself. Sali then produced his ring, and put it on her finger, saying:

“So we had the same thoughts!”

Verena held out her hand in the pale, silvery light and contemplated the ring:

“Oh, what a lovely ring!” she said laughing. “And so, we’re really and truly engaged now—you’re my husband and I’m your wife. Let’s think we are just for a minute—only until that cloud over the moon has passed, or until we’ve counted twelve! Kiss me twelve times!”

Sali’s love was certainly just as strong as Verena’s, but for him marriage was not such a living, burning question,—not so much a definite Either-or, and immediate To-be-or-not-to-be,—as for Verena, who was capable of feeling only the one thing, and saw in it with passionate decisiveness a simple issue of life or death. But now at last he saw a light, and what was womanly feeling in the young girl forthwith became in him a wild and hot desire, and a bright glow lighted up his senses. Vehemently as he had embraced

and caressed Verena before, he now did it in a different and more tempestuous way, overwhelming her with kisses. In spite of her own intense feeling Verena noticed this change at once, and a violent trembling thrilled her entire being; but before the streak of cloud had crossed the moon she too was convulsed by passion. With impetuous caresses and struggles their ring-adorned hands met and clasped each other tightly, as if celebrating a wedding on their own account, without the command of a will.

Sali's heart now pounded like a hammer, and the next moment stood still. He drew a deep breath and said softly:

“There's but one thing for us to do, Verena—consume our marriage this hour, and then go out of the world together. There's the deep water—there nobody can separate us again. We shall have been united—whether for a long or a short time does not matter.”

Verena at once replied:

“Sali—that thought occurred to me long ago and I decided that we could die, and then everything would be over. Then swear you'll do it!”

“It's already as good as done! Nothing but death shall ever take you from me now!” cried Sali beside himself. But Verena drew a deep sigh of relief, and tears of joy streamed from her eyes. She pulled herself together, and leaped as lightly as a bird across the field down toward the river. Sali hurried after her, thinking that she was trying to run from him, while she thought he was trying to hold her back. And thus they raced along, Verena laughing like a child unwilling to be caught.

“Do you repent now?” cried one to the other, as they reached the river and embraced.

“No, it makes me more and more happy!” each replied.

Free from all cares they walked downstream along the bank, outstripping the hurrying waters, so eager were they to find a resting-place; for their passion now saw only the blissful intoxication of their union, and in this was concentrated the entire import and value of the rest of their

lives. What was coming afterward, death and annihilation, was a mere breath, a nothing, and they thought less of it than a spendthrift thinks, when he is squandering his last possession, of how he is going to live the next day.

“My flowers shall go first!” cried Verena. “Look, they are all faded and withered!” She took them from her breast and threw them into the water, singing aloud:

“But sweeter than the almond is my true love for thee!”

“Stop!” cried Sali. “Here is your bridal bed!”

They had come to a wagon-road which led from the town to a river; and here was a landing-place where a large boat, loaded high with hay, lay moored. In wild humor Sali instantly began to untie the strong ropes. Verena laughed and caught his arm, crying:

“What are you doing? Are we going to end by stealing the farmer’s hay-boat?”

“That is their wedding present—a floating bedstead, and a bed such as no bride ever had. Besides, they’ll find their property down below, where it’s bound anyway, you see, and they’ll never know what happened to it. Look!—it’s already rocking and moving out!”

The boat lay in the deep water, a few steps from the bank. Sali lifted Verena high up in his arms and carried her through the water out toward it; but she caressed him with such boisterous vehemence, squirming like a fish, that he was unable to keep his footing in the current. Striving to get her face and hands into the water, she cried:

“I want to try the cool water too! Do you remember how cold and wet our hands were when we shook hands for the first time? We were catching fish then—now we’re going to be fish ourselves, and two fine big ones!”

“Be quiet, you dear little imp!” said Sali; for what with his lively sweetheart and the waves he was having trouble to keep his balance, “or it’ll carry me away!”

He lifted his burden into the boat and swung himself up after her; then he lifted her up on the high-piled, soft,



Permission F. Bruckmann A.-G., Munich

ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

SPRING LANDSCAPE

fragrant cargo, and swung himself up after her; and as they sat there aloft the boat gradually drifted out into the middle of the river, and then floated, slowly turning, downstream.

The river flowed now through, high, dark forests, which overshadowed it, and again through open fields; now past quiet villages, now past isolated huts. Here it widened out into a placid stretch, as calm as a quiet lake, where the boat almost stopped; there it rushed around rocks and rapidly left the sleeping shores behind. And as the morning glow appeared, a city with its towers emerged from the silver-gray stream. The setting moon, as red as gold, made a shining path up the stream, and crosswise on this the boat drifted slowly along. As it drew near the city, two pallid forms, locked in close embrace, glided down in the frost of the autumn morning from the dark mass into the cold waters.

A short time afterward the boat floated, uninjured, against a bridge and staid there. Later, the bodies were found below the city, and when it was ascertained whence they came, the papers reported that two young people, the children of two poverty-stricken, ruined families, that lived in irreconcilable enmity, had sought death in the water, after dancing and making merry together all the afternoon at a kermess. Probably—so the papers said—this occurrence had some connection with a hay-boat from that region, which had landed in the city without a crew; and the assumption was that the young people had stolen the boat to consummate their desperate and God-forsaken marriage—a fresh evidence of the increasing demoralization and savagery of the passions.

THE GOVERNOR OF GREIFENSEE (1878)

By GOTTFRIED KELLER

TRANSLATED BY PAUL BERNARD THOMAS



ON the 13th of July, 1783, that being Emperor Henry's Day, as it still stands in red letters on the Zurich calendar, a large crowd of city and country people, some in carriages, some on horseback, and some on foot, were wending their way along Schaffhauser Street toward the village of Kloten. For on the gentle slopes of that region Colonel Solomon Landolt, who was at that time Governor of the domain of Greifensee, was going to muster and drill the corps of Zurich sharpshooters which he had organized, and draw them up for review before the gentlemen of the War Council. He had chosen Henry's Day, as he said, because half of the militiamen of the worthy canton of Zurich bore the name of Henry, and were in the habit of celebrating the popular name-festival with an idle carousal, so that not much harm would be done by a muster.

The spectators enjoyed the unusual sight of the new, hitherto unknown troop, consisting of sturdy young volunteers in plain green uniforms, and were very much interested in their rapid movements with open ranks, as well as in the independent actions of each individual as he handled his accurate rifle; and especially were they pleased by the fatherly relation in which the organizer and leader of the entire corps seemed to stand toward his jolly men.

First one would see them, widely scattered, disappear along the edge of the woods; then, at the colonel's command, shouted as he flew over the hilly ground on his glossy bay mare, they would reappear as a dark column in the distance, come marching close by, singing merrily, and a

moment later emerge into view again on top of a hill covered with fir-trees, against whose green they could no longer be distinguished. It was all done so swiftly and so cheerfully that the uninitiated spectator could have no idea of the amount of work and effort it had cost the worthy man to prepare this highly personal gift to his fatherland.

And when at last, at the sound of the bugle, he came trotting close up at the head of his troop of riflemen, of whom there were perhaps five hundred, and as quick as lightning commanded them to break ranks for rest and the return home, while he himself dismounted nimbly from his horse, showing as little fatigue as the young men, then every mouth was full of his praise. Several officers of Swiss regiments posted in France and the Netherlands were present, and they discussed the great future of the new arm and rejoiced that their country was introducing it independently and of its own accord. They also found satisfaction in recalling how even Frederick the Great, once when Landolt was attending the manoeuvres in Potsdam, had fixed his eyes on the tirelessly active man and sent for him; also how in repeated negotiations he had tried to secure him for his army. It was known that Landolt still possessed an autograph letter from the great man, which he preserved more carefully than a love-letter.

All eyes were fixed approvingly on the Governor as he now approached his Councillors and fellow-citizens, and cordially shook hands with all his friends. He had on a dark-green suit, without any galloons, light-colored riding-gloves, and high boots with white cuffs. A stout sword hung at his side, and his hat was turned up in the style of an officer. As for the rest, the aforesaid * biographer describes him as follows:

“ Even one who had seen but once could never forget him. His brow, open and clear, was high-arched. His aquiline nose protruded from his face in a gentle curve. His thin

* In an introduction to the *Züricher Novellen*, of which this tale is one, Keller introduces an old gentleman who is supposed to tell the stories.

lips formed delicate, graceful lines, and in the corners of his mouth there lay concealed behind a scarcely noticeable, whimsical smile, a suggestion of satire such as hits the mark, but never intentionally wounds. His bright, brown eyes glanced around freely and firmly, in a way to reveal the indwelling spirit, rested with indescribable kindness on gratifying objects, but flashed piercingly at everything which offended the honest man's sensitive nature, when displeasure drew together his heavy brows. He was of medium height, powerfully and regularly built, and of military bearing."

Let us add to this description that he wore a good-sized queue at the back of his neck, and that on this Emperor Henry's Day he was in his forty-second year.

His brown eyes had an unforeseen opportunity to rest with that indescribable kindness on a gratifying object, when he approached a rose-red state-coach to greet its occupants, who extended their hands to him; for unexpectedly there was among them a very beautiful lady, whom he had once known, but whom he had not seen for years. She may have been about thirty-five years of age, had laughing brown eyes, a red mouth, and dark-brown hair. The latter hung down over the lace collar which inclosed her half-bare neck, and was piled up richly on her beautiful head, which was covered with a handsome straw hat, tilted forward. She wore a summer dress with white and green stripes, and had in her hand a parasol which people would now take for Chinese or Japanese. For the rest, to cut short any unfounded predictions, it must be observed at once that she had long been married and had several children; and that any relations between her and the officer could therefore only concern the past. In short, she had been the first girl to whom he had offered his heart, and she had given him a polite refusal. Her name must remain unknown, for the reason that all her children are still running about in honor and dignity; and we must content ourselves with the name which Landolt's memory still retained for her—he called her "Goldfinch."

Both persons blushed slightly as they shook hands. And as they were partaking of refreshments at the Lion in Kloten, whither they had betaken themselves, and where Landolt occupied a seat beside the lady, she was as pleasant and unreserved toward him as if she herself had been the enamored party. He began to feel very blithe, as he had not felt for years, and conversed in the best of spirits with the so-called Goldfinch, who still seemed as young as ever.

But finally the long summer day began to draw to a close, and Landolt was obliged to think of returning home; for it was a ride of nearly three leagues to Greifensee, whose manorial domain he had been ruling as Governor for more than two years. As he took leave of the company an invitation found expression, seemingly of its own accord, and it was arranged that his old friend should come some day with her husband and children, and surprise him in his castle at Greifensee.

Absorbed in meditation, and accompanied by but one servant, he rode slowly home by way of Dietlikon. As he crossed the peat-bogs dusk was already coming on; at the right the evening glow was fading away over the wooded ridge, and on the left the waning moon was rising behind the mountains of the Zurich highlands—a mood and a situation in which the Governor was wont to feel a quickening of life, to become all eyes, and to heed only the quiet power of nature. But today the gleaming lights in the sky and the gentle dominance near and far made him more solemn than usual, even somewhat sentimental; and while he was thinking about the reception he would accord that nice creature who had given him the mitten, the desire suddenly came over him to invite not only her, but also three or four other lovely beings, toward whom he had once borne a similar relation. Enough, as he rode along there awakened in him a genuine longing to see the amiable, once-loved ladies all together at his home, and to spend a day with them. For, alas, it must be explained that the hardened old bachelor had not always been so unapproach-

able as now, and that at one time he had resisted all too little the blandishments of the other sex. On his list of pet names there was another whom he called Harlequin; also a Whitethroat, a Captain, and a Blackbird—making with Goldfinch five in all. Some were married, the others were not; but all five, since he was conscious of no wrongdoing with respect to any of them, could doubtless be induced to come. Had his hands not been occupied with the reins and whip, he would have rubbed them together with inward delight as he began to picture to himself how he would make the fair ones acquainted with one another, how they would behave and get along together, and what pretty sport was promised for him in playing the host to such a charming family.

The difficulty, to be sure, would be in taking his housekeeper, Frau Marianne, into his confidence, and obtaining her consent and assistance; for if she were not in the plot and favorably disposed toward so delicate an affair, the lovely plan would fall through.

Frau Marianne, however, was the oddest fish in the world; in a whole kingdom one could not have discovered another like her. She was the daughter of Kleissner, town-carpenter of Hall in Tirol, and had been brought up, along with a number of brothers and sisters, under the sway of a bad step-mother. The latter had sent her as a novice to a convent; she had a good singing-voice, and seemed to promise very well. But when the time came to take the vows she offered such wild and fearful resistance, that she was dismissed with horror. After that Marianne struck out alone into the world and found a position as cook in a tavern at Freiburg in Breisgau. On account of her well-shaped figure she had to endure the advances and wooings of the Austrian officers and students who frequented the place. But she energetically repulsed them all with the exception of a handsome student of good family from Donaueschingen, to whom she gave her affection; wherefore a jealous officer made slanderous remarks about her

which reached her ears. Armed with a sharp kitchen-knife, she strode into the guest-room, where the officers were sitting, and called the offender to account as a calumniator; and when he attempted to put the resolute woman out of the room, she attacked him so fiercely that he was obliged to draw his sword to defend himself. But she disarmed the man, broke his sword and hurled it at his feet; in consequence of which affair he was expelled from the regiment. The plucky Tirolese girl now married the handsome student, against the will of his people too, the pair eloping together. In Königsberg he enlisted in a Prussian regiment of cavalry, which she also joined as a sutler-woman and accompanied on several campaigns. Here she proved so tirelessly industrious, and so skilful as a cook and baker, both in the field and in the garrison, that she earned enough money to make her husband's life comfortable, and to save something besides. In the course of time they had nine children, whom she loved more than anything in the world, and with all the strength of her passionate nature. But they all died, and each time it almost broke her heart, which, however, proved stronger than all the fatalities.

Finally, when youth and beauty had fled, the hussar, her husband, recalling his once better estate, began to despise his wife; for life had become too pleasant for him in her care. So she took the money she had saved, purchased his dismissal from the regiment, and let him go wherever he pleased to seek his fortune. She herself, all alone, again wandered southward, whence she had come, to find employment.

At St. Blasien in the Black Forest it happened that she was recommended to the Governor of Greifensee, who was looking for a housekeeper; and in that capacity she had now been serving him for two years. She was at least forty-five years old, and was more like an old hussar than a housekeeper. She would swear like a Prussian sergeant and when her displeasure was aroused would raise such a storm that everybody fled, save only the laughing Gov-

ernor, who would hold his ground and enjoy the row. But she took excellent care of his house; she managed his servants and field-hands with unyielding severity, took care of his money faithfully and reliably, bargained and economized wherever it was possible and her master's generosity did not intervene, and in turn with her good cooking encouraged his hospitality so obligingly and so intelligently, that he was presently able to turn over to her, without reservation, the entire management of his household.

Then again her deeper nature would shine through all the roughness when, with an unbroken contralto voice, she would sing for the Governor, listening to her attentively, an old ballad, or a still older love-song, or a hunting-song; and she was not a little proud when her master, who could play the cornet, would learn the mournful melody, and sound it forth from the castle window over the moonlit lake.

Once when the ten-year-old son of a neighbor was lying in bed with an incurable disease, and the encouragement of neither pastor nor parents could comfort the child in his pain and dread of death,—for he was so eager to live—the Governor, quietly smoking his pipe, sat down beside the bed and talked to him with such simple and appropriate words about the hopelessness of his condition, about the necessity of his composing himself and suffering for a short time, and then about the gentle release from it all that death would bring, and the blissful, undisturbed rest that he was going to enjoy for having been a patient and good boy, and finally about the love and sympathy which he, a stranger, cherished for him, that the child was changed from that hour; he bore his sufferings with cheerful patience, until death at last did bring release.

Then the passionate Frau Marianne rushed up to the death-bed, knelt beside the body, and prayed devoutly and long, asking the supposed little saint to intercede with God in behalf of all her dead children; whereupon she reverently kissed the Governor's hand, as if he were a great bishop, until he, laughing, shook her off with the words:

“Are you possessed, you old simpleton?”

And so this was the Governor’s stewardess, with whom he would first have to come to an understanding, if he proposed to assemble his five old flames on his hearth and have them shine.

As he rode into the castle yard and dismounted from his horse, he heard her storming in the kitchen because the dogs were howling in their kennels—a maid having neglected to give them their evening meal.

“This is not a favorable time!” he thought, as he meekly sat down in his arm-chair to have supper, while his house-keeper entered in a stormy humor, and related to him all that had happened during the day. He poured out for her a glass of Burgundy, of which she was very fond but drank only when invited by her master, although she kept the cellar keys. This slightly cooled her temper. He then took his cornet down from the wall, and blew one of her favorite tunes out over the lake.

“Frau Marianne,” he now said, “won’t you sing me that other song—how does it go—?”

Whoso the blessed maids hath seen
High up in the evening light,
By the haunted rock his soul, I ween,
Must wing its parting flight.
Adieu, adieu, O sisters dear,
My body sleeps in the weeds down here.

She immediately sang all the stanzas of the song, each having a different theme, but all expressing a like longing to see something again. She herself was touched by the simple melody, and all the more when the Governor sent forth the sustained notes into the night.

“Frau Marianne,” he said, reëntering the room, “we must make plans pretty soon for the proper reception of a small but select company!”

“What company, sir? Who is coming?”

“I expect,” he replied with a cough, “Goldfinch, Harlequin, Whitethroat, Captain, and Blackbird!”

The woman opened wide her mouth and eyes, and asked: "What sort of people are they? Do they sit on chairs or on a pole?"

But the Governor had already gone into the next room to get his pipe, which he now lighted.

"Goldfinch," he said, blowing away the first puff, "is a beautiful woman!"

"And the second?"

"Harlequin?—She is also a woman, and beautiful in her way!"

Thus it went on, down to Blackbird. Since the house-keeper, however, was not satisfied with these laconic explanations, the Governor had to enter into further detail about things concerning which his lips had never before emitted a word.

"In a word," he said, "they are all old sweethearts of mine, whom I wish to see all together for once!"

"But Lord o' Mercy!" cried Frau Marianne, who with her eyes open still wider jumped up and ran over to the rear wall. "Governor! My most gracious master! You have loved, and so many? Heavens and earth! And devil a soul ever had a suspicion of it! And you've always acted as if you couldn't stand women! And so you led on all those poor things and then jilted them?"

"No," he replied with an embarrassed smile; "they didn't want me!"

"Didn't want you?" cried Marianne with increasing excitement. "Not one of them?"

"No, not one."

"Cursed rabble! But your idea is good—they shall come. We'll lure them here and have a look at them. That'll be a funny company! I hope we'll lock them up in the tower where the jackdaws perch, and let them starve! As for quarrels—I'll take care of that!"

"No, none of that!" laughed the Governor. "On the contrary, you must extend to them all possible courtesy and hospitality! For it is to be a beautiful day for me, a day

such as it would needs be if there were really a month of May—and of course there isn't—and if this were at once the first and the last May!"

Frau Marianne saw by the gleam of his eyes that he honestly meant the occasion to be edifying, ran to him, seized and kissed his hand, and then, drying her eyes, said softly:

"Yes, I understand you. It's to be such a day as if I suddenly had all my dead children, the blessed little angels, here with me!"

The ice once broken, he gradually made her acquainted, as suitable opportunities came, with the five objects of his former devotion, explaining the course of events in each case; all of which gave occasion for sundry interruptions and much whimsical cross-fire between narrator and listener. We will retell the stories, but arrange them in order, round them off, and adapt them to our understanding.

GOLDFINCH

This name Solomon Landolt got from the fair lady's family coat-of-arms, which showed a finch and was painted over her front-door. As more than one family had such song-birds on their escutcheons, it is safe to betray the baptismal name, which was Salome, of the quondam little maid; or rather, she was a very stately young lady, when Solomon made her acquaintance.

In addition to the public domains and provinces, there also existed at that time a number of old estates, with castles, fields, and local jurisdiction—and some without these—which were purchased and sold by citizens according to their means, and thus passed from hand to hand as private possessions. Up to the time of the Revolution this was the prevailing way of investing capital and carrying on agriculture, and it gave even to non-aristocrats the pleasure of adorning their theoretical share in the local sovereignty with titles having a lordly and feudal sound. Thanks to this arrangement half of the more prosperous

population lived during the pleasant season of the year, either as hosts or as guests, at these various official and non-official country seats, with their beautiful natural surroundings, very much as the old gods and demi-gods of feudal times had lived, except that they now enjoyed serene peace and had no feuds or war-troubles.

It was at one of these places that Solomon Landolt, then about twenty-five, met young Salome. On different sides they were distantly related to the family, so that while they could not rightly be called kinsfolk they had a pleasant feeling of common connection. Furthermore, as their names sounded somewhat alike they became the object of mirthful remarks, and there was much fun, to which they did not object, when one of their names would be called and they would both look around and blush to find that "the other" was meant. As they were equally good-looking, equally cheerful and high-spirited, their well-meaning friends thought them suited to each other, and a marriage not at all out of the question.

To be sure, Solomon was not yet exactly in a frame of mind to establish a home of his own; on the contrary, his ship of life was still cruising around outside the harbor, undecided whether to put to sea or to make port. At one time he had attended the French military school in Metz, first to study artillery and military engineering, then to take up civil architecture, with which he would some day serve his native city. With the same purpose he had also gone to Paris. But compass and rule and the everlasting measuring and computing had proved too tedious for his unfettered spirit and wild, youthful nature; so he had cultivated a natural talent for freehand drawing, sketching, and painting, and at the same time had kept his eyes and ears open, thus acquiring knowledge and experience of various kinds, particularly such as could be got on horseback. But there was no architect or engineer in him when he came home. His parents were but little pleased at this, and their evident anxiety moved him to accept at least a

position in the city court, in order to qualify himself for participation in the government. Carefree, but lovable and of good habits, he took things very easy there, while deep earnestness and energy slumbered but lightly within him.

Very naturally there was more talk of the young man's uncertain position with regard to a possible marriage, and every aspect of the matter was discussed more thoroughly than he himself suspected. Just as farmers, the more unknown the future is to them, usher in the year all the more lavishly with disparaging prophecies, so did the mothers of various marriageable daughters discuss and disparage the innocent morning-time of Solomon's life. The charming Salome gathered from all this that definite prospects and plans of marriage were out of the question, but that a friendly, even familiar intercourse was all the more permissible. She was called Mademoiselle, and was trained in the French spirit, except that she had been reared in a free protestant society and not in a convent; so that she regarded even a mild flirtation as not at all dangerous.

Guilelessly Solomon gave himself up to an affection which had presently bloomed in his honest heart, without, however, conducting himself obtrusively or with presumption. The result was that when either of them was visiting at the always hospitable country-seat, the other did not long remain away, and the effect of these occurrences was merely to amuse people by keeping them guessing: "They'll marry! They'll not marry!"

One fine day, however, a settlement of the question seemed to grow up out of the ground. Having in his younger days acquired all sorts of information about farming and eagerly increased it on his travels, Solomon induced the owner of the estate to have cherry-trees planted in a meadow which lay on a sunny slope. He himself procured the young, slender trees, and set about planting them with his own hands. Among them there was a new variety of white cherries, which he wanted to plant in alternate rows

with the red ones, and since there were very nearly fifty trees in all, there would probably be a full day's work; for it was spring and the days were short.

But Salome insisted upon being on hand to help wherever she could, because, as she laughingly said, she might perhaps some day marry a country gentleman and must therefore learn about such things betimes. With a broad sun-hat on her head she did actually accompany him to the somewhat distant meadow, where she zealously assisted in the work. Solomon measured off the straight lines for the rows, and the distance between the separate trees, while Salome helped him to stretch the strings and to drive the stakes. He dug the holes in the soft ground as he wanted them, and Salome held the delicate trees upright while he threw the earth back in again and stamped it down so that it was nice and solid. Then Salome took the watering-pot and brought water from a tub, which a farm-hand kept filling with the life-giving element, and watered the trees as plentifully as Solomon directed.

At noon, when the shadows of the newly planted trees began to turn, the host humorously sent out to the industrious couple a rustic meal, suitable for field-hands. It tasted delicious too, as they ate it sitting on the greensward, and Salome asserted that she now had as much right as a farmer's daughter to drink a few glasses of wine, considering how hard she was working. The wine and the renewed exertion, which continued until evening, warmed her blood and made it tingle; it clouded the light of her worldly wisdom, eclipsing it momentarily, just as the moon eclipses the sun.

Solomon kept at the work so earnestly and so cheerfully, managed the business so cleverly and conscientiously, was all the while so uniformly merry, confidential and entertaining, and seemed so happy, without once forgetting himself all day long by so much as a bold look or remark, that a pleasant conviction came over her that with this comrade her entire life would be as nice as this day. A warm affec-

tion gained the upper hand in her, and when the last cherry-tree stood firmly in the ground, and there was nothing left to do, she said with a gentle sigh:

“ Thus everything comes to an end! ”

Solomon Landolt, carried away by the note of feeling in these words, looked at her in delight; but owing to the glow of the evening sun, which illuminated her beautiful face, he could not make out whether it was reddened by the light or by tender emotion. Only her eyes shone through all the brightness, and involuntarily their four hands came together. Nothing further happened, however, for just then the servant came to get the rake, shovel, watering-pot, and other implements.

Beneath changed stars they walked back between the rows of trees which they had planted. Since they could only look at each other with eyes of love, they spent less time together in the house and were more circumspect. On this account, and still more on account of a certain contentment which seemed to enliven and at the same time to calm them, it became quite evident that something new had taken place.

But Solomon did not allow it to go on thus for many days; he whispered a few significant words to her, which she caught very well, and then rode at a rapid gait to Zurich, in order to win over both families to the possibility of an engagement.

First, however, he felt an impulse to lay bare his heart to his lady-love in a letter; but scarcely had he got under way and penned the most urgent part, when curiosity suddenly prompted him to test the solidity of the girl's affection by means of a mysteriously dubious description of his lineage and prospects.

The former, to be sure, was of a peculiar kind on the mother's side.

His mother, Anna Margaretha, was the daughter of a Dutch General of Infantry, Solomon Hirzel, Lord of Wülffingen, who with his three sons drew large pensions

from the government of the Netherlands, and used the money to conduct their well-known and singular farm on the aforesaid court-domain in the vicinity of Winterthur. A wolf, which howled and bayed vigilantly, was kept chained by the gate instead of a watch-dog,—in itself a token of their eccentric ways. After the early death of the mother every one did as he pleased during the father's frequent absences, and the sons, as well as the three daughters, brought themselves up and did it in the wildest possible way. Only when the old General was at home was a certain order observed, in that every morning *réveille*, and every evening "taps," was beaten on the drum. Otherwise everybody went his own gait. The oldest daughter, Landolt's mother, managed the house, and the duties laid upon her had the effect of making her the best and steadiest member of the family. Nevertheless she would ride out hunting with the men, carrying the dog-whip, and whistling shrilly through her fingers. It was a custom of the men to have their habits and deeds painted in a humorous way on the walls of their buildings. Thus in a pavilion there was a picture showing the old general with his three sons and oldest daughter, who was already married, dashing along over stone and stubble, while little Solomon Landolt rode at his stately mother's side—a regular centaur-family.

Sometimes these rides were taken in pursuit of a tame stag, which had been trained to flee from hunters and dogs and finally let itself be captured. But that was merely for riding-practice; real hunting was indulged in constantly, varied only by feasts and the perpetration of innumerable practical jokes, which extended even to the exercise of magistracy.

Through all this wild life Landolt's mother, being a woman of good sense and cheerful temperament, lived decently, as has been said, and later on she was a true and reliable friend to her children, while the paternal house went under.

After the old general had died in the year 1755, and Anna Margaretha had married and left home, the sons gave themselves over to a life that grew more disorderly every day. Their hunting expeditions degenerated into quarrels with neighboring estate-owners regarding matters of jurisdiction, also into ill-treatment of inferiors. A pastor, who had preached to them from the pulpit, they attacked as he was riding through their forest, and chased him with whips through the Töss River and across country, until he collapsed with his mare, dropped trembling to his knees, and begged their forgiveness. Bailiffs who came to collect a rather large fine imposed upon them for this offense, they caused to be waylaid by masked men on their return and relieved of the money.

Besides their senseless extravagance, they acquired a passion for gambling, which they would indulge continuously, week in and week out. They enticed poor devils there and took away from them all they owned, and then, in order to preserve their own gentlemanly honor by giving their victims a chance to get even, kept on playing until they themselves had lost twice as much to the unfortunates.

But finally it all came to a sad end. One after the other they were obliged to leave the castle, until finally the last one was compelled to sacrifice in rapid succession his seignorial rights and revenues, his woods and fields, his house and home and to make his escape. One of the brothers reached such a low estate that he was taken care of in a foreign work-house; another lived alone in a forest-hut for some time, but was so harassed by creditors and wasted by disease that he was obliged to abandon even this wretched place of refuge and disappear into remote obscurity; the third took refuge in foreign military service, where he too went to the bad.

Nevertheless the wild humor of the brothers staid with them until the last minute. Before they deserted the castle they had their rustic court-painter depict on the walls all the scenes and misdeeds connected with their decline, down

to the last sitting of their court. Behind the stove stood forth the titles of all the alienated deeds and privileges, and in a forest clearing, illuminated by the moon, foxes, hares, and badgers were playing with the insignia of the lost estate. Over the door, moreover, they had themselves portrayed in a rear view, showing them near a boundary-stone, with their hats under their arms, solemnly striding over the line of their estate for the last time; underneath, in topsy-turvy letters, stood the word "Amen!"

While Solomon Landolt was evolving this dubious history in the letter to Salome, the melancholy fear seized him that the unfortunate blood and fatal destinies of his three uncles might possibly revive in him, and that it had been due only to a lucky star that they had skipped his mother. All the more naturally, he concluded, the unlucky star might rise in him again. To fight against it conscientiously and in accordance with his best knowledge was, to be sure — so he wrote her — his ardent purpose; but he was obliged to acknowledge that he had already gambled away a considerable sum on his journeys, and had secretly been reimbursed for it by his mother. Furthermore, he went on, he had already, with other people's money and without the knowledge of his father, kept horses worth far more than he could afford; and as for cash, it was practically certain that he would never learn to husband it as became the head of an orderly household. Even the less harmful trait of his uncles, fondness for riding and hunting, for pranks and jokes, were present in him, down to the very propensity to daub walls; for even as a boy he had covered the walls of Wellenberg Castle, where his father had lived as governor, with a hundred pictures of soldiers, drawn with charcoal and red chalk.

These grave anxieties, he thought, as an honorable man, he had no right to conceal from his much-beloved Mademoiselle Salome; he ought rather to give her an opportunity to reflect carefully on the weighty step over the threshold of a veiled future, and to make up her mind

whether she would invoke the help of divine providence and venture it with him, or act with just and commendable caution, and with complete freedom of her worthy person, guard herself against a dark fate.

Scarcely had he dispatched the letter when he regretted having written it; for its contents had become in the course of its composition more serious, more possible, as it were, than he at first supposed. Indeed the situation was fundamentally as he had described it, although he himself looked into the future with good courage. But it was now too late to change things, and finally he again felt the need, after all, of being able to test the depth of Salome's affection by observing the result.

The result was not long in manifesting itself. Salome had immediately told her mother what had happened between her and Solomon. The news was talked over with the father, and the marriage, in view of the uncertain prospects of the young man, whom all liked and none understood, was declared undesirable, yes, even dangerous. And when the letter arrived, the parents cried:

“He is right, more than right! Let him be praised for his sturdy honesty!”

The good Salome, to whom a life of worry or actual unhappiness was unthinkable, wept bitter tears a whole day, and then wrote in a short note to the indiscreet tester of her heart: It could not be! It could not be for several weighty reasons! He should take no further steps in the matter, but keep his friendship for her, just as she would always faithfully put hers at his service with the most willing cordiality!

In a few weeks she became engaged to a wealthy man whose circumstances and temperament permitted no doubt to arise as to the certainty of a well-established future.

Landolt was slightly troubled for as much as half a day; then he shook off his vexation, and with cheerful visage came to the conclusion that he had escaped a danger.

HARLEQUIN

The name of the sweetheart whom he called Harlequin may be given in full, since the family is now extinct. She bore the ancient baptismal name of Figura, and was a niece of the clever Councillor and Reformer Leu; so her full name was Figura Leu. She was an unspoiled child of nature, whose gold-blond curls could be arranged in the fashionable styles of the day only with the greatest difficulty and waged daily war with the hair-dresser of the house. Figura Leu's life consisted almost entirely of dancing and frisking about, and of a succession of jokes which she perpetrated with or without spectators. Only at the time of the new moon did she become more quiet: then her eyes, concealing the rogueries in their depths, were like a pool of blue water, in which the little silvery fish remain below unseen, and at the most only leap up occasionally to catch a fly venturing too near the surface.

At other times, however, her fun began early on Sunday morning. As Chairman of the Reformation Chamber, that is, the official Board that had charge of religious and moral betterment, it was her uncle's duty to permit the exit of those inhabitants who wished to go outside the gates on Sunday and to grant them passes, which they had to leave with the gate-watchman; for all other people were forbidden by strict Moral Ordinances to leave the city on days of worship. The enlightened gentleman secretly derived much amusement from this function when it did not cause him too much trouble; for on many Sundays almost a hundred persons, with the greatest variety of excuses, would apply for permission to go out into the country. But it afforded even more amusement to Figura, who would first group the petitioners in the spacious hall, arranging them according to the soundness of their reasons, and then conduct them in classes into the Reformer's office. Her classification, however, was based not on their alleged excuses, but on the genuine reasons which she read in their faces. Thus she would unerringly place together appren-

tices, artisans, and servant-girls, who wanted to attend some distant kermess or harvest-dance, but made the pretense that they had to fetch an outside doctor for a sick master. These folk would invariably bring with them, as evidence of their sincerity, either an empty medicine-bottle, a salve-jar, a pill-box, or even a little flask of water, which, at the merry girl's suggestion, they would carefully hold in their hands when they were admitted. Next would come a group of modest little men, with boxes of angle-worms already in their pockets, who wished to enjoy their privileges of citizenship by fishing in quiet brooks. These would have a hundred different excuses, such as — to attend a christening, to collect an inheritance, or to inspect a head of cattle, and so forth. After these would follow more questionable fellows, well-known reprobates who were headed for a gang of gamblers in some out-of-the-way dive, or at best for a bowling or drinking resort. Last of all would come the lovers, who were honestly anxious to get outside the walls, in order to pick flowers and damage the bark of the forest trees with their pocket-knives.

All these groups she would arrange with expert skill, and her uncle would find them so well classified that, without much loss of time, he could separate those whom on humane grounds he wished to let out for once, and reject the others, so that not too great a number would be running out of the gates at once.

Solomon Landolt heard about this merry muster which Figura Leu held every Sunday morning, and he felt a desire to try the adventure himself. Accordingly, although as an officer he could go in and out of the gates whenever he pleased, he mounted his horse one day, rode to the Leu house, and with his boots and spurs on entered the hall, where the curious grouping of the pleasure-seekers had in fact just been completed. Figura was standing on the front steps ready for church; in accordance with the Ordinance she was dressed in black, wore the prescribed nun-like kerchief on her head, while her little, marble-white

neck was encircled by the permissible gold chain. Surprised by this dainty and delicate apparition, he hesitated a moment to greet her; but presently, with a scarcely suppressed smile, he politely asked to be shown where he was to stand.

The girl made a graceful courtesy, and recognizing a roguish purpose in the tone of his voice, inquired:

“What business is it, Sir, that calls you away?”

“I want to shoot a hare for my mother, who is having guests this evening and has no roast!” replied Landolt as soberly as possible.

“Then, will you kindly take your place there,” she said with corresponding gravity, pointing toward the group of lovers, whom he recognized by their bashful and love-lorn manner, as he had heard them described. As he approached the group, somewhat embarrassed, Figura bowed once more to him, and then as lightly as a spirit hurried out of the house and off to church, leaving everybody in the lurch. When she had disappeared, Landolt quietly made his way out of the vestibule again, mounted his horse, and trotted off thoughtfully toward the nearest gate, which was promptly opened for him.

He had at least made the acquaintance of the peculiar girl, who seemed to have no objection; for whenever he met Figura, she received his greeting in a most friendly manner, and indeed she often greeted him first with a merry nod, for she did not tie herself down to etiquette. Once, indeed, she unexpectedly tripped up to him on the street, as if borne by wings, and said:

“I now know who the hare-hunter is! Good-day, Mr. Landolt!”

This behavior was very agreeable to his straightforward, open nature, and she filled his heart, which had already been slightly pecked by Goldfinch, with tender sympathy. To get better acquainted with her, he sought the society of her brother, who also lived with their uncle, since they had been orphans from childhood. Solomon had found out

that Martin Leu belonged to an association of young men called the Society for National History, which met in a clubhouse on the market-place.

It was the aspiring young radicals of the ruling classes who were seeking under this title to bring about a better future, and to escape from the dark prison of the so-called "two-classes," that is, the spiritual and secular authority. The subjects of enlightenment, culture, education, human dignity, and especially the dangerous theme of civic freedom, were dealt with in lectures and informal discussions, all the more extravagantly as their fathers of course took care that their ideas were not realized too fully, and that the sovereignty of the old city over the country was not called in question. For everybody knew that both country and people had been acquired in the course of centuries with good money, and the parchments of the State did not differ by a hair's breadth, in respect of legal status, from the deeds of the private citizen.

On the other hand, discussion whether the right of legislation, the right of changing the constitution, rested with the citizens or with the authorities, was a pleasure all the more in favor that it had to be enjoyed in secret, since the executioner with his sharp implement of correction was close at hand. Whenever the citizens, described by the rulers as most difficult to manage, would flare up in indignation, the executioner would be quickly withdrawn until the storm had passed over; afterward he would stand there again like a barometer-mannikin, and the magistracy would again become what it was before—the same mystically-abstract beast of prey, appointed by God alone.

There was consequently need of an all the more ardent and serious spirit among these young men wrestling with ideas, some of whom were being carried along toward a strict Puritanism. For, as people sometimes say one thing and mean another, they thundered against luxury and epicureanism, but in a spirit quite different from the Moral Ordinances. They did not desire the modesty of the Chris-

tian subject, but the virtue of the strict republican; wherefore there presently arose two factions, one of easygoing tolerants, the other of grim ascetics, who watched over and chided the liberals. A member who wore a gold watch and refused to discard it had already been expelled, while others had been watched and warned about leading too luxurious a life. The chief mentor was Professor Johann Jacob Bodmer, already a back number as man of letters and reformer of taste, but as citizen, politician, and moralist, a wise, enlightened, and broad-minded man; of such there were then few and are now none. He was well aware that he was regarded by the ruling class and the orthodox as a misleader of youth, but his prestige was so firm that he had no need to fear, and the faction of strict observance among the young men was his special guard of honor.

Into this society Solomon one day had himself introduced, and just before the business of the meeting began, he made the acquaintance of young Leu, who liked him from the first. They were obliged, however, to keep silent, as Professor Bodmer himself had appeared that day for half an hour to read a paper of ethical import and assign a lesson of similar nature. Landolt did not pay much attention, as his thoughts were wandering elsewhere. He occasionally glanced at Figura Leu's brother, who seemed even more bored than he, and both felt a sense of relief when the regular business was over.

But now came the critical moment. The serious members held it a matter of honor to stay together at least half an hour longer for general conversation, while the light-minded were eager to get away early to enjoy themselves in a tavern. This desertion was observed with sharp side-glances, denoting contempt or indignation, according to the fugitive's general worth. After several had thus sneaked away, Martin Leu plucked the unsuspecting Solomon by the coat-sleeve and in a whisper invited him to go out for a glass of wine. Landolt unsuspectingly went out with him, but great was his surprise when his companion

suddenly rushed obliquely across the street, dragging him along, ran up Steingasse as fast as they could, hurried through the Home of the Destitute, a labyrinthine hole, toward the dark Löwengässlein, thence past the Red House across to Eselgässlein, as a hunted stag bounds across a clearing, circled around behind the slaughter-house, crossed the Lower Bridge and the Weinplatz, ran up Weggengasse and through Schlüsselgasse, cut across Storchengasse by the Red Man, passed along Kambelgasse, and then, coming to the Limmatt again, turned to the right and finally entered the new and imposing Palace of the Tomtit Guild.

Breathless from laughing and running, the two young men halted to get their wind, clinging to the iron banister of the stairway, which still attracts the eye as a fine example of the smith-craft of that period. Leu now told his new friend about the state of affairs, how it had been his concern to avoid the glances of spies by taking a zigzag way. Landolt, being an enemy to any kind of bigotry, was not a little pleased by the clever ruse, especially as it proceeded from the brother of the girl in whom he was interested. With light hearts they entered the brilliantly-illuminated dining-room, the walls of which were adorned with numerous swords and three-cornered hats, belonging to the guests who were sitting at the various large tables.

Small sausages, tarts, muscatel, and malmsey—such were the things which the reunited faction of the Society for National History partook of, according to the exact inventory of the Catonic faction's spy, who had followed the last two runaways unseen through all the side streets, and now, with his hat pulled down over his brow, was standing in the doorway and taking careful note of every plate. And these things before the supper which was waiting for them at home, and after hearing a speech by the great Father Bodmer on "The Necessity of Self-restraint as a Leaven of Civic Freedom!"

To the young epicureans, however, it tasted none the worse; and friendship, as a genuine manly virtue, here

celebrated another triumph; for Martin Leu formed a life-long pact of friendship with Solomon Landolt, not suspecting that the latter had designs on his sister, or that he was besides a very temperate fellow, who thought little of conviviality for its own sake.

The consequences of excess were not long in revealing themselves. The strict moralist went to work without consulting Bodmer, nor did they disdain to report the matter secretly to the authorities, intending, however, to make a recommendation of mercy. In the form of a confidential tractandum the matter did in fact reach the supreme court of morals, the Chamber of Reformation. It was deemed prudent, however, as the sinners were sons of respectable families and were moreover gifted young men, to give them merely a mild, oral admonition. Accordingly one or two persons were assigned without any ado to each member of the Board for a quiet settlement suited to the end in view.

The elderly Mr. Leu quite properly had his own nephew and the latter's special accomplice, Solomon, turned over to him. When Solomon received an invitation to dine with the Councillor on a Sunday, punctually at twelve o'clock, he had already been apprized by the nephew as to what was up. Full of expectation he strode through the empty streets, which were avoided by the inhabitants on account of their strict observance of the Sabbath. A considerable number of heavy pie-baskets, borne by servants and resembling solemn Dutch men-of-war—these alone were cruising about on the quiet streets, squares, and bridges. At some distance Solomon followed one of these vessels, whose helmsman he knew, his excitement increasing because he hoped to see Figura Leu, and at the same time ran the risk of being reproved in her presence.

“You are going to get a lecture,” she cried out to him as he was passing through the corridor. “But console yourself! I have disobeyed the Ordinances too—just look at me!”

She exhibited herself to him gracefully, and he saw that she had on a close-fitting silk dress, adorned with beautiful lace, and a necklace set with gleaming gems.

"I did this," she said, "so that the gentlemen need not feel ashamed in my presence, when they come to dinner after getting scolded. Good-by for the present!"

With that she vanished as quickly as she had appeared. And it was indeed true that everything *Figura* had on her slender body was forbidden to women in the Ordinances.

Solomon Landolt was first shown into the Reformatory's office. There he found Martin Leu, who laughed and shook hands with him.

"Gentlemen," the uncle began his address, after the young men, standing side by side, had assumed an attitude of attention, "there are two points of view from which I should like to bring home to you the matter which you know is pending. In the first place, it is not healthy to partake of food and drink, especially southern wines, before supper and at irregular hours, and thus to accustom the palate to frequent over-indulgence of that kind. Young officers, in particular, should refrain from such feasting, as it soon makes a man corpulent and thus unfits him for service. In the second place, however, if it must be, if the gentlemen absolutely require a collation, it is in my opinion unworthy of young citizens and officers to sneak off and run through a hundred dark alleys to get it. No, young fellows of the right sort do, without words of excuse, without secrecy, and without fear, what they think they can stand for before their own consciences. And now let us go to dinner at once, or the soup will get cold!"

Figura Leu received the three men in the dining-room, and played the hostess with jocose grandezza, for her uncle was a widower. The latter looked at her gay attire in amazement, and she immediately explained to him that she was breaking the Ordinance intentionally, so that her poor brother should not stand alone in the pillory. The Reformatory laughed heartily at this, while *Figura* filled Solomon Landolt's plate so full that he was obliged to protest.

“Has your lecture already had such good effect?” she asked, casting a laughing glance at him.

But now his good humor was awakened, too, and he became so merry and so entertaining with his many clever remarks, that Figura’s silvery laughter was heard almost incessantly, while she herself was so busy listening to him that she found no opportunity for pleasantries of her own. The only one to relieve him was the Reformer, who told excellent droll stories from his long experience, mainly characteristic incidents of his official career, or about the narrow zealotry of the clergy. Also several comical instances of the profound influence exerted by the housewives in town and church affairs were brought to light, and it was easy to see that the Reformer had not failed to read his Voltaire.

“Mr. Landolt,” cried Figura almost passionately, “we two will never marry, lest such disgrace should befall us! Your hand on it!”

She held out her hand, which Solomon quickly seized and shook.

“So let it be!” he said laughing, yet with a throbbing heart; for he thought the very opposite, and took the beautiful girl’s words as a sort of disguised hint, or encouragement. The Reformer also laughed, but straightway became solemn when the church-bells began to ring, sounding the first call to the afternoon sermon.

“These everlasting Ordinances again!” he exclaimed; for families were forbidden to protract the midday meal beyond the time for worship and they did not realize that it was already two o’clock. Everybody looked sadly at the inviting table, which was still well filled. Martin, the nephew, quickly opened another bottle of wine for dessert, while the Reformer hurried away to don his church robes, since station and custom required him to go to the cathedral. Presently he appeared again in the prescribed black gown, with the white, mill-stone collar around his neck, and the conical hat on his head. He intended merely to finish

drinking his glass, but as Landolt was just in the midst of a new story, he sat down again for a moment. The conversation once more grew animated and did not stop until a sudden silence followed the full peal of the church bells, which had been ringing for some time.

Mr. Leu, the uncle, said with a start:

“It’s too late now! Fill the glasses, Martin! We’ll stay here out of sight, until the time is past!”

Figura Leu clapped her hands and cried joyfully:

“Now we are all malefactors, and what a fine sort! Let us clink glasses on that!”

With a smile she raised the crystal goblet of amber-colored wine, and for an instant the afternoon sun irradiated not only the glass and the rings on her fingers, but also her golden hair, her delicate, rosy cheeks, her red lips, and the precious stones in her necklace; she stood there as in a halo, like an angel of heaven celebrating a mystery. Even her care-free brother was struck by the edifying sight, and he would have liked to clasp his shining sister in his arms, but for the fact that he would have destroyed the vision. Her uncle, too, gazed at the girl with complacency and suppressed a rising sigh of anxiety as to her fate.

When another short hour had elapsed and evening was drawing near, the Reformer proposed to the two young men that they betake themselves to the promenade in the Schützenplatz, where, along the two rivers which inclose the place, stand the beautiful avenues of trees.

“There,” he continued, “the noble Bodmer, surrounded by his friends and disciples, is now taking a walk and speaking excellent words which are worth hearing; if we join him, we shall regain our good reputation with everybody. Meanwhile Figura can look up her Sunday girlfriends, who have the habit of promenading in the same place before they eat the preserved cherries to which they innocently treat one another.”

In accordance with this suggestion the three men went

out to the aforesaid promenade, where various companies were strolling up and down in close array. Among them, in fact, was Bodmer and his retinue, explaining, as they walked along, the difference between the real and the ideal, between the republic of Plato and a Swiss city-republic; in the course of which discussion he spoke of all sorts of occurrences, and alluded to various stupidities and improprieties with unmistakable innuendo.

The two Leus and Landolt, after the proper exchange of compliments, joined the Bodmer group and walked along with them. Solomon Landolt, naturally vivacious and moreover not very attentive, was soon a few steps in advance of the others, while Bodmer passed over to the subject of public education grounded on definite political principles.

In advance of a group of young women, who were strolling from a side alley across the main avenue, Figura Leu was likewise walking, with a similar impatient mien. Landolt made a deep bow, and all the gentlemen behind him also took off their three-cornered hats and bent forward respectfully, so that their swords mounted into the air behind them. Figura bowed in return with inimitable gravity and great ceremony, and all the young ladies behind her, some twenty of them, followed her example.

As Bodmer was criticizing an educational work of Basedow, the feminine group met them again, this time in a straight line, and there followed a similar exchange of greetings, which lasted until all had passed. Turning now to the utility of the stage, of which Bodmer spoke not without allusions to his own dramatic efforts, he was once more interrupted by the same ceremonial, so that there was no end to the hat-lifting and bowing, almost to the disgust of the worthy professor.

The fault, to be sure, was partly Solomon Landolt's, who, as a hunter and a soldier skilled to keep constant watch on the movements of the enemy, directed the course of the learned gentlemen, without their realizing it, in such a way

as to bring about these repeated meetings. But Figura responded so promptly and reliably each time with her exaggerated courtesies, that he did not repent of doing it.

And this day, when it was over, seemed to him the pleasantest he had ever known.

The merry girl was now in his mind all the time, but the cheerful composure which he had maintained in the case of Salome, the Goldfinch, was now gone. Indeed, whenever a considerable time elapsed without his seeing her, the mere thought of having to live his life without Figura Leu filled him with sadness and fear. And she, moreover, seemed to be truly fond of him; for she facilitated his efforts to be with her, and treated him like a good comrade who is always ready for fun and responsive to every sunbeam of good humor. A hundred times she would rest her hand on his shoulders, or even put her arm around his neck; but as soon as he attempted to clasp her hand in a familiar way, she would withdraw it almost hastily. And if he went so far as to venture an endearing word, or a significant glance, she would ignore it with cool indifference. Sometimes she even made fun of him about small matters, and he would bear it in silence, failing to notice in his embarrassment that she had at the same time given him a look of warm sympathy.

Brother and uncle were fully aware of this strange intercourse, but feeling that the girl's nature was something not to be changed, they let the young people alone, especially as they knew Solomon's character to be entirely honorable and upright.

But one day the affair came to a crisis. It being summer, Solomon Gessner, the poet, had taken up his official residence in the Sihl Forest, the supervision of which had been intrusted to him by his fellow-citizens. Whether or not he really attended to the duties of that office himself, is no longer to be ascertained; but so much is certain, that in that summer home he wrote poetry, painted, and enjoyed himself with the friends who often visited him. This new

Solomon, renowned in our histories, was at that time in the prime of life and at the height of a fame which had already spread over all countries. As much of this fame as was merited and just, he bore with that amiable simplicity which is characteristic only of men who really have ability. Gessner's idyllic poems are by no means weak and vacuous compositions, but for their time — and no one who is not a hero can go beyond his time — they are finished little works of art, with a style of their own. Nowadays we scarcely look at them any more, just as we do not think what people will say fifty years hence of all that is being produced today.

However that may be, the atmosphere in which the man lived at his forest home was truly poetic and artistic, and his jovial, many-sided talent, combined with his frank humor, was the source of a constant golden mirthfulness. His own etchings, as well as those of Zingg and Kolbe done after his paintings, are destined to be much sought for by collectors a hundred years hence, whereas now we throw them in for a few pennies.

Having an interest in a china factory, he had lightly undertaken to learn to paint the vessels himself, and after a little practice had essayed to decorate a magnificent tea-set. The result was a great success. And now the handsome production was to be dedicated in the Sihl Forest, whither he had invited friends of both sexes to join in the little celebration. The table was spread on the bank of the river under some superb maple-trees, behind which the verdant mountain-slope, crown upon crown, towered up into the blue summer sky. On the dazzling-white, embroidered table-cloth stood the pitchers, cups, plates, and other dishes, covered with a hundred pictures of different size, each one of which was an invention, a little idyl, a bit of verse. And the charm of it lay in the fact that all these things — nymphs, satyrs, shepherds, children, landscapes, and flowers — were done with a free, firm hand, each one in its proper place; so that it did not look like the work of a factory painter, but like that of an artist at play.

The table, thus adorned, was sprinkled with roundish spots of sunlight, which fell through the crenate foliage of the maples and danced about to the soft rhythm of the waving branches, sometimes reminding one of a slow and solemn minuet.

Mr. Gessner was sitting alone, absorbed in watching this play of light, when the first carriageful of invited guests arrived. In it sat the wise Bodmer, the Cicero of Zurich, as Sulzer used to call him, and Canonicus Breitingen, who in former days had been his ally in the war against Gottsched. But as they had their worthy housewives with them, the two were occupying the rear seat. Other carriages brought other friends and scholars, all of whom spoke an extraordinarily lively and witty jargon, which was animated by a mixture of literary dandyism and Helvetic probity, or, if you will, old-fashioned national self-complacency. The last carriage was filled with young girls, among whom was Figura Leu, accompanied by Solomon Landolt and Martin Leu, on horseback.

All these dignified and handsome people were presently moving about joyously beneath the trees. The painted china tea-set was examined and highly praised. But it was not long before Solomon Gessner and Figura Leu enacted a scene showing a shepherdess teaching a bashful shepherd to dance; and it was done so naturally and so comically that it created a general merriment; and pretty Mrs. Gessner, *née* Heidegger, had difficulty in getting the company seated again to do honor to her collation.

The more quiet conversation which now followed was helped along by one of those enthusiasts who always have to lug in personal topics. This man had already dug up the most recent events of Gessner's life, perhaps not without the help of the latter's excellent wife. Several letters had come from Paris. In a letter to Mr. Huber, translator of Gessner, Rousseau had made some most flattering remarks about the latter, asserting that he, Rousseau, always kept his writings within reach. Diderot even wished to

have some of his own tales published in a single volume together with Gessner's latest idyls. That Rousseau should dote on the ideal state of nature in that idyllic world was after all nothing remarkable; but that the great realist and encyclopedist, Diderot, should seek the pleasure of appearing arm in arm with the simple idyllic poet, seemed the very acme of imaginable praise, and to Gessner's disgust gave rise to most protracted discussion.

By this, however, Cicero-Bodmer was thrown completely off his balance, so that human folly, which dwells even in the wisest, got the upper hand and broke loose; for he now insisted, irrepressibly and inconsiderately, in talking about his poetry. He recalled sadly how once upon a time, in a league of enthusiastic friendship with young Wieland, he, the elder, the man of established fame, had vied with the rising youthful star in planning a number of devout poems; and what had become now of those noble joys?

With his lean legs crossed, and with a light, gray summer cape thrown picturesquely around his shoulders as a protection against the rather cool forest air, he leaned back in his chair and gave himself over in sheer melancholy to the memory of those sad experiences. For, one soon after the other, those seraphic young men, Klopstock and Wieland, whom he had invited to Zurich, had so basely disappointed and betrayed his sacred, paternal friendship and his poetic brotherliness; one by attaching himself to a crowd of young carousers and manifesting an alarming worldliness, instead of working on his *Messiah*; the other by associating more and more with all sorts of women and ending up—so Bodmer thought—as the most frivolous and dissolute poetaster that had ever lived. In consequence he, Bodmer, had had his hands full fighting down his shame and grief with an inexhaustible flood of fearful hexameters in solemn biblical epics.

Thus he came to speak of *The Trial of Abraham*, of *Jacob's Return from Haran*, of the *Noachid*, of the *Deluge*, and all those monuments of his restless activity, and re-

cited numerous brilliant passages from them. Here and there he interwove deplorable incidents that had come to his knowledge from his wide correspondence; for example, how the Council of Danzig had forbidden poetically-inclined young citizens the use of the hexameter, on the ground that it was an indecent and seditious vehicle for the treatment of civic affairs. He also related with a malicious smile, as characteristic of modern friendship, how he had confidentially informed a clerical friend of his about the appearance of a bitterly satirical attack on him in a poem entitled *Bodmerias*, and how indignant the friend had been that anybody should attempt in such a spiteful, loathsome way to destroy men's delight in the immortal works of Bodmer. It was to be hoped—the friend had declared—that no honorable man would read such villainous stuff, and more to the same effect. Then he went on to tell how the hankering clergyman had concluded by inquiring if he, Bodmer, could not procure a copy of this *Bodmerias* for a day, since, after overcoming the vexation that would be caused by reading it, his delight in Bodmer's noble poems would undoubtedly be doubled.

Everybody present smiled with amusement at the inquisitiveness of the clergyman, whose identity they guessed. But Bodmer, with increasing excitement, let his cape drop to his hips, bent forward, so that he looked like a Roman senator, and cried:

“And for that he is going to miss being mentioned in the commemorative passage that I had designed for him in the new edition of the *Noachid*; for he has shown that he is not sufficiently refined to pass on into the future side by side with me!”

He now mentioned the faithful friends he had already favored with mention in passages of his various epics, and those he still meant to honor in this way, devoting to them a larger or smaller number of verses in larger or smaller works according to the man's importance.

With a sharp, scrutinizing glance he looked around him.

All looked down; some blushed and some turned pale, but all were silent; for he seemed to be subjecting them to a serious inspection. Gradually his mood became gentler; he leaned back again, thinking of by-gone days, and then, glancing up toward the green mountain-side, said in a plaintive voice:

“ Oh, where is that golden time gone, when my young Wieland wrote the preface to our joint collection of poems, and added the words: ‘ It is to be attributed chiefly to our divine religion, if in the moral excellence of our poems we are something more than Homers.’ ”

The moment he lowered his eyes he saw a sight so strange that he suddenly jumped up and cried out sternly:

“ What is the little fool doing? ”

It must be explained that all this time Solomon Landolt had been walking up and down beneath the trees, aloof from the others, thinking about his love-affair, and wondering whether something decisive could be made to happen that day. He was wearing at the time a conspicuous hair-bag, with large bows of ribbon on it. Now Figura Leu had procured in the house a small pocket-mirror and a round hand-mirror. The former she had managed, without his knowledge, by pretending to be arranging something to fasten to the hair-bag, and thus adorned he had calmly continued his walk. At the same time she began to trip along behind him as lightly and nimbly as a Grace, making pantomimic dance-steps that were inaudible on the mossy ground and all the time glancing alternately into the hand-mirror and then into the pocket-mirror on Landolt's back. Occasionally, as she danced along, she would turn the hand-mirror and the upper part of her body in such a way that one could see she was looking at herself from all sides at once.

Like a flash of lightning the agile-minded and shrewd old man began to suspect that wanton youth was here symbolizing vain self-admiration, namely, his own, as exhibited in the remarks he had been making. Everybody turned

in the direction in which his long, bony index-finger was pointing, and laughed at the pretty spectacle. Finally Landolt himself had his attention attracted; he looked around in astonishment, and caught Figura in the act of quickly removing the mirror from his back.

“What does that mean?” asked the old professor, who had regained his composure, in a gentle, calm voice. “Is youth making fun of garrulous old age?”

What Figura really meant by it was never ascertained. Only so much is certain, that she was seized with remorse and stood there in great embarrassment. In her anxiety she pointed to Landolt and said:

“Do you not see that I am merely playing with this gentleman?”

And now Solomon Landolt blushed and turned pale, since he could not but feel that he had been made ridiculous. The guests too had finally become aware of the dubious nature of the spectacle, and a silent, somewhat painful suspense ensued.

Then Solomon Gessner sprang up, seized the hand-mirror, and cried:

“This is not a case of mockery—not a bit of it! The girl was trying to represent Truth following at the heels of Virtue, which none of you, I trust, will deny that our Solomon possesses. But her representation was faulty, for truth must exist for its own sake alone, and not be dependent in any way whatsoever upon virtue or vice. Let’s see if I can do it better!”

With that he took a veil from the lady nearest him, hung it about his hips to produce an antique effect, and mounted a stone with the mirror in his hand. Standing on this pedestal, with contorted body and an insipid expression, he produced such a funny imitation of a pigtailed statue of Veritas that laughter and good cheer returned.

Only Solomon Landolt remained in a disturbed state of mind and slipped away to seek a remote forest-path, in order to collect his thoughts, that he might afterward

emerge from the affair like a brave man. He had not gone far, however, when he unexpectedly felt Figura Leu take his arm.

"Is it permissible to walk with you?" she whispered. For a while she walked along lightly beside the silent man, whose arm, in spite of his silence, she did not release. When they came to a certain eminence, where they could no longer be seen, she stopped and said:

"I must have one talk with you, or else I shall die in misery. But first this—!"

With that she threw both arms around his neck and kissed him. But when he wanted to keep it up, she pushed him away forcibly.

"That means," she went on, "that I love you and know that you love me. But right here and now we must say Amen! Good-by and Amen! For you must know that I promised my mother on her deathbed, one minute before she gave up the ghost, that I would never marry! And I must and will keep that promise! She was deranged—at first melancholia, then something worse—and only in her last hour did her mind become clear once more, so that she could talk to me. It is in the family and crops out, now here, now there; formerly it regularly used to skip a generation, but my grandmother had it, and then my mother, and now they fear that I may get it too."

She sank to the ground, covered her face with her hands, and began to weep bitterly.

Landolt, deeply touched, knelt beside her and tried to grasp her hands and comfort her. He groped for words to express his thanks, his feelings, but could say only:

"Courage! We'll take care of that! A fine idea that! Nothing will ever come of that!" etc.

But she cried out with terrifying conviction:

"No! no! At present my mirth and folly are assumed only to drive away Melancholy, which stands behind me like a ghost. I feel it coming!"

At that time there were in our country no special institu-

tions for such patients; unless they were violent, the deranged were kept at home, where they were long remembered as miserable demoniacal creatures.

The weeping girl arose sooner than he had hoped; she carefully dried her face, and with instinctive haste cast grief aside.

“Enough for the present,” she cried. “You know now! You must marry a good, beautiful girl, one who is wiser than I. Hush! Be still! This ends it!”

For once Landolt had nothing more to say. He was touched and shocked by the gravity of the fate that threatened, but he also felt within him an assured happiness that he did not intend to lose. They walked around together until all evidence of Figura’s excitement had vanished from her beautiful face, and then returned to the company. There a little dance among the young folk was already in progress, Gessner having procured a couple of country musicians.

When Figura reappeared, the reconciled Bodmer himself invited her to take a turn with him, in order to demonstrate his youthfulness. Afterward she danced with Landolt as often as she could without attracting attention, whispering to him that this would have to be the last day of their intimacy, as she could never tell when she would be called away into that unknown land where minds go wandering.

On the drive back to the city he rode beside the carriage in which she sat. Her little tongue was never still for a moment. From a cherry-tree under which they passed he broke off a branch loaded with coral-red cherries and threw it into her lap.

“Thank you,” she said, and she carefully preserved the branch with its withered fruit for thirty years; for, although her health was always good and the dismal fate never appeared, she held firmly to her resolution. Martin, her brother, whom Solomon went to see early the next morning in order to have a talk with him, confirmed what she

had said and asserted that the existence of insanity in the family was a recognized fact, and that the women in particular had always been susceptible to it. There was nobody, Martin averred, whom he would rather have had for a brother-in-law than Solomon Landolt; but for the sake of his sister's peace of mind, which she had thus far maintained fairly well, he himself was compelled to ask him to make no further advances.

Landolt did not submit immediately; on the contrary he quietly waited for years, without, however, seeing any change in the situation. All that kept up his spirits was simply the fact that, whenever he saw Figura Leu after the regular intervals of separation, her eyes gave him to understand that he was her best and dearest friend.

CAPTAIN

Solomon Landolt lived along for seven full years without concerning himself any more about the womenfolk; only Harlequin, as he called Figura Leu, continued to hold a place in his heart. Finally, however, he had another affair.

At that time there was residing in Zurich a certain Captain Gimmel who had recently returned from military service in Holland, and had brought with him a daughter; his wife, a Dutch woman, was dead. He had a small private income in addition to his pension, but lived in such fashion that he spent almost all of it on himself. This man was an arrant drunkard and brawler, who prided himself particularly on his fencing. Although no longer young by any means, he was always associating with young fellows and roistering and raising rows. Happening to encounter him one day, Landolt was disgusted by the Captain's noisy, boastful talk and accepted his challenge. The company betook themselves to Gimmel's house, where he had a regular fencing-room. Here Landolt hoped to give the old brawler, in spite of his leather cuirass, a few stout pokes in the ribs; for he was himself a good fencer, having diligently practiced the art as a small boy in the castle at Wülflingen, also later at the military school in Metz, and again in Paris.



Permission Photographische Union, Munich

ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

THE SHEPHERD'S LAMENT

And so the room presently resounded with the noise of shuffling and stamping feet, and with the clang of swords. Landolt attacked the Captain more and more viciously, finally making him puff and blow; then suddenly dropped his weapon and stared as if spell-bound at the opening door, through which the Captain's daughter, the beautiful Wendelgard, was entering with a tray of small liqueur glasses.

The apparition might indeed have been called glorious. Her tall figure was richly dressed, seemingly beyond her means, in rustling silk; but even this splendor faded before the rare beauty of the girl herself, whose face, neck, hands, and arms were all of the same alabaster whiteness, as if she were a draped statue of Parian marble. Furthermore, she had a luxuriant growth of glossy, reddish hair, whose silk-like threads showed a hundred wavelets, while her large, dark-blue eyes, as well as her mouth, seemed to tell of an appealing earnestness, yes, almost a mild anxiety, though it was not exactly due to spiritual causes.

When this radiant creature looked around for a place to lay down the tray, the Captain, who welcomed the interruption with delight, motioned her to the window-sill. The young men, on the other hand, saluted her with that courtesy which we owe, under all circumstances, to such beauty. With a bow and charming smile which shone through the earnestness of her features, she withdrew, hastily casting a timid glance at the astonished Solomon, whom she had never before seen in the house. Her papa then produced a variety of fine Dutch brandies, which he passed around and thus managed to avert a continuation of the fencing-match.

But Landolt had lost all inclination to hurt Captain Gimmel; for in his eyes the Captain had all at once been transformed into a sorcerer, who possessed golden treasures and the power to dispense happiness and unhappiness out of his hands. When Gimmel proposed an expedition by boat to a good wine-garden, Landolt joined in without

hesitation; unaccustomed as he was to the elderly brag-gart's jarring conduct, he was now the very personification of tolerant indulgence.

Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh, and after one novelty comes another. From that day on, in order to hear something about the beautiful Wendelgard, he was continually bringing up her name by shrewd devices, but in the coolest and most casual way; at the same time the girl, otherwise but little known, was getting herself talked about because of the recklessness she was said to have displayed in contracting a large number of debts. Here was the unheard-of case of a young girl, the daughter of a citizen, hovering on the verge of disgraceful bankruptcy; for her father, it was said, refused to pay any debts contracted without his knowledge, and threatened the creditors with violence and the daughter with disinheritance.

The truth of the matter seemed to be that the daughter, in order to provide for the needs of the household, for which she was not allowed ample means by her father, had resorted to borrowing, and had then begun to fall back with increasing frequency on this easy solution of the problem for her personal needs. Want of maternal supervision, combined with inexperience and a certain naiveté, which are often characteristic of such exceptional persons, had not been without influence in the case, apart from the fact that she thought her boastful father very well-to-do.

However that may have been, she was now the subject of general gossip; the women clasped their hands and declared that doomsday must be near when such phenomena took place; the men thought it portended at least the downfall of the State; the young girls secretly put their heads together and indulged in the most uncanny descriptions of the unfortunate creature; the young men lapsed into wanton, malicious jokes about her, but at the same time manifested a certain timid prudence by avoiding the Captain's house and even the street where it stood; the victimized merchants and shopkeepers ran hither and thither to the courts, following up their complaints.

It was only Solomon Landolt whose heart went out with redoubled passion to the beautiful girl grieving amid her debts. Ardent sympathy inspired and filled him with an unconquerable longing, as if the fair sinner were sitting, not in the purgatory of her misery, but in a blooming rose-garden surrounded by a golden lattice. He could no longer resist the impulse to see her and to help her, and so one evening when he saw the Captain securely moored in a tavern, he went with quick decision to Wendelgard's house and pulled the door-bell forcibly. To the maid who looked out of the window and asked what he wanted, he replied brusquely that he was a messenger from the city court and wished to speak with the daughter of the house; he chose to introduce himself in this way in order to curtail any further explanations and useless excitement. As a matter of fact he did frighten the poor girl not a little by so doing; for she was very pale as she approached him, and turned a deep red on recognizing him. In the greatest confusion and with a voice plainly faltering with fear and alarm, she asked him to take a seat; for she was so helpless and forsaken that she had no notion of business procedure, and thought that she was now going to be led off to prison.

But Landolt had scarcely sat down when they changed rôles, and he was now the one to find difficulty in hitting upon the right word for his communications; for to him the beautiful, unfortunate girl seemed more noble and exalted than a King of France, who, after all, when he was buying the blood of the Swiss, always had to call them *grands amis*. But finally, assuming the manner of one seeking protection, he made known to her the object of his visit; the increasing pleasure he derived from looking at her encouraged him so much that he was presently able to explain to her calmly how he, as an assessor at court, had taken cognizance of her annoying situation, and had now come for the purpose of conferring with her about the matter and discovering some way to adjust it. So she could impart to him with implicit confidence the extent and nature of the obligations she had incurred.

With a deep sigh of relief Wendelgard cast another scrutinizing glance at him, similar to the first one, and then hurried out to get a box in which, without looking at them again, she had put all the bills, duns, and court records that had come in up to that time. With another sigh, accompanied by a blush of shame, she cast down her eyes and poured the entire lot on the table; then she leaned back in her chair and covered her face with the empty box, behind which she began to sob gently with averted head.

Touched and glad that he was in a position to intervene so helpfully, Solomon took the box from her, gently took her hands, and begged her to be of good courage. Then he set about examining the papers, and whenever he needed information, he put the question in such a kindly, confidence-inspiring way that she found it easy to answer him. Presently he drew forth the little sketch-book which he always carried with him, and which was filled with hasty studies of horses, dogs, trees, and cloud-formations; then, selecting a clean, white page, he noted down the good Wendelgard's debts. They were mostly for fine clothes and ornaments, as well as for elegant furniture, although a modest proportion of them was for dainties; but the total was far from being as enormous as was rumored in public. Still, all together it added up to well-nigh a thousand gulden of Zurich currency, a sum which the girl could in no way have procured.

But Landolt was so infatuated with the beautiful creature that the list of her debts seemed to him, as he carefully put the little book back into his breast-pocket, a sweeter, more precious, and more delightful possession than an inventory of the property of a rich bride. He loved everything on the list, the gowns, lace, hats, feathers, fans, and gloves; even the sweets merely aroused in him a desire to treat the charming, grown-up child to that sort of thing himself.

When he took his leave, promising to let her hear from him soon, she looked at him with a doubtful expression,

since she could not see what was to come of it all. But she had become cheerful, and with an air of trusting gratitude she herself lighted him down to the front-door, where she whispered a friendly "good-night" which completely captivated the young city judge. Slowly and thoughtfully—the latter, perhaps, for the first time—she reascended the stairs, and, for the first time in a long while at least, dropped off into a sweet and peaceful slumber; so that she did not hear the noisy Captain when he came home.

So much the less did Solomon Landolt sleep that night; for he meditated over the affair until the cocks in the city's numerous hen-yards began to crow.

As Solomon still lived with his parents and was dependent upon them, he could at the most raise but part of the sum required for Wendelgard's redemption, because he had to conceal his interference in the matter, unless he wished, right at the start, to aggravate the difficulty of a subsequent marriage with this phenomenon of recklessness. On the other hand he had a rich grandmother, whose favorite he was, and who was in the habit of helping him out of all sorts of financial straits, and took pleasure in doing it secretly. But at the same time she had this peculiarity, that she vehemently opposed every matrimonial project of her grandson whenever the subject was mentioned. She declared that she knew him better than anybody else, and that he would only be unhappy and pine away; as for the women, she asserted that she understood them well enough too, and knew what they were. Consequently each of her donations and secret advances was accompanied by a confidential warning to him not to think of marrying; and when he turned to her in any difficulty, he needed only to make some such allusion in order to be sure of immediate results.

Now he again had recourse to this singular grandmother, and with a dissembled sigh confided to her that it was at last absolutely necessary for him to think of getting out of difficulty and in general of attaining an independent position by making a good match that was in sight. In

alarm she took off her spectacles, with which she had just been reading in her interest-book, and looked at her unlucky grandson as if he were a lost youth about to set fire to his own house.

“Do you know that I shall disinherit you if you marry?” she cried, herself startled by the thought. “That would cap the climax, to have one of those scratching hens get into my boxes and chests! And you! How will you ever learn to tolerate a woman? How will you stand it, for example, if you get one who fibs all day long, or one who rails at everybody, so that your honorable table is turned into a place of slander, or one who is always eating wherever she happens to be, and gossiping while she chews? What will you do if you get one who goes pilfering around in the stores, or contracts debts like the Gimmel girl?”

The grandson suppressed a laugh at this last species, wherewith the grandmother had so nearly hit the mark, and said as seriously as possible:

“If the poor women are as bad as all that, there is all the more reason for not leaving them to themselves; we ought rather to marry them, in order to save what can be saved!”

In extreme irritation the enemy of her sex cried:

“Be still, you abomination! What is it? What do you want?”

“I have gambled away a thousand gulden, six hundred of which I haven’t got!”

The old woman replaced her spectacles, snatched the gloria-cap from her head, in order to run her fingers through her short, gray hair, and then hobbled over to the inlaid writing-desk, behind whose rising roll-top Solomon was delighted to see the guarded wonders that had once gladdened his childhood: a small round silver globe, a knight sitting on a carved ivory horse, with gilded armor of real silver that could be taken off, a shield ornamented with jewels and an enameled helmet-plume; finally, a four-inch ivory skeleton with a silver scythe, which was known

as the "little Death," and was carved with such artistic skill that not the smallest bone was missing.

The old woman took this dainty Death in her trembling hand, making the fine ivory jingle and rattle a little, scarce audibly, and said:

"Look here—this is how husband and wife look when the fun is over! So who wants to love and marry?"

Solomon now took the little figure in his hand and looked at it attentively; a mild shudder passed through him as he pictured to himself Wendelgard's beautiful form crumbling away from such a framework. But when he thought of the swift flight of time and its irretrievableness, his heart beat so violently that the little skeleton trembled quite noticeably. He cast a longing glance at his grandmother's hand, which drew forth from a permanent supply of cash, in one of the compartments, a roll of shining double louisd'ors, as she said:

"There are the thousand gulden! But don't bother me with any more talk of marriage!"

He now betook himself first to Captain Gimmel, whom he found in a tavern and called aside. He set forth to him that he had been commissioned and put in a position by a third person, who preferred to be unnamed, to straighten out the unpleasant difficulty of his daughter, but on condition that the Captain, in order to spare his daughter as much as possible, should let the thing be done in his own name, and that she was to have no idea but that her father had paid her debts. On this condition he, Landolt, would deposit the money in a public office as coming from the Captain, and see to it that the various creditors were satisfied without publicity. Thus father and daughter would be spared all further annoyance.

The Captain looked at the young man with astonished eyes, mumbled something about unauthorized meddling and the preservation of his domestic rights, and felt for his sword. But when Landolt went on to say that people were taking great interest in the girl and in her future welfare,

which might depend upon a prompt adjustment of the affair on hand, and the Captain began to scent a good provision for his child, he sheathed the sword of his honor, and declared himself satisfied with the proposed *modus procedendi*.

Solomon Landolt now brought the business to an end with cautious skill, so that the creditors were paid. Everybody believed that Captain Gimmel had thought better of it, and even Wendelgard suspected nothing else. The father assumed toward her a pompous mien, which strengthened her belief anew that he must surely be a man of means.

Hence she was by no means excessively astonished or disconcerted when Solomon, the agent, reappeared one evening and handed her the receipts for all the debts, large and small. But Solomon was heartily glad of the outcome and rejoiced at the recovery of her composure; for while settling up and ferreting out the number and nature of her debts, certain doubts had occurred to him, which, to be sure, only filled him anew with tender sympathy for her in her helpless poverty, and inspired him with an ardent desire to guide her destiny with a firm hand. In anticipation of his visit Wendelgard had for the last few days been dressing and adorning herself even more painstakingly than usual, and she too was glad of her greater composure, but mainly because she no longer appeared humiliated before her deliverer, having extricated herself, as she supposed, with her own means.

Nevertheless she thanked him with childlike cordiality for his helpful efforts, and familiarly offered him her hand. She looked so beautiful that without further delay he confessed his love for her, asserting that this alone had induced him to interfere so obtrusively in her affairs. Yes, he even went so far in his unrestrained frankness as to explain to her that by returning his love and giving him her hand, she would help him far more than he had helped her, leading him to alter a somewhat unsettled and desultory life, and to do for love and beauty what he had not cared to do for himself.

But this honest indiscretion, or indiscreet honesty, awakened the beautiful girl's caution. She let the excited Solomon hold her hand while he was talking, and looked at him with friendly eyes, which gleamed charmingly with the happiness of being raised so suddenly from humiliation. But amid all the loveliness of the moment the formerly so frivolous girl thought of the unsettled life which her lover accused himself of having led, and requested a week's time for deliberation. She dismissed him very graciously, however, and drew short, quick breaths, like a young rabbit, when she found herself alone again.

Meanwhile the Captain had thought over Landolt's mysterious intimations more thoroughly, and had made the discovery that his daughter was, indeed, ripe for happiness and ready for the market. He was not disposed to let the jewel be carried off by an unknown hand, but wished to be on hand with open eyes, and above all to arrange a suitable exhibition. In order to start things going at once, he decided to visit with his daughter the baths of Baden, which was just then overrun with visitors, owing to the fine Whitsuntide weather. He had her pack up her finest clothes, which she was not allowed to wear at all in Zurich on account of the Moral Ordinances, and without delay they put up at the Hinterhof in Baden, which, like all the other hotels, was already filled with strangers. But with that Gimmel's paternal supervision ended abruptly; for he immediately sought and found a sufficient company of bibulous old soldiers, and left his daughter Wendelgard entirely to herself.

As lucky chance would have it, Figura Leu was staying at the same hotel in the company of an elderly lady who was taking the baths for rheumatism. She too was now a trifle advanced in years, and did as she pleased even more than of yore. When she saw the beautiful Wendelgard, whose debts had made her quite famous, and noticed that in her forlornness she scarcely knew what to do with herself, she took her up and found her own pastime in

studying and learning to understand the peculiar and original creature, in whom beauty, with no other attribute, seemed to have become incarnate. She soon won the confidence of the girl, who had never known the satisfaction of such intercourse, and on the very first day she knew about her relations with Solomon and about the week's time for deliberation. By the second day she was convinced that it would be the greatest calamity that could befall the incautious suitor, if he were to win the girl. She herself did not rightly know why. She merely had the feeling that Wendelgard did not have a real soul. Then again she saw Wendelgard as a clean, white canvas, on which Solomon would paint something passably good, and so perhaps everything would turn out well.

Troubled by her own uncertainty, she suddenly decided to leave the decision to a sort of ordeal of God or trial by fire, the idea of which came to her on the unexpected announcement of the arrival of her brother Martin, who for the past five years had been in Paris as captain of the Zurich regiment. He was a good hand at all clever feats, and in particular had come to be a first-rate comedian, from taking part in the private theatricals of Parisian society. Captain Gimmel and his daughter had never seen him, and even to those who knew him well he could make himself unrecognizable.

On this circumstance Figura based her plan; and hearing that her brother was on his way from Zurich to Baden, having come home unexpectedly for a visit, she contrived to meet him secretly on the way, to acquaint him hastily with her project and win him over to it; for he took almost as much interest in the welfare of his honest friend as did his sister. But she had need to hurry, for four of the seven days had already elapsed, and she could easily see that Wendelgard was not going to answer No.

Accordingly Martin Leu delayed his arrival until night-fall, while Figura hurried back alone and acted as if nothing had happened. During the night he made his preparations,

and on the following day, with a grand and mysterious air, he strode upon the scene and as an unknown stranger. As if by chance, as soon as he had got his bearings, he approached Captain Gimmel, drank a bottle of wine with him, promptly allowed him to win a few thalers at dice, and then let matters drop, while he went out for a walk on the public promenades and along the bank of the river. Meanwhile Figura had cunningly spread the rumor that the stranger was a French gentleman, who had an income of half a million livres, and was bent on marrying a Swiss Protestant, since he himself belonged to that confession. He had already been in Geneva, but had found nobody there, and was now on his way to Zurich; he had stopped off to look around in Baden first, however, having learned that there was a very choice assemblage of ladies to be seen there.

The Captain came hurrying home, that is, to the hotel, before supper — which was contrary to his habit — to have his daughter put on her finery and go walking with him. He even gave her his arm as they walked along, and with his carbuncle nose he assumed such haughty, affected airs that the hundreds of pedestrians were no less amused by his comical appearance than edified by Wendelgard's beauty. When they encountered the wealthy Huguenot, there was a still grander scene and a long exchange of compliments and introductions. Martin Leu did not need to feign astonishment at Wendelgard's appearance — his astonishment was genuine; but at the same time he saw how necessary it was to rescue his friend Solomon from this danger. He offered her his arm and led her to the table in place of her father. Figura looked on as if frightened, and seemed to wonder at all the pretty scenes which now took place. Wendelgard talked with her but a few minutes after the meal, because there was to be an excursion to Schinznach, where a no less aristocratic throng of people was assembled.

In short, on the very first day Martin played his part so well that late in the evening Wendelgard came flying to

Figura and informed her breathlessly that something was going to happen—the Huguenot had just asked her if she would not rather live in France than in Switzerland. And then he had asked her casually how old she was, and an hour before had said that if he ever married he would not take a penny as dowry from his wife. And her father had already told her to accept the suitor at once, if he proposed to her.

“But my dear child,” remarked Figura, “all that does not mean much! Do be careful!”

But Wendelgard went on:

“And we were walking along together for more than an hour, and he kissed my hand and sighed!”

“And did he propose to you?”

“No, but he kissed my hand and sighed!”

“A French hand-kiss! Do you know what that is—nothing at all!”

“But he is a devout Protestant!”

“What is his name?”

“I don’t know yet—that is, I don’t think I know. I didn’t pay attention!”

“That changes the matter, to be sure,” replied Figura thoughtfully. “But how about Solomon Landolt?”

“Yes, that is so,” answered Wendelgard, sighing and stroking her white brow with her white finger-tips. “But just think of it—half a million income! That would end all care and grief! Anyway, Solomon needs a wife who can help him to settle down in life and become somebody! How can I do that, when I know nothing myself?”

“He doesn’t mean that, you little goose! He means that if he only has you, he will begin to work, to strive, and to command for your sake. You can just look on, and needn’t do anything yourself at all. And he would do it, let me tell you!”

“No, no! My light-mindedness will only hinder him! I feel that I shall run into debt again, and far deeper than before, unless I am rich, extraordinarily rich!”

“That changes the matter, to be sure,” replied Figura, “unless you prefer to let yourself be reformed and bettered by him. And he is the man to do it, believe me!”

But seeing that Wendelgard was merely getting into a state of anxious perplexity, without expressing any feeling for Solomon, she added:

“At all events take care not to fall between two stools. If the French gentleman proposes to you tomorrow, you must be able to give him his answer on the spot. The day after tomorrow is the seventh day; then you must expect to see Landolt come to hear your decision. Then there will be scenes and disclosures, and you’ll run the risk of seeing both of them turn their backs on you!”

“Dear me! Yes, that’s true! But what shall I do? He isn’t here, and I can’t go to him now!”

“Write to him, and this very day; for tomorrow a special messenger must take your letter to Zurich, or else the day after tomorrow he’ll be here without fail. I know the man!”

“I’ll do that—give me pen and paper!”

She sat down to write, but did not know how to begin. Figura Leu therefore dictated to her:

“On mature consideration I find that the feelings which attract me to you are merely those of gratitude, and that it would be false for me to give them another name. Furthermore, since the will of my father points out to me a different course, I beg you to honor my firm resolve to obey him as an indication of the confidence and sincere respect which will always be cherished for you by Your devoted, etc. * * *”

“Finis!” concluded Figura. “Have you signed it?”

“Yes, but it seems to me something more should be said. It doesn’t just suit me.”

“It is just right! That is the concise refusal style used in a situation that admits of no discussion. That cuts everything off short, and thirsty toppers can tell by the sound when they have tapped an empty keg.”

This allusion, somewhat spiced by jealousy, Wendelgard did not understand, as she was kind-hearted. She begged Figura to see to the speedy dispatch of the letter, so that no meeting would take place. Figura promised and in order to be quite sure turned the letter over to her brother at daybreak. The latter rode straight to Zurich with it and surprised Solomon Landolt, who was making preparations to leave for Baden on the following day.

He turned pale a little as he read the note, and blushed when he saw that Martin Leu knew what was in it. But the latter at once gave him an oral elucidation of it by telling the whole story. Thereupon he left him alone for an hour, and then returned and said:

“Solomon, my sister sends her regards and says that, if you want the fair Miss Gimmel, you need only to let her, my sister, know, and the girl will not run away from you!”

“I don’t want her, and I realize my folly,” said Landolt. “But she is beautiful and lovable, and you two are rogues!”

Martin Leu remained in Zurich as Martin Leu; wherefore the wealthy Huguenot naturally vanished from Baden as if the earth had swallowed him. The Captain and Wendelgard tarried there two weeks longer, and then returned to Zurich; the Captain was thirstier and more unbearable than ever, and Wendelgard, quiet and dejected, kept out of sight.

But the story did not end there. For a spirit of mischievous curiosity impelled Martin Leu to get a closer view of the rare beauty. Taking every precaution not to be recognized as the mysterious Frenchman, he visited the Captain’s fencing-room. And now the wheel of Fortune turned; when he saw the poor daughter in her modest grief and beauty, the wild father having died suddenly of apoplexy, he fell so violently in love with the forlorn girl that he impatiently brushed aside all protests, warnings, and appeals to reason, and did not rest until she was his wife.

But first he asked Solomon for the last time:

“Do you want her, or not?”

Solomon had answered without hesitation:

“I say with the Bible: ‘Let your speech be Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay;’ I shall not return to the matter.”—“Costs me a thousand gulden, to be sure, but thank God nobody knows it!” he added to himself; for he knew that his grandmother, with her sense of justice, made accurate note of all her advances to him, and that some day they would be subtracted from his inheritance for the benefit of his brothers and sisters.

Martin Leu lived with his wife in Paris for two years, and then secured his discharge; on her return she was a well-trained and shrewd woman, and contracted no more debts. She knew about the episode at Baden, and had recognized the Huguenot before he suspected it and told her himself.

But later on, when Figura Leu would ask Solomon Landolt if he resented her interference and would rather have Wendelgard for himself, seeing that she had turned out so well and had evidently made herself out more stupid than she was, he would press her hand and say:

“No, it is better so.”

Wendelgard, for brevity's sake, he called the Captain.

WHITETHROAT AND BLACKBIRD

The one-sided adoration of beauty, however, had such a detrimental effect upon Solomon immediately after its unfavorable outcome, that he completely lost his bearings and was at the mercy of all sorts of impressions. All the cupids, like swallows about to fly southward in the fall, were fluttering and clamoring about him; and in the same year that he lost Wendelgard he had two trifling adventures, which may be wrapped in the same swaddling-clothes, as is sometimes done with puny twins.

Every morning for some years, whenever the weather was fair and the air mild, Solomon had heard in his back room a psalm sung by a sweet girl-voice which came over the gardens from a somewhat remote neighborhood. This

voice, at first that of a child, had gradually become stronger, without, however, attaining any great power. Yet he liked to hear the regular singing, which seemed to take place daily before breakfast, and he called the invisible songstress Whitethroat.

She was the daughter of Elias Thumeysen, proselyte-clerk and quondam pastor, who had rid himself of the burden of his real pastorate on coming into a handsome inheritance, but still continued to make himself useful by performing certain clerical functions, like that of clerk to the Commission for Exiles and Proselytes. From the latter, at his wife's desire, he took his customary title. He was also clerk of the Reformation Board and Inspector of Candidates for the Zurich Clergy. In addition to all that he amused himself by painting those maps on which the world now seems to us to stand on its head, East and West being at the top and bottom, and North and South at the left and right.

His daughter, Whitethroat, whose real name was Barbara, practiced arts of a quite different nature, and was occupied with them from morn till night. For her father, the proselyte-clerk, also made representations of all sorts of birds; he would paste together on paper their natural feathers, or even small fragments of them, and then paint in their beaks and feet. One of his masterpieces was a fine life-sized hoopoe in all its feathery splendor. Now Barbara had developed and perfected the art by applying it to humanity, having fashioned a multitude of full-length effigies, the hands and faces of which were painted, the rest consisting entirely of pieces of silk or wool, or some other natural product, artistically cut and arranged. And surely the Birds of Aristophanes could not have been wiser than those of the proselyte-clerk, which begat such a handsome race of human creatures as filled the work-room of the little songstress. Splendid above all others was her mother's brother, the ruling antistes of the local church. He was dressed in clerical robes of black satin, and wore black silk

stockings, and a collar of the finest muslin. His wig, made of the fur of a white kitten, was an infinitely laborious and dainty piece of work, and harmonized splendidly with his water-blue eyes and pale-pink face. His shoes were cut out of tiny scraps of morocco leather, the silver buckles being of tinfoil, while the edges of the liturgy book which he held in his hand were of goldleaf.

This pontifex, hanging in a frame behind glass in the place of honor, was surrounded by other portraits of men and women of various ranks and vocations. The finest was a young lady enveloped in a dress of white lace, cut out of the finest *papier à jour*. On her hand sat a parrot, a mosaic of the smallest feathers of a humming-bird. Facing her sat a flute-player with his legs crossed; in a coat of sky-blue satin, with an artistic ruffle around his neck, he seemed to be teaching the parrot to sing, since the bird had its head turned toward him attentively. The buttons on the dress were made of reddish spangles or tinsel.

There was also a veritable parade of stately military persons on foot, whose uniforms, galloons, metal buttons, scabbards, leather accoutrements, and crests all gave like evidence of indefatigable industry. But here Barbara Thumeysen had reached the limit of her skill; for now when she attempted to pass over to officers on horseback, she knew well enough how to employ her English scissors in cutting and making caparisons, saddles, and reins from the appropriate materials; but the drawing of the horses was beyond her power, since hitherto she had practiced only on human heads and hands, and that with indifferent success. So it was necessary for her to find a teacher or helper for this, and upon inquiry she was given the name of Solomon Landolt, who was then the best horse-artist in Zurich.

Accordingly the proselyte-clerk one day made unexpectedly a polite call upon the city-magistrate and captain of riflemen, and in well-chosen words set forth his desire that

he graciously consent to instruct and advise his daughter with regard to the proper portrayal of a riding horse; so that she could paint the animal on paper in its natural form and color, and with the correct step, whereupon the reins and saddle could afterward be added the more easily, and the rider seated in the proper posture.

Landolt was glad to offer his services, partly from sheer obligingness, but also from curiosity to see the Whitethroat who sang so charmingly every morning. With wonder he looked first at the motley bird-world of the proselyte-clerk—the hoopoe, and all the goldfinches, bullfinches, jays, woodpeckers, and plovers; then with still greater amazement at Miss Barbara's creations—the antistes, all the guild-masters, councillors, wives of chief magistrates, lieutenants, and captains; and finally at the girl herself, whose form was as delicate and regular as if turned out of ivory. Among all the birds and human effigies in the modest little museum, she herself seemed to him the most beautiful creation, and accordingly he began his course of instruction at once. With the help of suitable sketches he first explained to her the bony structure of the horse, and then, before passing on to the difficult form-secrets of a horse's head, taught her how to indicate with a few straight strokes the base-lines and fundamental proportions. In this way the instruction was gradually extended over the entire body, until finally they could proceed to coloring and the representation of white, bay, and black horses; the manes and tails were reserved by Barbara to be made of natural hair.

The pleasant relation lasted several weeks, while they were trying to overcome little imperfections and deficiencies that kept showing themselves. Landolt acquired the habit of spending an hour or two with her every forenoon; a glass of Malaga and three Spanish rolls were always set out for him, and presently he was left alone with his pupil—the gentlest and quietest teacher that had ever lived. Whitethroat was as familiar as a little tame bird, and it was not long before she was eating half of the Spanish rolls

out of his hand, and even poking her beak into his glass of Malaga.

One day she surprised him with a secretly executed portrait of himself sitting in his captain's uniform on his dapple-gray Ukraine horse. Of course it was only his left side, the side with the sword, and had only one leg and one arm; on the other hand, as the horse's mane and tail were cut and pasted from her own glossy, jet-black hair, it could be seen from this sacrifice, as well as from the effigy as a whole, how much she cared for him.

And indeed she did think their mutual proclivities and ways so compatible and harmonious that whenever she seriously weighed the possibility of their marriage, blushing slightly at the thought, she felt that they could not fail to be happy together. And on his part Solomon thought he could wish for nothing better than to run into this peaceful little harbor, after all the storms he had weathered, and spend his days in Whitethroat's museum. Nor were the families of the two art-enthusiasts at all displeased by this increasing intimacy, since a marriage seemed to both sides wholly advantageous and desirable. And so the affair went so far that the Thumeysens called on the Landolts, under the diplomatic pretext of affording Mistress Thumeysen an opportunity to inspect Solomon's paintings, which were as yet quite unknown to her.

Now Solomon, although he possessed a decided and vigorous artistic vein, had never acquired the stamp of the finished and accomplished artist, because life did not give him time for it; nor did he in his modest indifference make any pretensions. Nevertheless as an amateur he stood on an extraordinarily high plane of independence, of original fertility of mind, and of immediate, personal understanding of nature. And with these qualities was united a bold, fresh workmanship, which was animated by the fire of an everlasting *con amore* in the most exact sense.

Hence the walls and easels of his painting-chapel, as he called it, afforded an unusual opulence, and, varied as were

the pictures which met the eye, there shone forth from all the same bold, yet peacefully harmonious spirit. The ceaseless mutation of inwardly quiet Nature—her wakening and waning glow, her echoing and dying sound—seemed only the varying chords of the same composition. The landscape at gray dawn, the fading glow of evening, the darkness of the woods, with the moonlit, dew-laden cobwebs in the bushes of the foreground, the full moon peacefully swimming in the blue over the bay, the autumn sun battling with the mist over a reedy bank, the red glow of a fire behind the outlying tree-trunks of a forest, a village with smoking chimneys on a gray-green heath, a lightning-rent sky, rain-beaten surf—all this seemed like a single essence, but one trembling and quivering with the breath of life; and especially did it seem the result of the artist's own seeing and experiencing, the fruit of nocturnal wanderings, and of tireless rides at every hour of the day through storm and rain.

But now all that was most closely knit together and enlivened by a race of men, some deeply agitated and warlike, others wandering alone, or racing along swiftly like the clouds above them, others quietly bleeding to death on the ground. Cavalry patrols of the Seven Years' War, fleeing Kirghiz and Croats, fighting Frenchmen; then again peaceful hunters, country-people, the homeward-bound plow-team, shepherds in the autumn pasture, also forest and water birds flushed by war or the hunt, the grazing doe, the sneaking fox—all these were invariably found on the one and only spot appropriate to their situation. Then too one would often unexpectedly recognize in a gray, shadowy form, laboriously struggling along against the beating rain, some near acquaintance who was evidently being pictorially drenched for some offense; or else one would see some woman with a malicious tongue pictured perhaps as a night-witch out on a moor, washing her feet in a pool which lapped a gibbet. Finally one might see the painter himself riding away over a hill toward the evening glow, quietly smoking a pipe.

The call was executed and received in the most ceremonious manner; after they had taken their coffee, Solomon conducted the carefully and half-festively attired Barbara into his studio, while the rest of the company deliberately remained behind, in order to walk in the garden and inspect the house inside and out. Solomon now displayed and explained his pictures to the girl, together with a multitude of other objects, such as hunting-paraphernalia, weapons, animal skeletons he had prepared himself, and so forth. The jointed doll, which was sitting in a chair in the uniform of a red hussar and apparently gazing at a picture on an easel, had already frightened her, as she entered the room, and drawn forth a faint cry. But after that she kept still and gave absolutely no sign of pleasure or approval, but only of curiosity, since this entire world was strange and incomprehensible to her. Solomon thought nothing of it, did not even notice it, as he was not looking for praise and amazement. In his eagerness to attain his object he simply kept hurrying on from picture to picture, while Barbara's bosom, which was covered with light cloth, began to heave more and more vehemently under its covering of bright cloth, as if with great alarm. In front of a river-picture, showing a conflict between the early morning glow and the gleam of the setting moon, Landolt told her how early he had had to rise one morning to catch this effect, and how he could never have produced it at all without the help of his jews-harp. He laughingly explained to her the influence of such music when it was a question of mingling delicate color-tones; and he seized the little instrument, which lay on a table covered with a thousand other things, put it to his mouth, and drew from it a few trembling, faintly-breathed tone-structures, which now threatened to die away, and now fused together in a gentle swell.

“ See,” he cried, “ this is that bluish gray which changes to the dull copper-red on the water, while the morning star is still unusually large and bright. It will rain today in this landscape, I think! ”

As he looked around at her joyfully, he discovered indeed that Barbara's eyes were already full of water; she was very pale and cried out, as if in despair:

"No, no! We are not suited to each other! Never! Never!"

Quite startled and alarmed, he seized her hand and asked what was the matter, how she felt. She drew away her hand vehemently, and with confused words began to intimate that she did not understand the least bit of all that, that she had no aptitude for it, and never would have, and that it seemed almost hostile to her and frightened her. Under such circumstances a harmonious life together would be out of the question, because they would always be pulling in opposite directions; and Landolt could just as little value and appreciate the peaceful and innocent efforts which heretofore had made her happy as she could follow his work with even the slightest understanding of it.

Landolt began to see what she meant, and what was disquieting her, and told her in gentle encouraging words that his efforts were but play, just like hers—merely a side issue that was of no moment whatever. But his words only made things worse, and in the greatest agitation she hurried out of the room, sought her parents, and begged with tears to be taken home. In helpless dismay the members of both families gathered about her; Landolt also came up, and now she once more began her strange explanations. It appeared more clearly that she attributed vastly more importance to that which distressed her than could properly be expected of a delicate young creature so simple and unassuming; but that her inability to rise above herself and tolerate what was strange to her was no doubt largely attributable to a certain narrowness in which she had been brought up.

All the encouragement of Landolt and his parents was of no avail; the parents of the despairing girl, moreover, seemed rather to share her apprehensions, and anxiously hastened their departure. A sedan-chair was ordered and

the daughter was packed into it. She immediately let down the diminutive curtain, and thus the little caravan marched away as fast as the bearers could walk, much to the annoyance and shame of the Landolts.

The next forenoon, as early as he thought it proper, Solomon went to the proselyte-clerk's house to inquire after the daughter's health and to see what he could do to patch matters up. The parents received him with polite excuses, and explained to him how not only the profound nature-cult and the wild love of sketching in his paintings, but also the doll, the animal skeletons, and all the other strange things, had alarmed their daughter's modest spirit; and how they too could not help thinking that such outspoken artistic whimsicality threatened to disturb the peace of a modest burgher's household. In the midst of these explanations, which amazed good Solomon more and more, the daughter herself appeared on the scene, with tear-swollen eyes but composed. She extended her hand to him cordially, and with gentle, but resolute words, said that she could be his only on the positive condition that both of them should renounce pictorial art forever and thus banish all the estrangement that had come between them, each one making his loving sacrifice.

Solomon Landolt hesitated a moment; but his presence of mind soon caused him to see that a kind of arrogance was here appearing in the guise of innocent narrowness; that this by no means insured domestic peace and made the demanded sacrifice all too costly. Accordingly without a word in defense of his painting-chapel he took leave of his hosts, as also of the hoopoe, the pontifex and all their train.

Scarcely had the usual period of mourning over the death of a hope passed away, together with the vexation of the grandmother over the "pretty piece of business" which she had finally found out about, when the Blackbird flew upon the scene as the immediate successor to the aforesaid Whitethroat.

Half city-residence and half country-seat, there lay in the midst of beautiful gardens in one of the suburbs, a house which Landolt, being well known and highly esteemed there, was in the habit of visiting quite frequently. This property had a landmark in the shape of a blackbird, which in the spring of the year would perch every evening on the tip-top of a tall Weymouth pine standing in a corner of the garden, and from there delight the entire neighborhood with its melodious singing. After this blackbird, in accordance with his custom of adopting the first good suggestion, Landolt named the beautiful girl Aglaia; which again is no Christian name, but a further invention of his, for he erroneously regarded this name of one of the three Graces as identical with the name of the plant columbine (*Agley*), *Aquilegia vulgaris*. He was led into this mistake by the dainty and graceful appearance of the columbine, whose cups, now blue and now violet, seemed to him to sway and nod around the tall, slender stalks no less charmingly than did Blackbird's or Aglaia's pale-blond looks play about her neck.

One evening in the previous spring, as he had passed the house and stopped a moment to listen to the blackbird's singing, he had for the first time seen the beautiful girl standing under the tree. She was a daughter of the family who had just been recalled from a sojourn of several years in foreign parts. He had taken a good look at her, but as he was just then involved in the Wendelgard affair, he merely lifted his hat and went his way.

It was now autumn, and one day as Solomon was strolling along the edge of a wood in the mild sunshine, he came across a late-blooming columbine; he plucked it and was examining it, when suddenly he was reminded of the girl standing under the blackbird-tree, though he had not thought of her since that day. This mysterious and immediate effect of the flower seemed to his much-tried and still seeking heart like a late-rising, but so much the brighter star, an infallible oracle from on high. He saw vividly

the girl's slender form and curly hair, as she looked down while listening to the bird's song and then raised her grave eyes to him as he greeted her.

That very evening, for the first time in a long while, he again called at the house and staid nearly three hours conversing agreeably with the family. Aglaia sat quietly by the table knitting; when Solomon spoke she gazed at him quite frankly and attentively, and when anybody else said something worthy of note, she would look at him again as if eager to learn his opinion about it. He had a very pleasant visit, and when he went away she clasped his hand firmly and shook it repeatedly, as if he were an old friend. When he met her shortly afterward on the street, she returned his greeting with a faint smile of joy at the unexpected meeting, and not long after that she even sent a written message to her new friend asking him if he would not like to attend a modest little celebration which they were having that evening to mark the end of the grape-harvest then going on. He accepted the invitation with pleasure, provided himself with fire-works, and went at the appointed time to the half-rustic residence, where a crowd of merry young people and children were already assembled. With his rockets and small pinwheels he made himself very useful and popular among the excited young folk, and Aglaia, who was everywhere directing and arranging, came repeatedly to express her joy at his coming and his splendid performances. When it was time for the customary vintage feast, which the lady of the house, her mother, had to leave in the lurch on account of ill health, she seated him at the lower end of the long table beside her own place. And here again he made himself useful by carving with easy skill a goose and two hares, whereat Aglaia once more expressed joy and approval; he did it too in a way to indicate that he was glad to be able to do it, although the occasion for his doing it was that the father had burned his hand with a squib and so did not himself carve.

When the appetite of the lively throng had been appeased, and shouting, singing, dancing, and music held the field, Aglaia leaned back contentedly in her chair, alleging that she must now rest after her day's work. It was easy to keep her neighbor with her, and thus, undisturbed by the noisy autumn merry-making, they sat quietly together and derived much diversion and quiet satisfaction from a simple conversation. Aglaia kept looking at Solomon with inquiring friendliness, and then, when she would gaze off thoughtfully into space, he in turn would contemplate her charming head and graceful form. In a word, they became at this time professedly good friends, and the lovable girl formally urged the young man, as he took his leave, to increase the frequency of his visits and to maintain friendly relations, which she would not like to do without. After that she contrived to send more and more messages to him, asking favors or fulfilling promises which she had cunningly made him exact from her, and Solomon with a heart aglow reflected that he had at last knocked at the right door.

“There is a girl,” he said to himself, “who knows what she wants, and who steers openly, honestly, and without affectation for her goal. Whether her course is prudent, or imprudent, I am not foolish enough to investigate, since it concerns my own self. Let every man come to his own in his own way!”

Thus he sank ever deeper into a dream which seemed sweeter and lovelier than any he had ever dreamt before, and which promised a new and better life, as clear and calm as the azure sky. But with unconscious caution he hesitated to cloud this brightness by precipitating matters; accordingly he enjoyed all winter long, with an increasing sense of security, a peace of mind such as he had never before felt when under the spell of passion. And he enjoyed it all the more keenly that Aglaia was of a serious rather than cheerful temper and often gave herself up to dreamy meditation, from which she would suddenly awake to fix her eyes on him.

“ Oh,” he thought, “ we’ll let the little fish squirm a bit. This tribe has tormented us enough already! ”

But in the spring it began to look as if Aglaia proposed to take the matter into her own hands. She unexpectedly expressed a desire to begin anew her neglected riding-practice, and with little difficulty she managed to have Solomon selected as her escort and teacher. Thus they rode together over all the most beautiful roads of the surrounding country, on the lake-drives, through the high-lying woods, and it was soon quite apparent that Aglaia needed no more instruction. All the more intimate and varied was their conversation, and they imparted to each other what they liked and disliked in the fair world, on the rugged earth.

One or another of Solomon’s various love-affairs had very likely leaked out; certain it was that the last adventure had come to people’s ears directly from the proselyte-clerk, if only because the tragic end of the visit and the solemn departure with the sedan-chair demanded an adequate explanation.

To this Landolt referred the words of Aglaia when, as they were halting under green lindens to breathe their horses, she said to him in a soft, sympathetic voice:

“ Dearest friend, you too have surely been very unhappy, haven’t you? ”

He was surprised by the sudden question and with a laughing glance merely replied:

“ Oh, that’s the way of the world! I can almost say, like Cousin Stille: I have had some happy and some unhappy times in my life! ” But to himself he thought: “ Now is the time! Now it must come! ”

But whether it was that he regarded their situation on horseback as unsuitable for a declaration of love with the attendant circumstances, or that he was restrained by a final impulse of caution: he urged the horses to a rapid trot and the conversation ended. But when he took his leave, Aglaia squeezed his hand all the more warmly, and he had

scarcely reached home when he sat down and wrote a few lines to her, declaring his love. She answered at once that his precious words touched, gladdened, and honored her, and begged him to come the following day and take her for a long walk, adding that a suitable pretext could easily be found. Early in the morning another note came, wherein she fixed the form and the pretext—the accident of their both going to call in the same neighborhood, suitable company on the footpaths in view of the fine weather, etc.

Landolt dressed himself more carefully than usual, almost like a Spartan going to battle; he even put on a pair of garnet cuff-buttons and took in his hand a slender cane with a silver knob.

When he arrived Aglaia was already decked out in her best summer finery; she had on a violet-figured white dress and long gloves of the finest leather. Her most precious ornament, however, was her eyes, with which she cast a radiant glance of gratitude at Solomon as she offered him her hand. Impatiently, like one who hopes to take a long step forward in some important matter, she hastened their departure.

When he saw the rare creature walking along ahead of him on the narrow path, he extolled in his heart that slender columbine with its bell-shaped cup which had led him on so pleasant a way. A breeze rustled softly in the leaves of the young beeches under which they were walking, slightly agitating the locks on Aglaia's neck and shoulders.

“Proverbs are really fine things!” he said to himself: “‘He who laughs last, laughs best,’ and ‘All's well, that ends well!’”

Just then the path broadened, and Aglaia turned and stepped back beside him; once more she gave him her hand, a beautiful blush transfigured her face, and with beaming eyes filled with tears she said:

I thank you for your noble affection and for your confidence! Life must and will go well with you, and better than if I were destined to make you happy. Let me tell

you, then, that I myself am the captive of a happy-unhappy passion, and that a man whom I love ardently loves me in return—yes, I may tell you that I am loved!”

Then she told at length with passionate agitation the story of her love and sufferings, which had taken place in Germany and concerned a clergyman.

“A parson,” said Landolt almost inaudibly; and just then, in spite of his silver-mounted cane, and although there was not even a pebble in the path, he stumbled a little.

“Oh, don’t say parson!” she implored. “He is a wonderful man—look here, look into these unfathomable eyes!”

She drew from her bosom a medallion, which she wore on a well-concealed string, and showed him the picture. It was that of a young man attired in black, with rather regular features and very large dark eyes, such as many painters give to Jesus of Nazareth; one might also call them black Juno-eyes. But Landolt thought as he stared vacantly at the picture with bitter feelings: “They are the eyes of a cow!” And as she put it back into her white bosom he seemed to hear a soft chuckle there, as if some one were saying: “He who laughs last, laughs best!”

The story which Aglaia now went on to tell was somewhat as follows: When only half-grown she had been taken into a family of blood-relatives in the German city of X, where she was to be educated. In this house she had met the young clergyman, who, in spite of his youth, was already highly esteemed as a pulpit-orator. He was very orthodox, but had, nevertheless, a touch of the pietistic enthusiasm of the day. He spoke with such fervent conviction of the divine and the beatific, of inexhaustible love-treasures, and the everlasting home of man, that all these things seemed to be actually present and guaranteed in his person; and combined with his captivating eyes, they had aroused in the young and inexperienced girl an insuperable longing to win his heart. This longing, increased by an over-rich imagination which embellished and transfigured

everything, had developed into an ardent, sweetly-bitter passion, which in the lapse of years grew stronger rather than weaker. Such a passion, which naturally soon betrays itself, would be out of order in such a beautiful creature were it not to be strongly reciprocated. But the related family, as well as the girl's parents, were for more than one reason opposed to a marriage, and the more serious the state of the charming Aglaia's heart became, the more serious became also the difficulties which loomed up before her longing and desires. It resulted finally in her being forcibly removed from the house and taken home.

But, as hers was a deep-rooted character, she held all the more tenaciously to her affection; she exchanged letters with her lover, outwardly calm, but inwardly moved by a never-resting hope. This hope flamed up mightily anew when the young clergyman, passing through Switzerland in the company of a distinguished gentleman, found an opportunity to see her and was even granted admission to her house. But while his position and future seemed to be assured, this did not change the situation or affect the opposition of her parents, who from the first had cherished other hopes for their daughter and now clung to their plan with calm gentleness and love, but none the less persistently.

Such was the situation when Aglaia, who was always looking for help, sought in the above-described, roundabout way to secure Solomon Landolt as her friend and helper, which he became. He accompanied her faithfully to the country-seat where she wanted to call, and toward evening returned to get her; and by the time they had reached home, she had completely won him over. He loved and admired her love, the like of which he had never seen before, and he even became a partisan of the happy lover, and regarded it as a right, a duty, and an honor to help the fair Aglaia.

First he spoke in a confidential way with influential outsiders and managed to beset the parents with new arguments and suggestions; then he talked several times with the father and mother themselves, and before half a year

had elapsed he had smoothed the way, and the clerical gentleman was able to lead home his bride. She was indebted to her friend even for the titles of *Consistorialrätin* and *Hofpredigerin*, for he had pestered his most exalted and learned connections in Zurich in order to secure a pleasant berth for her.

His heartfelt sympathy still went out to her when, after four or five years, she returned as a lone widow. For, unfortunately, the deep lustre of her husband's eyes was in part the result of a hectic constitution, and he died prematurely of the wasting disease. Just as consuming, to be sure, had been the fire of her husband's ambition, his uninterrupted worry about earthly prestige, promotion, and success; so that in her brief married life Aglaia experienced such an excited figuring of income, tithes, and perquisites as she had not known before and would not know again. All the more calmly and resignedly did she now seem to pass her days.

These, then, were the five feminine beings and old flames whom the Governor of Greifensee was eager to bring together at his home. Two or three lived in Zurich, the others not far away, and it was simply a question of enticing them there in such a way that none of them would know about the others, and that each one would come alone expecting to find a company of friends. All this he talked over with Frau Marianne and made suitable arrangements. He set the last day of May for the great event, and sent out the invitations, all of which were accepted without suspicion, so that thus far the affair was a great success.

With the first gray light of dawn on the 31st of May Landolt ascended into the highest watch-tower of the castle to see what the weather-outlook was. The sky all around was cloudless, the stars were growing dim, and the eastern horizon was beginning to glow. Then he planted the

great domanial flag, with the leaping griffin on it, above the gable-roof of the castle, and behind the encircling wall he placed two small cannons with which to thunder forth a welcome to the arriving fair ones. In order to make sure, he had arranged to have a special carriage call for each of them and convey them to the castle. All the servants were ordered to put on their best Sunday clothes; but the neatest of all was his monkey Cocco, who had been specially drilled for the occasion, was dressed up like a hoary little granny and wore a cap whose huge ribbon bore the inscription: I am Time!

Within the house Frau Marianne was standing ready as stewardess, attired in a rich old-fashioned Tirolese-Catholic costume; beside her stood a handsome fourteen-year-old boy whom the Governor himself had selected and dressed in the clothes of an attractive lady's-maid, to have him wait upon the ladies.

Shortly before nine o'clock the first cannon-shot boomed, and between the trees and hedges a coach was seen slowly approaching; in it sat Figura Leu. As the carriage stopped in front of the castle-gate, the monkey sprang up into it with a large bouquet of fragrant roses, and with ludicrous gestures thrust it into her hands. She saw into the rebus instantly and took both monkey and bouquet on her arm; and as she alighted from the carriage, while Landolt, with his sword at his side and his hat in his hand, offered her his arm in welcome, she cried out with joyous laughter:

“Whatever is going on here? What means the banner on the roof, and the cannon, and Time bringing roses?”

As she had been quite blameless and was the dearest of them all to him, he let her into the secret and confided to her that all five — she knew the ones — were going to meet there that day. At first she blushed, but after she had reflected a moment she smiled with a certain delicacy:

“You are a rogue and a clown!” she cried. “Take care — we'll nail you to the cross and roast your monkey, together with his roses, *singe aux roses*, won't we, Cocco, little Governor?”

He had scarcely escorted her into the house, where she was immediately waited upon by Frau Marianne and the boy-maid, when the cannon thundered again, and two carriages drove up simultaneously. They contained Wendelgard and Salome, Captain and Goldfinch, who had already been mutually wondering on the way who was in the other carriage, which had always kept in sight. These two ladies knew about each other and their former relations with the Governor; they eyed each other with quick glances of curiosity, but were presently taken away by Cocco, who came hopping up with a fresh bouquet of roses, and Landolt, who escorted them, one on each arm, into the house.

There, in the meanwhile, Frau Marianne had just finished her first examination of Figura; knowing that she had been blameless, she treated her with gracious kindness. But all the more did her eyes flash fire when Salome and Wendelgard entered; the nostrils of her hook-nose and her upper lip, on which grew a blackish moustache, quivered passionately at the sight of the two fair women who had once deserted the Governor, and the master had to direct a stern glance at his faithful servant in order to restrain her and compel her to assume a fairly courteous manner.

Aglaia too, who now arrived and was received in the same way as her predecessors, had to undergo a very critical scrutiny, since it was not yet decided whether what she had done to Landolt, in order to gain a helper in her distress, was pardonable or unpardonable. But the old woman, in view of the fact that Aglaia after all had been capable of true love and had married in accordance with her first affection, let her pass with a faint grumble.

Scarcely a glance, however, did she deign to bestow on Whitethroat, whose arrival was now announced by the final cannon-shot; what could she have to do with a fly who had dared to have an affair with the Governor and had then shrunk from him after all?

The Governor saw at once that the sensitive Whitethroat, who was almost trembling anyway and did not know where

to turn among all the beautiful forms, was quite lost before the old hussar of a housekeeper, and with a few secret words he recommended her to the special protection of Figura, who immediately took her in charge. And now there began a great introducing and greeting; except Figura Leu the beautiful women all kept looking askance at one another, not knowing what to make of it. For of course they all knew one another by sight and reputation, apart from the relationship of Wendelgard and Figura. But the latter, aided by Landolt's happy humor, at once diffused a joyous and cheerful spirit; there was no room for idle suspense, for a light breakfast was passed around, consisting of tea, sweet wine, and pastry; Frau Marianne attended to pouring the beverages, while the boy carried around the cups and glasses. The ladies looked with inquisitive eyes at everything, especially at the putative waiting-maid, who seemed a little suspicious. They walked around and looked at the walls and the furnishings of the room, and then at one another again, while Landolt spoke to each in turn with courteous familiarity, all the time testing and comparing them with contented eye.

Finally the situation dawned upon them, and they realized that they had been drawn into an ambush. They began to blush and smile alternately, and finally to laugh. The reason and the open secret, however, were left unexplained; for the Governor unexpectedly put a damper on the merriment by seriously and solemnly excusing himself on the ground that he was obliged to devote a short hour to his official duties and hear a few cases in his capacity as judge. As they were all trivial matters, such as small matrimonial controversies, he thought it might perhaps entertain the ladies to attend the trials. They accepted the invitation with thanks, and accordingly he conducted them into his large office, where they took seats like jurors on both sides of his judicial chair, while the clerk sat before them at his little table in the centre.

The court-messenger, or bailiff, then led in a rustic couple who lived in great discord, although the Governor had not yet been able to find out on whose side the fault lay, because each would overwhelm the other with complaints and accusations, and neither was at a loss to keep matters evened up. The wife had recently thrown a basin of hot gruel at her husband, so that he stood there with a scalded pate from which large tufts of hair were already falling out — tufts which he kept testing every minute with the greatest uneasiness, only to regret it each time when a fresh bunch was left in his hand. The wife, however, emphatically denied the deed, maintaining that her husband in his wild rage had taken the soup-dish for his fur cap and had tried to put it on his head. The Governor, in order to find a way of his own out of the difficulty, had the woman withdraw, and then said to the man:

“ I plainly see, Hans Jacob, that you are the sufferer and a poor Job, and that the injustice and deviltry are on the side of your wife. Accordingly next Sunday I shall have her put in the revolving pillory on the market-place, and you yourself shall turn her about before the entire community, until your heart is satisfied and she is tamed ! ”

But the farmer was frightened by this sentence and urgently besought the Governor to retract it; for, he said, even if his wife was a bad woman, she was nevertheless his wife, and it did not become him to expose her in that way to public disgrace. He begged him to do nothing more than give her a severe reprimand.

Hereupon the Governor had the man taken out and the woman brought in again.

“ Your husband,” he said to her, “ is, according to all appearances, a good-for-nothing and scalded his own head in order to get you into trouble. His extraordinary malice merits appropriate punishment, and you yourself shall bestow it. Next Sunday we will put the fellow in the pillory, and there before all the people you may turn him around as long as your heart desires ! ”

When the woman heard this she leaped into the air for joy, thanked the Governor for his good sentence, and swore that she would turn the pillory with such tireless persistence that the very soul in his body would hurt him.

“Now we see where the devil lurks!” said Landolt sternly; and he sentenced the wicked woman to three days’ confinement in the tower on bread and water. The dragon looked around angrily, and when she saw the ladies with their roses, sitting at the right and left and eyeing her timidly, she stuck out her tongue at both groups as she was led out.

There now appeared an utterly care-worn couple, who could not live in peace and yet did not know why. The source of their unhappiness was this: husband and wife had never from the first had a good talk together or allowed each other to speak freely, and this in turn was due to the fact that both were equally lacking in any external charm which might have been dwelt on as a basis of reconciliation. The man, who was a tailor, claimed to possess a profound sense of justice, over which he brooded incessantly while sewing, whereas other tailors spent their time singing a song or excogitating vile jokes. His wife had exclusive charge of the little farm and while about her work would resolve not to yield at the next scene. Since both were industrious people, their only opportunity to quarrel was at meal-times, but even these times they could not properly utilize, because at the very beginning of the controversy their pointed arrows always shot past the mark into unfamiliar marsh-regions, where a regular battle was no longer possible, and their words were choked in dumb anger. In this sort of life the food they ate did not agree with them, so that they looked like Famine and Misery, although, as already remarked, they were poor only in amiability, which is, to be sure, the poorest sort of proletariat. Yesterday the anger of the husband had become so intense that he had jumped up and run from the table, but a hole in the ragged table-cloth was caught by a button on

his vest, and he had dragged the cloth along with him, together with the porridge, the vegetable-dish, and the plates, and hurled them all on the floor. The wife took this for an intentional act of violence, and the tailor, with a sudden clever inspiration, allowed her to retain this opinion, in order to increase his prestige and exhibit his strength. But the wife didn't propose to tolerate such things and laid a complaint before the Governor.

As the latter listened to both in turn and perceived the hopelessness of their perpetual wrangling, which had neither compass nor rudder, he saw the nature of their case and sentenced the couple to four weeks' imprisonment and to the use of the marriage-spoon. At a sign from him the bailiff took this utensil down from the wall, where it hung on a little iron chain; it was a double spoon, neatly carved of linden-wood, and had two bowls on the same handle, so arranged that one turned up and the other down.

"See," said the Governor, "this spoon is made from the linden, the tree of love, peace, and justice. While you are eating, and when you offer to each other the spoon,—for you'll not get another,—think of a green linden standing in full bloom; imagine that the birds are singing in it, and that above it the clouds are floating in the sky, and that beneath its shade lovers sit and judges hold session and peace is concluded!"

The little man had to carry the spoon, the woman followed with her apron at her eyes, and thus the pale, lean couple marched sadly to the place decreed, whence after four weeks they came forth reconciled and harmonious, and even with a delicate touch of color in their cheeks.

After that there was led in from prison a cross fat woman, who looked around sulkily and was apparently not well. She was the wife of a subordinate official and had talked her husband into attempting to bribe the Governor with a quarter of veal, so that he would be favorably disposed to them and wink at their misconduct. When the woman brought the meat to Landolt and handed it to him

obsequiously, he had sent her to the tower until she should eat up the quarter of veal, which was carefully cooked for her. As may be imagined, she hurried as fast as she could to finish it, and was now unable to conceal a certain discomfort. The Governor explained to her that the eating of the quarter of veal was to be regarded as punishment for attempted bribery, but that a fine of twenty-five gulden was imposed for misleading her husband into wrong-doing, and that a mulct of twenty-five gulden was added for the compliant weakness of her husband, all of which the clerk might note down. The fat woman made a clumsy bow, and wobbled out with both hands on her stomach.

Two sisters of beautiful figure were accused of deceiving their quiet and inoffensive husbands and of creating dissension and unhappiness in their homes, and furthermore of letting their old mother starve and languish away helplessly on a sick-bed. Summoned before the court of the Governor, they appeared in seductively voluptuous attire, their hair done up in a loud way and adorned with flowers. Smiling sweetly and casting ardent glances at the Governor, they entered. The latter, recognizing their impudent purpose, ended the hearing at once, and ordered that the wenches be taken out, shorn of their beautiful hair, whipped, and compelled to sit at the spinning-wheel until they had earned something for the support of their mother.

Then there appeared as complainants two religious sectarians, who had declined to take the oath of citizenship before the Governor, and had also persistently refused to perform any of the duties of citizens, absolutely closing their ears to repeated kindly warnings, and all this on the score of their faith and an inner call. They now complained of poor people who had forcibly entered their forests and supplied themselves with as much fire-wood as they wanted.

“Who are you?” asked the Governor; “I do not know you!”

“How is that possible?” they cried, as they told their names. “You have already summoned us here several

times, and have sent the court-bailiff to us with written and oral orders!"

"Nevertheless, I do not know you!" he went on cold-bloodedly; "since you yourselves recall that you have never recognized any of the duties of citizenship, I can grant you no justice. Go and find it wherever you can!"

Taken aback, they slunk out and made haste to secure justice by the performance of their duties.

In a similar way he decided a few more cases with his clever inspirations; he settled quarrels and punished good-for-nothings, and it was particularly to be noticed that, with the exception of the bribing official, he did not impose a single fine or elicit a single shilling; albeit other governors were ordered to use this side of their jurisdiction as a source of income, and not infrequently abused it. Consequently his administration of justice stood in good repute with high and low; his judgments were described in a double sense as Solomonic, and for a long time afterward the people called that day's session, on account of the odor of roses, the rose-court of Governor Solomon.

But he was now glad that the business was over; for on account of the preparations for this festal day he had kept postponing it until finally it had to fall on the very day of the event. He invited the ladies to take a short stroll in the fresh air before the midday meal, which, he said, they had all well earned. And when they were by themselves in the garden on the shore of the lake they did indeed breathe a sigh of relief; for they had become quite concerned at the assurance with which this bachelor had understood and handled matrimonial affairs. One or two who until then had perhaps not thought him very shrewd racked their brains trying to fathom the nature of his case.

But they were all diverted from these mistrustful thoughts when they saw the monkey, Cocco, come hopping up pitifully, for they had forgotten to relieve him of his uncomfortable clothes. His cap was askew and hung down over his face, without his being able to get it off, and his

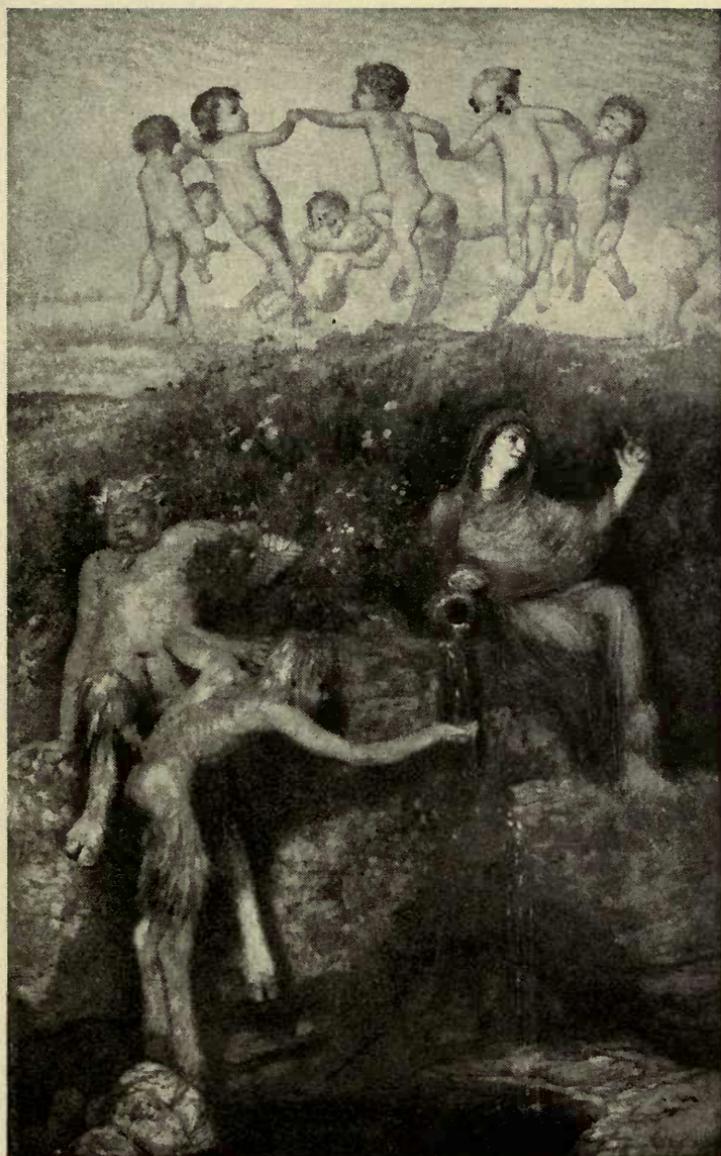
clothes were wound around his legs or hanging from his tail, and all the while he was making a hundred efforts to free himself. The ladies sympathetically relieved the monkey of all his discomfort, and now he entertained them with a series of the cutest tricks and pranks, so that all doubt and melancholy forsook their beautiful heads, and the Governor found them laughing merrily when he came, followed by two servants, to bring them to dinner.

“Aha!” he cried, “that’s the kind of dinner-bell I like to hear! When ladies laugh together it sounds like the bells of Saint Cecilia’s chapel! Which of you rang the beautiful alto?—You, Wendelgard? And who the storm bell, as if her heart were on fire?—You, Aglaia? Whose was the pleasant intermediate tone of the vesper-bell?—It was yours, Salome! The silvery prayer-bell tinkles in your purple belfry, Barbara Thumeysen! And the voice that rang like a golden curfew?—That is easy to recognize, it was my Harlequin, Figura!”

“How ill-mannered,” rang out the other four bells, “to call one of us a harlequin!” For they did not know that they all bore such pet-names, although Figura knew hers and had sanctioned it.

The brittle film of ice over their hearts was now entirely broken. The glory of the blue sky and the still bluer lake streamed in through the windows and lighted up the room in which the table was set, and when the roving eye looked out it was at once soothed by the fresh Maytime verdure of the opposite shore. The round table in the centre of the room was radiant with delicate spring flowers and scattered lights; for it was set most beautifully, being adorned with everything that the Governor had been able to furnish from his gardens, as well as his cupboards and heirlooms.

Six chairs with high backs stood around the table, each far enough from the next to enable its occupant to move freely and comfortably, and to see and converse, in a dignified manner, with his right- and left-hand neighbor. In short, the arrangement suggested a Round Table spread



Permission Photographische Union, Munich

ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

SPRING DANCE

only for electoral princes, and there was nothing lacking except the private buffet behind each chair; instead of these, enthroned all the more magnificently in the background, was the great castle-buffet, with its antique utensils.

Beside this buffet Frau Marianne was already standing like a marshal, with one hand resting on the buffet and the other on her hip. She wore a scarlet skirt and a black velvet bodice; a large silver crucifix hung over her plaited ruff and rested on her bosom, and her tanned neck was encircled by some filigree ornaments, while a cap of marten-skin covered her hair, which was turning gray. A white apron hanging from her waist proclaimed her office, but from under her black eyebrows she cast severe glances around the room, as if she were mistress.

But the awe she inspired did not dispel the once awakened merriment, and the five ladies, smiling joyously, took the seats which Landolt assigned them; at his right hand he placed Figura Leu, at his left Aglaia, opposite him the oldest of the flames, Salome, and in the two remaining seats, Wendelgard and Whitethroat. With a warm feeling of happiness he saw them thus assembled at one table, and with great assiduousness he kept up the conversation on all sides, so that without violating good breeding he could look at them all in turn, counting forward and backward and skipping about just as he pleased.

Frau Marianne served the soup at the buffet, and the disguised boy, who was the well-instructed and artful son of a near-by pastor, passed it around. He resembled an eighteen-year-old girl, always bashfully casting down his eyes when spoken to, obeyed Marianne's slightest signs, and placed himself mutely beside the door as soon as a service had been performed. But whenever the Governor would summon the supposed girl to his side and quietly give her a confidential commission, which she executed with zeal, the flames wondered anew at the unknown lady's-maid, of whom they had never heard, and cast many a fleeting glance at her.

Still, the chatting did not suffer on that account but rather grew more animated and cheerful, and the aforesaid chimes kept pealing as harmoniously and busily as do the bells of a town when the Pope is arriving. Now, as if he were already in town, there was a moment of silence, which Wendelgard took advantage of to inquire about the nature and size of the domain of Greifensee, as she was secretly anxious to know how great the measure of her happiness would have been, had she become the Governor's wife. The other ladies wondered that a citizen should not know this, but Landolt explained to her that the stronghold, city, and castle of Greifensee, with land and people, had been pledged in the year 1402 by the last Count of Toggenburg to the people of Zurich for six thousand gulden, and had never been redeemed, and that it was one of the smaller domains, numbering but twenty-one boroughs. For the rest, the present castle and town were not the original ones, which had of course been destroyed in the year 1444 by the Allied Swiss, who were warring against Zurich. Picturing to himself the scenes of that long and bitter civil strife, Landolt lapsed into a description of the downfall of the sixty-nine men, who, during almost the entire month of May, had defended the castle against the larger force of the besiegers. He related how, in accordance with civil war's horrible custom of destroying the conquered under the form of a fair trial, and in order to gain an end by inspiring terror, sixty of these men, preceded by their faithful leader, Wildhans von Landenberg, had been sentenced to be executed on the spot after they had finally surrendered. He dwelt especially on the proceedings of the War Council, which was held on the meadows at Nanikon, to decide the fate of the faithful.

He told how certain just men had boldly interceded for leniency and mercy and had pointed out the captives' honest faithfulness to duty; also how certain vengeful ones had protested wildly against showing mercy and opposed its advocates with intimidating inculcation; and how the passionate

controversy thus carried on in the face of the doomed men had terminated in the cruel death sentence for them all. The mysterious cruelty displayed by a majority so great that there was no division at all when the matter was finally put to vote; the immediately following entrance of the executioner, whom the Swiss took with them in their wars, as they now take a doctor or a chaplain; the onrush of old men, women, and children imploring mercy; the obstinate mercilessness of the majority and their leader, Itel Reding — all this was vividly described. Then the ladies listened with quiet horror to the progress of the execution, and heard how the Captain of the Zurich troops, in order to set his own men a manly example in the hour of death, demanded that his head be struck off first, so that nobody might think he was hoping for a change of mind or an unforeseen event; how the executioner paused at first after each decapitation, then after every tenth, awaiting a reprieve and even begging for it himself, but each time received the answer: "Be silent and do your work!" — until sixty innocent men lay in their blood, the last being beheaded by torch-light. Only a few minors and broken-down old men escaped the execution, and these more from inattention or fatigue on the part of the judges than for mercy's sake.

The good ladies heaved a deep sigh of relief when the story, much to their comfort, was ended. Toward the last they had been listening breathlessly; for the Governor had described it all so vividly that they really thought they saw before them the nocturnal meadow and the ring of wild warriors in the red torch-light, instead of the table covered with flowers and cups and lighted by the spring sun.

"It was indeed an uncanny aggregation, that War Council," said Landolt, "whether they were deciding upon an attack or pronouncing a death-sentence. But now it is time," he went on with a changed voice, "to leave these things and come back to ourselves. Fair ladies of my heart, I should now like to invite you to form a small, but more peaceful council, to hold a consultation, and to pronounce judgment

concerning a matter which concerns me closely, and which I shall lay before you, provided you do not deny me the kind attention which has its seat in so many dainty ears. But first let the public withdraw, as the negotiations must be conducted in secret!"

He motioned to his housekeeper and her adjutant, and they immediately withdrew. Then he raised his voice and continued to talk, interrupted by a slightly embarrassed clearing of the throat, while the ten white ears listened in mouse-like silence.

Honored ladies, I greeted you today with the proverb, Time brings roses, and surely it was well chosen, since it has sketched before my eyes a magic pentagram of five such fair heads, in which the magic line passes mysteriously from one head to the other, crosses itself, and at every point returns into itself, diverting all harm from me. Yes, time and fate have treated me well indeed. For had I won the first of you, I should never have known the second, and had the second granted me her hand, the third would have remained hidden from me forever, and so forth, and I should not now be enjoying the happiness of possessing a five-fold mirror of memory, unclouded by a single breath of harsh reality, or of dwelling in a tower of friendship, whose free-stones have been piled on top of one another by cupids. It is indeed roses of renunciation which time has brought me; but how splendid and lasting they are! As if undiminished in beauty and youth I see you blooming before me, and on my word not one of you seems ready to falter or retreat by so much as a hair's breadth before the storms of life. First of all, let us clink glasses on that! Long live your hearts and eyes, O, Salome, Figura, Wendelgard, Barbara, Aglaia!"

With flushed cheeks they all rose and smiled at him graciously, as they clinked their glasses with his. But Figura whispered into his ear:

"What are you driving at, you silly rogue?"

"Hush, Harlequin!" said the Governor, and when they had all resumed their seats, he went on:

“ But renunciation can never satisfy itself, and when it can find nothing more to renounce, it ends by renouncing itself. This seems but a bad play on words, but it nevertheless describes the dubious situation into which I see myself brought by circumstances. The occupancy of high governmental offices, and the management of a large household, no longer permit me to remain single with impunity; people are urging me to give up this unmarried state, in order, as judge and administrator at the head of a domain, to set an example of a true *pater-familias*—and so on, whatever the phrases may be with which they urge and worry me. In short, there is nothing left for me but to renounce the quiet stars of memory and to yield to necessity. Now, as I look around me, of course there can no longer be any talk of love and affection, which are banished by the pentagram; no, it is the cold light of necessity and common utility which must illuminate my decision. Now there are two worthy creatures between whom the tongue of the balance wavers, and the decision, dear friends, I have left to you! A wise friend of mine, a clergyman, has advised me to take either a very experienced old woman, or else a very young girl, but nobody in between. Both are now found, and the one you advise me to take, she shall it be, irrevocably. The old one is my good housekeeper, Frau Marianne, who until now has taken excellent care of my house; she is somewhat rough and smoky, to be sure, but honest and virtuous, and she was once beautiful as well, even if it was long ago. She has only to change her name, and then everything is in order. The other is the young maid who served us at table; she is distantly related to Marianne, who brought her here to help with the work and test her usefulness. She seems to be a gentle, well-mannered child, poor, but healthy, truth-loving, and straightforward. But I say no more on this point—you understand me! Now think it over, hold a consultation, exchange ideas; and then do me the friendly service of peacefully deciding the question. The majority rules, in case you are unable to agree

unanimously. I shall now go out. Here is a brass bell; when you have reached a decision, ring this as hard as you can for me to come in and receive my fate from your white hands!"

Having uttered these words in an unusually serious tone, he left the room so quickly that none of the ladies had a chance to interject a word. So now, like five state councillors, they sat there on their chairs in silent astonishment and looked at one another. So great was their surprise that none of them could make a sound, until Salome, the first to collect her thoughts, cried out:

"This won't do! If the Governor wants to marry, we must see that he gets the right sort of a wife. He is a made man now, and I shall soon find somebody who is suited to him. But by no means can we let him carry out this notion!"

"That's what I think, too," said Aglaia thoughtfully; "we must gain time!"

"Aha! you'd still take him yourself after all," thought Salome; "but nothing will come of that—I know of one for him." Then she said aloud: "Yes, above all we must gain time. Let us ring and explain to him that we will not decide the matter now, but postpone our decision."

She had already reached for the bell, but the youngest, Barbara Thumeysen, restrained her and piped in rather forcibly:

"I oppose a postponement! Let him marry, it is right that he should! And for my part I vote for the old house-keeper, for it wouldn't be seemly for him to marry a young thing now!"

"Bah!" said Wendelgard, "the old rattle-box! I vote for the young one! She is pretty and will let herself be moulded by him into the shape he wants; for she is also modest. And if she is poor, she will be all the more grateful!"

Salome and Aglaia, both vexed, made the objection that the first question was whether they were going to settle the matter that day or postpone it. Still more angrily Bar-

bara cried out that she voted for a settlement and for the old woman; but if they wished to postpone it, she reserved the right of making a personal reconnoissance among the honorable and reputable daughters of the city. For, she said, there was more than one worthy deacon's daughter to be provided for, whose splendid virtues and principles would benefit the still somewhat too gay and fantastic Governor.

There now ensued an almost violent hubbub. Figura Leu alone had said nothing; she had turned pale, and felt such an oppression of the heart that she could not say anything. Although she ordinarily saw into all the Governor's tricks and notions instantly, she regarded the present jest, simply because she loved him, as a very serious matter; she saw something coming which she had long wished for him and feared for herself. But she resolutely pulled herself together, and begged to be heard.

"My friends," she said, "I think we shall gain nothing by postponement, but rather that the Governor has already decided in favor of the girl, and that he wants our sanction from courtesy and in a spirit of fun. That he would marry Frau Marianne I will never believe, nor does she look as if she would fall in with such a plan; the old woman is too shrewd for that. But if we make no decision, or, which amounts to the same thing, if we refuse him the friendly sanction he expects, I for my part feel sure that we shall hear tomorrow the announcement of his decision."

The little company convinced itself of the probable correctness of this view.

"Then I move," said Salome, "that we proceed to vote. How old is he, anyway? Does anybody know?"

"He is almost forty-three," answered Figura.

"Forty-three!" said Salome; "all right, I vote for the young girl!"

"And I for the old woman!" cried the proselyte-clerk's daughter, the delicate Whitethroat, who seemed as obstinate in the matter as one of the speakers in that bloody War Council of Greifensee.

“I vote for the girl!” cried out Wendelgard, on the other hand, and she tapped the table with the palm of her hand.

“And I for the old woman!” said Aglaia with an uncertain voice, staring vacantly into space.

“Now we have two votes for the girl and two for the old woman,” cried Salome. “Figura Leu, your vote decides it!”

“I am for the young girl,” said Figura, and Salome immediately seized the bell and rang it forcibly.

A few moments elapsed before Landolt appeared, and a deep silence reigned during which the ladies experienced a variety of emotions. Figura was scarcely able to conceal a few large tears which hung from her eye-lashes; she had accustomed herself to think that Landolt would remain single, and now she knew that she would have to endure solitariness all alone. An idea of Wendelgard’s helped her to effect this concealment; for the latter broke the silence by proposing, in a rather loud voice, that the Governor must kiss the old woman before they made known their decision. He would then think that their choice fell on Marianne, and they would be able to tell by the face he made whether he really meant to marry her. This proposal was approved, although Figura opposed it, because she wanted to spare the Governor the unpleasant scene.

Just then the door opened and he entered solemnly, arm in arm with Frau Marianne, who bowed and smiled ludicrously in all directions as if she wanted to bid in advance for a friendly reception; at the same time, in a spirit of malicious roguery she cast penetrating glances at the five charming judges, one after the other, so that they sat there quite crestfallen and with guilty consciences. But the Governor said:

“Having convinced myself in advance that my friends and helpers would point out to me the road of calm reason and sedate age, I am now leading in my chosen partner, and am ready to exchange rings with her!”

Once more Frau Marianne bowed in all directions, and the ladies at the table became more and more puzzled and despondent. Not one of them dared say a word, for even Aglaia and Barbara, who had voted for the old woman, were afraid of her. Only Figura Leu, filled with sadness at the thought of the man's lowering himself to marry a weather-beaten vagrant who had long ago had nine children, arose and said in a voice of impatient agitation:

"You are mistaken, Governor! We decided that you should marry the young cousin of this good woman, and we hope that you will respect our advice and have not made April fools of us!"

"I fear it's already done!" replied Landolt, and he stepped to the table and rang the bell. Frau Marianne burst into a loud laugh, as the boy who had played the maid appeared in his own clothes and was introduced to the ladies by the Governor as the son of the pastor at Fellanden.

"But now," he said, "inasmuch as the old woman is denied me, and I judge by her laughter, that she does not care, and as the young girl has slyly transformed herself into a boy, I think we'll all remain as we are for the present. Forgive this wicked jest, and accept my thanks for the good will you showed me in that you did not deem me unworthy to be joined to youth and beauty! But how could it be otherwise when the judges themselves are enthroned in everlasting youth and beauty?"

He gave them his hand in turn and kissed each one on the mouth, to which none of them objected.

Figura gave the signal for a moderate outbreak of hilarity by crying out joyfully:

"And so he took us all in after all!"

With a loud chirping the lovely flock of birds flew up and alighted on the shore of the small harbor in front of the castle. There a boat, canopied with green foliage and decorated with gay pennons, lay ready for a pleasure-sail. Two young boatmen were holding the oars, and the Gov-

ernor was sitting by the rudder. A short distance ahead a second boat was gliding out with a band consisting of the French-horn players from Landolt's riflemen. With the simple airs of the horn-players alternated the songs of the ladies, who were now aware with gentle heartfelt joy that the Governor, sitting quietly by the rudder, liked them, and that they shared his peaceful happiness. The horns and the singing of the ladies now and then elicited a faint echo from the wooded slopes of the Zurich mountains, and the large, dazzlingly white Glarner range was reflected on the motionless surface of the lake. When approaching evening began to veil everything with its mild golden glow, and all the blues grew deeper, the Governor steered the boat back toward the castle and landed in the midst of a full chorus, so that the five ladies were still singing as they sprang ashore.

Waiting for them at the castle were four sprightly young men whom Landolt had invited there for the evening. A small dance was arranged, and Solomon danced once with each of the flames. As they took leave, he assigned to each one of the young men as an escort; but to Figura Leu the modest boy who had played the young maid.

As they were driving away he had the cannons fired again, and then as the darkness increased, he had the flag on the roof taken in.

"Well, Frau Marianne," he asked, when the latter brought him his sleeping-cup, "how did you like the congress of old sweethearts?"

"Why, mighty well," she cried, "by all the saints! I'd never have thought that such a ridiculous thing as five mittens could ever come to such an edifying and glorious end! I'd like to see any other man do it! Now your heart is at peace—as much so as is possible here below; for complete and everlasting peace comes only yonder where my nine little angels dwell!"

Such was the course of this memorable enterprise. Later Landolt received the governorship of Eglisgau on the Rhine, where he remained until governorships came to an

end everywhere, and feudal splendor collapsed, with the old Swiss Confederation, in the year 1798. He now saw foreign armies march across his fatherland and the beautiful hills and valleys of his youth — Frenchmen, Russians, and Austrians. Though no longer in official position, he was nevertheless always active with advice and help, always on horseback and indefatigable; but in all the misery and stress of the time his artistic eye watched over every change of the thousand different forms which detached themselves as in a feverish dream, and even in the thunder of the great battles, the scene of which was his immediate home-land, not a gleam of fire by night, nor a spying Cossack or Pandour at gray of dawn, escaped his notice. When the storm-floods finally subsided, he spent his time painting, hunting, and riding, frequently changing his residence, and died in the year 1818 in the Castle of Andelfingen on the Thur.

Of those last days his biographer says:

“On warm summer afternoons, especially during the harvest, when the entire region, which was rich in grain, swarmed with reapers, he would sit alone in the shade of the plane-trees. He liked to watch them from his height; when they sang at their work, he would break off a leaf, and whistle softly on it, accompanying the joyful melodies which came floating up from the valley; and occasionally he would fall asleep over it, like a weary reaper on his sheaf.”

In the late autumn of his seventy-seventh year, when the last leaf had fallen, he saw the end coming.

“The rifleman yonder took good aim,” he said, pointing to the ivory Death which he had inherited from his grandmother. Figura Leu, who had died before the beginning of the new century, had borrowed the delicate image from him, saying that it amused her, as she expressed it. After her death he had taken it back and placed it on his desk.

Frau Marianne passed away in the year 1808, completely exhausted by her work and the performance of her duties; but a funeral procession such as follows a distinguished man accompanied her body to the grave.

THE COMPANY OF THE UPRIGHT SEVEN (1878)

By GOTTFRIED KELLER

TRANSLATED BY BAYARD QUINCY MORGAN, PH.D.
Assistant Professor of German, University of Wisconsin



ASPAR HEDIGER, master tailor in Zurich, was at an age when the industrious artisan begins to allow himself an hour or so of rest after meals. And so he was sitting one fine March day not in his bodily but in his intellectual workshop, a tiny den which he had allotted to himself these many years. He was glad he could occupy it again without a fire; for neither his old habits as tradesman nor his income permitted him to have an extra room heated during the winter, merely for reading. And this at a time when there were tailors who could afford to hunt and to go riding daily; so closely dovetailed are the shades of culture.

Master Hediger, however, cut no mean figure in his orderly back room. He looked almost more like an American squatter than a tailor: a powerful and intelligent face with heavy side-whiskers, surmounted by an imposing bald dome, was bowed over *The Swiss Republican*, reading the leading article with a critical expression. At least twenty-five neatly bound folio volumes of this *Republican* stood in a small walnut cabinet, and they contained almost nothing which Hediger had not experienced or fought through in the last twenty-five years. Besides these the cabinet contained Rotteck's *Universal History*, a Swiss history by Johannes Müller, and a handful of political tracts and the like; an atlas and a small portfolio of caricatures and pamphlets, mementos of bitterly passionate days, lay on the bottom shelf.

The walls of the little room were adorned with portraits of Columbus, Zwingli, Hutten, Washington, and Robespierre; for he was a bitter partisan and sanctioned the Terror after the event. Besides these international heroes, some Swiss Progressives also adorned the walls, with highly edifying and prolix memorials appended in their own handwriting, regular little essays. Against the book-case leaned a well-kept, shining musket, on which hung a short side-arm and a cartridge-box that always contained thirty ball-cartridges. This was *his* hunting-piece, with which he went gunning not for hare and partridge, but for aristocrats and Jesuits, for constitution-breakers and betrayers of the people. Until now his good angel had preserved him from bloodshed, through lack of opportunity; yet more than once he had seized his gun and hurried to the square in the days of the riots, and the weapon had to remain permanently stationed between bed and cabinet; "for," he was wont to say, "no government and no battalions can protect freedom and justice unless each citizen is prepared to step outside his door and see what is going on."

Just as the doughty tailor was deeply buried in his article, now nodding approval and now shaking his head, his youngest son Karl entered, he a budding official in one of the government-offices.

"What is it?" asked Hediger gruffly, for he did not like to be disturbed in his den.

Karl asked, somewhat uncertain of the success of his request, whether he might have his father's gun and cartridge-box for the afternoon, to drill with.

"No, you can't; no thought of it!" said Hediger curtly.

"Oh, why not? I won't hurt it," continued the son, intimidated but persistent, for he absolutely had to have a gun or he would be put under arrest. But the old man only replied the louder,

"No thought of it! I only wonder at the persistence of these gentlemen, my sons, who are so unpersistent in other

things that not one of them stuck to the calling of his own choice. You know that each of your three older brothers wanted this gun as soon as they had to begin to drill, and that not one of them got it. And yet here you come slinking along after it. You've got your own fine wages, and nobody to provide for—buy your own weapons like any other man of honor. This gun won't leave the spot, except when I use it myself!"

"But it's only for a few times. You surely don't expect me to buy an infantry rifle, seeing I'm going to join the sharpshooters later on and buy a carbine for that."

"Sharpshooters! That's good too. Just how do you explain the necessity of joining the sharpshooters, when you've never fired a bullet in your life? In my day a man must have burned up a lot of powder before he could apply for membership; now lads turn marksmen, hit or miss, and there are fellows wearing the green coat that couldn't knock a cat off a roof, though to be sure they smoke cigars and play the gentleman instead! That's not my affair."

"Oh, let me have it just this once," said the boy, almost whimpering; "tomorrow I'll see about getting another; I can't any more today."

"I give my gun to nobody," responded his father, "who doesn't know how to handle it; if you can take off the lock of this gun and take it apart properly, then you can have it, otherwise it stays here."

And he hunted in a drawer for a screwdriver, gave it to his son, and handed him the musket. Desperate as he was, Karl tried his luck and began to loosen the screws of the lock. His father looked on derisively; but it was not long before he cried,

"Now don't let the screwdriver slip so, you'll ruin the whole thing. Loosen all the screws first, then take them out, that's easier. There, at last!"

Now Karl held the lock in his hand, but did not know what else to do with it and laid it down with a sigh, already seeing himself in imagination in the guard-house. But old

Hediger was now warmed up and he picked up the lock to give his son a lesson on it by explaining it as he took it apart.

"You see," he said, "first you take away the trigger-spring by means of this spring-hook—this way; then comes the screw of the sear-spring, which you unscrew only half-way, and then tap on the sear-spring this way, so that the pin comes out of the hole; now you take out the screw. Now the sear-spring, the sear-screw, and the sear; then the bridle-screw and the bridle-hammer; then the tumbler-pin, the trigger, and finally the tumbler; this is the tumbler. Hand me the neat's-foot oil from that little cabinet there, I'll just oil up the screws a bit right now."

He had laid all these parts on the newspaper, and Karl looked on eagerly and handed him the bottle, saying that the weather had changed for the better. But when his father had wiped off the parts of the lock and freshly moistened them with the oil, he did not put them together again, but threw them promiscuously into the cover of a small box, saying,

"Well, this evening we'll put the thing together again; now I want to finish reading the paper."

Disappointed and savage, Karl went out to tell his woes to his mother; he felt a mighty fear of that public power to which he was now going to school as recruit. Since he had outgrown school, he had not been punished, nor in fact during the last years of school, and now it was to begin again on a higher plane, simply because he had relied on his father's gun.

His mother said, "Your father is really quite right. All you four boys get more than he does, and that by reason of the education he has given you; but not only do you spend the last farthing on yourselves, but you're forever coming to plague him with borrowing every sort of thing: black swallow-tail, field-glass, drawing instruments, razor, hat, rifle, sabre; everything that he keeps in good order you carry off, only to bring it back ruined. It's just as if you

were studying the year round what else could be borrowed of him; but for his part he never asks anything of you, although you owe him your life and everything else. But I'll help you this once more."

Hereupon she went in to Master Hediger and said, "Dear husband, I forgot to tell you that Frymann the carpenter sent word that the Seven would meet today to transact some business, I think something political."

"Is that so?" said he, at once agreeably stirred, and he got up and walked back and forth. "I wonder that Frymann didn't come himself to speak with me first about it, to consult me."

After a few minutes he dressed hastily, put on his hat, and left with the words,

"Wife, I'm going out right now, I must know what is up. Besides, I haven't once put my foot outside the door this spring, and it's so lovely today. So goodbye."

"There, now he won't come back before ten o'clock tonight," said his wife laughing, and she bade Karl take the gun and be careful of it, and be sure to bring it back in season.

"Take it!" lamented her son; "why, he's taken the lock apart, and I can't fix it."

"Then I can," cried his mother, and she went into the den with him. She tipped over the boxful of parts, picked out the springs and screws, and began to put them together very skilfully.

"Where the dickens did you learn that, mother?" cried Karl quite dumfounded.

"I learned it in my father's house," she said. "He and my seven brothers had trained me to clean all their guns and rifles for them after they had been shooting. I often cried over it, but in the end I could handle the stuff like a gunsmith. In the village they simply called me the Gun-girl, and almost always my hands and the tip of my nose were black. My brothers shot away and drank away house and home, so that poor I was glad to have your father the tailor marry me."

During this narrative her dexterous fingers had actually assembled the lock and fastened it to the stock. Karl hung the shiny cartridge-box about him, took the gun, and hurried at top speed to the drill-ground, where he just barely escaped being late. After six o'clock he brought the things back, and attempting now to take the lock apart himself, put the parts back into the box-cover, shaking them into disorder.

When he finished his supper it was dark. He went to the lake front, hired a boat, and rowed along the shore until he came opposite some yards used partly by carpenters, partly by stone-cutters. It was a perfectly glorious evening; a mild south wind lifted tiny ripples on the water, the full moon lit up its distant surface and sparkled brightly on the little waves close by, and in the sky the stars stood out in clear, brilliant shapes; the snowy mountains looked down into the lake like pale spectres, divined rather than seen; and on the other hand, the fol-de-rol of commerce, the petty and restless lines of the buildings vanished in the darkness and were united under the influence of the moonlight into large, quiet masses—in short, the landscape setting was worthily prepared for the coming scene.

Karl Hediger rowed rapidly until he neared a large lumber-yard; there he sang a couple of times in a quiet voice the first verse of a short song, then rowed slowly and quietly out into the lake. From the piles of lumber a slender girl who had been sitting there arose, untied a skiff, stepped into it, and rowed gradually, with several turns, after the boatman of the gentle voice. When she had reached his side, the young people spoke to each other by name and then rowed without further delay side by side out into the flowing silver, far out upon the lake. Glorifying in youthful power, they described a mighty curve with several spirals, the girl leading and the youth following with easy pulls of his oars, without leaving her side, and one could see that the couple was not unpractised in rowing together. When they had got to complete stillness

and solitude, the young girl drew in her oars and stopped. That is, she laid only one oar down, the other she held over the gunwale as if playing with it, but not without a purpose; for as Karl also stopped rowing, but tried to approach her and even to grapple her skiff, she very skillfully managed to keep off his boat with her oar, by giving it a single push from time to time. This practice also seemed not to be new, since the young fellow soon resigned himself and sat still in his little craft.

Now they began to chat, and Karl said,

“I must say, Hermine, I can turn the proverb around and declare that what I enjoyed to the full in youth I vainly wish for in old age. When I was ten years old and you were seven, how often we used to kiss; and now that I am twenty, I don't even get your finger-tips to kiss.”

“Once for all, I refuse to listen to another word of these impudent lies,” answered the girl, half angry, half laughing, “it's all made up and false, I absolutely don't remember any such familiarities.”

“Unfortunately,” cried Karl; “but I remember them all the better. And more than that, you were the leader and the temptress.”

“Karl, how horrid,” Hermine interrupted him; but he continued pitilessly,

“Just remember how often, when we had got tired of helping poor children to fill their baskets with shavings—and how it always vexed the foremen—how often I'd have to build out of small sticks and boards in among the big piles of lumber, and all in secret, a tiny little hut with a roof and a door and a little bench inside. And then when we'd sit on the bench with the door shut, and I'd finally lay my hands in my lap, who would throw her arms around me and kiss me more times than you could count?”

At these words he came near falling into the water; for as he had sought to approach imperceptibly during this talk, she suddenly gave his skiff such a violent shove that it almost overturned. She burst into a ringing laugh as

his left arm plunged into the water to the elbow, drawing a curse from him.

"You wait," he said, "some day I'll certainly get even with you for this."

"Lots of time for that," she replied, "don't be in too much of a hurry, please, my fine gentleman!" Then she continued somewhat more seriously, "Father has learned our story; I didn't deny it, at least in essentials; but he won't hear to it, and forbids us any further thought of it; so that's how we stand."

"And do you intend to yield to your father's command as dutifully and as irrevocably as you make out?"

"At least I shall never do the exact opposite of his wish, and still less shall I risk a hostile relation with him; for you know that he bears a grudge a long time and is capable of a hatred that eats into his very soul. You also know that he has been a widower these five years past, and has stayed so for my sake; I think a daughter might well consider that. And now that we're talking about it, I must also tell you that under these circumstances I regard it as improper for us to see each other so often; it's bad enough when a child can't obey its father in spirit; but to do every day what would hurt your parents if they knew it has something hateful about it, and so I wish we wouldn't meet alone oftener than once a month, instead of every day as we've been doing, and for the rest, let time take its course."

"Take its course! And can you and will you really let things go that way?"

"Why not? Are they so important? Perhaps we can still have each other and perhaps not. The world will go on just the same, and perhaps we'll easily forget each other, for we're young yet; but in any case it doesn't seem to me that there's any great cause for making a fuss."

This speech the seventeen-year-old beauty delivered in a matter-of-fact tone and with apparent coldness, as she seized her oars again and steered for the land. Karl rowed along beside her, full of anxiety and alarm, and not less

full of anger at Hermine's words. She was half glad to know that her young scamp was anxious, but on the other hand she too was pondering upon the substance of their conversation, and especially the four weeks of separation she had imposed on herself.

Thus he finally succeeded in surprising her and forcing his boat up to hers with one stroke. Instantly he clasped her slender body in his arms, drawing her form half toward him, so that they both leaned partly over the deep water, while the boats were tipped quite decidedly, so that any movement might overturn them completely. The girl consequently felt herself defenseless and had to suffer Karl to imprint seven or eight passionate kisses on her lips. Then he gently and carefully righted her and her skiff; she swept the loose hair from her face, seized her oars, drew a deep breath, and with tears in her eyes cried angrily and threateningly,

“Just wait, you rascal, until I have you under my thumb. As true as God is in heaven, you shall know that you've got a wife!”

Hereupon she rowed with rapid strokes back to her father's land and dwelling, without looking around at him again.

Karl however, filled with bliss and triumph, called after her, “Good night, Miss Hermine Frymann! That tasted good!”

Mrs. Hediger had, however, not made a false report to her husband when she caused him to go out. The news which she communicated to him had only been saved up for suitable use and then utilized at the right moment. As a matter of fact a meeting did take place, a meeting of the Society of Seven, or of the Strong, or of the Upright, or of the Freedom-loving, as they variously called themselves. This was simply a circle of sever old and tried friends, all master-artisans, patriots, arch-politicians, and stern domestic tyrants after the pattern of Master Hediger.



THE EXETER AND DREXEL

From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin.

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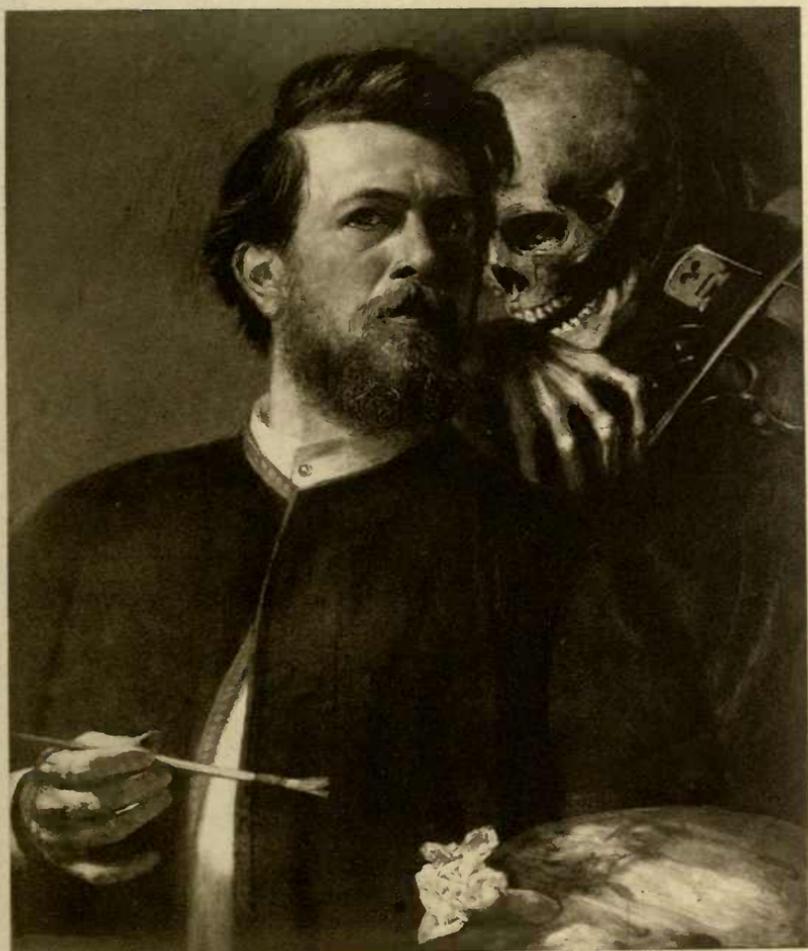
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From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin, pattern of Master Hediger.



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Born in the previous century, every man of them, they had as children witnessed the downfall of the old régime and had then experienced through many years the storms and birth-pangs of the new period, until the latter cleared up in the late forties and once more brought Switzerland to power and unity. Some of them came from the common domains, the former subject-land of the Swiss Allies, and they could remember how as peasant children they had had to kneel down by the roadside when a coach came driving by with barons and the court-usher in it; others were more or less distantly related to imprisoned or executed revolutionaries. In short, all were filled with an inextinguishable hatred toward all aristocracy, which since the downfall of the latter had simply been transformed into a bitter scorn. But when it once more appeared in democratic garb, and, allied with those old-time purveyors of power, the priests, stirred up a struggle lasting several years, then to their hatred of the aristocrats was added that of the clerics; indeed, their martial sentiment now had to turn not only against lords and priests, but against their own brothers, against entire masses of the agitated people—causing them in their old days an unexpected expenditure of compound energy, which however they made valiantly.

These seven men were anything but insignificant; in all popular assemblages, union meetings, and the like, they helped to form a solid centre, stuck unweariedly to their posts, and were ready by day or night to do for their party commissions and transactions which could not be intrusted to hirelings, but only to perfectly reliable persons. Often they were consulted by the party leaders and taken into their confidence, and if a sacrifice was necessary, then the seven men were the first with their mites. For all this they desired no other reward than the victory of their cause and their good conscience; never did one of them thrust himself forward or seek an advantage or a position, and for them the greatest honor was a fleeting handshake from

this or that "famous Confederate;" but he must be a genuine one, and "clean to his kidneys," as they put it.

These valiant men had been learning each other's ways for decades; they all used each other's Christian names, and came in the end to form a close corporation, but without any other statutes than those they bore in their hearts. Twice a week they met, and since two of even this small company were inn-keepers, these alternated in having the meetings. Very entertaining and sociable they were; quiet and serious as the men showed themselves in large gatherings, they were both noisy and gay when by themselves; none of them put on airs, and none minced matters; at times they all spoke at once, then again they would listen attentively to a single speaker, according to their state of mind and their fancy. Not only politics was the topic of conversation, but also their home life. If one of them was in sorrow and anxiety, he would lay before the society what distressed him; the affair would be discussed, and its remedy became common cause. If one of them felt himself injured by another, he would make his complaint to the Seven, who would sit in judgment, and the offender would be admonished of his wrong-doing.

In all this they were alternately very passionate or very calm and dignified, or perhaps ironical. On two occasions traitors, unclean fellows, had sneaked in among them, been recognized, and in solemn assembly condemned and cast out, that is sadly thrashed by the fists of the valorous gray-beards. If a great misfortune came upon the party to which they belonged, that transcended all domestic unhappiness, and they would hide singly in the darkness and shed bitter tears.

The most eloquent and prosperous of them was Frymann the carpenter, a veritable Croesus with a very fine establishment. The most impecunious was Hediger the tailor, but in oratory second only to Frymann. His political ardor had long since lost him his best customers, yet he had none the less given his sons a good education, and so

he had no means left. The other five were well-established people, who did more listening than talking in the society when important business was on, but made up for it by speaking all the more weightily in their houses and among their neighbors.

Today there actually were important transactions on hand, which Frymann and Hediger had previously discussed. The time of unrest, of conflict, and of political trouble was past for these brave fellows, and the conditions which had been secured seemed to conclude for good and all their long political activities. All's well that ends well! they were able to say, and they felt successful and contented. And so on this evening of their political life they wished to indulge in a grand final festivity, and attend in a body, as the Seven, the Swiss national shooting-match which was to be held the next summer at Aarau, the first one to follow the adoption of the new constitution of 1848. Now most of them had long since been members of the Swiss Marksmen's Association, and all but Hediger, who contented himself with his musket, had good rifles with which they had in previous years gone shooting on Sundays. They had also already attended other festivals, though not together, so that the matter did not seem exactly strange. But a spirit of outward pomp had come over some of them, and it was a question of no less a matter than appearing in Aarau with their own banner and presenting a handsome memorial trophy.

When the small company had drunk several glasses of wine, and good humor held full sway, Frymann and Hediger came out with their proposal, which nevertheless startled the modest gentlemen somewhat, so that for some minutes they wavered irresolutely. For they did not quite see the propriety of attracting such attention and marching out with a banner. But since they had long before forgotten how to vote against any bold flight or daring undertaking, they did not hold out longer than it took the speakers to paint to them in glowing colors how the flag would be a

symbol and their procession a triumph of tried and true friendship, and how the appearance of seven such old war-horses as they with a banner of friendship would surely make good sport. Only a small banner of green silk was to be made, bearing the Swiss coat of arms and a good legend.

After the banner-question had been settled, the memorial gift was taken up; the value of it was fixed fairly easily: about two hundred francs, old style. But the choice of the object caused a lengthy and almost vexatious debate. Frymann began the general inquiry and invited Kuser the silversmith, as a man of good taste, to express his opinion. Kuser solemnly drank a deep draught, coughed, bethought himself, and then said that as luck would have it, he just happened to have a handsome silver cup in his shop, which he could heartily recommend, if that was satisfactory to them, and which he could give them at a very great discount. Hereupon there followed a general silence, interrupted only by brief utterances such as "That sounds good," or "Why, yes." Then Hediger asked if there was any further proposal to be made. Whereupon Syfrig, the skilful smith, took a swallow, plucked up courage, and said,

"If it is agreeable to the gentlemen, I will express an idea, too. I have forged a very ingenious plough of solid iron, which as you know was praised at the agricultural exhibit. I am willing to deliver this fine piece of work for the two hundred francs, although that would not pay for the labor on it; but I am of the opinion that this implement and symbol of agriculture would be a memorial gift that would genuinely represent the common people. Not that I wish to cast reflections on any other proposal."

During this speech, Burgi the crafty cabinet-maker had also been thinking about the matter, and when a short silence again prevailed and the silversmith was beginning to make a long face, the cabinet-maker delivered himself thus,

"An idea has come to me too, good friends, which might perhaps make great sport. Years and years ago I had to

make for an out-of-town bridal couple a double four-poster bed of the finest walnut, inlaid with bird's-eye veneering; day after day the young couple hung around my workshop, measuring the length and breadth of the thing, and billing and cooing before journeymen and apprentices without minding their jokes and broad hints. But when the wedding was to come off, suddenly they began to fight like cats and dogs, though not a soul knew why; one went off this way, the other that, and my bedstead stood there like a rock. At the very lowest valuation, it's worth a hundred and eighty francs; but I'll be glad to lose eighty and give it for a hundred. Then we'll have a feather-bed made for it and set it up in the trophy-room, all fitted up, with the inscription: For the encouragement of some unmarried Confederate. How's that?"

A merry peal of laughter rewarded this idea; only the silversmith and the blacksmith smiled coolly and acidly; but Pfister the inn-keeper at once raised his strong voice and said with his wonted frankness,

"Well, gentlemen, if the point is to have every man bring his own corn to market, then I know something better than anything proposed yet. In my cellar lies a fine solid cask of 1834 claret, so-called Swiss Blood, which I bought myself in Basle more than twelve years ago. In view of your moderation and modest ways, I never ventured to tap the cask, and yet two hundred francs are tied up in it, for there are exactly a hundred quarts. I'll give you the wine at cost price, and reckon the cask as cheaply as possible, for I'll be only too glad to get room for better selling goods, and may I never leave this spot if that trophy doesn't do us honor."

This speech, during which the three foregoing movers had already begun to murmur, was scarcely ended when Erismann, the other inn-keeper, took the floor and said,

"If this is the way it's going, then I won't stay in the background, but will say that I think I have the best thing for our purpose, namely, my young milch cow of pure

highland breed, that I'm ready to sell if I get a good purchaser. Tie a bell around the neck of this splendid animal, hang a milkpail between her horns, deck her out with flowers—"

"And put her under a glass globe in the trophy-room" the provoked Pfister interrupted, and with that there burst one of those storms which occasionally made the sessions of the Strong Seven somewhat tempestuous, but only to result in all the brighter sunshine. All spoke at once, defended their own proposals, attacked those of the others, and accused each other of self-seeking. For they always told each other plainly what they thought, and disposed of their affairs by means of frank truth and not disingenuous hushing up, as men of a certain kind of false culture are wont to do.

Now when a perfectly fiendish din had arisen, Hediger clinked his glass noisily and raised his voice to speak:

"Ye warriors, do not become heated, but let us make quietly for our goal! The objects proposed are then a cup, a plow, a complete four-poster, a cask of wine, and a cow. Permit me to consider your proposals a little more closely. That cup of yours, my dear Rudi, is a fixture in your place and I know it well; it's been standing for years and years behind your show-window, and I actually believe you got your master's title with it. But its shape is antiquated and will not permit us to choose it and pretend it is new. Your plow, Connie Syfrig, doesn't seem to have suited its purpose very well, after all, or you'd certainly have sold it three years ago. But we must plan to have the winner of our trophy take unfeigned pleasure in it. Your four-poster, however, is a new idea, Henry, and certainly a delicious one, and would surely give occasion for the most proverbial turns of speech. But to carry it out properly would require handsome and sufficient bedding, and the excess over the sum we have fixed would be too much for only seven people. Your "Swiss Blood," Lienert Pfister, is fine and will be still better if you put a more reasonable

price on it and end by tapping it for us, so that we can drink it on our memorial days. Against your cow, Felix Erismann, there is nothing to be said except that she regularly upsets the milkpail. That's why you want to sell her; for that vice is certainly not agreeable. But how about it? Would it be right now if some honest farmer won the animal, led her joyfully home to his wife, and she joyfully sat down to milk her and then saw the sweet foaming milk poured out on the ground? Just imagine the vexation, the anger, and the disappointment of the good woman, and the embarrassment of the good marksman, after this scene had been repeated two or three times.

"Yes, dear friends, do not take it ill of me, but I must say it: all our proposals have the common fault of hastily and thoughtlessly trying to make the honor of our country a source of calculation and of profit. What if this be done a thousand times over by big and little—we in our circle have never yet done it, and let us not begin now. So let each man bear equally, without thought of gain, the costs of the trophy, so that it can really be a trophy of honor."

The five gain-seekers, who had let their heads hang in shame, now cried with one voice,

"Well said! Kaspar has spoken well," and they said it was his turn to make a suggestion.

But Frymann took the floor and said,

"It seems to me still that a silver cup is most fitting for an honor trophy. It always keeps its value, cannot be worn out, and remains as a handsome memento of happy days and of the valiant men of the house. A house in which such a cup is preserved can never wholly decay, and who can say whether many other things are not preserved simply on account of such a memorial? And is not the opportunity given to art to mold many of these vessels into ever new and beautiful forms, and so to exercise its inventiveness and to send a ray of beauty into the most distant vales, so that little by little a mighty store of noble prize-cups is treasured up in the fatherland, noble in form

and in substance? And how appropriate that such treasures, scattered through the whole country, cannot be utilized for the common uses of everyday life, but in their pure brilliance, in their refined forms, continually keep the higher things before our eyes, and seem to hold fast the idea of the Commonwealth and the sunlight of days of ideal beauty! Away then with the rubbish of the annual fair that is beginning to pile up in our trophy-chambers, the prey of moths and of the most ordinary uses, and let us abide by the time-honored venerable drinking-cup! Truly, if I lived in a day when Swiss liberties were nearing their end, I could not imagine any more exalted crowning festivity than to gather together the thousands and thousands of cups belonging to all the corporations, clubs, and private citizens, cups of every kind and shape, in all the splendor of days departed, with all their recollections, and to drink a last toast to the declining fatherland — ”

“ Silence, rude guest! What unworthy thoughts are these? ” cried the Upright and Strong, and fairly shivered. But Frymann went on,

“ As it is fitting for a man at times to think of death in the midst of his prime, so too in an hour of reflection let him fix his eye upon the certain end of his fatherland, that he may love it all the more fervently in the present day; for all things upon this earth are transitory and subject to change. Or have not much greater nations than we perished? Or would you one day care to drag out an existence like that of the Wandering Jew who cannot die, serving all the new upstart nations, he that buried the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans? No, a nation that knows that one day it will live no more, uses its days all the more actively, lives so much the longer, and bequeaths a glorious memory; for it will grant itself no rest until it has brought to light and to fruition the capabilities that lie dormant in it, like an indefatigable man who puts his house in order before he departs this life. This is in my opinion the main consideration. When a nation has per-

formed its task, then a few years more or less of existence do not matter; new manifestations will already be waiting at the portals of time.

“And so I must confess that once a year I fall a prey to such thoughts during a sleepless night or on quiet paths, and try to imagine what type of nation will one day hold sway in these mountains, after we are gone. And each time I go at my work with so much greater haste, as if I could in that way accelerate the labor of my nation, so that that future commonwealth may walk with respect over our graves.

“But away with these thoughts, and let us return to our joyful project. What I think is that we ought to order a new cup of our silversmith, on which he promises to take no profit, but which he will make as valuable as possible. And for this purpose let us have an artist execute a good design, which shall avoid all humdrum emptiness; but in view of our limited means let him pay more heed to the proportions of it, to a beautiful outline and rhythm of the whole piece, than to profuse ornamentation. According to this design Master Kuser will furnish a neat and substantial piece of work.”

This proposal was accepted and the transactions ended. But Frymann immediately took the floor again and began,

“Now that we have dispatched the general business, worthy friends, permit me to bring up a special matter and to lay a complaint before you, the friendly adjustment of which we will undertake in common after our time-honored custom. You know that our good friend Kaspar Hediger is the progenitor of four specimens of handsome jolly boys, who endanger the whole region with their premature bent for marriage. And sure enough, three of them already have wife and child, although the oldest is not yet twenty-seven. Now there is still the youngest, just twenty, and what does he do? He makes up to my only daughter and turns her head! Thus these frantic marriage-devils have now forced their way into the circle of intimate friendship,

and threaten to break it up. Apart from the excessive youth of the children, I frankly confess that such a marriage goes contrary to my desires and intentions. I have a large business and a considerable fortune; therefore when the time comes I shall seek out a son-in-law who is a man of business, and who can furnish a corresponding capital and carry on the large building operations which I have in mind; for you know that I have bought up extensive building lots and am convinced that Zurich is going to expand very considerably.

“But your son, my good Kaspar, is a government clerk and has nothing but his meagre income, and even if he rises it won't become much larger, and so once for all his account is settled. Let him stick to it, he's provided for if he's economical; but he doesn't need a rich wife, for a rich official is absurd, taking the bread out of other people's mouths; and on the other hand I'm still less inclined to give my money for the loafing or the experimenting of inexperience. Besides all this, it goes against my grain to turn my old and tried relation to my friend Kaspar into kinship. What, are we to load up with family vexations and mutual dependence? No, my friends, let us remain till death intimately linked, but independent of each other, free and answerable to none for our actions; away with kinsman and cousin and all such titles! And so I call upon you, Kaspar, to declare in the bosom of friendship that you will support me in my purposes and oppose those of your son. And no offense, we all know each other.”

“We know each other, well said,” said Hediger solemnly, after he had dwelt long over a pinch of snuff; “you all know what bad luck I have had with my sons, although they are active and lively lads. I had them taught everything that I wish I had learned myself. All of them knew some language, could write a good essay, figured splendidly, and had enough grounding in other branches of learning to keep, with a little effort, from sinking into complete ignorance. Thank God, I thought, we can at last educate

our boys to be citizens that can't have the wool pulled over their eyes any more. And thereupon I let each of them learn whatever trade he chose. But what happened? Scarcely did they have their indentures in their pockets and look about them a little, when the hammer got too heavy for them, and they thought they were too clever for the trades and began to run after clerking positions. The devil knows how they managed it, but the young scoundrels went like fresh rolls! Well, evidently they can be used. One's in the postoffice, two are with the railroad, and the fourth perches in a government-office and claims he's an administrative official. Not that I really care. He who doesn't want to be master must stay a journeyman and have superiors all his life. But since money passes through their hands, all of these young clerking gentlemen had to furnish security; I have no property myself, and so all of you have given my boys security in turn, amounting altogether to forty thousand francs—the old tradesmen, friends of their father, were good enough for that! And now how do you think I feel? How can I look you in the face if only one of all the four makes a single false step, or does something careless or incautious?"

"Fiddle-de-dee," cried the old men, "drive all those notions out of your head. If they hadn't been good boys, we shouldn't have given security, rest easy about that."

"I know all that," answered Hediger; "but a year is a long time, and when it's over another begins. I can assure you that I am terrified every time one of them comes into the house with a fine cigar. Won't he succumb to luxury and self-indulgence? I think. If I see one of the young wives coming along with a new dress, I am afraid she is getting her husband into bad ways and into debt; if one of them talks to a bad debtor on the street, a voice cries out in me: won't that man mislead him into some indiscretion? In short, you see that I feel myself humble and dependent enough, and am far from wanting to become

indebted to a rich kinsman to boot, and to make of a friend a master and patron. And why should I wish my young swell-headed son to feel rich and provided for and to run about before my nose with the corresponding arrogance, when he's never been through anything yet? Shall I help to close the school of life for him, so that even in his youth he shall become a hard-hearted boor and lubber, who doesn't know what it means to earn one's bread, and who thinks he's a man of marvelous merit? No, my friend, be easy; here's my hand on it. Let's have no talk of kinship, away with your Kinsman!"

The two old men shook hands, but the others laughed, and Burgi said,

"Now who would believe that you two, who have just spoken so wisely in the cause of the fatherland and given us a good dressing down, would do such foolishness the very next minute! God be praised, then I still have some prospect of finding a taker for my double bedstead, and I propose that we give it to the young couple as a wedding present."

"Voted!" cried the other four, and Pfister the inn-keeper added,

"And I demand that my cask of Swiss Blood be drunk at the wedding, which we shall all attend."

"And I shall pay for it, if it comes off," shouted Frymann angrily, "but if nothing comes of it, as I know nothing will, then you'll pay for the cask, and we'll drink it at our meetings until it's gone."

"We take the wager," they said; but Frymann and Hediger pounded on the table with their fists and kept crying,

"Away with kinship! We don't want to be kinsmen, but independent good friends."

With this declaration the weighty session was finally terminated, and the Lovers of Freedom were strong and upright as they wandered homeward.

The next day at dinner, after the journeymen had left the table, Hediger announced to his son and his wife the solemn decision of the day before, namely that for the future no intercourse between Karl and the carpenter's daughter would be tolerated. Mrs. Hediger was so amused by this authoritative pronouncement that the small remnant of wine which she was just going to drink ran into her windpipe and caused her a terrific coughing-spell.

"What is there to laugh at?" said Hediger angrily.

His wife answered, "Oh, I can't help laughing to think that the proverb: Cobbler, stick to your last, might be applied to your club. Why don't you stick to politics, instead of meddling with love-affairs?"

"You laugh like a woman and you talk like one," replied Hediger with great seriousness, "the family is just where true politics begin; of course we are political friends; but in order to stay so we must be careful not to turn the families upside down and play communism with another's wealth. I'm poor and Frymann is rich and that's the way it's to be; we get all the more pleasure out of our spiritual equality. Now shall I stick my nose into his house and his affairs by marriage, and arouse jealousy and embarrassment? Far be it from me!"

"Well, well, well, these are queer principles," answered Mrs. Hediger; "a fine friendship, if one friend doesn't want to give his daughter to the son of the other! And since when is it called communism when prosperity comes into a family through marriage? Is it a blameworthy piece of policy, when a fortunate son is able to win a beautiful and rich girl, because that enables him to attain property and influence, to walk beside his aged parents and his brothers and lend them a helping hand, so that they too can get into clover? For when once good fortune has entered a house, it easily widens its scope, and without damaging the one, the others can throw out their hooks in his shade to advantage. Not that I am looking for a fool's paradise. But there are lots of cases where a man

who has got rich can with decency and justice be taken into counsel by his poor relatives. We old folks shall need nothing more; but the time might come when one or the other of Karl's brothers could venture on a good undertaking, a fortunate change of life, if some one lent him the capital. And perhaps one of them will have a talented son who could rise high if there were means enough to send him to college. One would perhaps become a favorite physician, another an influential lawyer or even a judge, another an engineer or an artist, and for all of these, once they had got that far, it would be easy to make good matches and so finally form a respected, numerous, and happy family.

"Now what would be more natural than to have a prosperous uncle, who could open up the world to his industrious but poor relatives, without harming himself? For how often it happens that through one fortunate person all the rest of the people in that house get something of the world and become wise and shrewd. And will you plug up all this opportunity and choke the wellspring of fortune?"

Hediger emitted a vexed laugh and cried,

"Castles in the air! You talk like the girl with her milk-pail. I see another picture of the man grown rich among poor relations. He to be sure denies himself nothing and always has a thousand notions and desires which cause him all sorts of expenditures and which he satisfies. But whenever his parents and his brothers come to him, as quick as a wink he sits down in importance and ill-humor at his rent-book, sticks his pen askew into his mouth, sighs, and says: 'thank God that you don't have the annoyance and the burden of administering such a fortune! I'd rather herd a flock of goats than watch a pack of malicious and dilatory debtors. No money comes in anywhere, they keep trying to break through and slip out everywhere, and day and night you are in fear of being grossly cheated. And if you get a rascal by the collar, he sets up such a howl that you have to let him go again the next minute, unless

you want to be decried as an inhuman usurer. Every official paper, every legal summons, every abstract, every advertisement you have to read over and over, so as not to miss one petition or overlook one term. And never is there any money on hand. If somebody repays a loan, then he puts his money-bag on the table in a dozen taverns and brags of his payment; and before he's out of your house there will be three men after that money, one of them without even any security. And then the demands made on you by the community, the philanthropic institutions, the public undertakings, subscription lists of every sort—you can't dodge them, your position demands it; but I tell you, often you don't know where your head is.

This year I'm especially hard pressed, for I have had my garden trimmed and beautified and had a balcony built; my wife has wanted it for a long time, and now the bills are here. I can't even think of keeping a saddle-horse, as my physician has advised me to do a hundred times, for new expenses keep coming along. Look there, I had a little wine-press of the latest type built for me, to press out the Muscatel that I grow on trellises—devil take me if I can pay for it this year. Well, my credit is still good, thank heaven.'

“ This is the way he talks, with cruel ostentation, and so intimidates his poor brothers and his old father that they say nothing about their request and simply take themselves off again, after they have admired his garden and his balcony and his ingenious wine-press. And they go to strangers and pay higher interest, simply to escape hearing so much gabble. His children are expensively and elegantly dressed, and walk with a springy step along the street; they bring little gifts to their poor cousins and come twice a year to take them to dinner, and this is a great lark for the rich children; but when the guests lose their shyness and begin to make a noise too, their pockets are filled with apples and they are sent home. There they tell all that they have seen and what they had to eat, and everything

is criticized; for ill-will and envy fill the hearts of the poor kinswomen, who none the less flatter the prosperous one and praise her finery with eloquent tongue.

“Finally some misfortune strikes the father or the brothers, and the rich man must enter the breach willy-nilly, to avoid gossip. And he does it, without needing much persuasion; but now the bond of brotherly equality and love is completely rent asunder. The brothers and their children are now the slaves and slave-children of their master; year in, year out they are hectored and badgered, they have to dress in coarse cloth and eat black bread, in order to make good a small part of the damage, and the children are sent to orphan-asylums and pauper schools, and if they are strong enough they have to work in the master’s house and sit at the lower end of his table without the privilege of speech.”

“Whew,” cried the wife, “what a terrible tale! And will you really take your own son here for such a scoundrel? And is it written in the Book that it has to be just his brothers who are to meet with such a misfortune that will make them his slaves? They who have always got along by themselves till now? No, for the honor of our own blood I must believe that a rich marriage wouldn’t turn us topsy-turvy to that extent, but that on the contrary my more hopeful view would prevail.”

“I don’t mean to say,” replied Hediger, “that it would go just that way with us; but we too should find an outward and finally also an inward inequality entering in; he who seeks after wealth, tries to rise above his equals — ”

“Stuff and nonsense,” interrupted his wife, as she took up the table-cloth and shook it out of the window; “has Frymann, who owns the property we are quarreling about, risen above the rest of you? Are you not one heart and one soul and forever putting your heads together? ”

“That’s different,” cried her husband, “entirely different. He didn’t get his property underhandedly, nor win it in the lottery, but he earned it dollar by dollar through

the toil of forty years. And besides, we're not brothers, he and I, and we have nothing to do with each other, and don't want to, that's the point. And finally, he's not like other people, he's still one of the strong and upright. But don't let's keep considering nothing but these petty private concerns. Fortunately there are no monstrously rich people among us, prosperity is fairly well distributed; but just let fellows with many millions spring up, who have political ambition, and you'll see what mischief they will do. There's that well-known spinner-king, he really has got many millions and they accuse him of being a bad citizen and a skin-flint, because he is said not to care anything for the common weal. But on the contrary, he's a good citizen, who lets other folks do as they please just as he always did, and who governs himself and lives like anybody else.

“But let this gold-bug be an ambitious political genius, give him some amiability, pleasure in spending money, and an understanding of all sorts of theatrical display, let him build palaces and houses of public utility, and then see what damage he will cause in the commonwealth and how he will ruin the character of the nation. A time will come when in our country, as elsewhere, great masses of money will unite without having been sturdily worked for and saved up; then the time will come to show the devil our teeth; then it will be seen whether the thread and the color of our banner-cloth are sound. The long and the short of it is that I don't see why a son of mine should put out his hands for another man's goods without having lifted a finger to earn it. That's as much of a fraud as anything.”

“It's a fraud that has been going on as long as the world has,” said his wife laughing, “namely that two people who love each other marry. And with all your big, stilted words, you'll never change that a particle. Anyway, you alone are the one to be made a fool of; for Master Frymann is wisely trying to prevent your children from becoming equal to his. But the children will have their own policy, too, and will carry it out if there's anything in the affair,—as to that I don't know.”

“Let them,” said the master-tailor, “that’s their affair; but mine is not to favor it, and in any case to refuse my consent as long as Karl is a minor.”

With this diplomatic declaration and the latest number of the *Republican* he withdrew into his study. Mrs. Hediger on her part was curious now and wanted to get after her son and call him to account; but only now did she perceive that he had cleared out, as the entire negotiation seemed to him wholly superfluous and irrelevant, and he besides felt disinclined to reveal his love-affairs to his parents.

All the earlier did he enter his skiff that evening and row out to where he had been on many previous evenings. But he sang his little song once and twice and even down to the last verse without any one appearing, and after he had vainly cruised about for more than an hour in front of the lumber-yard, he rowed back perplexed and depressed, and thought his affair was indeed in a bad way. The next four or five evenings he had a similar experience, and now he gave up lying in wait for the faithless girl that he took her to be; for although he recalled her resolve not to see him more than once a month, he merely regarded this as preparing him for a complete dismissal, and fell into an angry gloom. So he found it very opportune that the drill-season for the sharpshooter recruits was just beginning, and on several afternoons beforehand he went out to a shooting-range with a sharpshooter he knew, to get at least a little practice and to be able to show the number of hits necessary for his application. His father looked on at this rather derisively, and unexpectedly came out there himself, in order to dissuade his son from his foolish audacity before it was too late, if as he suspected Karl had no ability.

But he happened to come just after Karl had had his half dozen misses and so made a number of fairly good shots.

“You needn’t try to make me believe,” said Hediger,

astonished, "that you have never done any shooting; you've secretly spent many a franc at it, that's certain."

"Well, I have done some secret shooting, but it hasn't cost anything. Do you know where, father?"

"I thought so."

"Even as a boy I used to watch the men shoot, and listened to what they said about it, and for years I've had such a desire for it that I used to dream about it, and while lying in bed I would think for hours of handling a gun, and I've aimed hundreds of good shots at the target."

"That's capital. In the future they'll order whole companies of marksmen into bed and order them to execute such mental exercises; that will save powder and shoes!"

"It is not so ridiculous as it seems," said the experienced sharpshooter who was instructing Karl; "it is certain that of two marksmen who are equally gifted as to eye and hand, the one who is used to reflection will be the master. You need to have an inborn knack at pulling the trigger, and there are lots of queer things about it, as in all exercises."

The oftener and the better Karl shot, the more did old Hediger shake his head; the world seemed to him to be turned upside down, for he himself had only attained to what he was and what he could do by industry and strenuous practice; even his principles, which most people manage to cram in as easily and as numerous as sardines, he had acquired only by dint of persevering study in his back chamber. But now he no longer ventured to raise opposition and betook himself thence, not without an inward satisfaction at numbering one of his sons among his country's sharpshooters; and by the time he reached his dwelling he was determined to make Karl a fine-fitting uniform of good cloth. "He'll have to pay for it, of course," he said to himself; but he knew well enough that he never demanded any return from his sons and that they never offered to repay him anything. That is wholesome for parents and allows them to reach a green old age, so that

they may live to see their children gaily fleeced by their grandchildren, and so it passes on from father to son, and all survive and enjoy good appetites.

Now Karl was put into barracks for several weeks and developed into a handsome and skilled soldier, who, although he was in love and neither saw nor heard anything further of his sweetheart, nevertheless applied himself attentively and cheerfully to his service as long as the daylight lasted; and by night the conversations of his room-mates and the pranks they played allowed him no chance to pursue his thoughts in solitude. There were a score of lads from different districts, who exchanged and made capital of their native tricks and jokes long after the lights had been put out and until midnight came on.

Besides Karl, only one of them was from the city, and him he knew by hearsay. He was some years older than Karl and had already served in the light infantry. By trade a bookbinder, he had for some time not done a stroke of work, but lived on the exorbitant rent of old houses, which he skilfully managed to buy without capital. Sometimes he would resell one to some simpleton at an outrageous price, and then when the buyer could not hold out, he would put the forfeit and the paid instalments in his pocket and take the house back again, once more raising the rents in the process. He also had a neat trick of adding a small chamber or bedroom to an apartment by simple alterations and then demanding a further considerable increase in rent. These alterations were by no means well-advised or suitable, but quite arbitrary and stupid; and he likewise knew all the bungling artisans, who did the cheapest and poorest work, and with whom he could do what he pleased. When he got to the end of his ideas, he would have one of his old buildings whitewashed outside and raise the rent again.

In this manner he enjoyed a neat annual income without doing an hour's actual work. His commissions and agreements did not take long, and he would stand in front of



ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

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TRITON AND MERMAID (THE SURF)

other people's buildings as long as he did before his own bungled affairs, play the expert, stick his nose into everything, and was in general the stupidest fellow in the world. Consequently he passed for a shrewd and prosperous young man, who would be a rich man before long, and he denied himself nothing. Now he considered himself too good for an infantry private and had wanted to become an officer. But as he was too lazy and too ignorant for that, they had not been able to use him, and by dint of obstinate insistence he had now got among the sharpshooters.

Here he sought to force his mates to respect him, but without exerting himself, simply by using his money. He was forever treating the subalterns and his comrades to drinks, and by clumsy liberality he thought he could procure himself indulgence and freedom. But he got nowhere except to make a butt of himself, though to be sure he did enjoy indulgence of a sort, in that they soon gave up trying to make anything of him, and let him alone as long as he did not disturb the rest. A single recruit attached himself to him, and he acted as Ruckstuhl's servant, cleaned his weapons and accoutrements, and took up the cudgels in his defense; this was a wealthy farmer's son, a young miser who always had a fearful appetite for food and drink when he could satisfy it at another's expense. This lad thought himself in clover to be able to carry back home all his shining crowns and nevertheless boast that he had had a merry life during his time of service and had caroused like a true sharpshooter; at the same time he was jolly and of good cheer, and entertained his patron, who had far less than he, with his thin treble voice, delivering all sorts of popular rustic songs oddly indeed from behind his bottle; for he was a merry niggard. So Ruckstuhl, the young robber, and Spurri, the young country miser, lived on in the most glorious friendship. The former always had meat and wine before him, and did as he pleased, and the latter left him as little as possible, sang, and cleaned his boots, and did not even scorn the small tips which the other bestowed.

Meanwhile the other soldiers had their sport with them, agreeing among themselves not to let Ruckstuhl stay in any company. But this did not apply to his famulus, for he was a fine shot, strangely enough, and in the army every man who knows his business is welcome, whether he be a Philistine or a scapegrace.

Karl was the ringleader in all joking about the two; but one night he lost his taste for jokes when the wine-bibber Ruckstuhl boasted to his follower, after the room was all quiet, what a fine gentleman he was and how he was soon planning to marry a rich wife to boot, the daughter of the carpenter Frymann, who could not escape him, or he missed his guess.

Now Karl's peace of mind was at an end, and the next day, as soon as he had a free hour, he went to his parents, to find out what was going on. But as he himself did not want to be the first to mention the matter, he heard nothing about Hermine until just as he was leaving again, his mother told him she had sent him her regards.

"Why, where did you see her?" he asked as coolly as possible.

"Oh, she comes to market every day with the maid now, and learns how to buy. When we meet, she asks me to give her advice, and then we walk around the whole market and have lots of things to laugh at; for she's always jolly."

"Oh, ho," said Hediger, "so that's why you sometimes stay away so long? And what sort of match-making are you doing, hey? Is it becoming for a mother to act that way and to go around with persons who are forbidden to her son, and to take messages from them?"

"Forbidden, nonsense! Haven't I known the dear child since she was a baby, haven't I carried her in my arms; and now I'm not to go around with her! And isn't she to be allowed to send her regards to the people in our house? And can't a mother take such a message? And shouldn't a mother be allowed to marry off her children? It strikes me that she's just the proper authority to do it. But about

such things we never talk, we women-folk are not half so keen on you ill-bred men, and if Hermine takes my advice, she won't marry anybody."

Karl did not hear the conversation out, but went his way; for he had got a message and there had been no talk of any suspicious development. But he did put his finger to his nose and ask himself why Hermine had been so jolly, for she didn't usually laugh so much. He finally decided the question in his own favor and assumed that she had simply been jolly because she met his mother. So he resolved to keep quiet and give the girl credit for good-will, and let things take their course.

Some days later Hermine came with her knitting to visit Mrs. Hediger, and a great friendliness prevailed, with much talk and laughter, so that Hediger, who was just cutting out an elegant holiday coat, was almost disturbed in his workshop, and wondered what gossip it was that had come. But he did not pay much attention to it until he heard his wife go to a cupboard and rattle the blue coffee-cups. For she was making as fine a pot of coffee as she ever brewed; also she took a good handful of sage-leaves, dipped them in an egg batter, and fried them in butter to make so-called mice, since the stems of the leaves looked like mouse-tails. They rose splendidly, so that it made a heaping dish full, whose odor rose to the master's nostrils with that of the strong coffee. But then when he heard her pounding up sugar lumps, he became most impatient until he was called in to drink with them; but he would not have gone a moment earlier, for he was of the Strong and Upright.

As he now entered the room, he saw his wife and the dainty "forbidden" girl sitting in the closest friendship behind the coffee-pot, and he saw that it was the blue-flowered one, and that besides the "mice" there was butter there, and that the blue-flowered pitcher was full of honey; to be sure it was not real honey, but cherry conserve, about the color of Hermine's eyes; and it was Saturday, too, a day when all respectable city wives clean and scour, sweep and polish, and do not cook a bite that is fit to eat.

Hediger looked very critically at all these preparations and said good-day somewhat sternly; but Hermine was so gracious and yet resolute, that he sat there dumfounded, and ended by going in person to fetch up a "glass of wine" from the cellar, which he actually took from the little cask. Hermine repaid this mark of favor by asserting that a plateful of the mice must be kept for Karl, as he did not have much that was good in the barracks. She took her plate and kept pulling out the finest mice by the tail with her own dainty fingers until the mother herself finally cried that it was enough. Now the girl put the plate beside her, regarded it with satisfaction from time to time, and would now and then take a piece from it and eat it, saying that she was now Karl's guest; whereupon she would faithfully make good the theft from the dish.

Finally this got too much for worthy Mr. Hediger; he scratched his head, and urgent as his work was, he nevertheless quickly pulled on his coat and ran out to look up the father of the young sinner.

"We must be on our guard," he said to him; "your daughter is sitting with my old woman, as thick as thieves, and the whole goings on look mighty suspicious to me: you know the very devil's in the women."

"Why don't you chase the little minx away?" said Frymann angrily.

"I chase her away? You won't catch me trying it: why, you never saw such a witch! You come yourself and look to it."

"All right, I'll come right along with you, and give the girl a proper notion of what she's supposed to do."

But when they arrived, they found instead of the young girl the sharpshooter, who had unbuttoned his green coat, and was enjoying the cookies saved for him and the remains of the wine with all the greater relish for the fact that his mother had incidentally told him that Hermine would go rowing on the lake again that evening, since the moon was so fine and since she had not been out for four weeks.

Karl rowed out on the lake earlier than usual, for at the sound of "Taps," which the buglers of Zurich were wont to send forth in heavenly harmonies on fine spring and summer evenings, he must be in his quarters again. It was not yet wholly dark when he arrived at the lumberyard; but alas, Master Frymann's skiff was not floating on the water as usual, but lay upside down on two horses, a good ten paces from the shore.

Was that a hoax of hers, or one of the old man's tricks? he thought, and was just going to row back, saddened and indignant, when the great golden moon rose out of the forests on Mt. Zurich, and at the same moment Hermine stepped out from behind a blossoming willow loaded with yellow pussies.

"I didn't know our boat was being freshly painted," she whispered, "so I'll have to get into yours, row away fast." And she lightly sprang in, and sat down on the other end of his skiff, which was scarcely seven feet long. They rowed out until they were out of sight of any spying glance, and Karl lost no time in questioning Hermine about Ruckstuhl, telling about his words and deeds the while.

"I know that this 'gentleman' wants to marry me," she answered, "and that my father is actually not indisposed to agree to it; he has talked about it."

"Is he possessed of the devil, to give you to such a vagabond and idler? What about his weighty principles?"

Hermine shrugged her shoulders and answered,

"Father has simply got the notion of building a number of big houses and speculating with them; and that's why he wants a son-in-law who will help him in this, especially in regard to the speculation, and who will know that he is working for his own advantage if he takes pains with the whole enterprise. He is dreaming of an agreeable partnership in work and scheming, such as he would have liked to share with his own son, and now this man seems to him to have just the right talent for it. All he needs, he says, is a thorough business life and he'll be a regular expert.

Father doesn't know anything about his silly way of living, because he doesn't watch people's doings and never goes out with anybody except his old friends.

"In short, Ruckstuhl has been invited to dinner tomorrow, as it's Sunday, in order to establish our acquaintance, and I'm afraid he's going to come right out with his proposal. Besides, I hear he's a shameless flatterer and an impudent fellow, when he wants to snap up something he's after."

"Oh well," said Karl, "you'll trump his ace for him."

"I shall indeed; but it would be better if he didn't come at all and left my father in the lurch."

"It would be better, surely; but that's a pious wish, for he'll take good care not to stay away."

"I've thought of a plan, though it's rather peculiar. Couldn't you get him into some piece of folly today or tomorrow morning, so that you'd both get a day or two of arrest?"

"How kind you are to put me into the lockup for a couple of days, to save you a No. Can't you do it cheaper?"

"It's necessary for you to suffer with him, so that our consciences won't hurt us too much. As for my No, I don't want to be forced into saying aye, yes, or no to that fellow; it is bad enough that he talks about me in barracks. He shan't get any farther than that."

"Right you are, my sweetheart. Nevertheless, I think I can manage to have the rogue trot into the lockup alone; a scheme dawns on me. But no more of this, it's a pity to waste our precious time and the golden moonlight. Aren't you having any thoughts?"

"What thoughts should I have?"

"That we haven't seen each other for four weeks, and that you doubtless won't step ashore tonight unknissed."

"Are you going to kiss me, I wonder?"

"I myself; but I'm in no hurry, I've got you too securely. I want to look forward to it for a few minutes, perhaps five, six at the most."

“ Oh, ho! Is this your gratitude for my confidence in you, and do you really mean it? Will you not let me bargain with you? ”

“ On no consideration, though you spoke with the tongues of angels. Here’s a bad situation for you, my young lady. ”

“ Then I too will make a statement, good sir. If you touch me this evening with so much as a finger-tip against my will, then it’s all over between us and I will never see you again; I swear it by God and by my honor. For I mean it. ”

Her eyes sparkled as she said it. “ That will take care of itself, ” answered Karl, “ just keep still, I’ll be coming soon. ”

“ Do as you like, ” said Hermine curtly and was silent.

But whether he really thought her capable of keeping her word, or whether he himself did not want her to break her oath, he stayed obediently where he was and looked over at her with sparkling eyes, peering through the moonlight to see if the corners of her mouth were not twitching and she making fun of him.

“ Then I must seek consolation in the past again, and find compensation in my recollections, ” he began after a short silence; “ who would believe that this stern and tightly shut little mouth knew how to give such sweet kisses so many years ago? ”

“ Will you begin your shameless inventions again? But let me tell you that I won’t listen to that annoying stuff any longer. ”

“ Quiet, be quiet. Just this once let us direct our meditations backward into that golden time, and let us speak of the last kiss you ever gave me; I recall the circumstances as clearly and distinctly as if it were yesterday, and I am convinced that you do too. I was thirteen years old at that time, and you about ten, and some years had passed without kissing, for we now thought ourselves big folks. But there was to be an agreeable epilogue after all; or was it the early lark proclaiming the new morning? It was a fine Monday, the day after Pentecost — ”

“No, Ascension—” interrupted Hermine, but broke off in the middle of the word.

“You are right, it was a glorious Ascension Day in the month of May, and we were on an excursion with a company of young people, we being the only children among them; you stuck to the big girls and I to the young men, and we scorned to play or even to speak with each other. After we had already walked a good way, we sat down in a tall, bright grove, and began to play forfeits; for evening was not far away, and the crowd didn’t want to go home without some kissing. Two people were sentenced to kiss each other with flowers in their mouths, without dropping them. When this couple failed to perform the feat, and the next couple also, you suddenly came running up to me quite unaffectedly with a lily-of-the-valley in your mouth, stuck another between my lips and said, ‘Try it.’ Sure enough both the flowers fell on the ground to join their sisters, but in your eagerness you deposited your tiny kiss just the same. It was like having a light-winged, pretty butterfly rest there, and I involuntarily put up two finger-tips to catch it. But they thought I wanted to wipe my mouth and laughed at me.”

“Here we are at the shore,” said Hermine and jumped out. Then she turned around amiably and faced Karl again.

“Since you have kept so quiet and have given my word the honor due it,” she said, “I will row out with you again, if necessary, before the four weeks are up, and will make the appointment in a little note. It will be the first writing I have ever confided to you.”

With that she hurried to the house. Karl on his part rowed hastily to the landing, so as not to miss the taps of the worthy buglers, which cut the mild air like a jagged razor.

On the way he encountered Ruckstuhl and Spurri, who were slightly tipsy; saluting them amicably and heartily, he grasped the former by the arm and began to praise and laud him:

“What the deuce have you been doing again? What sly dodges have you been thinking up, you bad customer? If you aren't the grandest sharpshooter in the whole canton—what am I talking about, in all Switzerland.”

“Thunderation,” cried Ruckstuhl, highly gratified to have some one beside Spurri make up to him and praise him, “Thunderation, but it's too bad we have to turn in so soon. Haven't we got time to drain a bottle of some good wine?”

“Ssh, we can do that in our room. It's the custom among the sharpshooters anyhow to trick the officers at least once during their enlistment and carouse all night long in their room. And as recruits we'll show them that we're worthy to be full members.”

“That would be a capital joke. I'll pay for the wine, as sure as my name is Ruckstuhl. But we must be sly about it, as crafty as serpents, or we're done for.”

“Never fear, we're the right ones for that. Just let's march in very quietly and sanctimoniously and make no fuss.”

When they got to the barracks, their room-mates were all in the canteen getting their night-caps. Karl took some of them into his confidence, these passed it on, and so each provided himself with a few bottles, which they took out unnoticed, one after the other, and hid under the beds. When it struck ten, they quietly lay down on their beds, until the inspection of the lights had been made. Then all got up again, hung coats over the windows, lighted the lights, got out the wine, and began to carouse like mad; and Ruckstuhl felt as if he were in paradise, because they all drank to him and made him out a great man. For his ardent desire to have the soldiers as well as others think him somebody, without his doing anything to deserve it, made him stupider than he was.

When he and his satellite seemed to have been completely drunk under the table, various drinking feats were carried out. One of the men had to stand on his head and drink

up a casting-ladle full of wine held to his mouth; another was to sit on a chair, with a lead ball suspended from the ceiling circling about him, and drink three glasses before the ball touched his head; a third had some similar test, and every one who failed got some droll penalty. All this was done in perfect stillness; whoever made a noise was penalized also, and all were in their shirts, so that they could quickly crawl into bed in case of surprise.

Now as the time for the sentries to go the rounds drew near, the two friends were also assigned a drinking-feat. Each was to hold a full glass to the other's mouth on his sword-blade, and these must be emptied without spilling a drop. Boastingly they drew their short swords and crossed the laden blades; but they trembled so that the glasses fell off and they did not catch a drop. They were therefore directed to stand guard before the door in undress for a quarter of an hour, and this undertaking was lauded as the boldest that had been carried out in those barracks in the memory of man. Haversack and short sword were hung crosswise over their shirts, and in addition they had to put on their shakoes and pull on their blue leggings, but without shoes, and thus, with rifles in their hands, they were led outside the door and posted at either side. Hardly were they there when the door was bolted, all traces of the carousal removed, the windows cleared, the lights extinguished, and every man slipped into his bed and lay as if he had been sleeping there for hours.

Meanwhile the two sentries walked up and down in the gleam of the corridor-lamp, rifle on shoulder, and looked about them with bold glances. Spurri, whom the free carousal had put into the most blissful humor, became quite merry and suddenly burst into song, and this hastened the steps of the officer on duty, who was already on the way. As he approached, they tried to slip hastily into the room; but the door did not open at once, and before they knew what to do, the foe was there. Now everything fairly danced in their heads. In their confusion each placed him-

self at his post, presented arms, and cried, "Who goes there?"

"What does this mean, in the devil's name? What are you doing there?" cried the patrol, but without getting a sufficient answer, as neither of the two loons could get out a sensible word. The officer quickly opened the door and looked into the room; for Karl, who had been listening sharply, had hastily jumped out of bed, shot back the bolt, and as hastily crept back under the covers. When the officer saw that everything was dark and still, and heard nothing but puffing and snoring, he cried, "Hallo, men!"

"Go to the devil," cried Karl, "and go to sleep, you drunkards!"

The others also acted as if they had been wakened, and cried,

"Aren't those beasts in bed yet? Throw them out, call the guard."

"The guard is here, it is I," said the officer, "one of you light a light, quick!"

It was done, and when the light was thrown on the two lunatics, loud laughter came from under every counterpane, as if the entire company had been surprised to the utmost. Ruckstuhl and Spurri joined in like fools, marching around and holding their sides; for their spirits had again wandered off in a different direction. Ruckstuhl snapped his fingers in the officer's face time after time, and Spurri stuck out his tongue at him.

When the derided guard saw that nothing could be done with the "happy" couple, he took out his tablet and wrote down their names. Now as misfortune would have it, he was just then living in one of Ruckstuhl's houses and had not yet paid the rent—for it was just after Easter—whether because he had not been in funds or because he had neglected it while on military duty. At all events, Ruckstuhl's evil genius hit upon this topic, and reeling toward the officer he laughed and stuttered laughing,

“Pa-pay your de-debts fir-first, Lieutenant, before you wr-write other fo-folks’ names down. You know?”

And Spurri laughed still louder, tottered and stepped crabwise backward, wagging his head and piping,

“Pa-pay your de de de-debts, Mr. Officer, tha-that is we-well said, well said.”

“Let four men get up,” said he calmly, “lead these men under arrest to the guard-house, and have them locked up tight; in three days we’ll have a look at them and see if they have slept this off. Throw their cloaks over them and hang their trousers on their arms. March!”

“The tr-tr tr tr—the tr-trousers,” shouted Ruckstuhl, “we must have; there-there’s some-something in them that fa-fa-falls out when you shake them.”

“Fa-falls out when you sh-shake them, Mr. Officer,” repeated Spurri, and both swung their trousers around till the coins rattled. So they marched laughing and shouting with their escort through the corridors and down the stairs, and soon vanished in a cellar-like chamber on the ground floor, whereupon it became quiet.

Master Frymann’s table was unusually richly set the following noon. Hermine filled the cut-glass decanters with wine of ’46, put the gleaming glasses beside the plates, laid handsome napkins on the latter, and cut a loaf of bread fresh from the bakery at the Sign of the Hen, where it was baked after an old traditional recipe, and was the delight of all the children and gossips of Zurich. She also sent an apprentice, all in his Sunday best, to the pastry-cook to fetch the Macaroon Tart and the coffee-cake, and finally she arranged the dessert on a small side-table: crisp cookies, both flat and curled, pound-cake, fruit tarts, and conical raisin bread.*

* Feminine readers may be interested in the cakes which Keller specifies, and which are as follows: *Hüpli* and *Ofsteten*, crisp brown cookies of flour, cream, and sugar; both are very thin, but the former are rolled into small tubes, while the latter are flat and frequently stamped with a decorative pattern, or with the coat of arms of the family.—*Gleichschwer*, a pound-for-

Frymann, whom the fine Sunday air had put in a cheerful mood, gathered from this zeal that his daughter would oppose no serious resistance to his plans, and he said to himself with amusement: That's like all women. As soon as an acceptable and definite opportunity comes to them, they make short work of it and catch it by the forelock!

According to ancient custom, Mr. Ruckstuhl was invited for twelve o'clock sharp. When he had not arrived at a quarter past twelve, Frymann said,

"Let's eat; we must accustom this gentleman to punctuality from the start."

And when the soup was eaten and he still had not come, the master called in the apprentices and the maid-servant, who were to eat alone that day and were already half through, and said,

"Come and eat with us, we don't want to sit here and look at the stuff. Dig in and enjoy yourselves:

Whoever late for meal-time comes
Can take what's left or suck his thumbs!"

This invitation did not need to be repeated, and they were all jolly and of good cheer, and Hermine was the sprightliest of all, and found her appetite getting better, the more vexed and put out her father was.

"That seems to be a boor of a fellow," he growled to himself.

But she heard it and said,

"No doubt he couldn't get leave, we mustn't condemn him right away."

"Leave indeed! Are you sticking up for him already? Why shouldn't he get his leave, if he wants to?"

In the utmost dudgeon he ended his meal and immediately went to a coffee-house, contrary to his habit, simply to

pound cake, very rich.—*Pfaffenmümpfel* (Priest's tid-bit), cakes in the form of a three-pointed hat, with a fruit filling.—*Gugelhupf*, a cake of raised dough, made of flour, milk, and eggs, and containing raisins and grapes; it is made very high, and rounded off in the shape of a cone, or hat.—

avoid meeting the neglectful suitor, if he should finally come. Toward four o'clock he returned again, instead of seeking out his usual Sunday companions, the redoubtable Seven, curious to know whether Ruckstuhl had not put in an appearance. As he came through the garden, there sat Mrs. Hediger with Hermine in the summer-house, as it was a warm spring day, and they were drinking the coffee and eating the raisin-bread and the fruit tarts, and seemed in the highest of spirits. He bade the woman good day, and although the sight of her annoyed him, he immediately asked her whether she had any news of the barracks, and whether the sharpshooters were perhaps gone on an excursion together.

"I think not," said Mrs. Hediger, "this morning they went to church and afterward Karl came home to dinner; we had roast mutton, and he never leaves that in the lurch."

"Didn't he say anything as to what's become of Mr. Ruckstuhl?"

"Mr. Ruckstuhl? Yes, he's under strict arrest with another recruit, for getting terribly intoxicated and offending his superiors; they say it was a regular comedy."

"Devil take him!" said Frymann and went off like a shot. Half an hour later he was saying to Hediger,

"Now your wife is squatting in the garden with my daughter, and they're both tickled because a plan for her marriage is ruined."

"Why don't you chase her away? Why didn't you growl at her?"

"How can I, when we're old friends? You see, that's the way these accursed affairs are already mixing up our relations. And so hold fast: away with kinship!"

"Away with Kinsman!" affirmed Hediger, and shook his friend's hand.

July and the shooting-match of the year 1849 were at hand; there were scarce two weeks left. The Seven were again in session, and cup and banner were finished and

both were displayed and approved. The banner was set up and towered aloft in the room, and in its shadow was held the most difficult deliberation that the Upright had ever had. For suddenly the evident fact had come to light that there could not be a banner without a speaker, and it was the choice of this speaker that almost stranded the little ship of the septuple crew. Thrice did the choice fall upon each member of the crew, and thrice did each most decisively decline. All were indignant that none would take it upon himself, and each was wrathful that he was just the one on whom they wanted to put the burden and of whom they expected this unheard of thing. As eagerly as other men crowd forward when some one must open his head and let himself be heard, just so timidly did these men shun the opportunity for a public address, and each alleged his incompetence, declaring that he had never done such a thing in his life, nor ever would. For they still venerated speechmaking as an art which required talent as well as study, and they still cherished an unbounded and honest esteem for good speakers who could stir their souls, and everything such a man said they held as indisputable and sacred. These speakers they sharply distinguished from themselves, and ascribed to themselves the merit of attentive listening, of conscientious deliberation, and of agreement or rejection, which seemed to them a sufficiently glorious task.

So when they found that no speaker could be obtained by vote, a tumult and general uproar arose in which each sought to convince his neighbor that he ought to sacrifice himself. Hediger and Frymann in particular were the ones on whom they had designs, and these they bombarded furiously. They, however, defended themselves mightily and each put it off on the other, until Frymann called for silence and said,

“Fellow warriors, we have committed a thoughtless act, and we cannot but see that we had better leave our banner at home after all, and so let us quickly make up our minds to that and attend the festival without ostentation.”

A great gloom settled on them after these words.

“He is right,” said Kuser the silversmith.

“There is nothing left for us to do.” Thus Syfrig the plow-maker.

But Burgi cried, “It’s impossible: our project is known and the fact that the banner is made. If we give it up, we’ll get into the almanac.”

“And that’s true,” remarked Erismann the inn-keeper, “and our old opponents the reactionaries will work the joke for all it’s worth.”

A sudden terror thrilled their old bones at this idea, and the company renewed the attack on its two most talented members; but they again protested and finally threatened to withdraw.

“I am a simple carpenter and will never expose myself to ridicule,” cried Frymann, whereupon Hediger interposed,

“Well, and how should a poor tailor like me risk it? I should make you all a laughing-stock, and harm myself to no purpose whatever. I propose that one of the inn-keepers be called upon—they have the largest experience with crowds.”

But these protested most vehemently, and Pfister nominated the cabinet-maker, as being a great joker.

“Joker nothing,” cried Burgi, “do you think it’s a joke to address a Swiss festival-chairman in presence of four thousand people?”

A universal sigh answered this utterance, which again brought to their minds the difficulties of the task.

Little by little they now took to running in and out, and to whispering together in corners. Frymann and Hediger were left alone at the table and looked gloomy enough, for they saw that they would once more have to battle for their lives. Finally, when all had reassembled, Burgi stepped forth in front of them and said,

“Fellow-soldiers Kaspar and Daniel! You have both of you spoken so often to our contentment when we were together that either of you, if he only will, can very well

deliver a short public address. It is the vote of the society that you two draw lots, and that's the end of it! You will yield to a majority vote of five to two!"

A fresh tumult confirmed these words; the victims looked at each other and finally succumbed dejectedly, but each not without hoping that the bitter lot would fall to the other. It fell to Frymann, who for the first time left a meeting of the Freedom-lovers with a heavy heart, whereas Hediger rubbed his hands in delight—so inconsiderate does selfishness make the oldest friends.

Frymann's pleasure in anticipating the festival was now destroyed, and his days grew dark and cheerless. Every moment he thought of his speech, without getting the barest shadow of an idea, because he kept seeking it afar off, instead of seizing on the obvious and acting as if he were simply among his friends. The words he was wont to speak to them seemed trivial to him, and he fumbled about for something special and high-sounding, for a political manifesto, and this not from vanity, but from a dogged sense of duty. Finally he began to scribble up a piece of paper, not without many interruptions, sighs, and curses. With infinite labor he filled up two sheets, although he had only intended to compose a few lines; for he could not see how to end it, and the complicated phrases clung to each other like sticky burs and would not release the writer from their tenacious claws.

With the folded paper in his vest-pocket he went despondently about his business, and would occasionally read it over behind a shed and shake his head over it. At last he confided in his daughter and declaimed to her this rough draft, to observe the effect. The speech was an accumulation of thunderous words against Jesuits and aristocrats, profusely interspersed with Freedom, Human Rights, Servitude, Oppression, and the like; in short it was a bitter and unnatural declaration of war, without a word in it about the Seven and their banner, and moreover confusedly and awkwardly put together, whereas otherwise he could deliver an extemporaneous address ably and correctly. ¶

Hermine said it was a very strong speech, only it seemed to her somewhat out of date, as the Jesuits and aristocrats had been beaten for once, and she thought a cheerful and pleasant announcement would be more suitable, since every one was contented and happy.

Frymann was somewhat taken aback, and although the ardor of battle was strong enough in his old bones, still he pulled at his nose and said,

“Perhaps you are right, but you don’t quite understand it. When you speak publicly, you have to make a bold showing and put it on thick, something like a scene-painter, whose work looks like an ugly daub close by. Still perhaps it can be softened down here and there.”

“That would be good,” continued Hermine, “for it has so many ‘therefores’ in it. Let me see it. Look, almost every other line has a ‘therefore’ in it.”

“That’s just the mischief of it,” he cried, and took the paper from her and tore it into a thousand pieces. “That ends it: I can’t do it and I’m not going to make a fool of myself.”

But Hermine now advised him not to write anything at all, but to let it go and about an hour before the celebration to get hold of an idea and make a brisk extempore speech on that, just as if he were at home.

“That’s the best thing to do,” he answered, “and then if it goes badly, at least I haven’t made any false pretences.”

Nevertheless he could not refrain from continually prodding and stirring up the aforesaid idea, without causing it to develop, however; he went about distracted and anxious, and Hermine observed him with great satisfaction.

All at once the week of the festival had begun, and in the middle of it the Seven drove off to Aarau before daybreak in a special four-horse omnibus. The new banner fluttered gloriously from the box; on the green silk gleamed the words: “FRIENDSHIP IN FREEDOM!” and all the old men were merry and gay, jocose or serious together, and only Frymann exhibited a depressed and dubious appearance.

Hermine was already at the house of a friend in Aarau, as her father was wont to reward her for her model house-keeping by having her share all his trips; and more than once she had graced the merry circle of the old men like a rosy hyacinth. Karl was also there; although his time and money were sufficiently taxed by his military schooling, still at Hermine's suggestion he had gone thither on foot, and had strangely enough found quarters quite near hers; for they had to attend to their affair, and no one could say whether this festival could not be used to advantage. Incidentally he also wanted to shoot, and carried with him twenty-five cartridges, all he could afford; these he intended to use, but no more and no less.

He had soon scented the arrival of the Upright Seven, and followed them at a distance, as they marched with tightly furled banner to the festival ground. It was the day of largest attendance, and the streets were covered with promenading throngs in gala dress; large and small shooting-clubs marched along, some with bands, some without; but none so small as that of the Seven.

They had to wind their way through the press, but none the less they marched in step with short paces, and held their arms rigid with clenched fists. Frymann led with the banner, and his face looked as if he were being led to execution. Occasionally he looked about him on all sides, to see if there were no escape; but his companions, glad that they were not in his shoes, encouraged him and called out to him vigorous and pithy words. They were already approaching the festival-ground; the crackling rifle-fire already sounded close at hand, and high in the air floated the Swiss marksmen's flag in sunny solitude, and its silk now stretched out quivering to all four corners, now flipped with graceful little snaps over the people's heads, now hung down sanctimoniously along the pole for an instant; in short, amused itself with all the tricks that a flag can think of in a week; but the sight of it stabbed the bearer of the little green banner to the heart.

As Karl saw the gay flag waving, he had paused a moment to watch it, and so had suddenly lost the little group from sight; when he looked around for it he could no longer discover it anywhere: it was as if the earth had swallowed it. Rapidly he forced his way to the spot and then back to the entrance of the grounds and swept them with his eyes; no green banner peeped out of the throng. Back he went, and for greater speed took a side-street parallel to the main road. There stood a tiny tavern whose proprietor had planted a few lean pines before the door, set up a few tables and benches, and stretched a piece of canvas over the whole, like a spider that stretches her web close beside a great pot of honey, to catch an occasional fly that goes to it. In this little house Karl accidentally saw the gilt tip of a flag-pole shining behind the dirty window; he went in at once, and lo! there sat his dear old men in the low-ceiled room as if driven there by a thunder-cloud, lying limply athwart chairs and benches, and hanging their heads, and in their midst stood Frymann with the banner, saying,

“I won’t do it and that ends it! I’m an old man and I won’t bear the stigma of folly and be pestered with a nickname for the rest of my days!”

And with that he planted the banner in a corner with a vigorous thud. No answer ensued, until the pleased inn-keeper came and placed a vast wine-bottle before the unexpected guests, although they had all been too startled to order it. Hediger filled a glass, stepped up to Frymann and said,

“Old friend, brother soldier, here, drink a swallow of wine and pull yourself together.”

But Frymann shook his head and would say not another word. They sat in great distress, such as they had never known; all the riots, counter-revolutions, and reactionary conflicts they had ever experienced were child’s play compared with this defeat before the gates of paradise.

“Then in God’s name let us turn around and drive home

again!" said Hediger, who feared that fate might turn against him after all. But Karl, who had hitherto stood in the doorway, now stepped forward and said gayly,

"Give me the banner, gentlemen! I will carry it and speak for you, I don't mind doing it at all."

All looked up in astonishment, and a ray of relief and joy quivered in all their faces; only old Hediger said sternly,

"You? How did you get here? And how can an inexperienced greenhorn like you speak for us old men?"

But from all sides came the cry: "Well done! Forward undismayed! Forward with the youngster!" And Frymann himself handed him the banner; for it took a weight off his heart and he was glad to see his old friends snatched out of the distress into which he had led them. And forward they went with renewed pleasure; Karl bore the banner majestically aloft, and at their rear the inn-keeper looked dejectedly after the disappearing mirage which had for a moment deluded him.

Hediger alone was now gloomy and discouraged, as he did not doubt that his son would get them into a worse fix. But they had already entered the grounds; the men of Graubünden were just marching off, a long brown train, and past them marched the Seven through the people, and the time they kept to the Graubünden band was as true as it had ever been. Once more they had to mark time,—the technical expression for going through the motions of marching in one spot—as three fortunate marksmen, who had won cups, crossed their path with buglers and followers; but all this, together with the noisy shooting, merely heightened their solemn intoxication, and finally they bared their heads at sight of the trophy-temple, which was ablaze with trophies and on whose ramparts a close array of flags was fluttering, in the colors of the cantons, cities, counties, and parishes. In their shade stood some gentlemen in black, and one of them held the silver goblet of wine in his hand, to welcome the new arrivals.

The seven old heads floated like a sunlit ice-cake in the dark sea of people, their scanty white hair shook in the pleasant East wind, and was blown in the same direction as the red and white flag high above them. On account of their small numbers and their advanced age they attracted universal attention, the smiles they caused were not disrespectful, and all were attentive as the young standard bearer stepped forward and delivered briskly and audibly the following address:

“Beloved Swiss! We have come here with our banner, eight of us in all, seven graybeards and a young ensign. As you see, each has his rifle, without our claiming to be remarkable marksmen; to be sure none of us would miss the target, and occasionally one of us might hit the black; but if any of us should hit the bull’s eye, you can swear that he didn’t mean to. So for all the silver we shall carry away from your trophy-room, we might just as well have stayed at home!

“And still, even though we aren’t extraordinary shots, we couldn’t bear to huddle at home in the chimney-corner; and we have come not to take away, but to bring trophies: a modest little cup, an almost immodestly cheerful spirit, and a new banner that trembles in my hand with the desire to float on your flag-citadel. But the banner we shall take away with us again, for it is simply to be consecrated here. See what is written on it in golden letters: FRIENDSHIP IN FREEDOM! Indeed it is friendship personified, so to say, that we are bringing to the festival, friendship through patriotism, friendship through love of freedom. That is what brought together these seven bald heads that are shining here in the sun, thirty, no forty years ago, and kept them together through every storm, through good and evil times. It is a society which has no name, no president, and no statutes; and its members have neither titles nor offices; it is unmarked timber from the primeval forests of the nation which now for a moment is coming out of the woods into the sunlight of the national holiday, only to

step back into them again and to rustle and roar with the thousand other tree-tops in the cosy forest-twilight of the people, where but few know or can name each other, and still all are familiar and acquainted.

“Look at them, these old sinners! Not one of them is in the odor of particular sanctity. Rarely is one of them seen in church. About things clerical they haven’t much good to say. But I can confide to you, fellow-countrymen, here under this blue sky a strange truth: as often as their country is in danger, they begin quite gently to believe in God; first each one quietly and by himself, then louder and louder, until one confesses to the other and they finally practise together a remarkable theological system, whose first and only dogma is this: Help yourself, then God will help you! On days of joy like this, when crowds of people are met together and a real blue sky smiles on them, they revert to these theological ideas and imagine that the dear God has hung the Swiss standard high in the heavens and has made the fine weather simply for us. In both cases, in the hour of danger and in the hour of joy, they suddenly become content with the initial words of our constitution: In the name of God the Almighty! And then they are inspired by such a gentle tolerance that, however refractory they may be at other times, they do not even ask whether it is the god of the Roman Catholic or of the Reformed hosts that is meant!

“In short, a child who has been given a little Noah’s ark filled with bright colored animals, male and female, cannot be more pleased with it than they are with the dear little fatherland, and the thousand good things in it, from the moss-covered old pike at the bottom of its lakes up to the wild bird that flutters about its ice-capped peaks. Oh, what different sorts of people swarm here in this little space, manifold in their occupations, in manners and customs, in costume and language! What sly dogs and what moon-calves don’t we see running around, what noble growth and what weeds bloom here merrily side by

side,—and all of it is good and splendid and dear to our hearts, for it is in our fatherland.

“ So they become philosophers, considering and weighing the value of earthly things; but they cannot get over the wonderful fact of the fatherland. To be sure they have traveled in their youth and seen many lands of men, not with arrogance, but honoring every country in which they found the right sort of people; but their favorite expression is, now and always: respect every man’s native land, but love your own.

“ And how graceful and rich it is! The closer one examines it, the finer seems its warp and woof, beautiful and durable, God’s wonderful handiwork!

“ How agreeable it is that we have not simply one monotonous Swiss type, but that there are men of Zurich and Berne, Unterwalden and Neuenburg, Graubünden and Basle, and even two kinds of Baselers; and that there is one history for Appenzell, and another for Geneva. This variety within our unity, which may God preserve to us, is the genuine school of friendship, and only when political homogeneity becomes the personal friendship of a whole country has the highest goal been reached; for what citizenship should fail to accomplish, friendship can perform, and both will be united to form a single virtue.

“ These old men here have spent their days in toil and labor; they are beginning to feel the weakness of the flesh, and one is pinched in one place, another in another. But when the summer comes, they do not visit the baths, but the national festival. The wine of the Swiss festival is the fountain of health that refreshes their hearts; the summer life of the Confederation is the breath that strengthens their old nerves; the wave-beat of a happy nation is the ocean bath that makes their stiff bones active again. You will soon see their white heads become immersed in that bath. So give us the draught of honor! Long live friendship in our fatherland. Long live friendship in freedom!”

“ Long life to it! Bravo!” was the cry all around, and

the welcoming speaker replied to the address and hailed the peculiar and striking appearance of the old men.

“Yes,” he wound up, “may our festivals never become less than a school of manners for our youth, and for the old a reward for a pure public conscience and consistent civic loyalty, and a bath of rejuvenation. May there remain one festival of inviolable and active friendship in our land from county to county and from man to man. Worthy men, long live your nameless and statuteless society!”

Once more the cry was repeated round about, and amid general applause the little banner was set up on the ramparts with the others. Hereupon the little troop of the Seven wheeled about and marched straight to the great festival hall, to refresh themselves with a good luncheon, and scarcely had they arrived when they all shook their speaker’s hand and cried,

“It was as if our very hearts were talking. Hediger, friend Jakob, there’s good stuff in that boy of yours, he’ll turn out well, just give him a chance. Just like us, only with more ability, for we’re old fools; but be steadfast and don’t be dismayed, Karl,” and so on.

Frymann was quite dumfounded; the boy had said exactly what he ought to have thought of, instead of taking a fall out of the Jesuits. He too shook hands with Karl quite amicably, and thanked him for helping him out. Last of all, old Hediger stepped up to his son, took his hand likewise, fastened his eyes keenly and firmly on him, and said,

“My son, you have revealed a fine but dangerous gift. Nurse it, cultivate it, with loyalty, with a sense of duty, with modesty. Never lend it to the spurious and the unjust, the vain and the trivial; for it can become a sword in your hand which will turn against you or against the good as well as the evil. It can also become a fool’s bauble. Therefore look before you, modestly, eager to learn, but firm and undismayed. As you have done honor to us today, think always of doing honor to your fellow-citizens and your

country, of giving them joy; think of this, and it will be the surest way to preserve you from false ambition. Undismayed! Do not think you must speak on every occasion; let some of them go by, and never speak for your own sake, but always in some elevating cause. Study men, not to outwit and plunder them, but to awaken the good in them and set it in motion, and believe me, many that listen to you will often be better and wiser than you who are speaking. Never use sophisms and petty hair-splitting, with which one can stir only the chaff; the real heart of the people you can touch only with the full impetus of truth. Therefore do not solicit the applause of the noisy and restless, but look upon the calm and the strong, undismayed."

Hardly had he finished this speech and released Karl's hand, when Frymann quickly grasped it and said,

"Seek to become a man of all round knowledge and enrich its foundations, that you may not lapse into empty words. After this first beginning let a good space of time pass without thinking of such things again. If you have a good idea, do not speak merely to make use of it, but put it away; there will always be opportunities when you can employ it more maturely and to better advantage. If some one gets ahead of you with this idea, be glad of it instead of being vexed, for it is a proof that you have felt and thought a universal truth. Train your mind and watch over your disposition, and study in other speakers the difference between a mere braggart and a man of truthfulness and spirit. Do not travel about the country and do not run about all the streets, but accustom yourself to understand the course of the world from within the stronghold of your house and among tried friends; then you can appear when it is time for action with more wisdom than agitators and vagabonds.

"When you do speak, don't speak either like a witty janitor nor like a tragic actor, but keep your own natural character pure and then always speak in that character.

Don't be affected, don't strike attitudes, don't look around you like a field-marshal before you begin, or as if you were watching the audience. Don't say you aren't prepared when you are; for people will know your style and will detect it at once. And when you have spoken, don't go around gathering applause, or beam with self-satisfaction, but sit down quietly in your place and listen attentively to the following speaker. Save up your strong words as if they were gold, so that if you do some time get righteously indignant and use them, it will be an event and strike your opponent like an unforeseen thunderbolt. But if you think you may ever become reconciled to an opponent and work with him, then be careful not to let your anger carry you to extremes, so that people will not say: Cads will fight but for a night!"

Thus spake Frymann, and poor Karl sat astonished and thunderstruck with all these speeches, and did not know whether to laugh or be puffed up. But Syfrig the smith cried,

"Now just look at those two, who wouldn't speak for us, and here they are talking like books."

"Right you are," said Burgi, "but we have gained new growth by it, and have sent out a vigorous young shoot. I move that the lad be admitted to the circle of us old men and henceforth attend our meetings."

"Voted!" they all cried, and they clinked glasses with Karl; somewhat heedlessly, he drained the entire glass, which however the old men let pass without murmuring, in view of the excitement of the moment.

After the company had sufficiently recovered from the adventure by means of a good lunch, it dispersed. Some went to try a few shots, others to see the trophy-room and the other sights, and Frymann went to fetch his daughter and the ladies whose guest she was; for at noon they planned to meet again at a table which was nearly in the centre of the hall, and in the neighborhood of the speakers' tribune.

They all noted the number of the table, and separated in high spirits and free of all care.

Exactly at twelve o'clock the company of several thousand, which changed every day, sat down to dinner. Country and city folk, men and women, old and young, learned and unlearned, all sat gaily side by side and waited for the soup, opening bottles and cutting bread the while. Nowhere appeared a malicious face, nowhere was to be heard an outcry or noisy laughter, but only the hum of a happy wedding feast, magnified a hundred times and evenly distributed through the hall,—the quiet wave-beat of a self-satisfied ocean.

Here was a long tableful of marksmen, yonder a double row of blooming country girls, at a third table a gathering of so-called "old boys" from all parts of the country, who had finally passed their examinations, and at the fourth a whole emigrated town, men and women together. But these sitting companies formed only half of the assemblage; an unbroken stream of spectators, as numerous as the diners, flowed through the aisles and passages and circled about them in a perpetual movement. These were, God be praised and thanked, the cautious and economical ones, who had figured the thing up and had satisfied their hunger elsewhere for still less money, that half of the nation which manages everything more cheaply and frugally, whereas the other half kicks so terribly over the traces; there were also the excessively exclusive ones, who were afraid of the cooking and didn't like the forks; and finally there were the poor and the children, who did not look on by choice.

But the former made no invidious remarks, and the latter displayed neither torn clothes nor ugly looks; the prudent found pleasure in the imprudent, and the aristocrat who found the dishes of peas in July too ridiculous walked along as charitably as the pauper to whose nose they brought a tempting odor. Here and there to be sure a piece of culpable selfishness could be seen, when for instance some niggardly farmer succeeded in occupying on

a sudden a vacated seat, and eating on with the best of them, without having paid; and, what was even worse for order-loving eyes, there was not even an altercation or a forcible ejection as a result.

The chief festival-steward stood before the broad kitchen door, and blew on a hunting horn the signal for the serving of a course, whereupon a company of waiters burst forth and dispersed to the right and left and straight ahead with carefully practised evolutions. One of them found his way to the table at which the Strong and Upright were sitting, together with Karl, Hermine, and her friends, cousins or whatever they were. The old men were just listening eagerly to one of the principal speakers who mounted the tribune after the drummer had beaten a loud roll. Sober and serious they sat, with forks laid aside, stiffly upright, all seven heads turned toward the tribune.

But they blushed like young girls and looked at each other as the speaker began with a phrase from Karl's speech, narrated the appearance of the seven graybeards, and then took this as a beginning and text for his own address. Only Karl heard nothing, for he was softly jesting with the ladies, until his father nudged him to show his disapproval. When the speaker had finished amid great applause, the old men looked at each other again; they had attended many gatherings, but this was the first time that they themselves had ever been the topic of a speech, and they did not venture to look around, so embarrassed were they, though at the same time in the seventh heaven of happiness. But as things often go in this world, their neighbors round about did not know them, nor dream what prophets were in their midst, and so their modesty was not offended. With all the greater contentment did they press each other's hands after each had gently rubbed his own, and their eyes said: Undismayed! That is the sweet reward of virtue and enduring excellence.

Whereupon Kuser cried, "Well, this we owe to master Karl. I think we really shall have to promise him Burgi's

four-poster, and put a certain doll into it for him. What do you think, Daniel Frymann?"

"I'm afraid so too," said Pfister, "and that he'll have to buy my Swiss Blood and lose his wager."

But Frymann suddenly wrinkled his brow and said,

"A good tongue doesn't get rewarded with a wife so quickly. In my house at least there has to be a good hand to go with it. Let us not extend this jest, my friends, to unseemly things."

Karl and Hermine had grown red and looked out over the crowd with embarrassment. Just then boomed the cannon-shot which announced the resumption of the shooting, and for which a long line of marksmen, gun in hand, had been waiting. Immediately their fire crackled along the whole line; Karl rose from the table, saying that he was now going to try his luck, too, and betook himself to the shooting-range.

"And I'm at least going to watch him, even if I can't have him," cried Hermine jestingly, and followed him accompanied by her friends.

But it happened that the ladies lost sight of each other in the crowd, and at last Hermine was left alone with Karl and marched faithfully along with him from target to target. He began at the farthest end, where there was no crowd, and without much thought he hit the target two or three times running. Turning around to Hermine, who stood behind him, he said laughing,

"Well, that's doing pretty well."

She laughed too, but only with her eyes, while her mouth said seriously, "You must win a cup."

"Impossible," answered Karl, "I'd have to shoot at least fifty shots to win twenty-five numbers, and I only have twenty-five cartridges with me."

"Oh well," she said, "there's plenty of powder and ball to be bought here."

"I don't want to do that, though, it would be a pretty expensive cup with all that shooting. To be sure, lots of

them burn up more powder than the prize is worth, but I'm not such a fool."

"My, how nice and high-principled you are, and how economical," she said almost tenderly, "I like that. But it's better still when you do with a little as much as others manage with their tremendous preparations and their terrible exertions. So pull yourself together and do it with your twenty-five shots. If I were a marksman, I'd manage it!"

"Never, it simply never happens, little simpleton."

"That's just why you men are only holiday marksmen! But do at least begin again and try it."

He shot again and got a number, and then a second. Again he looked at Hermine, and her eyes laughed still more, as she said still more earnestly.

"See? You're doing well, keep right on now."

Steadfastly he gazed at her and could scarcely turn his eyes away, for he had never seen such a look in her eyes; something stern and tyrannical gleamed amid the laughing sweetness of her glance, and two spirits spoke eloquently in the gleam: one was the commanding will, but with it was fused the promise of a reward, and out of that fusion arose something new and mysterious. "Do my will, I have more to give than you dream," said those eyes, and Karl looked into them, questioning, curious,—until these two came to an understanding in the midst of the noise and tumult of the festival.

When he had satiated his eyes with this gleam, he turned again, aimed quietly, and once more struck the target. Now he himself began to think it possible; but because people began to gather about him, he went away and sought a quieter and more solitary range, and Hermine followed him. There he again hit the target several times, without missing once; and so he began to handle the cartridges as deliberately as gold-pieces, and each one Hermine accompanied with avaricious shining eyes as it vanished into the gun-barrel; but before Karl aimed, which he did without

haste or nervousness, he always looked into the face of the beautiful creature. As often as his success became noticeable and people gathered around him, he would go on to another range; and the tickets he got he did not put into his hat, but gave them to his companion to keep; she held the entire bundle, and never did a marksman have a prettier ticket-holder. Thus he actually fulfilled her desire, and made such fortunate use of his twenty-five shots that not one of them struck outside the prescribed circle.

They counted over the tickets and found this rare good fortune confirmed.

“I could do that once, but I shall never be able to do it again in all my life,” said Karl; “moreover, that is what your eyes did. The only thing I am wondering is how much else you intend to accomplish with them.”

“You’ll have to wait and see,” she answered, and now her mouth laughed too.

“Go and find the old men now,” he said, “and ask them to come to the trophy-room for me, so that I can be escorted from it, since there is no one else with me;—or will you walk with me?”

“I’d almost like to,” said she, but still she went rapidly away.

The Seven were sitting deep in cheerful conversation; nearly all the places in the hall had been taken by other people, but they clung firmly to their table and let the general life surge about them. Hermine stepped up to them and cried mirthfully,

“Karl wants you to escort him, he has won a cup.”

“What, what?” they cried, bursting into a shout; “is that the way he’s going on?”

“Yes,” said an acquaintance who had just come up, “and what is more, he won the cup with twenty-five shots, which doesn’t happen every day. I watched the young couple while they did it.”

Master Frymann looked at his daughter in astonishment:

“Did you shoot too, I want to know? I certainly hope

not; for women sharpshooters are all right in general, but not in particular."

"Don't be alarmed," said Hermine, "I didn't shoot, I simply ordered him to shoot straight."

Hediger however grew pale with wonder and satisfaction, to think that he should have a son both oratorically endowed and famous in the use of arms, to go forth with actions and deeds from his obscure tailor-shop. He held his peace and thought to himself that he would no longer play the guardian in that quarter. But now they all set out for the trophy-temple, where they actually found the young hero, sure enough, standing beside the buglers with the shining cup in his hand, waiting for them. And so to the air of a lively march they tramped away with him and into the dining-hall, to wet the cup, as they say; and again they took short, firm steps and clenched their fists, looking triumphantly about them. Once more arrived at their headquarters, Karl filled the cup, set it in the middle of the table, and said,

"Hereby I dedicate this cup to the society, that it may always remain with the banner."

"Accepted," they said; the cup began to circle, and new merriment rejuvenated the old men, who had been in high spirits since daybreak. The evening sunlight floated in under the countless roof-beams of the hall and gilded thousands of faces already transfigured with pleasure, while the resounding strains of an orchestra filled the room. Hermine sat in the shadow of her father's shoulders, as modest and quiet as if butter would not melt in her mouth. But from the sun, which caressed the cup before her so that both its golden lining and the wine sparkled, golden lights played over her rosy, glowing face, lights that moved with the wine when the old men pounded on the table in the fire of their speech, and then one could not tell whether she herself had smiled or only the playing lights. She was now so beautiful that she was soon discovered by the roving glances of the young men.

Merry troops of them sat down near by in order to keep

their eyes on her, and the question passed around: "Where is she from? Who is the old man, does nobody know him?" She's from St. Gall, from Thurgau, was the answer here; no, they are all from Zurich at that table, was the word yonder. Wherever she looked, the merry youths took off their hats, to show the proper esteem of her charm, and she smiled modestly, but without affectation. But when a long train of youths passed the table and all bowed, she had to cast down her eyes after all, and still more so when on a sudden a handsome young student from Berne came up, cap in hand, and said with polite frankness that he had been sent by thirty friends, who were sitting at the fourth table from her, to declare to her, with her father's permission, that she was the most charming girl in the hall. In short, every one fairly paid court to her, and the sails of the old men were swelled with new triumph, so that Karl's glory was almost dimmed by Hermine's. But he was to rise to the top again.

For there arose a murmur and a crowding in the central aisle, caused by two herdsmen from Entlibuch, who were pushing through the throng. They were veritable grizzly bears, with short pipes in their mouths, their Sunday coats under their big arms, small straw hats on their great heads, and silver hearts fastening their shirt bosoms. The one in advance was a clodhopper of fifty, and pretty tipsy and unmannerly; for he was eager to try feats of strength with all the men and kept trying to hook his clumsy finger into everything, while his little eyes blinked amiably or at times challengingly. So there arose offense and confusion wherever he went.

Close behind him walked the other, a still more powerful fellow of eighty, with his head covered with short, tight yellow curls, and this was the father of the fifty-year-old. He guided his gay son with iron hand, never letting his own pipe go out, and saying from time to time,

"Laddie, keep the peace. Laddie, don't be disorderly," and at the same time giving him the corresponding shoves and guidance. So he steered him with skilled hand through

the turbulent sea until just at the table of the Seven there was a dangerous blockade, as a crowd of farmers happened along who wanted to take the quarrelsome fellow into their midst and make him talk. Fearing that his laddie would attempt some monstrous deviltry, the father looked about him for some refuge and noticed the old men.

"Among these old shiny heads he'll be quiet," he grumbled to himself, and with one fist he grasped his son in the small of the back and steered him in through the benches, while he used the other behind him gently to fan off the provoked and pursuing ones; for short as the time was, more than one had already been considerably irritated.

"With your permission, gentlemen," said the ancient one to the old men, "let me sit down here a minute, so I can give my laddie another glass of wine. Then he'll get sleepy and be as quiet as a lamb."

So he wedged himself into the company with his young scapegrace, and his son did indeed look about him meekly and respectfully. But he said at once,

"I'd like to drink out of that little silver cup there."

"Will you be quiet, or I'll drive you into the ground without sharpening you!" said the father; but when Hediger shoved the filled cup toward him he said, "Well, all right then. If the gentlemen will allow it, drink away, but don't swill it all."

"That's a gay lad you have, good man," said Frymann. "How old is he?"

"Oh," said the father, "at New Year's he'll be something like fifty-two; at least he was yelling in my cradle in 1798 when the French came and drove away my cow and burned my house. But because I cracked a couple of their heads together, I had to run away, and my wife died of misery in the meantime. That's why I have to bring up the boy myself."

"Didn't you give him a wife, who could help you?"

"No, so far he's been too clumsy and wild; it won't do, he beats everybody to jelly."

Meanwhile the youthful ne'er-do-well had drained the

fragrant cup, without leaving a drop in it. He stuffed his pipe-bowl and smiled about the circle most cheerfully and peacefully. Thus he discovered Hermine, and the radiance of womanly beauty that issued from her suddenly rekindled in his heart the old ambition and his propensity for feats of strength. As his eye fell simultaneously on Karl, who was sitting opposite him, he invitingly stretched his crooked middle-finger across the table toward him.

“Stop there, lad; has the devil got you again?” cried the old herdsman in anger, and was about to take him by the collar; but Karl bade him let his son be, and hooked his middle-finger in that of the young bear, and now each sought to pull the other over to him.

“If you hurt the gentleman or sprain his finger,” said the old man, “I’ll take you by the ears so that you’ll feel it for a month.”

The two hands hovered for some time over the middle of the table; Karl soon stopped laughing and grew fiery red in the face; but in the end he gradually drew the arm and the body of his opponent perceptibly toward his side, and that decided the victory.

The man from Entlibuch looked at him quite disconcerted and discomfited, but did not have much time for it; for his aged father, none the less infuriated at his defeat, boxed his ears, and the son looked at Hermine in utter shame; then he suddenly began to weep and cried sobbing,

“And now I want a wife for once!”

“Come, come,” said his parent, “you’re ready for bed now.” He grasped him by the arm and made off with him.

After the retreat of this queer couple, a silence fell upon the old men, and all wondered anew at Karl’s deeds and achievements.

“That comes simply from gymnastics,” he said modestly, “it gives you training, strength, and skill for such things, and almost any one can learn it if he hasn’t been neglected by nature.”

“So it is,” said Hediger senior, after some reflection, and continued with animation, “Therefore let us praise

for ever and ever the new time which is again beginning to train men to be men, and which commands not only the squire and the herdsman, but the tailor's son as well, to train his limbs and ennoble his body so that it can bestir itself."

"So it is," said Frymann, who had also aroused himself from reflection, "and we too have all helped in the struggle to bring in this new time. And today we are celebrating with our little troop, as far as our old heads are concerned, the end, the last shot, and the rest we leave to the young ones. But men have never been able to say of us that we have obstinately clung to error and misunderstanding. On the contrary our efforts have been to the end of always remaining open to the reasonable, the true, and the fair; and therefore I withdraw freely and frankly my declaration with regard to our children, and I invite you, Friend Kaspar, to do the like. For what better establishment, plantation, and foundation can we choose in memory of this day than that of a living shoot sprung straight from the bosom of our friendship, and a house whose children will preserve and transmit the undismayed faith and the principles of the Upright Seven? Well, then, let Burgi hand over his four-poster for us to fit up. I will put into it charm and womanly purity; and you, power, resoluteness, and skill. And now forward with the unfurled green banner while they are young! That banner shall be theirs for all time, and they shall preserve it after we are dissolved. So make no further opposition, old Hediger, and give me your hand as kinsman."

"Accepted," said Hediger solemnly, "but on condition that you give the lad no funds for foolishness or boasting. For the devil goeth about and seeketh whom he may devour."

"Accepted," cried Frymann, and Hediger said,

"Then I salute you now as kinsman, and let the Swiss Blood be tapped for the wedding."

All seven now arose, and amid great shouts Karl's and Hermine's hands were put together.

“ Good luck ; here’s a betrothal, that’s right,” cried some of the nearest diners, and at once a throng of people came up to clink glasses with the young couple. Now the orchestra started up, as if ordered ; but Hermine extricated herself from the press, without, however, dropping Karl’s hand, and he led her out of the hall upon the festival ground, which was already lying in nocturnal stillness.

They walked around the flag-citadel, and as no one was near they stood still. The flags were waving talkatively and animatedly together, but the banner of friendship they could not discover, as it had disappeared in the folds of some large neighbor and was well taken care of. But high up among the stars flapped the Swiss banner, always lonely, and the rustle of its cloth was now distinctly audible. Hermine put her arms around the neck of her betrothed, kissed him unbidden, and said tenderly and with emotion,

“ But now our life must be good and right. May we live as long as we are good and capable, and not a day longer ! ”

“ Then I hope to live a long time, for I imagine such a good life with you,” said Karl and kissed her in return ; “ but how about the government : are you really going to get me under your thumb ? ”

“ As much as I can ! However, law and constitution will surely develop between us, and they will be good in any case. ”

“ And I shall guarantee the constitution, and claim the first position as godfather,” suddenly rang out a powerful bass voice.

Hermine stretched her little neck and seized Karl’s hand ; but he stepped closer and saw one of the sentries of the sharpshooters of Aargau, standing in the shade of a pillar. The metal of his equipment gleamed through the darkness. Now the young men recognized each other : they had been recruits together, and the sentry was a handsome farmer’s son. The betrothed sat down on the steps at his feet and chatted with him for a full half hour, before they returned to the company.

URSULA (1878)

By GOTTFRIED KELLER

TRANSLATED BY BAYARD QUINCY MORGAN, PH.D.

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WHEN religions change, it is as if the mountains opened, and forth into the light of day issue not merely the great magic serpents, the gold-hoarding dragons, the spirits of clear crystals, but with them also base, many-taloned monsters, and the whole army of rats and mice. So it was at the time of the first Reformation in the north-east parts of Switzerland, and especially in the neighborhood of the Zurich highlands, when a dweller in those parts, Jackie Geer by name, came home from the war.

It was on one of the first days of the year 1523 that the little army of Zurichers marched back over the Alps, which, strangely enough, had been protecting the Papal land and people against the French, at the very time that the Gospel was being preached in their home country. These soldiers had taken Parma, Piacenza, and other cities, and had held the Vatican from the death of Leo X. until the election of Hadrian VI., avoiding, however, any clash with the other Swiss, who were in alliance with the French and in their armies. But at last they saw that the Romans did indeed pet and flatter them, despite the new religious movement, but were also hoaxing them and keeping their pay in arrears; and so they were finally recalled by the Council and marched homeward, and their leaders arrived just in time to attend the first religious debate in the city hall of Zurich on the 29th of January, and to help pass sentence upon papal Rome.

A strange sight these war-hardened men must have afforded, just returned from years of residence in the Italy of the sixteenth century, but now adorned with the Councilor's golden chain and heavily armed with bristling goose-quills, taking part in that logical succession of disputations, divisions, and resolutions — based solely upon the spiritual Word — and in the purification of faith, morals, and government which was consummated in the face of a world's opposition, and the failure of which to secure universal acceptance was to result only from the mistakes made by its advocates.

When the aforesaid army, which may not have been much over twenty-five hundred strong, marching along from Lake Wallen with baggage-train and camp-followers, reached the southerly shore of Lake Zurich, opposite Rapperswyl, Jackie Geer had leave to abandon the main column and turn toward the Rapperswyl bridge, that he might the earlier reach his homestead, which lay on Mt. Bachtel in the country opposite. The name Jackie by no means signified a small person; for he was a man of good height and a powerful corporal, although still young. What it did express was a certain affectionate familiarity and the reputation for trustworthiness which the bearer of the name enjoyed among his fellows; just as in the regimental rolls or in the lists of the anniversary books such not infrequent pet names for warriors who have long since been dead and are otherwise wholly unknown make the impression that these latter were worthier and better loved than others, perhaps because of their simpler, more ingenuous ways, or because of a more cheerful equanimity and good nature, or for some other good qualities.

His leathern haversack lightly thrown over his shoulder, the man strode sturdily across the wooden bridge, which was nearly a mile long and without a railing, and the boards rattled and the snow creaked under his feet. Though sumptuously dressed and armed, he displayed none of the arrogant pomp of the mercenaries of that day; his costume,



Permission Photographische Union, Munich

BATTLE OF CENTAURS

ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

made white and blue like his country's flag, was of strong woolen cloth and only moderately slashed, somewhat as in our day even the most modest of men cannot prevent the tailor from suggesting this or that fashion in the covering of his nakedness. To be sure, armor, helmet, and halberd were all of good Milanese workmanship, and the armor actually spread out fanwise, with delicate fluting, from the slender hips to the broad shoulder, while the long leather gauntlets which he wore might even bear witness to genuine luxury; for without these no Swiss soldier of that day would show his face, if he thought at all well of himself; as a song of the German mercenaries has it:

"We'll put into carousing
What the Swiss puts into gloves."

Apart from this, however, the greatest finery in which the man was resplendent consisted in the sparkling rays of the wintry sun, which were reflected to a vast distance from his silvery armor; so that a second reflection traveled across the lake below him as long as he was on the bridge, only to disappear when he had entered the dark harbor-gate of the little town of Rapperswyl.

As he still had a good three hours' walk before him, and moreover did not know whether he should find any nourishment for today at his abandoned homestead, he went into a tavern and ordered a warm dinner and a jug of wine. The room was filled with boatmen, traders, and farmers, with good Catholics from the border of Schwyz and from the Gaster country; and although Jackie Geer had already heard much about recent events at home, he had had no idea of the depth of the irritation and passion which was now revealed in the conversation of the drinking company. With great surprise he heard the derisive and abusive nicknames for the Zurichers which were already in vogue, and which are the first weapons to be used at such times by angry narrow-mindedness against innovators. An old soldier, whom he recognized and of whom he asked the meaning of these words, explained to him the origin and

sense of the ugly invectives, but though he disapproved them, he himself at once burst into bitter reproaches.

“Your masters in Zurich,” he cried, “want to harry the priests, but they let fence-posts be sharpened on their own heads by the new clergy. And it’s a sin and a shame, the sermons they allow to be preached against us poor soldiers. They’re trying to forbid us to earn our living where we can, and to pick up a bloody penny with honor, or to knock down a spike from a golden crown. They want to make stay-at-homes and hypocrites of us, tied to our mothers’ apron-strings; and yet we haven’t preserved our land and freedom by reading books or chattering, but by means of good spears and long swords. Let them keep on with it, and they may get to be clever school-masters and fine debaters, but certainly they’ll never be able to stand up in the open field any more, nor scarcely to defend their own walls.”

Jackie Geer was not tremendously alarmed by this speech; he was weary of war, in spite of his youth, and longed for rest and peaceful work. Moreover, when he looked more closely at the old soldier, the latter did not seem to him to have much cause to rejoice over his past years. For he was evidently broken with hardships and wild living, tormented with gout, and grown prematurely old; his faded silk doublet showed hardly a trace of color amid the stains of sweat, dust, and iron-rust; the magnificent baggy trousers which had originally gone with it had long since disappeared and been replaced by a modest garment of goatskin. Between doublet and hose his shirt still hung out, yet no longer as an ornament and banner of pride, but a gray and coarse sack of poverty. His head was covered simply by a little cap of faded red velvet which he had formerly worn under his plumed hat, and which he now constantly pulled down over his ears because they pained him; and instead of a sword he carried a crutch. Eagerly he accepted the freshly filled jug from Jackie, and carefully wrapped up in a cloth some bread and cheese that was left.

Nevertheless he continued to growl, "Your masters have made a rod for their own backs! The common people outdo them in folly, as an ape will the king's jester, and the peasants want to whistle a different tune from their masters. Go on home to your mountain, and you'll find it swarming with as many fanatics and prophets as the fleas on a dog, preaching in the woods and dancing and practising lechery, and the women are madder than the men."

At this the younger soldier opened his ears in affright, and demanded a fuller account of these extraordinary matters; whereupon the old man related in his own fashion what he knew of the practices of the Anabaptists, who were especially numerous in Grüningen and in the vicinity of Mt. Bachtel. He concluded his tale, returning to his own folly, by admonishing the young fellow not to get into this disorder in his home district, but to start out again and join the forces of King Francis, where there were old scores to wipe out and new fortune to be gained.

With blinking eyes the old man looked out from under bushy white brows, and dreamily pictured to himself the storming battle-throngs, the flying colors, defeated foes, burning dwellings, luxurious quarters, foreign women, and purses full of silver.

When he awoke again from his fair visions, he no longer found his comrade beside him, for he, urged on by curiosity and anxiety, had already left the city and was hurrying homeward with long strides.

There he had lost of recent years, while still in the field, both father and mother in quick succession, but the small farm and its land had been cared for meanwhile by a neighbor whose dwelling stood on the same slope at the foot of the mountain, a few hundred paces away. Not only anxiety for his property hastened his steps, but the fear of no longer finding other things as he had left them. In the midst of the splendor and glory of Italy, face to face with the women of Rome, he had thought only of Ursula,

the young daughter of his neighbor, with whom he had grown up. Her quiet, simple nature, without any make-believe whatever, neither fair nor foul, wholesome as daily bread, fresh as spring-water, and pure as the breeze from the mountain-side, triumphed in his soul over every foreign, obtrusive beauty, and a life in union with her seemed to him as indispensable as the very earth of his home, which seems to behold a man with faithful orbs that resemble the brown-eyed Susan.

With something of an understanding he had parted from Ursula, not yet out of her teens; now he was wondering how she would look, and still he could get no other vision than that of the girl-child he had left. So much the more eagerly did he hurry forward, perplexed by the words of the old soldier, and he tarried only a short time with acquaintances whom he met on his way. But even so he thought he noticed that some of them wore expressions which seemed to say: "You'll have your surprise when you get home;" and that others eyed him searchingly, as if to explore his state of mind.

At last he saw his house standing on the height under the two nut-trees which shaded it in summer and which now stretched out their branches over it, dark and moss-covered like the thatched roof below them, and dripping with the snow that had melted during the day. Not only these falling drops, however, but also the small window-panes, which he had thought to find behind locked shutters, sparkled in the light of the sinking sun as if freshly washed; real smoke was rising from the roof, and now the door opened and a trim womanly figure came out, dressed more like a city woman than like a peasant of that day. A long dark garment enveloped to the throat a slender body, with a girle just beneath the breast, allowing the close-pleated sleeves of a white chemise to appear at the upper arm; a semi-transparent cap covered the brow close to the large dark eyes; besides this, a dainty white kerchief was wound several times about head, throat, and chin, so that no bit of the hair was visible, and the face was completely framed.

Jackie Geer had just been thinking of nothing but Ursula, and perhaps for that very reason he did not immediately recognize her in the mature womanly form which came to meet him, opened her arms, and clasped them round his neck. It was only when the soft bosom was already resting on his insensitive armor that he recognized the curve of the grave mouth she offered him to kiss, and not until he had unconsciously embraced and kissed her did he become aware of the unexpected good fortune of whose nearness he had been thinking. Confused and uncertain he held her in his arms, gradually loosened them in fear of doing a wrong, but immediately drew the beloved form closer to him again, until at last he held her resolutely off, and cried as he surveyed her,

“Are you really Ursula? And you’ve grown so big and beautiful?”

“Would to God I were beautiful,” said she with a loving glance, “I should be so glad for your sake. How long I have waited for you! But we knew that you would come today, for we saw your weapons gleaming far away, and we even thought we heard the drums through the quiet air. So I came over here and aired and heated your house, and lighted a fire on the hearth. Your animals are standing in our stables; tomorrow they can be brought over here, and then everything will be done. Now come in.”

She led the surprised man into the house, where she helped him take off his armor, brought warm water so that he could bathe his feet after the long and arduous march, and cared for him in every way. Then she set the table and served the meal that she had prepared, whereupon she seated herself beside him on the window-bench, as young married folks are wont to do before a large household has assembled to keep them more or less apart.

But neither of them felt any very great appetite, because their joy at the reunion was mingled with a strange agitation arising from the unwonted activities of the young woman. Jackie Geer surveyed the comrade of his youth

with growing satisfaction, but also with new astonishment and a somewhat uncertain feeling, and he was just going to ask her how it happened that she was wearing the head-dress, kerchief, and cap of a married woman, when she pointed with an affectionate smile to a wine-bottle, a wheaten loaf, and a spice-box which stood on a shelf, and said with a blush that the ingredients for a good wine-soup on the next morning were already prepared. It was at that time customary for the wife of a soldier who had just returned after a long absence in the field to prepare for him on the morning after the first night spent at his own hearth a hot drink of spiced wine with toasted bread, the best she could furnish, as a token of her joy.

Still more uncertain and astonished, he said,

“But we are not even betrothed, and nothing has been discussed or prepared.”

“Then why did you kiss me, if you don't want me?” answered Ursula, whose cheeks now suddenly paled.

“Why, who says I don't want you?” cried Jackie, as he drew the young woman closer to him; “if you want me, then I want you too. But that only makes us engaged, that is, provided your people give their consent.”

“Why, haven't you heard that in these parts we are of the holy and sinless of the new faith, that are no longer subject to any secular or spiritual authority? In us is the spirit of God, we are His body, and we do nothing but His will alone. So say our prophets, and you shall and will enter our congregation also, and so we take each other as man and wife by virtue of the holy spirit and will that lives in us.”

This speech Ursula delivered with hasty words, and now Jackie paled a little, as he clasped her still more firmly and looked searchingly into her eyes; for he had never yet heard her say so much at one time. And now as she hung on his neck and raised her eyes to him, he saw glowing in them a gentle, sensual fire, but at the same time the flame of the delusion which had consumed the modesty of this

spirit, and he saw that she had been touched by this monomania as a sweet grape is infected by rust.

Reluctantly and slowly he freed himself from her embrace and from the bosom that offered him such welcome rest, and gently sought to remove from his neck the hands that were clasped together as often as he separated them, until at last with a firm jerk he released himself and stood erect before her.

"The thing is not possible, not in this way," he said gravely, "I wish to enter marriage according to law and custom, and hold fast that which is mine. Come, dear Sulie, I will take you back to your home and talk to your people; then everything will be done in orderly fashion, and we shall come together with all the greater joy. Of your saints and prophets I don't hear much good; I don't know them and I don't think I shall become intimate with them."

But Ursula returned no answer; she dropped her arms limply and stared distractedly into space. Shame and vexation had overwhelmed her, as if she had offered herself and been rejected, and now she knew not what to do, since her lover stood before her like a kind of judge. Her eloquence had forsaken her, without allowing her former modest quietude of soul to return, and so it came about in the strange vicissitudes of life that the soldier who had been tossed about in endless wanderings stood there with sound mind, whereas calamity had visited the quiet woman in the remote mountain solitude.

Jackie again fastened his side-arm about him, then he extended his hand to the silenced girl, and when he saw that she did not move, he raised her gently and said,

"Come, Sulie, we'll soon have everything in order."

Passively she let him lead her to the door; there, however, she clasped her hands about the door-post and cried beseechingly,

"O let me stay here, let me stay here!"

But he loosened her grasp again, whereupon with a sudden swift decision she went on ahead of him into the night, without waiting for him. However, he soon caught up to her with a few strides; then they walked in silence side by side, and before long they saw towering into the nocturnal sky the great maple-trees near which stood the farmhouse of Enoch Schnurrenberger, Ursula's father.

This family name is traceable to a hill lying somewhat farther north, and called Schnurrenberg,—which in an earlier day, at the time of the settlement, signified the mountain of Snurro, i. e., the Jester. Now though father Enoch was hardly descended from those ancient Snurrings, at least he was in his own fashion a terrific buffoon, who thought himself the artfullest fellow in the countryside; but that was saying a good deal, for there was no lack of alert and ingenious heads in these highlands, among whom on the least provocation prophets and fanatics, chatter-boxes and visionaries of every kind, would spring up in a moment.

Just at that moment a number of such prophets were sitting together in Enoch's house, though of inferior rank and including none of the great preachers who were secretly or openly roving through the land. On the contrary, they were average men of all sorts, who managed to add specific misunderstandings to the general delusion, who mingled with it various mystic traditions, and who, stirred by long-standing sufferings of the people, disseminated the growing ferment and were themselves floated along by it.

Four or five such prophetlings, hatched out by the heat of the time, were gathered at Schnurrenberger's for an edifying discussion. But lest they should waste light and space, the shrewd host had dumped before them a pile of drying-apples, which the prophets must cut up while they exchanged their visions and thoughts. But as they were not really inclined to such industry, and were moreover constantly admonished by their hostess to take out the cores more neatly, they were sitting about the table in a

rather peevish humor, and the spirit refused to come upon them.

Consequently they felt agreeably relieved when Jackie Geer entered the room with measured steps, looked about him, and with a word of greeting walked up to father Enoch, who stared at him and tried to pierce him with strangely glittering eyes. Immediately the other prophets did likewise, dropping the apples and surveying the unconcerned soldier on all sides with idle eyes, blinking or sparkling according to their various physical powers. They all regarded themselves as so-called penetrators, and indulged in this bad habit of blinking at people,—which always reveals either a rogue or a conceited fool, but which is incomprehensible and repugnant to honest and decent folk, arousing in them the feeling of having vermin crawl over them.

Now while they all acted as if the newcomer were made of glass and they could look through and through him, Jackie suddenly stood still in his short journey through the spacious room, and with astonishment looked at them all in turn. He reflected that these were probably some of the new saints who had spoiled his beloved for him; so when he had finished curiously regarding the last one, he began again on the first one with guileless calm eyes, and he took plenty of time for it. Hence they began to blink their eyelids with increasing disquiet, and still did not wish to be outdone in the matter of penetrating, so that the thing grew uncomfortable for them, and Schnurrenberger finally opened the conversation, saying,

“What sort of a sword-bearer and war-hero is this that comes? Whom will he assail?”

“It is only I,” answered Jackie, “good evening, father Enoch, and all of you.”

At the same time he looked around for Ursula, who had slipped away from him and vanished before he entered the house. The men here knew quite well that she had gone to welcome the returning soldier; they also knew of her love and offered no hindrance to her plans; but none the

less the joker pretended ignorance and did not ask Jackie where he had left the girl, but with a sign invited him to sit down on a stool, continuing,

“ Well, look at that! Why, this is our friend and neighbor, and you would hardly recognize him, he’s been growing so; see how big his head is.”

And scarcely had Jackie taken his seat when Enoch began to abuse him with the quarrelsome impatience of the common people.

“ What is the object of sword and armor in this day? Do men not know that the millennium is coming and that our defenders are the angels in heaven with shining swords and diamond shields? But of course you have come from the Pope and are going to some pope or popelet in Zurich, and so what should you know of the spirit and of the millennium, you bullies and braggarts? You probably think you are big and important with your drums and banners? Oh, what an infirm, moist and watery being is man! Prick him just a little and he begins to trickle; and take the strongest fighter, with limbs that look as if they were cut out of marble, and drop on top of him a boulder no bigger than a camel, and it’s just as if you had stepped on a paltry spider: a dirty wet spot on the earth is all that is left.”

To this unfriendly attempt to lower his pride Jackie rejoined with a good-natured laugh,

“ And what is left when your camel-rock falls on a saint or prophet? ”

But this was by no means pleasing to Enoch; instead of answering, he cried,

“ By their fruits ye shall know them! Will you, the egg, claim more wisdom than the hen? Come, have you seen a single one of those learned puffed-up parsons, or have you heard their captain, the perverted Zwingli, preach a single sermon? ”

“ To be sure I have both seen and heard him,” said Jackie, “ but it was a long time ago and I didn’t have much sense then. It was eight years ago, when I had run off

with the rest to Lombardy as a sixteen-year-old boy, and it was just after the disaster at Marignan, where we lost the battle. At that time Zwingli preached to us on the field, a sweet and courageous man, with eyes as beautiful as a stag; I can remember distinctly how reverently I looked at him. Of course I'll listen to him preach! For they say he bases his words and puts his reliance on nothing but the word of God, just as it stands in the Holy Book."

"Book! Book! What do you know about it, and what does that dunce and false teacher know about it?" It was one of the prophetic coadjutors that suddenly emitted these last words in a shrill voice, a lanky man who was called Cold Veerts of Gossau, because his hands were always clammy and cold. He was clad in a tight gray coat like a bag, was quite beardless, and only his sallow eyebrows rose into his narrow forehead like a pair of Gothic arches.

"What is the Book?" he cried. "An empty skin, a bag, until I blow the holy spirit into it! A dead cat, until I drive it to its feet with the breath of God! It is a silent pipe, a mute fiddle, until I play upon it! I am the Revelation and the Word, and the Book is only the sound of it, and the breath that stirs the air. I kindle it like a lantern to make it give light, and put it out as soon as I please. I draw it over my head like a cap of darkness and go brr, brr, and shake my head; and in a moment I am veiled in mystery and a terrible darkness goes out from me so that your flesh creeps! I blow through my nose and the mists vanish, the Book lies on the table of God; its letters gleam like a thousand stars, and you think you are witnessing the establishment of the heavenly kingdom. I take it and throw it into the corner yonder, and it is a printed book, a pile of bad paper, like a thousand other books!"

All looked involuntarily toward the corner by the stove, as if he had really hurled a Bible thither; the hostess uttered a cry of terror and astonishment at such power and glory. Jackie Geer also looked thither, astounded

and alarmed by these shocking words; but Cold Veerts continued,

“ Let that vain Grammarian and learned scholar try his arts on that multitude of dead letters, he might just as usefully stir up the sand of the desert, for no living spring will issue forth. But I take it up again and it is a rod of Moses, a plow, a shield and a sword, a pitcher and a glass, a cask and its wine, a green forest and the hound with which I hunt in it, the deep sea and the ship I ride in. I read the writing and I write it, I think it, I speak it, I open it, I shut it, I sit on it, I tie it to the Devil’s tail and make him run like a belled cat.”

“ For I am he that speaketh, saith the Lord, and he that hath written the Word, and that alone can read and understand it in its dwelling, the creature of my hand!”

This speech was uttered by a new voice, still louder and more impassioned, although the words were spoken somewhat more slowly and distinctly. The soldier, looking around at this new speaker, saw a squat figure with rolling eyes and a defiantly protruding, broad under-lip in a swarthy countenance. This was the Snail of Agasul, as the people called him, a far-roving cobbler and school-master of varying profession. Of his underlip a hostile priest had said that when the Snail talked it looked like the devil’s couch, on which the fallen angel sat and rocked, letting his hairy legs hang down. Otherwise there was nothing peculiar about him, except that he seemed to like ornaments; for he wore several gilded rings on his fingers, set with red and green glass. It was said of him that in earlier years he had ripped open his shoes and worn similar cheap rings on his toes.

“ I am he that speaketh!” he cried, as he once more fastened piercing eyes on Jackie Geer, who was regarding him curiously, and his vexation waxed intensely, until on a sudden he bethought himself and began a song in which men and women joined; for Ursula also unexpectedly raised her voice:

God is in Juda widely known,
In Israel His name resounds,
At Salem stands His mighty throne,
All Zion to His fame redounds.
He breaketh lance and spear in two,
And shield and sword and battle's tide;
The arrogant He doth subdue
And lames the warriors far and wide.

He goeth forth in might arrayed
To put an end to all distress,
And whosoever is dismayed,
Him doth He help from his duress.
Praise God and bring Him offerings
His hand is neither soft nor light:
He putteth out the star of kings,
And chaseth them in headlong flight.

But the chant died away rather sadly than threateningly, more like a lament than a song of victory; the Snail of Agasul, however, started up anew and cried,

“Now you probably think God really sits on a fiery chariot or in the citadel of Zion above the clouds, wearing a long beard and equipped with crown and sword, and that he will drive away the Pope and the princes for you, the squires and the little citizen-kings of Zurich, and you only need to stand still with open mouths and let the roasted birds drop into them! And do you think he carries a little ink-pot at his girdle, and writes down all your names in a book, each of you with your credit account and your wishes, with the height of your body and the weight of your belly, so that he can add or subtract according to what good health demands, and that all his fingers are smeared up with ink-spots, the good man?”

“Ho, a big mistake, ye blind heathen, who worship images and do not see the Lord that sits on your backs. Here he is, there he is, everywhere. He is in the dust of this floor and in the salt of the sea. He melts from the roof with the snow, we hear him dripping, and he gleams as filth in the street. He switches his tail with the fish in the

depths of the water, and looks afar with the eye of the hawk that flies high in the air. How should the wine seem so good to us if he did not dwell therein? But he is in us too, and just as we can only see ourselves when we have a mirror, so we can only perceive him who dwells in us in the countenance of our neighbor and brother; hence we must earnestly mirror ourselves in each other and be mutually brothers, that we may discover and reveal him who has been in us from the beginning of all things. For how could we be so holy, so sinless, so intelligent, so witty, if we ourselves were not divine by nature, and how could he exist if we did not give him a dwelling-place?

“Therefore he depends on us as much as we on him, and we must curb him when he fails to do well, and completely besmear him with bold thoughts and words, until he is intimidated and comes out with his miracles and does our will!”

He took an apple from the table, held it up before him, and spoke to it as if it were alive:

“Hallo, you funny little Lord God; you’ve fled hither, are sitting in this apple and thinking I won’t find you? I’ll start you up, just as you once drove Adam out of the thicket when he had eaten of the apple. By the holy blood of the Son of Man, come out of that in a hurry. Look, brethren and sisters, how the apple begins to shine with inward light, see how it swells on my hand and becomes a world? Do you see how the stem grows and turns into the high cross that stands on Golgotha? Do you see the tiny men that swarm on the earth, and the graves that open, and the dead that are resurrected? Holy, holy, holy is he! Call upon and praise him, he has redeemed us.”

“Holy, holy!” cried all with one voice, excepting the soldier, who kept his astonished eyes fixed on the prophet, until the latter suddenly hurled the fruit at his head, crying with an altered voice,

“There you have the apple, eat it!”

But Jackie had already caught the apple in his hand, and

after looking at it for a little while he quietly laid it on the table.

“You won’t do that to me a second time, you mountebank,” he said to the Snail, looking calmly at him; but the petty prophet shifted unquietly from side to side behind the table, where he felt himself moderately secure, and jerkily leaped up once or twice, without knowing quite what to do with the man of war. It was simply that evil arbitrariness which had dwelt for a thousand years above the altars, and which had now entered these poor folk, proclaimed itself in paltry fashion, and was at a loss as soon as resistance appeared.

Beside this restless saint, however, there sat a quiet one who now pacified him; this was Jakob Rosensteel, called Broadfield, a stout man with a long beard who had so far sat there in comfortable silence with his hands folded. He favored a spiritual calmness, a quietude, an immobility of soul, which absorbed all affliction and let itself be filled to overflowing with the divine and with all good things without effort of its own. For years he had wandered about the realm in a leisurely way, and once he had been in a monastery and had then left it again; now he was proceeding slowly from house to house, because necessity would ever and again put him upon his legs and force him to seek a union with more active seers of God, in whose train there would be something to bite on.

“Be not so impatient, but rather meek,” he said to the Snail of Agasul, laying a hand on his shoulder; “see, the man is quite calm, in spite of his sword; allow him the necessary time to receive and digest the true word of God, and you will see what a fine saint he will one day be, after his new birth.”

“I will cut no more apples,” answered Snail testily, but evasively, and thrust away what lay before him on the table.

“Wife, clear the table,” cried the host; “let us prepare for ourselves a tiny worldly pleasure and drink up a jug

of wine. Veerts, have you got your new deck of cards with you? ”

The table was cleared, Cold Veerts drew out a pack of cards from his gray coat-bag and laid it on the table; old Enoch fetched in a great pitcher of wine, which he served to his guests for good money, although he had no license to do so, and now without any further noise they eagerly played through the greater part of the night with the cards, whose faces were composed of horrible creatures, apes, cats, and demons, some of them indecent,—they were, however, not closely observed by the players.

Not until morning was near did they put an end to this monotonous business and scatter to their various dwellings or lurking-places. Jackie Geer, who had declined to play with these rude fellows, but who had not succeeded in having any speech with the women of the house, had long since sought out his solitary domicile, and with a shake of the head and a decidedly ill humor had finally gone to rest.

II

Nevertheless he slept deeply and far into the morning, since his weariness was hospitably accommodated by the carefully freshened bed, the broad marriage couch of his deceased parents. As he awoke he must perforce think of the womanly hand that had prepared this couch so well; and when his eye fell upon the breakfast destined for him, he became uncertain in his mind whether he had not acted foolishly in thrusting from him the happy love that had been in his grasp. He now brewed for himself the hot spiced drink, as well as he knew how, and as he sat over it bethought himself how the affair might be turned so that he could come to his own.

Just then the door opened and old Schnurrenberger entered, in heavy mittens and with an axe under his arm, like a man who is going to the woods and wants to greet his neighbor in passing. With his constantly oscillating eyes he swiftly took in the breakfast to which Jackie invited him, nor did he delay to share it with him.

“I shall have to set down this wine and bread and spice,” he began deliberately, “to my credit in our reckoning, since you have spurned the child and put her away from you; for it is reasonable that you alone should bear this expense.”

“Who speaks of spurning and putting away? I want her more than ever,” answered Jackie; “but I am surprised that you, her father and mother, are willing to let her go in the manner you know of; and I am surprised that you have intercourse with such buffoons, that put such stuff into your heads as I heard last night.”

“These poor buffoons will be masters of you and your lords; for we the people will make them great, in order that we ourselves may become great and glorious according to the decree of God, who is on his way to us. As for the child Ursula, we will no longer submit to the old heathen regime, but give her away in divine freedom, and he alone can have her who receives her in such freedom. But you have come home as a stiff-necked and arrogant accomplice of the old faith, that is plain, and we no longer put much reliance in you.”

Jackie Geer looked down in distress; he was one of those simple natures who remain untouched by outbreaks of spiritual plagues, without needing to exert themselves, just as there are people who seem to be inoculated against bodily diseases and pass through them without danger. So he clearly felt that he should never come into sympathy with this spiritual confusion, which was repugnant to him. But while he felt toward Ursula no sort of bitterness, but only a tender compassion, her father's conduct filled him with uncertainty and aversion. He had known the latter as at all times a shrewd man and fluent talker, and had thought him wiser than he really was, because in his innocence he was unable to estimate the fact that it is just such sly-dogs, motivated by evil impulses, that are the first to fall a prey to the perversion which they imagine they firmly control. So much the more puzzling seemed to him now

this strange evil, which had so uncannily quartered itself on his birthplace and his future.

After brief reflection, however, he composed himself and said,

“I am going to Zurich, where I should have to report and serve in any case. There I shall look about me, for that is the best place to see and hear what is going on in the land, and what the leaders really want and are preaching. For that reason I should be glad if you would look after my affairs awhile longer; as soon as I come back I will take everything off your hands and it shall not be to your disadvantage.”

But this communication was by no means pleasing to Enoch Schnurrenberger, nor the fact that the young man was going to seek counsel in the city of the old rulers, instead of listening to him.

“You will not return,” he said, with quick change of front; “and out of old friendship and in order to do you a good turn, I will make it easy for you to pursue your supposed happiness, as long as the spirit of God does not come upon you. Listen then: all that is now called property will be at an end as soon as the millennium comes, and that can happen over night. First, all tithes and ground-rents, all land-burdens and statute-labor and all unjust hardships will be abolished; but soon after all the land will be confiscated and the last boundary-stone pulled out, and whoever doesn’t like it can wipe his mouth and get out. Now, I’ll have pity on you and take over your little estate for a small earnest, so that you can go right now without losing all you have, and I’ll call it mine as long as the present condition lasts. As I shall have a share in the new empire, I shall suffer no need then, and in either case I should have to give up all I possess. But in this way you can go where you please for the time being, and have a penny or two for the trip.”

After what seemed a short reflection, Enoch named a still smaller purchase price, for which he was willing to conclude the transaction with Jackie on the spot.

“I have saved that much out of my pay and prize-money,” replied Jackie, drawing out a little leather purse filled with gold and showing it to the old man, whose curious eyes seemed to sparkle more at the things of this world than at the kingdom of God.

“More than that,” continued Jackie, “the little property seems to me to be safe enough for now. But it might also happen that tithes and ground-rents would be abolished, but not private ownership, and then this farm would be worth just so much more and I should be cheated,—but of course you certainly didn’t think of that. So we’ll leave things as they are, and I thank you for your well-meant assistance.”

“As you will,” said Enoch, whose thoughts the other had guessed pretty well, since he also was no fool; “but see to having the business taken care of now, for I don’t want to bother with it any more.”

With that he took up his axe and left the house without further words, while Jackie Geer again found himself alone. Enoch’s conduct was no small weight upon his heart, since it showed him plainly that his neighbors had given him up and wished to get him away. After he had sat awhile in the quiet room, only yesterday so warm and hospitable and today so cold and cheerless, he suddenly sprang up and prepared to set out. Instead of taking out his old farm-clothes, he remained in his warlike dress and carefully put it in the best of shape, as also his weapons. The leather-covered gloves, too, with their high tops, he again pulled on, as if pride bade him shut himself off and differentiate himself from his perverted fellows. When he had finally closed the shutters and was looking from the threshold back into the dark house, he almost felt as if the disabled old fellow at Rapperswyl had been in the right, and as if he would prefer to sally forth again, and were it only to find a grave in the green fields.

However, he put the key in his pocket and went away in the direction of Enoch’s farm, intending to deposit it there

as a sort of pledge that he would return, and that he for his part would not give up hope. When he came to the dwelling-house, he saw Ursula's mother, muffled up as for winter, standing in the open barn and cutting up some sort of fodder, from which he judged that the daily work was for the time being going on in the same old way.

"Do folks have to chop cabbage and turnips even in the millennium?" said he with propitiatory jest; "God give you a good day! So busy with your bent fingers?"

"May God bless you, Jackie, and give you a good day, too," answered the woman; "folks will always have to do something, or else life would be too stupid. Where are you going in your armor? I was coming over to your house in a little while to get you some dinner, for we can't let you go on this way. But it seems you're going to fly away again?"

"I must go down to Zurich and get mustered out with my regiment; here is my key, if you will keep it awhile for me. And tell me, how is it with Ursula? Is it your opinion too that she ought to become a wife without priest or magistrate?"

"Yes, that is my opinion too, because it is the will of God and my husband. To be sure, he knows better than I, and has always had his will. He intends to become one of the leaders himself in the new order, and he says we have to begin some time, and with just the things that are closest to us. He's clever enough, he sees through everything, and he has great talents. So the best thing for you would be to submit to him; for you can't make any headway against him. Sulie never closed an eye last night; just now she's spinning in the living-room; don't you want to go in?"

He did so; Ursula's face was completely suffused with blushes as he entered; she lowered her eyes to her spindle, but without noticing that her thread was getting twisted. To his greeting she did not reply, and even when he took her hand she did not look up but turned away.

“ I didn't have a chance yesterday to give you the little ring I brought with me,” said he, and slipped a gold circlet of dainty workmanship, which he had bought in Italy, on a finger of the hand he had grasped; “ will you plight me your troth again and promise to wait till I return? ”

“ Unless you renounce your lost world and unite with us I will not wear the ring,” said Ursula at last, her eyes still averted, “ I will wait, however, until you have grown more accustomed to great things.”

“ I will renounce nothing and pledge myself to nothing,” cried Jackie, “ but you must in any case give up the prophets I saw yesterday, for I do not like them.”

Hereupon Ursula stripped the ring from her finger and let it roll on the floor, as she stood up and without looking at Jackie Geer went out of the room and into her chamber, where she abandoned herself to a flood of hot tears. She bowed beneath the constraint of her delusion and the piercing glance of her father, whom she both feared like a sword and revered like an infallible saint; for where should such spirits find faith and a following, if not first of all among their own kin, to whom they are incessantly preaching their imaginings and giving the best account of themselves that could be desired?

Jackie still stood in the room for a few minutes; then without picking up the ring or looking about him further he went out and started on his way with a heavy sigh. Again he encountered many a strange figure and glance, as he passed through the neighboring villages, and he saw how they stood whispering together. But he soon noticed that the farther he went the more the air seemed to clear; he saw the old familiar people, who attended to their affairs sensibly and unconcernedly, and who went their ways with cheerful calm. And still things were not exactly the same, neither here nor elsewhere; an active and vigorous thinking seemed to breathe through the enlightened air and to animate all men, and without his being able to assign a cause for it, the briskly striding wayfarer felt good cheer and light enter his spirit.

To be sure he found the army which was still encamped in Zurich engaged in excited controversy. As a result of the strict rule against any further military service under foreign banners, also against pensions, the old soldiers and their ringleaders felt greatly aggrieved, and being prevented from setting forth anew, and egged on by secret or open opponents of the Reformation, they gave free rein to their surly humor and their tongues, while on the other hand the fanatical prophets mingled with the soldiers and sought to win them over to their cause.

After Jackie had made preliminary inquiries and had reported to his superiors, he sought out the Alsace Tavern, for it had now come to be evening; here the city appointed its own barkeeper to serve Alsatian wine, and here the under-officers and the old fighting-cocks of the returning army were sitting or standing together — for the horsemen were gathered in groups in the corridors and even in the doorway, over which the city arms were painted, or were walking up and down in slender erectness, like men who have not bent their back for years, nor handled mattock or axe. Jackie forced his way through and managed to secure a seat in the farthest corner of the crowded room, which echoed with loud and excited conversation, as far as the low ceiling permitted. Biting remarks and speeches whirred past each other; the voices of the highest pitch belonged to the tallest and strongest men, but rang out all the more piercingly and threateningly. Everywhere the question was being argued whether the prohibition should be obeyed or openly defied, or whether they should simply leave the country and go where they would, leaving the rest to the future.

When Jackie looked around him more closely, he noticed Cold Veerts of Gossau sitting back to the wall amid the soldiers, and close beside him another strange non-militant, a disguised monk and Papist whom nobody knew, but who had till now been putting into circulation all sorts of inflammatory words about resistance and about adhering to

the old war-freedom. Suddenly Veerts raised his eyebrows till they touched his hat and began to cry out that they must believe neither this Romish devil's-companion nor the lords and councillors, but throw their spears into one heap in the middle of the town and burn them solemnly; for the new Jerusalem was approaching, bringing its own city troops with it: legions of angels with fiery swords, against which no earthly iron could accomplish anything. The latter would have no task save that of digging up the willing earth with slight labor and opening it to the mildest of weather. Moreover, every man would get a young wife and might take this opportunity to get rid of the old one, if he had any, since all evils were to be done away.

A peal of laughter interrupted this speech, which had at first attracted some attention; only three or four old fighters, who might have dreaded somewhat their return home, seemed to be giving the matter more mature consideration, until they too saw the improbability of it and did not deign to look at the prophet again. But Jackie Geer, vexed to have this grimacing fellow, whom he had seen only yesterday, come into his sight again and remind him of the unhappy turn which his meeting with Ursula had taken, now cried with a loud voice that they had not gone thither to spend time on every kind of jackass, such as seemed to be dropping from the skies all over the country; they had more serious things to do and must stick together.

Hereupon being greeted and questioned as to his opinion in the matter, he said,

“Brothers in arms, I have been here only a few hours, but just the same I have found out that the council and the citizens, the Two Hundred and the people of the district, are united in a large majority, and that they have the power first, last, and all the time. Therefore I say that it is not becoming or of any use for us to stir up strife and break the law.”

“That is a good speech from a young soldier,” said some one near him with an agreeable voice, and a hand

was laid warmly and firmly on his shoulder. As he looked around in surprise, he saw Master Ulrich Zwingli, accompanied by a respected guild-president and a young classical scholar, who had just come from transacting state business and wanted to look in here and see how things stood with the men of war.

“If there is such a feeling among the soldiers,” continued Zwingli, “and if there is any room left for us, then I too should like to drink a glass of the Alsatian wine, which must be quite as good for a clergyman who loves the soldiers, as for the soldiers themselves.”

The men drew together, some amiably and willingly, some but slowly and sulkily; but this movement became more vigorous every moment, the longer the sunny eye of the Reformer rested on the gathering, whereby there was soon plenty of room for the newcomers, though to be sure at the expense of the monk and Cold Veerts; because these two alone had not budged, they were squeezed and shoved together from both sides, so that they could no longer stir between the stout and broad soldiers, and had to devote all their energies simply to turn their hostile faces away from each other.

With all the less disturbance could Zwingli, who recognized the two men and noted with cheerful amusement how they were wedged in, converse with the soldiery; and soon they listened with visible satisfaction to his words, whose bright Toggenburg dialect contrasted pleasantly with the speech of Zurich; for the latter is now dull and close, now in its unwieldy broadness occasionally troublesome even if one's own, until the growing stream of words overcomes all obstacles and thunders along like a pebble-rolling mountain torrent. Besides, the mobile speech of Master Ulrich was the blossoming of the fresh and untrammelled nature of the mountain child who, born high up among rocky peaks and snow-caps, has leaped down into life with supple strength, and seems to carry in his eye the brilliance of his birth-place, and to feel the breath of the mountain air on his cheeks.

Nor did the man who in later years wrote those curious instructions for the proper behavior of a field-captain have much difficulty in persuading these fighters that he was no enemy and despiser of honest warriors, but their friend and brother. They followed his words attentively as he depicted the higher type of army, which did not shed its blood for money and alien quarrels, but did indeed know how to defend with honorable weapons the independence of the fatherland, the laws it had helped to make, good morals, and freedom of conscience.

At last it grew so quiet that they could all hear the sudden ringing of the bell which gave the order for closing all taverns and tap-rooms. Zwingli immediately arose with his companions and betook himself homeward, ending what had been for him an unusual adventure. But the soldiers also, whom in view of their long march, as also of their present state of mind, no one ventured to order out, rose for the most part voluntarily, and some of them conducted Zwingli to his parsonage not far from the minster and there shook him warmly by the hand; among them Jackie Geer, who had sat close beside him with great contentment and had looked at him attentively, as far as modesty would permit. Zwingli stayed up during the greater part of the night, writing letters in Latin to his learned fellow combatants about the things which were stirring him and them.

But the troops dispersed peacefully on the next day and scattered about the country-side, each seeking his own hearth; only Jackie Geer remained in town with a small number of reliable men who had no other lodging, in order to be at hand in case of emergency and meanwhile to perform manifold confidential services. And Jackie attended toward the end of the month the first great Disputation by which the supremacy of the State and the independence of the parish were established, while the accepted biblical record was declared to be the sole basis of the faith. He also went regularly to hear the Reformer preach, and according to the measure of his simple understanding he

was witness to a genuine work of reformation, which had the good fortune of beginning at the very bottom.

From the solid foundation of the earth rose the pillars and gables of the work into the midst of the supersensual world, until like pure bars of crystal they penetrated the crystal ether above without losing their own form, and the architects did not stand like arbitrary wirepullers hidden in some spiritual or physical vestry, but in the midst of the temple, and, themselves suffering, hoping, confiding, conquering, or perishing, looked up into the heights that were cleansed of the odor of priestly heathendom, as far as possible in that day and age. But religion remained the same and did not become attenuated to a mythological literature which, stretched over a philosophical formula, can be played upon with more or less skill like any other instrument.

Hence both the Reformers and their people were naïvely pious, and with all their freedom of thought quite at one with each other; even the simple soldier Jackie Geer found it possible to walk the new paths consciously and with open eyes.

III

Whitsuntide of the year 1524 proved to be no pleasant festival for the world of images in city and country churches; for in consequence of a further disputation and the resulting ordinance, and with the approval of the people, everything painted, carved, or chiseled, everything gilded or colored, was removed from altars and walls, pillars and niches, and destroyed, so that the artistic industry of many centuries, modest as it had been in this corner of the world, died away before the logic of the noiseless Word; but real religions suffer no makeshifts: either they perish in them or they consume them as fire licks up the dust. Despite all delay and indulgence, something like a thunderstorm broke, and with the cry: Down with idols! there began a hammering, ripping, scraping, whitewashing, smashing, and splitting, and in a short space of time the

entire little world of form and color had vanished from the light of day, like the breath on a window-pane.

A year later the after-piece was played on a fine autumn day, when the church-treasure was formally taken from the cathedral chapter-house in Zurich and passed into the hands of the State. From these relics formed in gold and silver the clerical guardians did not part so readily, and they finally yielded only to a decided order, when the representatives of the council forced their way into the vestry. Jackie Geer was detailed to escort and guard, and as he kept the thronging crowd within bounds he himself wondered at the venerable treasures which were now carried through the desolate passages out into the bright sunshine and thence for the time being into the city warehouse opposite, a gray old castle.

At the head swayed the silver images of the patron saints of Zurich, the martyrs Felix, Regula, and Exuperantius, who in spite of all reformation constitute the state seal of Zurich to this very day, their heads in their hands. There followed a solid gold image of the Virgin of sixty pounds weight, then a series of golden and silver crosses, heavy gold monstrances which marched along like tiny cathedrals, a dense swarm of golden goblets and other vessels, in styles ranging from the earliest Byzantine and Gothic down to the latest Renaissance; censers and the like accompanied the reliquaries, plenaries, and other receptacles for sacred relics, the golden prayer-book of Charles the Bold, and similar rarities, all profusely strewn with jewels and pearls; all these things gleamed in the last rays of the sun on their short journey, before vanishing in the dark halls of the castle.

There followed, however, immediately a still gayer spectacle, accompanied by more and merrier noise, when the interminable array of vestments and paraments, of church banners, altar-cloths, carpets, and tapestries of every sort appeared, carried and flourished by school-boys and others. But this procession did not go into the ware-

house, but marched like a cataract of silk, of gold and silver thread, of linen and white lace, down the cathedral steps to the helmet-house* which stood in the river, an open platform where peddlers and traders sat, and where all sorts of barter went on. There they instituted a sale of all these goods and stuffs, some of them very old and of the most skilful workmanship; a crowd of vain or frivolous women and girls hurried up out of those notorious retreats where the social evil continued to lurk until they were swept away in the housecleaning of a new era, and they began to haggle and chaffer for the shimmering, glittering stuffs. Nor was it only women that rummaged and plucked at them, picking out the gaudiest pieces they could find to adorn their bodies, and buying them for little money, but here and there some incorrigible military dandy would pull out a cover or a vestment of perhaps Saracen manufacture, from which he intended to have a magnificent jacket cut for himself.

Jackie Geer watched this turbulent, unusual spectacle with astonishment, and even discovered the Snail of Agasul, the false prophet, tugging at an ancient dalmatic which was covered with lions and eagles of red and yellow silk, and seemed to be adapted to transformation into the dress of an officer in the New Jerusalem. In his haste, the prophet threw aside a longish carpet of handsome weave; Jackie picked it up, spread it out, and saw a charming design unfold before him. In a forest, indicated by some mountain-ash standing against a bluish ground, a thrush was sitting on a branch, and reaching for a bunch of blood-red berries to quench its thirst. A fox was greedily watching the unsuspecting bird, not dreaming that at his back a young hunter was bending his bow toward him, while death was already clutching at the youth's throat; but the last figure was the Saviour, who came through the wood and grasped death by the remnant of the lock that grew on the back of his bald pate. Since this cover or tapestry

* So-called from the shape of its roof.

could not be used for any garment, no one paid any further attention to it, and Jackie Geer, who found pleasure in it, bought it and folded it up with care. For at sight of the Snail he had suddenly thought of Ursula, and then the desire had wakened in him to give her the rug for the house which he still hoped to share with her; it was now nearly three years since he had returned from the war, yet he was not at home, for madness held him aloof.

Just at this very time there was to be on one of his own meadows a gathering of the fanatics of that district, who had now openly espoused the Anabaptist creed. During the summer Ursula had mowed the grass and toilsomely raked it into a pile, since no one else paid any heed to it and she, despite all the darkening of her soul, was unconsciously moved to look after Jackie's advantage. For although her father would be the first to profit, yet it afforded him a malicious pleasure to see Jackie's land go to waste, apart from the fact that his fanatical activities and speculation were already frequently standing in the way of necessary work. Moreover, he had been unable to hire any help for a good year, because all claimed to be his equal and none would obey him.

Ursula feared that the haystack which she had piled up on the meadow with so much toil might be trodden down and destroyed by the large gathering; so she went up there early in the morning of the appointed day with rake and pitchfork, in order to move the hay as far as possible to one side; but she told no one of her intention. The meadow was so situated that it was inclosed on three sides by woods, and while it was open on the fourth side, it could be seen only from a great distance, whence any happenings on it might perhaps have been made out through telescopes, if such things had existed then.

Now as she toiled and worked in the morning sunlight, in the midst of the mountain solitude, the pale, joyless countenance took on a faint red and was animated with gladness. While the autumn mists covered the valleys, it

was as warm up here as in May or June; so in her charming eagerness she threw aside head-dress and kerchief, blossoming out like a young rose as she bestirred herself for Jackie Geer with his gold ring glittering on her hand. For as often as she lay down to sleep at night, or was alone by day, she would immediately put his ring on her finger. Now and again she looked about her with sparkling eyes, now far into the hazy distance, where the mountain-tops stood in rows like bluish shadows, now into the near-by woods that surrounded her with masses of purple and gold, and her look was as mysterious as if her beloved might at any moment step forth from the trees.

Then on a sudden a portion of the foliage, a red and yellow bush, seemed to become animate and to walk toward her; it was the Snail of Agasul, who had altered the dalmatic into a sort of robe, provided it with sleeves, and put it on, to the end of appearing in it before the expected assemblage and assuming a lofty station. Upon his head he wore an old hat of blue velvet, which he had tied into a peak with gold cord, achieving an indistinguishable shape, and all his fingers were covered with glass jewels, which gleamed feebly in the October sun like insincere flattery.

With agreeable surprise he noticed the solitary Ursula, and he hastened his steps to come up to her, his eyes half blinded by this unguarded loveliness.

“I find you in a favorable hour, daughter of Zion,” he cried; “it is time you were raised to honor, and I have long since chosen you as the one to sit at my side on the seats of judgment and to lie at my side upon the couches of eternal splendor. Today is a great day, and much must be accomplished before the sun rises again.”

Without delay he attempted to grasp her and draw her to him; but she, aroused from her sweet dreams, repulsed his charge with her pitchfork, thrusting it at him so vehemently that the tines caught in his mummery, and as the prophet tried to free himself, the poorly fastened robe dropped from his body in several disconnected pieces, and



From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin.

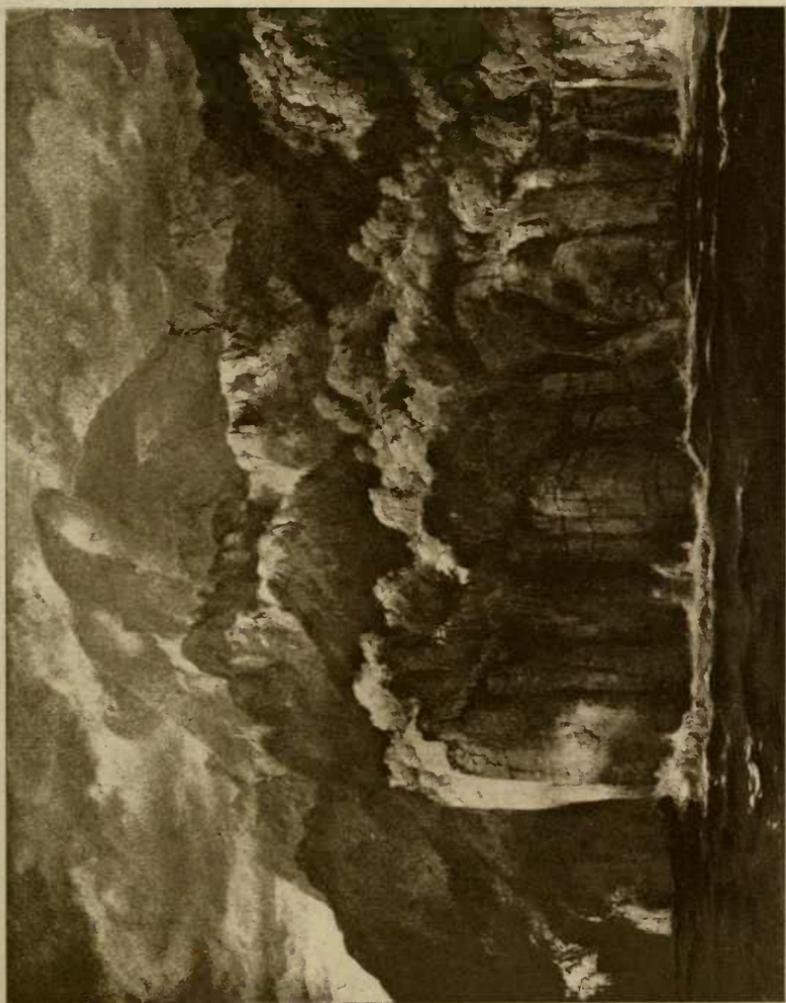
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PERHSSON PHOTOGRAPHISCHE UNION, NURNCH.

he stood there in worn and dirty underclothes. As footsteps approached at the same moment, he picked up the fragments with a curse and ran back into the thicket to cover his nakedness and to repair the sovereign garment as well as might be.

Leaning on her weapon, panting and frightened, Ursula looked after him as after some fiendish spectre that had wakened her from a dream; but at the same moment she uttered a still more terrified cry, as she felt herself clasped by two arms. Turning around, she saw the man of calm, Jakob Rosensteel the impassive, who, however, was now quite active in snatching bliss. He kept incessantly clutching at the parrying girl, and with great swiftness, whereby he gave himself the appearance of a swimming dog; but with equal assurance Ursula held him off with a single hand, while she surveyed anew and with astonishment the remarkable man, whom she had not taken to be so dangerous.

“You are right,” he said puffing, “not to want that fellow who is running away over there. He is too sharp and too ardent for your spirit, gentle in spite of your pitchfork. Share with me my delightful quietude of soul, peace under the palm-trees; there will abide full satisfaction and peaceful hours, until the Lord shall come and say: Aha, those two were not fools, they had a touch of paradise in advance.”

“Go, I don’t want you,” cried Ursula; “I know the angel and lord I am waiting for; he is handsome and slender, bright and clean of countenance, and not so draggle-tailed as you. Faugh, be off with you, you bag of ashes! Shame on you, folks are coming!”

And indeed several groups of men and women approached and began to assemble. But at the same moment old Enoch came running up and cried,

“Be gone, away! The governor of Grüningen is on the way with lance and sword! We are betrayed!”

All fled into the forest and disappeared as quickly as a

puff of wind; the mountain meadow was still and empty, and only Ursula came back from the side whither she had withdrawn unperceived, to continue her work unconcernedly, since she had only moved half of the hay to a more sheltered spot. But her thoughts, under the influence of her adventure and the ensuing stillness, swerved from their purpose; without knowing it she seated herself on the remainder of the hay-stack, supported her head on both hands, and subsided into deep reflection.

Meanwhile the Governor of Grüningen, whom Enoch had seen from afar, and who knew nothing of the Anabaptists' plans, but was simply going hunting with his suite, had taken another road and had vanished again from that district. But that which had lent his small train the appearance of an official or military undertaking was the accidental presence of Jackie Geer, who had marched at the head. As was natural in that day and state of things, he went in his full soldier's armor even on these peaceful roads, on which he was seeking Ursula with his newly purchased rug, and he had indeed looked not unlike a scouting advance-guard when he found the houses empty of people and started up the mountain to look for them. So while the Anabaptists were creeping about in the forest, he reached and walked slowly across his meadow, on which he had not set foot for years. Thus a man becomes a stranger on his own ground, he thought, and he himself hardly knows why.

"But who is still haying up here?" he went on in thought, as he noticed the hay-stack, the form sitting on it, and the rake and fork. Inaudibly he strode up to the unexpected apparition and now stood at his full height before the huddled girl, who had fallen asleep. As he stood in front of the sun, his shadow covered her and a slight shiver passed over her bare shoulders. But only when he called her by name did she awake and see his tall form, which stood out darkly against the shining sky, his shoulders alone casting a gleam of bright sunlit steel. But stately as he was to look upon, yet his soldierly splendor

and glory paled before the strange radiance of beauty that transfigured her face as she suddenly recognized him. And this beauty came into being in the absence of her spirit, as it were, like a sunbeam playing across a quiet water. Trembling the poor girl arose and stretched out her hands to the man with a smile; but her knees were unsteady and she sank back again, becoming aware as she did so of her half-uncovered bosom, which she covered with her hands, blushing and lowering her eyes.

“ Ursula, what are you doing here? ” said Jackie Geer, “ come, give me your hand and don’t cover yourself so timidly. ”

“ No, that isn’t proper, ” she whispered; “ I’m not so slovenly. ”

Jackie saw her kerchiefs on the ground and brought them to her, then sat down beside her and helped her put them on. Then he put his arm around her and kissed her.

“ And what are you doing here in the hay? ” he asked again.

For a considerable time she looked up at him, laying her head back on his arm, before she answered. But then she recollected herself.

“ Oh, what was I doing? I am caring for your hay, as is my duty, O fairest Angel, Lord Gabriel. Do you not know that you have a meadow here, and not one of the worst ones? ”

“ What do you call me? Gabriel? ”

“ Lord Gabriel, to be sure. Lord, Lord, Lord, I say, not just plain Gabriel. ”

“ Don’t you know Jackie Geer any more? ”

“ Jackie? Where is he? Oh dear, I completely forgot him! How sad the world is; and I was so fond of him! But that can’t do him any good now, nor me either; now I am betrothed to a Lord of the angels, a Baron in heaven, and so Jackie will get left, poor boy! To be sure I feel sorry for him when I think of his misfortune. So kiss me, Lord Gabriel, but softly, so that he can’t hear. ”

She said these things so prettily that Jackie could not refrain from kissing her again, and took occasion to look deeply and searchingly into her eyes; for he did not know whether she was jesting or raving, for this transcended all his experience. But he could discover nothing save an unfathomable flood of love, sadness, joy, and unconcern, which different things he could not quite keep distinct. And yet he had the feeling that only he was there, all by himself, and no second person near him. And yet she rested warmly enough on his arm; and when he played with her hand he found the ring which he recognized as his own.

“Where did you get the little ring?” he now asked; “did you get it from the Angel Gabriel?”

“How can you ask such foolish questions,” she answered, “you gave it to me yourself. But what sort of a bundle are you carrying?”

“That is a piece of tapestry that I brought you for your home. See what pretty pictures there are on it.”

He spread out the rug as well as he could; for she was quite unwilling to allow him that much freedom of movement, and clung tightly to him. She looked at the design without moving, but attentively and with understanding, and said thoughtfully,

“That is a very lovely piece, and I never saw one like it; it is easy to see that it was woven in heaven, and you brought it to me like a letter. The whole course of the world can be read on it; every one chases some one else, and last of all comes the Saviour and he overcomes death and all evil. That will make a suitable and elegant cradle-cover for our home. Ssh! Hush now, you wild bird, with your rustling wings and your whistling feathers. When the time has come you will see the purpose of this tapestry.”

Jackie Geer could no longer endure this playfulness, whose sweetness was for him mingled with bitter gall. He could not tell whether Ursula's speeches simply agreed with the hallucinations common to her co-religionists, or whether she had become under their influence personally deranged,

perhaps incurably so. He sprang up violently, shook himself until his armor rattled, and with blanching cheeks he cried,

“Come, Ursula, let us go down to the houses.”

Frightened and humble she stood before him. “I will follow you immediately, dearest Lord Gabriel,” she said, “for I can do this work here later, and whatever else there is to do.”

“Let the dry grass fly where it will, like our poor senses,” he cried again, “and come with me.”

He seized the rake and fork, while she immediately folded up the rug, hugged it tight, and hurried down the mountain at his side, quietly and hastily. Occasionally she timidly looked up at him; but if he returned her glance with sorrowful but loving eye, she would take courage, and as sky and landscape grew more and more sunny and pleasant, confidence and a feeling of happiness returned to the perplexed girl. She chatted and narrated this and that, and gave sensible answers to the questions Jackie put to her, suggested by the road they took.

His dwelling was the first they reached. Locked and shuttered, silent, it stood there like a dwelling of the dead, the ground before the door covered with fallen leaves which no one swept away. With a deep sigh he stood still; Ursula whispered softly in his ear:

“What are you looking for here? That’s where my old sweetheart lives, let us go on.”

“Why, is he at home, sitting in the dark?”

“Maybe. He has cheerful blue eyes, and he can do all sorts of things by their light, even when all the shutters are up. Do you hear? I think he’s pounding or hammering at something. Whoo! It makes me shudder!”

“Let’s see if he’s in there,” said Jackie, and he went toward the door. But Ursula ran ahead of him and put her ear to the keyhole to listen.

“Now he’s as quiet as a mouse,” she whispered; then

she knocked softly and politely on the door with a bent finger and cried half timidly, half roguishly, "Jackie?"

"He isn't in there after all," she said more valiantly, as everything was still and they heard only the murmur of the spring under the trees, unweariedly pouring its water into the trough on which the distressed Jackie had seated himself. He felt as if he were split in two, and was jealous of himself, because his simple mind could not follow along the erring paths which Ursula's thoughts were traveling, and he saw incomprehensible misery before him. In this distress he bethought himself of the Gospel and the almighty, merciful God who would surely see and hear him now, and he prayed a silent prayer for Ursula, to which he added an Our Father.

At once he felt relieved when he saw that Ursula had meanwhile taken the rake with a firm hand and had swept together all the fallen leaves before the door and in the whole yard, and had brushed them aside. And all the while she looked as healthy and as sensible as ever, until she was done and said,

"There, now at least he can walk properly when he comes, that same vagabond, and we needn't sing:

Brave Jackie shot at a flying dove,
While riding through the heather,
But his gray horse tripped on a fennel-bush,
And he missed it altogether.

Oh, an old love like that isn't so easy to weed out!" she continued pensively, sitting down beside Jackie, "and faithlessness is not very nice, either, no, and not good, let folks say what they will—and yet I feel so happy now! I am as light as a little bird in the air, as light as the tiniest bit of down lost by such a bird, that stands still between heaven and earth and doesn't know whether to rise or fall."

At this moment a few nuts dropped from the trees. He's coming, he's coming! Away, away!" she cried, and hurried off so fast that Jackie could scarcely catch her.

“Is it he? Did you see him?” she asked, as soon as he was beside her.

“Who?”

“Why, the man that lives there?”

“Don’t think of him now, for I am with you.”

“Yes, that is true, and he can’t do anything to me.”

Jackie now went with her to her father’s house and saw with surprise that almost as great neglect prevailed about it as about his own. The mother was sitting on the threshold with careworn features, with a gloomy, almost wild glance, and seemed to have aged greatly. She was holding a knife with which to cut a meal of carrots, but had dropped both hands, and her gray head drooped forward as she brooded.

“Mother, see who is here, glory is coming!” cried Ursula to her with rosy cheeks; “come, stand up, I will just go in and prepare a sweet barley porridge. You like that, don’t you, Lord Gabriel? Ah, just remember that if you would stay with us you must simply take pot luck.”

At once she hurried into the house and busied herself there. The old woman had looked up in surprise; when she recognized the soldier, she shrank slightly.

“My husband is not here,” she said, “if you want to settle with him; but anyway, he has no money now; you must be patient, the times will soon be better.”

“I need no money and can wait,” replied Jackie, “but I would like a settlement, to be sure, and I should like to ask you what you have done to your daughter Ursula.”

“How so, what do you know about her?”

“I met her out yonder and have been with her more than two hours; she claims I am the Angel Gabriel and talks like a madwoman. For I cannot believe that she is only making sport, that is not her way.”

“Those are simply things which are sealed to you and which are obscure even to the child; but she divines them and is filled with them. Things are happening and miracles will be done before you are aware of it.”

“They will come to a frightful end before you are aware of it; I fear Enoch is leading you all into misfortune with his sophistries.”

“On the contrary, I base all hope on him, and hold fast to him and his spirit,” said the afflicted woman in a tone that plainly said she was forced to combat secret doubts and only overcame them with difficulty when left to herself. And this showed in the unconscious foresight with which she refrained from giving utterance to any hostile feeling toward Jackie; nor did she use any harsh words or think of forbidding him any further intercourse with her child, although she must have known that it was against her husband’s wish.

“I do not know what to do,” said Jackie after a few minutes of silent reflection, “except to be patient and to wait for the time to come that will resolve all these entanglements. But I grudge these lovely years, our poor robbed youth. You old folks might have worked off this evil possession during your own spring-time, if it was so necessary, and then the young folks could be enjoying their days now.”

Ursula alone was of good cheer; she prepared the meal and came out to call Jackie and her mother to it.

“Do the angels eat barley porridge, too?” said the former with a sad smile, though he could not help but note with pleasure her busy and conscientious activity.

“At least they eat wheaten cakes and veal,” she cried merrily; “by the tent of Abraham the Patriarch in the plains of Mamre they sat at table, three of them, and did eat heartily.”

Not without a heavy heart did he resolve to part from her once more, but he suddenly took his leave and set out on his journey. Ursula walked some distance with him; then she looked after him until he vanished behind some rolling ground, and now she returned with sallow, bloom-forsaken face, as if deprived of her soul.

“I’m glad he was here for the child’s sake,” thought the mother, “now she’s had a happy hour again for once, so

she could recover a little." But when she saw Ursula coming back, she cried, "In the name of the Lord Christ! How you look! What misery is this?"

It was nearly evening when Enoch came home, and not in a good humor. The movement had spread widely and was throwing up great waves; but it had passed out of the hands of the petty prophets into those of more or less learned leaders who suppressed the worst follies and pursued more clearly seen ends. Much as Enoch distinguished himself everywhere with shouting and frantic buffoonery, still he could not get on top, but only contributed to the increase of perplexity and danger, hatred and passion.

In all threatened tumults and demonstrations he was one of the foremost, marching about in coarse sackcloth, strewing ashes on his head, and crying, "Zion, Zion!"

But at the same time he kept his eyes busily revolving and spying out the things he should desire and appropriate to himself after the general overthrow. The great mass of the devotees, however, as has at times been characteristic of this nation, resembled a man who is weary of passionate digging and grubbing, of lugging and carrying, brooding and worrying, and who suddenly boils over with wrath at his own cares and labor, and throws away his spade, only, however, to pick it up again of his own accord, after the disappearance of the mirage that enticed him.

But majority control retained the upper hand through all the confusion; again recourse was had to the living Word and the Bible, Anabaptism was invited to a public discussion, declared disproved and overcome, and sentenced: that is, on further persistence prosecuted, banished, or punished with loss of freedom and life.

Enoch Schnurrenberger was one of those who would not yield or were repeated backsliders; now he would become a fugitive, flitting about neighboring districts, now he would secretly return and seek to form new mobs of rioters or to join others already formed. On these numerous pilgrim-

ages he kept acquiring new fashions, airs, and spectacular tricks; he could eat fire, speak through the roof like God, die and be resurrected as often as he would—although these arts became burdensome to him with advancing age, especially dying, in which he had to throw himself violently on the floor and go into convulsions.

But one day, just as he was taking part in the practice of baptismal rites in a wood, he was captured with wife and daughter, whom he forced to share his roving poverty, and taken off to Zurich with a whole troop of other zealots. There were nearly twenty persons, who were first put into the hospital, then placed in the square before the city hall, and thereupon conducted to a high tower in the East wall of the city, since that time called the Heretic Tower, where with straw for beds and as little food as possible they were to end their days unless they abjured.

In the little train walked the Snail of Agasul and the impassive Rosensteel, who had joined this group once for all, because with them he never needed to provide for a lodging, sluggish as he was. In advance marched Enoch with commanding bearing, a few women bringing up the rear. Ursula supported her mother and carried in a bundle some clothes for them both, wrapped in Jackie Geer's embroidered rug. She looked about her timidly and with inquiring eyes; but when the people along the road scanned the procession with disapproving, even contemptuous mien, she no longer ventured to look up, whereas the defiant men sang and shouted: Here Jerusalem, here Zion!

Jackie Geer also stood by the roadside; his heart throbbed piteously within him, but he did not stir. As he could not live save amid common sense and order and clear air, so also he found civic honor necessary for his very breathing. But now since these deluded creatures appeared to be condemned criminals, as matters had turned out, and since a good part of them were indeed probably without honor, his thoughts after a painful struggle forsook his old affection and Ursula, and he let her pass him unseen.

In their tower the prisoners raised an uncanny clamor with their singing and shouting, especially on quiet nights, which at times degenerated into a widely audible howl of curses and cries, full of fear and distress, lightning and thunder, lamentation, death and the devil, destruction and annihilation, whereupon, at times, a song of triumph would suddenly ring out again.

Jackie could endure this no longer; he resolved that he would at least get Ursula out of the tower, if at all possible, and for several days watched his opportunity. The entrance to the tower was in a small wooden shed built against the wall and was not guarded, since the tower-guard, who lived in the topmost little chamber under the roof, locked the door from the inside and took the key up with him; but the Anabaptists were in about the middle of the tower. Moreover, there were no very strong locks on it, because the tower had not originally been planned as a prison.

One dark night Jackie took the necessary implements and a small lantern and went to the spot. He easily opened several doors and climbed the steep stairs, after he had kindled the lantern. It appeared that the captives were lying on an open floor which was only barred by a frail lattice. On this occasion the Anabaptists were sleeping, or at least were keeping quiet. Men and women lay side by side, naked and unkempt; Jackie threw his light on every face without finding Ursula. Finally he saw that she was lying off to one side on a bundle of straw over which she had thrown the rug with the figures of death and the Saviour. She was sleeping deeply and soundly, like one who had at last found an hour of rest after long and distressed watching. In order to avoid making any noise, he did not call to her, but merely touched her chin gently, and as this did not wake her, he seized her hand, on which his ring glittered in the pale gleam of the lantern. Struck by this, he was for a short time undecided whether to slip the ring from her finger and keep it himself. But in this instant Ursula opened her weary eyes, and he was hindered in his base design by the indescribable expression in them.

As in the dream of a dream she arose without noise or delay, gathered up the rug, and left the room hand in hand with her deliverer, with the sure step of a somnambulist; but before and behind them, like so many gray lemurs, whisked and flitted her aroused fellow-prisoners with light feet down the long stairs and away. Like a strip of mist driven by the night-wind, they glided along the city wall; and out of the adjacent Crown Gate, always open in time of peace, they scattered and vanished in night and fog. Ursula also had slipped away from Jackie Geer, without his knowing how; she herself did not come to full consciousness until the break of day, and it was natural that on the strength of her testimony the fugitives proclaimed a miracle, spreading abroad through the land that the angel of the Lord had led them out of prison. Two or three of them recanted again, and were captured and executed; Enoch Schnurrenberger strayed about the district of St. Gall with his family, and did not return till later to his native parts, where for a time he remained quiet and was left unmolested.

Jackie Geer, who had remained standing before the empty prison, had closed the doors as well as possible, put out his light, and quietly taken himself off. The upward look of the awakening Ursula at the moment when he was debating whether to take off her ring, had made such a deep impression on him that he spent many days in bitter repentance. To be sure he found it possible to believe that Ursula had voluntarily fled from him, whereas he had hoped to be able to keep her in the city and have her well cared for and nursed. But then again he was tempted to ascribe her disappearance to unclean powers, especially when he considered how the old woman had been able to get away with such witch-like swiftness, and the more so that he neither had nor could have any knowledge of the effects of such mental states as the captives exhibited.

The reports of the doings of the Anabaptists in the

regions where the fugitives now abode, of their aberrations and their horrifying rites, were of so repellant a nature that Jackie began to give up all hope of a turn for the better, and his first step was to accept a chance to sell his modest property on Mount Bachtel.

After subtracting the encumbrances on it, he cleared a tolerable sum, and was now as good as parted from his old home.

IV

So for a long time he neither saw nor heard anything of his little group of neighbors, and almost forgot them amid all the events of which he was a witness and an eager partaker in his modest station. The work of Zwingli and his friends had spread victoriously over all the flat lands of Switzerland and had come into touch with the Reformation in Germany; the powerful Canton of Berne had joined them, bringing with it a different temperament and a different political conception; manifold other bearers of the faith, with contrasting claims, exercised their varied influence, so that a very considerable mass was set in motion, here pressing forward rapidly, there advancing more sluggishly, while between these extremes floated vacillating, mediating parts;—and all this flooded about the firm Roman Catholic centres, which, immutable, crafty, and resolute, withstood the deluge like islands, relying on their tried and proven strength, and incited to resistance by the powers of the past which dwelt without the land.

Upon this sea that stormily surged back and forth, the little ship of state of Zurich with its helmsman Zwingli shot on far ahead without delay. With utter simplicity in his reliance upon the immediate personal providence of God, and with equal watchfulness and knowledge of men and things, he struggled indefatigably against the cunning and force of the opposing world; he was the soul of the public and the secret council, teacher and preacher, statesman and diplomat, and with the same pen he wrote theo-

logical treatises, moral ordinances, state documents, and military plans.

For at last the great cause had come to the point of martial settlement; the Reformer believed with sacred fervor that this world of resistance need only be forced to hear the word of God in order to yield, and instead of international treaties he simply carried the Gospel in his hand. But all this was intolerable to his opponents, and he did not know that a people can decline to accept a change of religion or government for the same reason that a woman refuses a suitor once for all.

But government and people now stood unflinchingly behind the master, although, to be sure, harmony and good understanding were in part the result of constant reporting and questioning of the parishes. Jackie Geer also, who was a good illustration of the spirit of the people, was well acquainted with these matters, and the leaders found him close at hand and engaged in useful activity when it was now decided to have recourse to arms.

The two camps in the first war at Kappel faced each other on the further side of the Albis Range; the Catholics were insufficiently prepared and few in number, but the Zurich army had the advantage both in strength and in the general political situation. Their allies had also set out with them and were mostly in the field, whereas the Austrian King Ferdinand, with whom the Five Places had an alliance, was making no preparations for actually assisting them.

As under these circumstances the Five Places were somewhat downcast, and as there were numbers of mediators and arbitrators in the field, the result was that Peace of Kappel which was to be of short duration, and which not only robbed the Zurich men of their advantage, but also injured the work they championed. During the period of the negotiations, however, the Zurich camp offered the novel spectacle of a Protestant army-camp, such as never occurred again, except perhaps under the Swedish King, or among

the Puritans in England, and in this model camp Jackie Geer played the part of a model soldier.

The drums beat daily for prayer and preaching; all were well provided with food and drink, but no drunkenness was permitted, nor cursing nor blasphemous speech. None might injure a plant in the field or carry off a fence-paling, and friendly behavior toward every one, even toward their enemies in the field, was the general practice. The younger men spent their time in singing merry songs, or in such games as make the limbs supple, physical exercises like putting the shot and broad-jumping; all common harlots were kept out, and any that appeared were driven away.

Jackie Geer was one of the most eager to maintain this order. For a young warrior (to be sure he would not be young much longer) he liked to pray almost too well, and too loudly and with too solemn a face, as if he would in time listen to himself with satisfaction,—although this was not the case, at least not yet, but might come to pass if things continued as they were. At any rate, he was not disinclined to hear himself talk, whereas formerly he had been more laconic. But this was a result of the course of the time and of the agitated partisanship in common affairs which controlled each individual.

But if he saw from afar a lad talking with a country-lass, or actually flirting with her, he would at once send thither a sentry to watch what was going on, and if ever a short-skirted army-hussy appeared, he felt like aiming at her the Mercury or the Venus that stood among the Zurich field-guns, and firing it off, and such a gay bird did well to fly back to the camp of the enemy, whence she had come. For there one could find woman aplenty, together with cards and dice, although food and drink were scarce.

Now as soon as the mediators and arbitrators in the field had so far influenced the spirit of both parties that peace could be negotiated, it was voted to discuss the same publicly before the assembled armies. First the Zurich army arrayed itself in an extensive circle around a high stage on

the open plain, on which was planted the banner surrounded by the other flags, according to the saying: "Zurich is where the banner floats." Beside them stood the captains and ensigns, but the corporals stood on the open field before their men, Jackie Geer among them; it was their duty to listen more attentively than the others to what was said, and Jackie did indeed stand there as serious and silent as a statue, as soon as the thirty representatives of the Catholic army, introduced by a bugler, appeared on horseback and stopped before the tribune.

First the arbitrators mounted the platform and delivered their speeches recommending peace, whereupon the Catholics had their riders dismount, go upon the tribune, and set forth their complaints, after which they rode away; now the Zurich leaders came forward with Zwingli at their head, to speak further and discuss what they had heard.

On the third day the Protestant representatives, nearly sixty men strong, rode over into the camp of the Five Places with the result of this consultation. There stood the army assembled in similar fashion, and now it was Zurich's turn to display its oratory before the Catholic troops.

Unfortunately they were not very strong in this particular. Zwingli himself, in view of the prevailing hatred of his person, could not have gone in any case; but the principal captains had never been very favorable to the Reformation and were only too anxious for peace, so that no great effect could be hoped for from their advocacy. There was nothing left for it but to choose a professional advocate as speaker, who, however, acquitted himself but poorly of his task before the attentive army of the Old Cantons, which was accustomed to regular public assemblies.

Hence a mood prevailed throughout the scene that was cool and, as it were, diluted; but then Jackie Geer stepped forward beside the leaders and took the floor, letting the popular sentiment of his party answer that of his opponents through him in a way that would have delighted Master

Ulrich. Briskly and comprehensibly he made them feel what was stirring the hearts of the Reformed Protestants and how they had entered upon the road they were going; what they regarded as just and reasonable, and how they would stand by their leaders to the death, yet were not opposed to a just peace, but were longing to return with joy to their old Swiss confederates, as soon as these had put their hand and seal to just and necessary articles of peace.

He was followed promptly by other soldiers from the rural parishes of Zurich, who defended with vigorous words their cause and that of their lords. From this demeanor the Catholic host gained a distinct impression that the population of the Reformed districts was of one mind and knew the goal it sought, and the assembly dispersed, pensive over what it had heard.

The arbitrators, men from Strassburg, Constance, Basle, Berne, and so on, eager and anxious to prevent the war and the evident cleavage of the Swiss federation, now went into session in the village of Steinhausen midway between the two armies, reducing or amending the articles of peace; these were then laid before both sides and after renewed consultation and delay were finally accepted.

Neither party was entirely satisfied; but at any rate the Reformed party had gained one important thing, namely that the Five Places should renounce any union with Ferdinand and hand over the treaty of alliance. The Magistrate of Glarus, who with moist eyes had first prevented the outbreak of hostilities and made the negotiations possible, cut the parchment to shreds with his dagger before all the people, with that satisfaction which well-meaning but not very far-seeing peace-makers feel at such moments.

The army of the Five Places returned to its mountains discontented and dejected, but the Zurich host returned to its city in a kind of triumph, with banners flying and bands playing.

The interpretation and execution of the peace-tractate

soon enough occasioned new difficulties and offense in all quarters, well-meant as the instrument was, and excellently drawn up as to strictly legal form and as to Swiss interests, despite its origin on the battle-field. For when the streams of past and present meet, bearing passions, pure or impure, on their tide, men of law are but poor dike-guards. As a sign of the renewed change for the worse there appeared a fresh inclination of the Five Places to enter once more into relations with the Austrian, contrary to the articles of peace; or again the constantly watchful readiness of the brother of Charles V. to separate the Swiss with his designing operations, yet without actually risking a single soldier.

It was such cunning as this which brought about the so-called War of Musso, through which Jackie Geer again took the field. The notorious bandit Jacob Medicis, whom Charles V. had made a Margrave and Castellan of Musso, a strong castle on Lake Como, raided the valleys of Kläven and Veltlin belonging to Graubünden, after having, before now, made similar bold raids and, through assassination, prevented the envoys of Graubünden from reaching Milan. His relative, Marcus Sittich of Hohenems, made a feint at rushing Austrian troops to his aid, and the plan succeeded to this extent that the attention of the Protestant districts was directed to this point. Zurich advised Berne and the other places to send aid to Bünden, and a sufficient force marched thither, drove the intruder out of the land without delay, drew from the government at Innsbruck a polite excuse for the unpleasant incident, and then handed over to the Duke of Milan and the Bünden army the task of continuing the war against the Castellan of Musso; also handing over the territory of his which they had taken. About two thousand men remained behind for the siege of the castle, to whose destruction the Swiss themselves were going to attend. These troops were put under the command of Master Stephen Zeller of Zurich, and the latter induced Jackie Geer to stay with him instead of marching back home with the rest.

The said Stephen Zeller, you must know, was a most pious, watchful, and reform-loving man, who had resolved to introduce here the good order of the camp at Kappel, after noticing to his distress that in the present campaign there had not been much of that Christian discipline visible, partly because there were among the soldiers many of the old dispensation, partly because they were outside of their own country and fighting a foreign foe. Instead of the God-fearing hymns which Zwingli had written in his old Toggenburg dialect and had set to music, the men were singing again, "Come, lass, tuck up your skirts," or "Be spry, my lads, and pass the bowl," and often they suited the action to the word, which by no means pleased the worthy captain; and it was just as an assistant and go-between against this demoralization, and as a sort of model soldier, that he had kept Jackie with him. The latter met the demands made upon him with great zeal; with unalterable seriousness he sought to maintain discipline and order, gave a good example of moderation and morality in person, and was of great assistance to the captain, who visited and inspected all the posts and guards in person, both by day and night.

The besieged robber-baron was well provided with all sorts of munitions and with men, and his nest was extraordinarily strong; and however sharply the Swiss peppered him, with the aid of an excellent artillery-officer whom the Landgrave Philip of Hesse had sent to Zurich, he returned their fire with equal zeal, and there was need of every precaution to avoid damage from it in the exposed positions.

But in the meantime the soldiers, egged on by old-time mercenaries, took offense at the rigid discipline in which they were to be held, and hoaxed the captain wherever they could. Soon this degenerated into regular hostility and calumny, which some of them managed to convey to Zurich, so that the captain was asked to report on it and was on his part vexed and offended.

The ill-will of many of the malicious fellows was natu-

rally directed against Jackie also, who faithfully stood by the captain and was called by them the Virtuous Verger; and when they thought they could lay a trap for him, they were reluctant to forbear. Not without a trace of self-righteousness did he endure such injury, going his way all the more incorruptibly and solemnly.

One fine day in September, when the shooting had ceased, he left the circle of the camp and walked along under the heavenly sky which arched above the dark blue of Lake Como. He finally came to a house in which a tavern-keeper from Milan had established himself, taking advantage of the campaign and the presence of the various armies, to sell not only good wine but all kinds of merchandise such as soldiers in the field like to buy. A couple of buxom nieces assisted him in the business and proved as much of an attraction to the Milanese and Swiss soldiers as his wines.

And indeed ten or twelve brave Confederates were sitting carousing in a stone arcade, to which a long, half-dilapidated stairway led.

"There goes the Virtuous Verger," said one, as he saw Jackie striding past.

"Call him up here," cried a second, "let's pickle him!"

The first immediately called down to him,

"Corporal, here are good comrades and good wine, have a glass!"

Jackie Geer reflected that he could perhaps prevent some disorder and manage a timely return to camp if he joined them for an hour or so, and he clambered up into the Castle of Jollity and sat down with the carousers.

The dark wine was really so fresh and good that it warmed his cool heart, and Jackie yielded to his imbibing comrades more than was profitable, especially as the golden weather and the seemingly harmless merriment of the company claimed their due and made him forget his solemn whimsies. Only the pretty waitresses kept him from wholly forgetting his scruples. Yet he did not deign to

look at them much, but bore himself like one to whom such things are foreign.

But then a jug of wine for which he stood treat was unexpectedly brought in by the finest figure of a woman he had ever seen, tall and elegant, with dark braids and still darker eyes, and richly clad in green silk, breast and arms veiled in voluminous white muslin. "That's the tall Fresca (i. e., Frances) of Bergamo" was the word among the soldiers, but Jackie did not hear it, for he could do nothing but gaze at this uncommon vision, whose movements betrayed not the slightest immodesty, but rather a smiling assurance, and who promptly sat down at his side when he pulled out his well-filled purse merely as a pretext for a moment's conversation with her; for words failed him, despite the unusual spirits into which he had been unconsciously thrown by the wine. Again and again he was forced to look at the nobly formed face, the slender figure, the broad breast with its high-arched frame, all of which seemed formed for a prince rather than for poor soldier-boys; and many and handsome as were the women he had already seen in Italy, never in his life had such a one been among them.

As often as she arose and went away, she would always return to him, and without being impolite, she simply had nothing to do with the others. The strict corporal neither saw nor heard anything but this beautiful woman, who conversed with him quietly and familiarly, and yet who looked into his eyes not like a person of doubtful character but like a stanch and good friend, asking about his home and his history, his habits and likes.

The evening slipped away, night fell, the stars twinkled in the sky and on the mirror of the lake, but Jackie did not notice that his comrades had stolen out one after another, and that even the landlord and his tribe had disappeared, until the tall Fresca said in her melodious voice,

"It is getting too cool here, we must go inside, if you care to drink another glass."

They went into the adjoining chamber, which was also empty and quiet, and dimly lighted by a lamp hanging from the ceiling. He was now deeply in love, his heart throbbed in the fulness of the joy of life which had suddenly awakened in him from its long sleep, and as the excessive draughts of wine he had taken had befogged his judgment, while at the same time he was at bottom an honest man, the plan now popped into his mind, as she rested silently and seriously in his embrace, to take this glorious being along with him and marry her, if she would have him, for she seemed in her own person to represent happiness and a great fortune. At the same time her liking seemed to him by no means sure beyond a doubt; on the other hand, it was surely worth trying to save the soul dwelling in such a body and snatch it away from the Papists.

While weighing such thoughts in his heated head, he toyed with the woman's white hand and brought to view a gold ring which she wore on one finger. Suddenly he noticed that the ring resembled exactly the one he had once given to Ursula, and that it must be its twin, made by the same goldsmith.

Jackie grew pale; for the dear pallid countenance of poor Ursula rose up before his soul and cast its reflection on his face.

"What ring is that?" he asked with a strained voice.

"That is a ring from my sweetheart, who is going to marry me," the fair Fresca calmly replied.

"Where is he and what is he?"

"He's really a baker and tavern-keeper, but of late years he has been a bandit, because things have gone badly with him. Now he is a fugitive and is hiding in Naples, because he was paid by a great lord to kill a count and was found out. As soon as I have earned enough I'm going to join him, and then we'll start up an inn and a bakery somewhere in the south. I'm going to Rome soon, where I have a sister who is living at a cardinal's."

"And are you really going to stick to your betrothed, when he's a murderer and an outcast?"

“Why not? He isn't an outcast, but only a poor wild fellow who needs to have folks help him and care for him. We have been sweethearts from childhood and we'll never give each other up.”

So this lost girl keeps faith with a banished murderer and clings to him, Jackie thought to himself, and you, miserable wretch, first forsook and now wanted to betray poor Ursula's innocent soul.

By this time he had already become sober again; the sweat stood out on his brow, and he had released the strange woman, feeling an aversion for the incomprehensible mixture of calm, practical behavior, base calculation, love, consistency, and shamelessness which cropped out in this noble form.

“Good night,” said he; “will you light me out?”

“Where are you going?” she asked in surprise, but quietly; “come this way through the kitchen, that's the better way.”

But he would not listen to her and went to the arcade through which he had come and began to descend the dangerous stairway in the darkness; for the fair one had slammed the door shut behind him without a word, instead of lighting him. Soon he missed his footing on the worn stone steps and plunged down into a dense laurel bush, which fortunately kept him from serious injury. Yet it cost him some trouble to extricate himself, get on solid ground, and find his quarters.

“Can it be, can it be?” he said to himself over and over, without being clearly conscious in his confusion whether he meant the tall Fresca or himself. For he was even taller than the woman and of sterner stuff, and yet he had fallen.

On the next day he showed no cheerful countenance when he met his fellow-carousers, who eyed him knowingly and followed him up with half-audible gibes.

“You are right and wrong too,” he said as he turned upon them, “but you have done me more good than harm.”

“ Why, that was just what we wanted, Corporal,” they cried laughing, “ who would wish you any harm? Today is another day, and you can calmly keep on with your virtuous works! ”

A message and a commission with which he was unexpectedly sent to Zurich by the leaders just at this time met his own desire very opportunely, and he set out in the selfsame hour.

At home matters had again begun to presage civil war and were surging forward toward that crisis which resulted in disadvantage to Zurich from the unfortunate battle of Kappel, leaving the Reformation just where it stood.

The city of Zurich was now well provided with scholars and theologians, and a spirit of wisdom and superiority filled it; every one carried the Holy Writ and the Tractates in his hand, and the universal display of conscious wisdom offended and irritated not only their Catholic opponents, but even their friends. The stronghold of Berne, where worldly diplomacy prevailed over that of the clergy, felt this pedantic spirit just as disagreeably, so that when Zurich in excess of zeal had worked itself into a dangerous position by violent infractions of law and by partiality, one of the Regents, who was urging some overt act, was given to understand by a Regent of Berne that the Zurichers would surely be able to get along alone, since they were so clever.

V

Enoch Schnurrenberger had recently returned with his family, after the neighboring districts had been cleared of Anabaptism on account of too great excesses, and after the sectarians had long since grown quiet in these parts and their doings been forgotten, the real leaders being dead, exiled, or imprisoned.

Enoch alone could not desist altogether; the less he was noticed and watched, the more he felt impelled to make a

showing and to find a new form in which to await the great day and the millennium, where he was absolutely bent on being director or at least cashier.

His latest device was to interpret and practise literally the saying: "He that humbleth himself like this little child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." And so on the morning of the 10th of October, 1531, he and the followers who had remained with him and secretly accompanied him, had gathered at his remote farm and were playing at being children instead of attending to their work. He was bent and shriveled and had a long white beard which fell almost to his waist. Squatting barelegged, on the floor of the living-room, in an old red petticoat, which was to represent a child's dress, he was building of boards a little wagon which he loaded with chaff, groaning with childish sounds: Lo lo lo, da da da, in which employment however his recently contracted asthma was a considerable hindrance.

The Snail of Agasul had fashioned himself a walking-frame out of fence-palings, in which he staggered about, a sucking-bag in his mouth. Occasionally he would remove this and cry,

"Snail I am called, a snail I am, and yet I can catch up with the swift Lord God who rides on the hurricane."

Cold Veerts of Gossau had tied a rope about a foot of the stove and was incessantly lashing the stove with a whip, now crouching on the floor, now riding the stove like a horse.

But Jakob Rosensteel had chosen the better part; he was lying on a sack of straw in a corner and represented a child in its cradle, attempting to put into his mouth the great toe of his right foot, which was not very well possible on account of his corpulence.

A few women were dragging pine-cones around the room on long strings, either because they could not think of any other plaything to get, or because they had got the idea from their own little ones.

At times all these aged folks would assemble, form a ring, and dance in a circle, singing children's songs, clapping their hands, and hopping up and down.

Enoch's old wife stood before the hearth in the kitchen, holding under her arm a rag-doll. A child's cap, in which Ursula had been christened, she wore on her gray locks, to which it was slightly attached, but in such a way that it sat awry over her left ear. This had an uncanny effect because of the expression of hopeless sorrow that abode on her wrinkled face; for she was beginning to believe that she herself could not enjoy the advantage of her husband's cleverness, and that he himself would not live to see his triumph. She was preparing barley porridge for the entire company.

Ursula was sitting alone before the house under the maple-trees, whose beautiful autumn foliage with its jagged outlines spread over her a golden sky interwoven with blue. She herself looked neither gay nor sunny, but was gloomily and darkly wrapped from head to foot in clothes and remnants of brown and gray, such as she had been able to gather together; her feet were shod with stout field-shoes and on the bench beside her lay a tightly strapped bundle and against it leaned a stick; for she had been saying for weeks that she would tramp away with the Angel Gabriel as soon as he was well. The latter she was holding in her arms in the shape of a St. Sebastian, a wooden manikin about eighteen inches in length. Her father had once taken the little image from an altar during the plundering of a chapel and had brought it home in order to have some sport with it, but Ursula had taken it away and hidden it, because in her eyes it resembled Jackie Geer or rather that angel, on account of its blond hair and blue eyes; for the wooden image had still been fairly fresh as to paint. She had carefully pulled out the wire arrows sticking in it, and now every day she would bind up the red dabs of wounds with strips of white linen and lovingly wrap up the little Lord Gabriel, each time trying in vain to loosen the tiny hands fastened to its back.

She never looked at her angelic betrothed except when she thought herself undisturbed, and just at this moment she was once more wrapping him up in his bandages and cloths, twisting and turning the figure with the greatest nimbleness.

Inside the house they went on playing in their own fashion; at times one or another would deliver a short sermon in childish style; then they ate the scanty rations they had collected and pretended to squabble over the larger morsels like little children. Ursula, however, came and got some food and again withdrew to one side with her swaddled sweetheart. But as it drew toward evening, Enoch suddenly rose and said in his usual undisguised voice,

“ Now, children, we’ve done enough for today. Let us stop working now and sit together for a while.”

Immediately they all leaped up with a feeling of gladness, or as quickly as they could at their various ages, stretched their limbs, scratched their legs, and then sat down without delay around the table, where as of old they commenced playing cards with sober seriousness.

But they had been putting their heads together and slapping the cards on the table in this solemnity for scarcely half an hour, when the doors were thrown open and two armed men dashed in so excitedly that the players shrank back and thought that the power of the government was again let loose over them. But it was their neighboring farmer who had bought Jackie’s farm, with his son.

“ Why, don’t you hear anything that goes on in the world? ” the men cried; “ open your windows! Corporal Geer is riding through the villages like the wild Huntsman and collecting troops! The Five Places are on the march and are standing on the border in great numbers; every one must go to Zurich! Don’t you hear the alarm ringing? Give up your tomfoolery and defend house and home, as well as you can; and whoever has the strength, let him go with us! For with you more than with most it’s a question of life and death.”

With that they ran out and down the mountain. The frightened zealots came out of the house and heard the alarm-bells ringing everywhere, and the drums beating, and they saw the fire signals flaming on the watch-stations far out across the land.

With astonishment they looked and listened; but all feeling or understanding for the significance of the moment had forsaken them; nor did they get into either a merry or a derisive mood, because they were anything but easy in their minds, indeed badly frightened, and so all they could do was to gape stupidly out into the night of excitement.

But Ursula, who had been sitting day-dreaming in the corner by the stove, had raised her head at the neighbor's words, and when she heard Jackie's name she had immediately dropped the wooden doll, seized bundle and stick, and quietly left the house. For a short time she harkened and peered out into the dark world, seeing the fires and hearing the alarm-bells; then without further delay she strode off in the direction of the lower lands, whither the two armed men had gone. In the next village she saw a small troop of defenders who had already assembled; they marched on and joined others on the road, and so it went all through the night, until the hurrying men reached the city; and unceasingly the dark form of Ursula marched and marched along unseen behind the soldiers, and with them passed through the gate unmolested.

All the streets were illuminated and there were cries, commands, footsteps, and the noise of arms. The advance guard had already marched off to Kappel that afternoon; now it was only the surprised common people that slowly gathered. They were put in line and counted, and fed and watered with what there was. Ursula slipped in and out among the surging crowds and saw Jackie Geer clearly and distinctly in the light of the torches, as he now went up and down on foot quite calmly, helping to arrange the columns. She now recognized him for the first time as himself — as she recollected later — but took good care to keep out of his

sight, and as good care not to lose him from hers. When he went into a house after daybreak she seated herself not far off on a curbstone and rested there with veiled head. But when the banner finally moved away about noon, she had already gone ahead on the road toward Mt. Albis, and was slipping undismayed through the forests adjoining the road.

Half way she rested again and through the trees watched the army pass by, incomplete to start with and marching in confusion. Horsemen, cannon, and infantry were jumbled together; but the deep seriousness which rested on the marching throngs, and their handsome appearance, unusual in Ursula's eyes, struck her like a breath of pure air. Among the stately men who rode near the banner was Ulrich Zwingli himself, and his attractive look brightened further the spirit of the intent girlish spectator. The slender man was wearing a good suit of steel armor over the long robe of scholar or preacher, his head was shielded by a peculiar round steel helmet with a broad brim, against his shoulder rested an iron halberd with short shaft, or rather a battle-axe of graceful lines, and on his left side hung his sword. But despite all these weapons there dwelt on his handsome features a piously resigned expression, full of sorrowful foreboding; his lips prayed half perceptibly, but the prayer rose with such visible sincerity from the depths of his heart that a bright ray of health and gentle comfort passed from this apparition into her tortured breast, and so she nearly overlooked Jackie, who was following the vanishing leader at the head of his troopers.

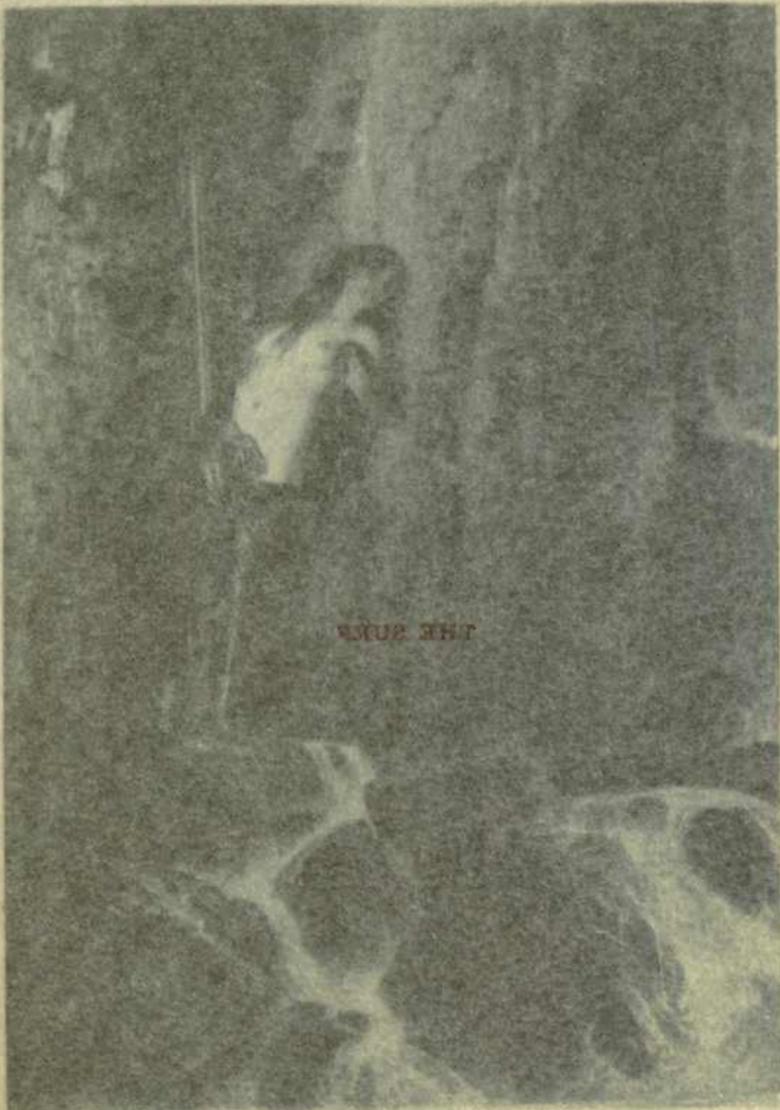
But she did not stir and continued her journey only after the column had passed her and crossed the summit of the mountain, and was beginning to assemble. In a wide circle the colorless figure, hardly distinguishable from the earth, passed around all the manœuvres of the little army, whose principal reënforcement was still to come, whereas allied troops were lying inactive far off to the westward, and their brother enemies were marching onward eight thousand strong.

She was now standing before that grove to the left of the Zurich position whose occupation had been neglected, and she could see both armies; the artillery-battle, however, which had begun some time before, drove her back among the trees. She found an old beech whose stout roots formed a hollow, and which also inclosed a small cavity in the earth; into this shelter she snuggled and sat there quite secure, as she thought. Now she quickly opened her little haversack, as the time had come to take some refreshment, and took from it a flask of wine and a piece of dried meat and bread, of which she ate and drank in tolerably good spirits; for was she not breathing the same air as the man whom she was following?

But now on a sudden there was a crackling and booming among the trees and behind her; the few sharpshooters of Uri who had spied out the position of the Zurich army and the possibility of flanking it at this point had occupied the grove and were shooting from it, whereupon a part of the Zurich guns were turned in this direction, so that the balls crashed into the trees above Ursula's head.

She sat motionless and still, and no eye perceived the cowering grayish-brown little heap of human life.

Then it grew quiet about her again; the marksmen had left the grove to call out the main force of the Catholics, as yet undecided to attack. Then the storm did indeed approach at Ursula's back; the host of the Five Places burst by thousands through forest and thicket and then out of them in both directions, so that, as the chronicler says, there arose such a mighty clashing, crackling, and roaring as if the earth were quaking and the forest bellowing. Ursula crouched down with folded hands; but it seemed as if it would never end. To the right and left, ever new regiments of fierce men rushed incessantly past her, but she saw scarce anything but their broad feet, beneath which the forest ground with all its underbrush was soon transformed into a trampled army road. Fortunately the old beech among whose roots she sat divided



THE SUICIDE

From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin

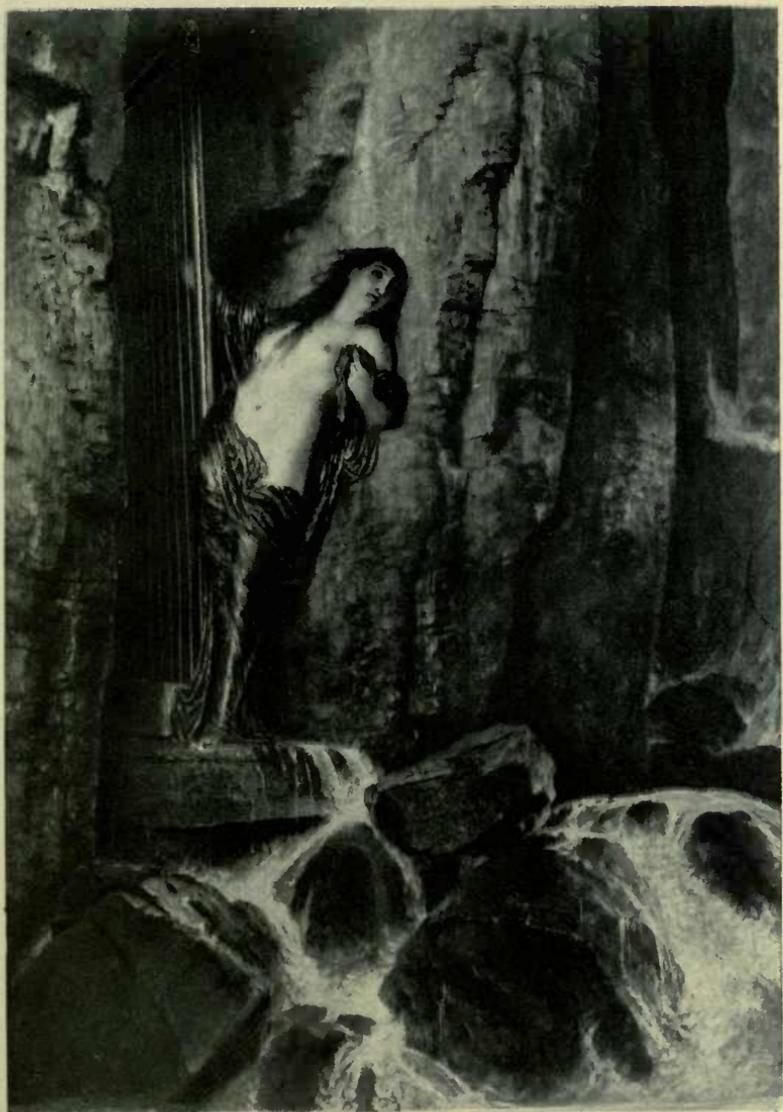
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the stream of the furious army at her back; all the more deafening was the noise of war-horns, trumpets, and drums in her ears, and at the last she leaned back half in a faint against her stout and secure tree-support.

Finally, however, it again grew still about her. The last men had hurried past, and the entire army was now between her and the thin battle-line of the Protestants, who were moreover just in the midst of a wheeling movement.

Now Ursula heard the cry of the attack shake the air, as the act of vengeance for supposed or genuine spiritual contempt was begun with a storm of imprecations, and the terrible salute returned with equally loud and bitter abuse.

Hereupon she heard the clashing of an impassioned conflict, which however did not last long, since from this hour the battle took the calamitous course which was written in the stars for the hosts of Zurich.

The sun neared its setting; among the fallen on the field lay all but a few of the most prominent Zurichers who had marched out to fight, nearly thirty Councillors, as many Protestant pastors, often father and son and brothers side by side, country folk and city folk. Zwingli lay forsaken under a tree. He had not fought, but had manfully stood in the ranks with his men, to suffer what was destined for them. He had fallen more than once after the flight began, but had risen again, until a blow that struck and cleft his helmet riveted him to mother earth.

The setting sun shone into his face, still firm and peaceful; it seemed to him to be testifying that he had after all done right and administered his office like a hero. Like the great golden cosmic Host of the purified Eucharist the beautiful orb floated over the earth one last moment and drew to the sky the glance of the dying man.

From the Rigi as far as Mt. Pilatus, and thence far off into the dimly gleaming Jura Range there stretched a gray cloud-bank with a purple edge, like some vast divine throne. But upon it upright formations of fleecy clouds were floating in a rosy light, like a procession of spirits that halts

a moment. Doubtless these were the saints that were calling the hero into their midst, and here were not only the saints of the Old and New Testament and of the Christian Church, but, as he had once written to King Francis I., honest pagans such as Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios. And Pindar was there too with glittering cithara, for whom the dying man had once written an enthusiastic preface.

But he whom Ursula had been following with foreboding, vagrant impulse, was also lying lifeless, stretched out some fifty paces from the spot where the worthy guardian of the banner had fallen in a successful attempt to rescue it. Jackie Geer had fought manfully and had repeatedly helped to repulse the first attacks. When confusion and flight began, and the banner had been lowered, he heard, himself carried away by the swirling masses, cries of "Rally to the standard!" Opposing some of the advancing enemies, he fought the attackers as best he could, cutting and thrusting, but was forced to retreat step by step, and failing to look behind him he fell backward into the ditch which had been so fateful for the battle. In heavy armor as he was, he had fallen heavily and lost consciousness from the shock, and now lay at the bottom with his feet up.

When night had descended on the land, and Ursula could perceive that the battle was over, she issued from the grove. She saw the field covered with the numerous fires of the victors, and heard their shouts of joy. At once she clearly saw who had won the day, but felt not a moment's hesitation about going forward and over the battle-field. Nor did any one pay any attention to her as she now slipped about like a spirit of the night; for many women from the victors' camp were running about among the men. Wherever she saw people busied about dead or wounded, she stepped forward, but did not find what she feared, and hopefully she steered a course that would gradually take her out of the Catholic camp and among the wreckage of the Zurich army.

From one of the sentry-fires she had drawn a burning pine-knot unobserved, and now she piloted herself unterrified through this strange nocturnal world, full of exuberant joy, misery, and mortal terror. It was already growing darker and quieter when she came to a foot-bridge leading over the mill-ditch. She looked to one side as if by chance and saw a beam from her torch strike a bit of armor lying at the bottom of the ditch. Without delay she turned about and descended along the bush-covered bank, where a corpse lay among willows. But it was not Jackie; yet she walked along the bottom of the ditch, through which the water flowed a winding course, and found another silent man, also not the right one. But the very next one she came to was he. She recognized him at the first glance. Instantly she grasped his legs, which were pointing up the bank, and began to pull them down and then laboriously to raise his head; not until that was done did she throw herself upon him and put her ear to his mouth. He was still breathing, but gave no other sign of life; yet there was no trace of blood to be seen either on him or near him. Hastily she fumbled at helmet and breast-plate without getting them clear, and she began to sigh deeply, especially after her torch fell into the water and went out.

Now two men appeared above with a torch and threw the light upon her.

"There's another one down there that's about gone," said one, and the other returned,

"Let's climb down, perhaps it's one of ours."

"Zounds, it's a couple," they cried, when they had descended.

"I've seen him, too," continued the first, as he threw the light on the fallen man's face.

"And I too, but I don't know where," replied the second soldier, who also looked softened and humane, like his comrade.

"Who is the man that lies there, and who are you, shade of the night?" they asked Ursula.

“It is Corporal Jackie Geer, and a good man,” she answered imploringly; “have pity, good gentlemen, and help him, for he is still alive.”

“As God lives, this is that Jackie,” and “An honest old comrade! How the years go by,” cried the two full of wonderment. “But who are you yourself and how did you happen into this ditch?”

“I am a neighbor of his and an old playmate, and was betrothed to him; and I followed him without his knowledge.”

“Well,” said the first, “a man that the Lord has granted such a faithful friend mustn’t be forsaken. Come then, you field-ghost, we’ll help you.”

The commander of the triumphant army had just proclaimed to the sound of the drum that no further wounded or prisoners should be slain, and so the two men, who came from Schwyz, had no difficulty in dragging Jackie out of the ditch and carrying him to the monastery of Kappel, whose Protestant abbot was also lying on the field; it was already filled with wounded.

Through the foresight of the two men, Jackie was conveyed to a decent bed in a small cell; Ursula did not move from his side and watched every breath he drew. Not until the third day did he recover consciousness; but within a week he could leave his bed, and when he had completely recovered, since there was no sign of a wound, and he had regained full command of his senses, he found in closest proximity, as close as he could have desired, her whose cure had been no less miraculously effected by the course of events than his own.

She had not the least idea how she had left her home, and yet her thoughts and her eyes were now wholly sound and clear. The happiness which she felt soon helped to restore her blooming cheeks; for she was like a plot of blessed ground, which immediately grows green when touched by a single sunbeam and a single drop of dew.

When the first consequences of the battle and also the

further confusion resulting from the war had disappeared, Jackie Geer took Ursula to wife according to the regulations of the existing administration, which she no longer opposed, and retired with her to her own farm, where old Enoch had taken leave of this world, obediently followed by his bowed and decrepit old wife into the New Jerusalem. But she had experienced the consolation, though to be sure behind her husband's back, of seeing her daughter married and happy.

The Corporal and his wife lived as worthy members of their nation, which instead of tormenting government and leaders with discontent, after that battle, or heaping them with reproaches for the common misfortune, encouraged them to be steadfast, and assured them of its joy in sacrifice, though not without adding its honest opinion about this or that matter which might perhaps be improved. And Jackie was one of those men in the district who lifted their voices with benevolent frankness, but at the same time upheld the interest of the community with unflinching integrity. Nearly two hundred years his descendants dwelt on the well-managed estate, which was called Geer's Farm.

As for the minor prophets, the good couple would always serve them a glass of wine or cider whenever one of them came to the farm with some new diversion. For they always had some buffoonery on hand, although they no longer preached. But their type still occasionally haunts the district around that mountain.

SONG OF THE EVENING*

By GOTTFRIED KELLER



OU my eyes, my little windows dear,
 Leave me yet a while your vision clear,
 Welcome many pictures in with cheer —
 Sometime soon you will be dark and drear!

And when once these weary lids will close,
 Then the soul shall rest — when darkness grows;
 Groping, off she strips her shoes and goes
 In her coffin black to find repose.

Still she sees two little sparks that gleam:
 Like two tiny inward stars they beam,
 Till they fade and vanish like a dream,
 Blown away by moth-wings' beat they seem.

Yet I'm wand'ring still at eventide,
 Only fading stars as friends abide.
 Drink, my eyes, what e'er can be espied
 Of the glories in this world so wide.

WINTER NIGHT*

By GOTTFRIED KELLER

NOT a wing was beating in the night,
 Dazzling white and peaceful lay the snow,
 Not a cloud hung o'er the starry light,
 Frozen was the lake — all calm below.

There a tree was growing from the deep,
 In the ice its crown was frozen fast;
 And the mermaid climbed the branches steep,
 Peering through the greenish ice at last.

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

There I stood upon the glassy sheet—
 Glass that barred me from that depth so dark,
 Well I could, beneath my very feet,
 All her white and wondrous beauty mark.

At the hard, hard roof, from place to place,
 Still she gropes, from stifled anguish sore;
 I shall not forget that dusky face,
 In my mind it lingers evermore!

SUMMER NIGHT*

By GOTTFRIED KELLER

THE grain is waving far around,
 And like a sea it stretches out;
 And yet upon the silent ground
 No horrid sea-brood lies about;
 But here of wreaths the flowers dream
 As they drink in the star-shine blest,
 Oh, golden sea, thy peaceful beam
 My greedy soul absorbs with zest!

There is a custom fair and old
 In my own home in valleys green:
 When bright the summer starlight's gold,
 When through the bushes fireflies sheen,
 Why, then a whisp'ring, waving gay
 Draws near the ripened field by night,
 And through the golden crops there sway
 The sickles, gleaming silver-bright.

For, flocking to the field in throngs,
 The young and sturdy lads draw near;
 The crop they're seeking that belongs
 To widow or to orphan drear

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.
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Who never the assistance knows
Of father, brother, servant boy—
For her the band her harvest mows,
Their work is graced by purest joy.

Already all the sheaves are bound
And swiftly in a ring they're laid.
How blithe the fleeting hours were found:
At night-time cool the boys have played!
Now there are songs and revels glad
Among the sheaves, till breath of day
Each brown and never weary lad
To his own labor calls away.

CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

By GUSTAV GRUENER, PH.D.

Professor of German, Yale University



LITERARY critics have found it an almost impossible task to classify Conrad Ferdinand Meyer in any of the accepted schools or groups of German authors, to assign to him his proper place in the history of German literature. He is a Swiss by birth; his most ambitious work, *Jürg Jenatsch*, has become a popular, national tale; in his epic *Engelberg* and in his poems he has sung the beauties of Switzerland's mountains and valleys; in countless touches his love of country shines out in his works; yet practically all writers agree that his writings betray almost none of the specific national traits that characterize the works of Gotthelf or Keller. Even his vocabulary is almost without dialect. He has been grouped with Freytag, Riehl, and Scheffel as a historical novelist, yet, for Meyer, history as history was of subordinate interest; it furnished him merely the background for his tales of men and their destinies. In his works he started from some psychological problem challenging literary solution. He was interested in his characters, in men, and only secondarily in the political or social conditions of their times. In common with the writers of the Romantic School, Meyer found in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation the most interesting setting for his stories and ballads. His style also shows some of the literary influence of the Romanticists. Yet with all his romantic background and atmosphere, Meyer is as much of a realist as Gottfried Keller in his literary point of view and in the presentation of characters and plot. The serene dignity and objectivity of his style might rank him with the classical writers.

Meyer's personality and his artistic development present

equally perplexing aspects. His native tongue was German, he was brought up in a German atmosphere, yet for years he was in doubt as to whether he ought not to write in French. From his earliest years it was his dream and ambition to make of himself a poet, yet he came near taking up painting as his life work. His enthusiasm for the French language and literature, nurtured by delightful association with a cultivated circle of friends in Lausanne, started him upon his literary career. A visit to Italy and the overpowering impression made upon him by Italian art inspired him to persist in that career, filled him with high artistic ideals, and set before him a lofty goal of achievement. Yet the immediate cause of his first real literary success (*Hutten's Last Days*) was the outburst of enthusiasm aroused by the unification of Germany and the restoration of the German empire. As his sister says:*

“He was, without realizing it, a bold, proud Ghibelline and at the same time a loyal Swiss Republican.”

Though from his boyhood a literary career had been his ambition, though he had been working and training himself for years for such a career, yet he reached the mature age of forty-five before he achieved acknowledged success in the field of letters—an almost unparalleled late literary development.

So, too, in his personality. He was an affable, approachable man, of marked courteous manners, fond of society when he did go out, kindly and charitable toward all. Yet for years he held aloof from all society, had few, if any, really intimate friends, kept himself almost entirely apart from his literary contemporaries, and, though devoted to his sister, did not open his soul and heart to her completely. He stood alone as an author and man. Of him we can say what Hutten, Meyer's hero, once wrote in jest of the great Erasmus, *est homo pro se*.

While Meyer's literary career and personality present such interesting features, the course of his life was com-

* *Conrad Ferdinand Meyer: In the Recollection of his Sister Betsy Meyer*, p. 59.

paratively uneventful. It lacks the romance of struggle and the vicissitudes of fortune which mark the lives of so many authors. Meyer was fortunately—or shall we say unfortunately?—free from material cares and worries during his whole life. He was born of an old patrician family in Zürich. His father, Ferdinand Meyer, was a highly-respected, able jurist in public service, with a fondness for reading and study. His hobby was history, to which he devoted himself entirely after his early retirement from office, and which he transmitted to his son. His mother, Elisabeth, was a woman of unusually refined, gentle spirit, of charming personality, but with a nervous temperament that later developed a tendency to melancholy. She characterized herself as having “a bright mind and a sad heart,” qualities which became the heritage of her first born, her son Conrad Meyer,* our author, who was born October 11, 1825.

Conrad was an attractive child, bright and quick at his books, though he showed no signs of his later talents. The only other child in the family was his sister Betsy, some five years younger, a most devoted, untiring companion, help-mate, and confidante to her brother during his whole life. Up to the time of his marriage, at the age of fifty, she was almost constantly with him, comforted and encouraged him in doubt and despondency, and acted as his secretary and literary adviser. In later years also, when an equally devoted wife had taken the sister's place, it was still Betsy to whom he turned with his literary plans, and whom he called upon to act as his secretary because her presence inspired him in his work.

The death of his father when the boy was only fifteen years old was a great loss to the family; for Meyer himself it was a veritable calamity. Upon his mother now devolved the whole care and training of her son. She loved him

* His given name was simply Conrad, but in order to avoid being confused with another author in Zurich of the same name he added his father's name to his own.

with all her heart, she was more ambitious for him than he was himself, but she did not understand him. She had neither the temperament nor the wisdom to control and guide him in these formative years. His was an unusual character; possibly it was abnormal, for he may have inherited some mental taint from his parents. At any rate, from now on he lived for years in a state of dreamy irresolution, with no ability to work or to devote himself to any definite purpose or aim in life. He shut himself off from acquaintances and friends, and in his isolation became morbid. When he was eighteen he left the *Gymnasium*, having acquired nothing else, as he declared, "but a thorough knowledge of the classics." During a stay at Lausanne, where he had gone to prepare himself for the university examinations, he became thoroughly acquainted with the French language and literature. The elegance, clearness, and power of both language and literature made such a deep impression upon him that he never outgrew its influence.

In accordance with the family traditions he decided to study law upon his admission to the university. His mind and heart, however, were not in law. He had taken up the study only to please his mother, while his own soul was vacillating between the calls of poetry and art. There was an artistic strain in the family. One of Meyer's uncles had been a painter; his sister Betsy, too, possessed considerable artistic talent. Meyer had shown considerable skill in drawing and, like Goethe and Gottfried Keller, he could not decide whither his genius was calling. His mother, hoping for some light which would help her son to come to a decision, sent some of his poems to the husband of a friend, Gustav Pfizer, a critic and poet of some note. Pfizer discovered no signs of an incipient genius and advised Meyer to take up painting. The critic's answer increased still more the youth's despair, for his heart was in his poetry. He neglected more than ever his law studies, began to avoid all society, shut himself up in his room, spending

all his time in indiscriminate reading and brooding—a recluse, dead to the world. His moodiness and depression became so alarming that finally (1852), with his own consent, he was taken to a retreat near Neuchâtel for treatment. The acute symptoms of his ailment were soon cured. His full convalescence went along slowly, though it was not irksome, as he spent much of his time in a charming circle of friends in the neighborhood. Since his progress did not satisfy his mother, he did not return home in the spring of the following year, but moved to Lausanne where a new circle of friends and a multitude of fresh interests were to open to him.

At Lausanne he attached himself closely to an old friend of his father's—a clergyman, Louis Vulliemin, a charming personality of a sturdy, manly type, who had made a name for himself as a historian of his native land. This fatherly friend not only welcomed Meyer to his hospitable house, which was a meeting-place of a cultivated company of common friends, but personally interested himself in his literary aspirations and guided him in his studies. Above all, he set him a task to enable him to utilize his studies and to try himself in literary work. Through his mediation Meyer received permission from Thierry, the French historian, to translate the latter's *Récits des temps mérovingiens* into German.* This friend also secured for him a position as teacher of history in an asylum for the blind.

For Meyer the months at Lausanne were months of genuine happiness and great intellectual profit. He was regaining his health in most agreeable surroundings, was engaged in a thoroughly congenial task, and through practice and study was broadening his knowledge of French and French literature. During this period French secured its deep-rooted power over Meyer, influencing his diction and style throughout his literary career. Notwithstanding his sister's

* This translation was published anonymously. It was favorably criticized for its faithfulness and the excellence of its style.

indignant protest to the contrary,* critics are unanimous upon this point.

Meyer's position at home and in public upon his return to Zürich was not a happy one. He had neither profession nor occupation, not even a prospect of ever obtaining a position such as a man of his antecedents might be expected to fill. To his mother the aimlessness of her son's life seemed a disgrace. Financial cares were also worrying her, as her property was gradually dwindling. In addition, she wore herself out by her devotion in nursing an old friend who had for years been living in her family. Her nerves finally gave way under the strain. She sought relief at the retreat where her son had been, but could find it only in death.

Meyer was now thirty-one years of age — seemingly as far as ever from any goal in life. His mother's death had left him financially independent, as her property had been considerably increased by another legacy; yet once more he resolved to prepare himself for public service by studying law. Since, however, the thought of studying at home was unbearable to him, he went to Paris to carry out his plans. Three months of the life there, which he spent chiefly in sight-seeing, were enough to send him home disappointed and all but disgusted with the shallowness and frivolity of Parisian life. His plan of systematic study was abandoned, and again he began drifting. A visit to Munich, undertaken for the sake of its art treasures, whetted Meyer's appetite for Italy, which it had long been his desire to visit. The following spring, the spring of 1858, he and his sister were finally able to realize their long cherished desire, and set out for Italy.

Italy and Rome exercised their fascination over Meyer as completely as they have over every German poet who has visited that land of the German's dream. In Paris he

* *Recollection*, p. 65: "When I occasionally hear of French influences that are said to have obscured his language and his literary work, or influenced his character, I have to hold on to my patience. That is a misconception of a very superficial kind."

had first come under the spell of Italian art, in Munich he surrendered to it completely, in Rome and Florence he became a worshipper of it for all time. What the Italian journey meant to Meyer we can learn best in the recollections of his sister Betsy, his traveling-companion:* “How great and how decisive the impressions were which C. F. Meyer received during his sojourn in Rome, * * * with what an abundance of ideas, subjects for artistic treatment, inspiration of every kind he returned, cannot be described. * * * Everywhere my brother was wandering about on ground known so well of old and yet so marvelously new to him. Wherever his foot trod, the characters of classical antiquity rose up before him, or the historical memories of medieval and papal Rome crowded in upon him. The dust of books fell from his soul so accustomed to loneliness. The pictures, floating before him, gray in gray, and drawn in large, but not always distinct, lines, suddenly took on distinctness, life, reality, charm, and color. Not that he came back from Rome an accomplished artist, having the power to give form and life [to his creations]. To attain this goal there was need of much time, much effort, and, above all, of energetic resolution to labor persistently. But from now on he saw this glorious goal before him.” The total and lasting impression of Rome she sums up in her concluding words: “Thus the Rome of 1858 stands in my memory—monumental ruins of antiquity, splendid, gay church-feasts, eternal sunlight, life in its very flower.” Meyer himself nowhere put into words the overpowering impression which Rome and Italy made upon him and his artistic ideals. It can be seen, however, in the classical form and spirit of his poems and tales of the Renaissance, for they reflect in every line the form, the color, the very life of classical Italy and its art.

The following twelve years, as far as actual results are concerned, seem to have been a period of inactivity and comparative barrenness. His first poems were published,

* P. 108 in book cited above.

it is true, and he was introduced into the world of letters under his own name, but his work made hardly an impression upon the public, whose interest was entirely absorbed by the great political events preceding the war of 1870. In the development of the poet these years, however, were of the greatest importance. As his sister writes:* “Now there follows a period of concentrated work, which covers approximately the decade between the freeing of Italy (1859) and the German War. This stretch of road in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer’s life begins with his journey to Rome and at its end stands the boundary stone of his first important poetical work: *Hutten’s Last Days*. These are years of gradual and complete transformation. Gradually he strengthens himself until he attains independence in his literary activity, though at the cost of much self-denial. The roots and trunk of the tree, standing by itself, out in the open and exposed to the storm, grow strong. Fruits, hardly visible to the eye, take form and ripen. He enters upon this period irresolute as to his personal and artistic purposes; he leaves it behind, asserting manfully the rights of his own individuality. I might call this period the summer solstice of his life. Now he recognizes his calling as a poet and lays hold of it as his life’s work. It now becomes a sacred matter to him, for he realizes now that the day is almost spent and that he must make good use of the hour.”

His development was slow. He employed his time without much profit in translating from German into French, and planned the more serious task of making a French translation of Mommsen’s *History of Rome*. He made one more effort to gain a foothold in some profession, having in view a university career as lecturer in French. Though he labored hard and faithfully, he arrived nowhere. He lacked the power of persistent, effective work and study. In his desire to accomplish something, at least, of literary value, he began an essay on Goethe and Lavater—but again not a line was published. He turned to his poetry,

* P. 136 in book cited above.

made a collection of one hundred poems which he had been writing during the past years, and tried to find a publisher for them. Fortunately for his future fame, he failed in his quest.

At length his sister, by a personal visit and appeal to the poet Pfizer, the same who had once discouraged him so completely, succeeded in finding a publisher for her brother's first original work, *Twenty Ballads by a Swiss* (1864), a collection chiefly of historical ballads, in a well printed volume, appearing without the author's name. The world was not startled by this booklet, excellent as some of the ballads were. The publication did, however, give Meyer a standing in his own community. It demonstrated that he possessed both poetic imagination and the power to give it shape and form. To the discriminating reader it showed promise—promise of far better things to come.

Only occasional poems, buried in the magazines in which they were printed, appeared in the years immediately following. Five years later Meyer ventured forth with another modest volume of poems, containing lyrics as well as ballads,* this time bearing the author's name. The poems fell upon troublous times, the eve of the Franco-Prussian war, and remained almost unnoticed. The collection proved that the poet had made progress. He had acquired greater freedom and breadth of pen and brush; had learned to check his tendency to rhetoric and pathos, and to express himself more vigorously and effectively. He had grown more sensitive to the beauties and moods of nature, had come closer to life. In a word, this collection reveals more of the author's personality; yet it can hardly be said that the poems are marked by great, original power, or that they strike a strong personal note. With the exception of the ballads the poems are "pictures," impressions, and recollections, not born of passion nor written in the "poet's frenzy;" hence they contained no appeal to their stirring times.

* *Ballads and Pictures by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer* (1869).

It is an interesting fact that, while the war of 1870 drowned the voice of Meyer's muse, the same event furnished the poetic inspiration that kindled his genius and called into life the work which by its poetic power compelled all Germany to listen and pay full homage to his genius. Meyer's aloofness carried its own punishment within itself. It deprived him of the encouragement and inspiration which come from association with congenial, cultivated friends. To be sure, he had always kept in touch with the circle of friends in Lausanne; they, however, were entirely French in their training and literary sympathies, while Meyer had once for all decided to write in German. They might admire and praise his poetry, but they could not furnish the helpful criticism which could come only from a trained German mind. In François Wille, a German-Swiss, who had spent many years as a journalist in northern Germany and had now returned to his native land with his highly cultivated German wife, Meyer found the literary mentor whom he needed. Wille was a poet and a critic, with an active, vigorous mind and keen, critical acumen. He cordially welcomed Meyer to his home, which was the gathering place of noted men of letters and arts—Richard Wagner, Liszt, the poets Keller, Herwegh, and Kinkel among others. Meyer became a regular visitor, talking over with Wille his ambitions, his plans, and his finished work. Wille advised him, guided him, and encouraged him with helpful criticism. Above all, he inspired him with his own enthusiastic love of Germany, which was now seeing the fulfilment of the political ambitions and dreams of centuries in the restoration of the German empire. Wille's enthusiasm fired that of the poet. It aroused within him the desire to give poetic expression to his German patriotism. He turned to a subject which had long interested him—a tragedy of the life of Ulrich von Hutten, the most brilliant, attractive, and pathetic figure of the German Reformation. Wille encouraged him and spurred him on. During the winter of 1870–71 the work progressed rapidly

as the events of the war crowded one upon another—a remarkable achievement when we consider that in the previous forty-five years of Meyer's life he had put forth only two small volumes of inferior poetry and now, within the space of a year, produced the "best German poem that the war of 1870 called forth."

The germ of the work lay in an old poetic sketch, in which, as Meyer says, "the sick knight sits gazing out into the fading evening glow while death, as he appears in Holbein, cuts a cluster of golden grapes from a vine at the window. Its meaning was: 'Ripeness is the all-important thing.'" Possibly Meyer saw his own career symbolized in the fate of the knight, who, with all his ambition, all his effort, had accomplished so little. The forty-five years of his life had been spent in labor and study, and the most that could be said of him was that he was "ripe—the all-important thing."

For by *Hutten's Last Days* Meyer proved his ripeness. The poem is conceded by all writers to be the most beautiful and dignified poetical expression of the best sentiment and lofty national enthusiasm aroused by the war. The achievement is all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that Meyer was born outside of the Empire and had once been on the point of abandoning his mother-tongue to write in French. The work is made up of a series of monologues in which the knight Hutten, an exile upon the lonely island of Ufnau in Lake Zürich, passes in review the chief events of his own life and a number of incidents that happen to him during these days of his last sickness. This "extended epic," as it has been called, consists of a series of ballads, or ballad-like sketches, in rhyming pentameter couplets, dramatic, terse, rugged and vigorous. The individual couplets ring out like epigrams. The whole breathes forth an ardent spirit of Protestantism and of German national spirit exulting in the union of Germany under one emperor and one crown. The poem lacks unity. It seems sketchy, loosely jointed. It reminds one of a series of pictures,

drawn in the plastic manner of Dürer or Holbein, with one central theme holding all loosely together, but each picture a unit by itself. *Hutten's Last Days* established Meyer's reputation as a poet once for all, placing him, as one enthusiastic reviewer says, "among the most distinguished poets of contemporary Germany." The epic has continued to grow in popularity and in the estimation of the critical writers.

A trip to Italy ripened his shorter epic *Engelberg*, an idyllic legend of the lovely valley which the poet had often visited. It is a glorification of the valleys and mountains of Switzerland and expressive of Meyer's love for the beauties of his own country which he had celebrated in many of his best lyrics.

Gradually Meyer had been approaching the field of literature in which he was to do his chief, if not his best, work—the *Novelle*.* He had proved himself a master of narrative in the ballad and the two epics, now he goes over to prose, publishing in 1873 his first story, *The Amulet*, centered in the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572. The tale has a strong, ingenious plot, is well motivated and well told, though open to criticism in some of the character drawing. All in all it was a masterly attempt in a new field. A year later *Jürg Jenatsch* followed, the longest and most ambitious of Meyer's stories. The plot, dealing with the liberation of the canton of the Grisons from the yoke of Austria and Spain during the Thirty Years' War and the hero, one of the most interesting characters of Swiss history—of whom Meyer has given a masterly though not historically accurate portrait—have combined to make the book a truly national novel with its strong appeal to Swiss patriotism.

Meyer's position in the world of German letters was now securely established. He enjoyed universal recognition at home and in Germany. His name was generally joined

* As the German term *Novelle* has no generally accepted English equivalent, it is here retained, alternating with the words tale and story, which approximate it in meaning.

with that of the other master of the *Novelle*, his fellow-countryman Gottfried Keller. The "Goethe and Schiller of Switzerland" became the stock phrase of the conventional literary article. To Meyer this success brought much happiness, largely compensating for the long years of discouraging work and delayed success. In 1875 he married, and two years later moved into a charming home on the banks of Lake Zürich, not far from his native city. Here he lived in quiet, happy retirement with his wife and his daughter, trying with untiring industry to make up for the unproductive earlier years of his life. Nine more *Novellen*, some of them as ambitious and elaborate as the ordinary novel, came from his pen.* He also published his *Poems* (1882), a revised collection of his previously published poems together with a number of new poems. He worked conscientiously and incessantly, as he was not a facile writer but was slow and extremely painstaking in all his writing and most careful in the revision of his earlier work. The strain finally proved too great for his strength. In 1892 he broke down mentally and was obliged to retire to an asylum; here, however, his health was restored sufficiently within a year to allow him to return to his family. Five years longer he was spared, though unable, in spite of improved health, to resume his literary work. October 28, 1898, he passed away peacefully, "gathered," as he had said of Hutten, "like a ripe cluster of grapes by the vintner, Death."

By birth, breeding, and in temperament Meyer was a gentleman. He was an aristocrat in appearance, tall, athletic, and soldierly in bearing. He was fond of out-of-door

* His *Novellen*—all historical with the exception of *The Shot from the Pulpit*—arranged in groups according to their time of action, are: (a) Middle Ages—*The Saint* (1880); *The Judicatrix* (1885). (b) Renaissance—*Plautus in the Convent* (1881); *The Monk's Marriage* (1883); *The Temptation of Pescara* (1887); *Angela Borgia* (1891). (c) The Reformation and the Seventeenth Century—*The Amulet* (1873); *Jürg Jenatsch* (1874); *The Shot from the Pulpit* (1877); *The Page of Gustavus Adolphus* (1882); *The Sufferings of a Boy* (1883).

life, enjoying skating, swimming, rowing, and mountain-climbing. He had a kind, engaging face, lighted up by bright eyes. He was courteous and friendly in his manner of meeting people, but his natural reserve made him seem to many people exclusive, even snobbish. While thoroughly affable and fond of meeting people, he did not make friends easily and, though he had his own circle of friends, he had few intimates, possibly none in the fullest sense of the word.

It is a notable fact that, though living in the same city and moving in the same circles, he never could win the friendship of Gottfried Keller. They were too different in antecedents, temperament, and development to be congenial, and Keller was too set to unbend, though Meyer met him more than half-way. There may have been a touch of literary jealousy, for Keller, who had long been the only great literary figure in Switzerland, suddenly found a peer, if not a rival, at his side. He did not quite relish the idea of being always spoken of "as a partner in the Swiss firm of 'Keller and Meyer,'" or as an "everlasting Siamese twin," as he himself vigorously expressed it. Possibly too, he harbored a feeling of resentment that Meyer had been always a favorite of fortune, having been born into position and wealth, while he himself had been obliged to win his way to recognition only slowly and after hard struggles. Keller recognized Meyer's literary ability and, at times, was more than generous in his praise of Meyer's work, but their personal intercourse was limited to a polite observance of formalities and an occasional kindly act of courtesy.

In character Meyer was calm, fair-minded, and dignified. He possessed a strong sense of justice and a high moral earnestness. He was deeply religious, his views being of the austere type—Protestant through and through. He did not lack depth of feeling, but was free from emotion and passion. There was not a fibre of sentimentality in his make up, and one will search in vain for purely emotional scenes in his works.

Meyer's fame as a writer rests chiefly upon his *Novellen*, which are essentially historical. Meyer did not turn to history because of his interest in history *per se*, but because, as he says himself, "Modern convention with its forms hides everything in society, makes it colorless. There is so much hypocrisy in it. * * * So I turned preferably to the untrammelled characters of the Renaissance who let themselves go, boldly and openly, in their vice." His chief interest, then, was in his characters, in the psychological or historical problems in which they were involved. Given the problem, he casts about for a setting in which their personalities and passions may have free play. How secondary in importance the historical setting was to him we can see from the fact that he was debating between three different scenes of action and three different periods of time for his tale, *The Monk's Marriage*, before he made his final decision. In *The Judicatrix* he first thought of Sicily in the reign of Frederick II., but decided for the Rætian Alps in the time of Charlemagne. He did not write historical tales to display his historical erudition or make a pedantic show of his antiquarian knowledge. He did not pore over learned volumes or old chronicles in search of subjects, nor did he search authorities to insure fulness or accuracy of detail. He did submit his finished work to learned friends, but only to guard against slips of memory or pen. Otherwise he treated events and characters with sovereign poetic license, always making sure of two things; first, that his characters were human and acted true to their natures; and then, that he was making no mistake in depicting the atmosphere and spirit of the times. In this second respect his long and thorough study of history served him in excellent stead.

Yet it would be a mistake to think of Meyer as a writer of character stories, a psychological analyst. Though secondary, the setting of a story was also of importance. His tales were intended to create their impression as a whole, and this total impression he secured by setting strong

original characters in unusual, interesting situations against a historical background that should hold the reader by its picturesqueness and historical importance. He sought out the great periods of history.

No better exposition of Meyer's method and technique could be cited than he himself has given us in his *Monk's Marriage*. We seem to be able to read the mind of the writer as he works at his desk. The first question which Dante, who has been asked to tell a story to a company assembled at the palace of Cangrande della Scala in Verona, puts to his auditors is: "What is your theme?" Like a dramatist the author of the story is interested in a human problem, "the case of the unfrocked monk"—two phases of which Meyer himself had touched upon in other tales. The author limits his theme further to the interesting phase of the monk who, under pressure from without, throws away his cowl and "breaks his vow more to himself than to the church"—which, as the author hints, can result only in a tragedy. The "theme" being set, Cangrande wishes to learn from Dante the character of the tale—whether it is to be a true story based upon documents, a popular legend, or a poetic invention. Dante, replying for Meyer, answers: "I shall develop my story from an inscription." That signifies that the story is to be a poetic development of an actual occurrence; and, furthermore, that it starts from a nucleus. In his nucleus Meyer agrees in method with Heyse's well known "falcon-theory" of the *Novelle* and E. T. A. Hoffmann's practice, in the development of his tales, of starting from some one striking picture or incident. Having chosen his theme, defined its character; revealed its germ, Dante selects his characters—the prince to be like the Duke before him, while "the remaining figures I shall take from your midst and give them your names." Here we see what is meant by "Meyer's realism." The setting of his stories is historical, but the characters, while they should be in accord with their setting, are taken from the men and

women about him, for humanity is the same in all ages. In touches here and there throughout the tale, illuminating hints of the novelist's art are given. Dante occasionally stops and reflects how he will develop his plot further; he cuts out, "with the gesture of a man holding a pen," some unessential character; he corrects a slip of memory; he occasionally drops the thread of the narrative to discuss the motives of some act or person, or to interject a bit of his own philosophy. Most characteristic of Meyer's style is the passage: "Dante stopped. His story lay in profuse fulness before him; but his exacting genius selected and simplified"—a perfect description of Meyer's "Tacitean" method of writing.

Most striking is Meyer's fondness for the "frame-story," the story within a story. Five of his eleven tales are of this kind, the "frame" varying from the simple device of an old manuscript, in which the story is found, to the elaborate and most artistic frame of *The Monk's Marriage*, in which the frame outshines the tale itself. Meyer's frequent recourse to this device has been severely criticized as a mannerism, as monotonous; but we can forgive the mannerism for the sake of the exquisite art. It is easy to see why authors employ the device. The narration of an eye-witness makes the story more real, more interesting; it makes it possible for the author to hold himself in the background, to introduce in a perfectly natural manner reflections upon incidents and persons, to eliminate non-essentials, and—an essential point in the case of Meyer, with his condensed style—to emphasize the important points of the story and make clear their bearing upon the plot.

As a writer Meyer possessed a keen dramatic instinct and power. Though he never produced a drama, many of his subjects first presented themselves to him as dramatic possibilities, some of which he actually sketched. As his sister says, he possessed the essential qualities of the dramatist—"the grand historic style, the dramatist's power of con-

structing plots, the careful motivation necessary to a drama." He saw with the eye of the dramatist; he caught and could reproduce the effectiveness of a picturesque setting, the plastic possibilities of a dramatic situation. His stories often create the impression of a series of dramatic scenes leading up to and grouped about the dramatic climax. His condensed style is at times intensely dramatic. Few authors depend to such an extent upon gesture and action for motivation. He has the dramatist's power of analyzing characters and sketching them with a few strokes, not depending upon description but representing them in action. The portrait of Dante in *The Monk's Marriage*, is a masterpiece of such dramatic characterization; that of Poggio in *Plautus in the Convent* is a worthy companion piece. Minor characters are clearly drawn, generally with a few strokes—each distinctive, none pale and lifeless. His characters are generally constructed on large, simple lines with striking, forceful qualities. Meyer seems to have learned much from Michelangelo, whose grand art he lauds so frequently in his poems.

Meyer has been called the "Tacitus of the *Novelle*" because of his condensed, terse style. He avoids long descriptions and characterizations more and more as his art develops, acquiring the art of presenting a situation, creating an atmosphere, or characterizing a person in a few phrases, even in a few words. Every sentence he wrote was carefully considered, condensed as far as possible, and then polished into artistic form. He will reduce sentences, particularly in his ballads, to a skeleton of nouns, but each one so pregnant, so suggestive, that the verbs seem unnecessary. He is exceedingly careful in the choice of words, sometimes changing an adjective five or six times before he is satisfied. His language is sonorous and full of color, sensuous rather than abstract. It is generally elevated and dignified in tone, rarely making concessions to the realism of colloquial speech or dialect. While highly figurative and picturesque, his style is not over-ornate or

rhetorical; it is stately without being stiff. His style is like the man—refined, cultured, dignified.

Of the two *Novellen* in this volume *Plautus in the Convent*, originally called *Brigittchen of Trogen*, is Meyer's shortest tale. It also shares with *The Shot from the Pulpit* the distinction of depending largely upon its humor for its effect. The general tone of Meyer's tales is serious, almost all having gloomy, tragic themes, although these are frequently lighted up by bright flashes of delightful humor and subtle irony, which characterized Meyer's conversation. But *Plautus in the Convent* is cheerful throughout, suffused with the sunny atmosphere and the charming humor of the Italian Renaissance, which Meyer here employs for the first time as the setting for his plot. There is no historic basis for the tale, though a reference (in Burckhardt's *History of the Renaissance*) to Poggio's activity and success in searching for lost classical manuscripts may have given the author his first hint. If not historical in fact, the story is historical through and through in the spirit of the Renaissance, of which Poggio* is the very embodiment. While the story as a work of art is not of great moment, still the character-sketch of Poggio is a gem of character-drawing, the "frame" is ingenious and artistically worked out, and the plot is diverting and full of human interest.

In *The Monk's Marriage* Meyer reached the highest development of the "frame-story." It has been universally admired for the genius and audacity of its invention, for its artistic elaboration, and for the wonderful pen-portrait of Dante, "the wanderer through Hell," whose personality dominates the whole story as he narrates it. This introduction of Dante was a bold stroke, justified only by success. The plot of the tale itself is based upon an account (in

* Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), papal secretary and famous humanist, is known chiefly for his letters and *Facetiæ*—a collection of witty stories and anecdotes. He rendered a great service to the cause of classical scholarship by his discoveries of lost manuscripts of classic writers, among others Plautus and Tacitus.

Machiavelli's *History of Florence*) of a family feud which began that bitter factional strife of the Guelfs and Ghibelines in Florence. The incidents of that story Meyer had used in his ballad, *The Mars of Florence*. For the *Novelle* he invents the frame, makes a number of changes in the story, and supplies an entirely different background. The frame is a masterpiece, generally more admired than the story. The tale itself in its substance is well suited to the frame; it is characteristically Italian, with its sudden changes of fortune, the breathless development of the plot, the volcanic outburst of passion. The plot, one of the few in Meyer's works in which love is the dominant note, is well developed and told with consummate art. The language is noticeable for its stately dignity, such as befits the character of the narrator, the great Dante. There are, however, serious defects in motivation both of the characters and of their actions. The story is marred also by Meyer's oft criticized fondness for gruesome deeds. It too has one of "those murderous *finales* which are Meyer's delight," as Keller once wrote to Theodor Storm. And yet, as a whole, *The Monk's Marriage* ranks as one of the best, if not the best, of Meyer's *Novellen*, although the story itself falls below the high standard of *The Judicatrix* or *The Temptation of Pescara*.

By his novels Meyer is most widely and most favorably known. His poems, except the epic *Hutten's Last Days*, for years found favor with only a few. Gottfried Keller had welcomed their appearance as a "fortunate event." Nevertheless, they made their way into general recognition but slowly. At present, however, the tide is turning. The collected *Poems* have reached their sixty-fourth edition, while popular anthologies and readers are becoming more and more hospitable to his ballads and even to his lyrics.

The mere enumeration of Meyer's poetical works* shows

* They appeared in the following order: *Twenty Ballads by a Swiss* (1864); *Ballads and Pictures* (1869); *Hutten's Last Days* (1871); *Engelberg* (Idyl, 1872); *Poems* (1882).

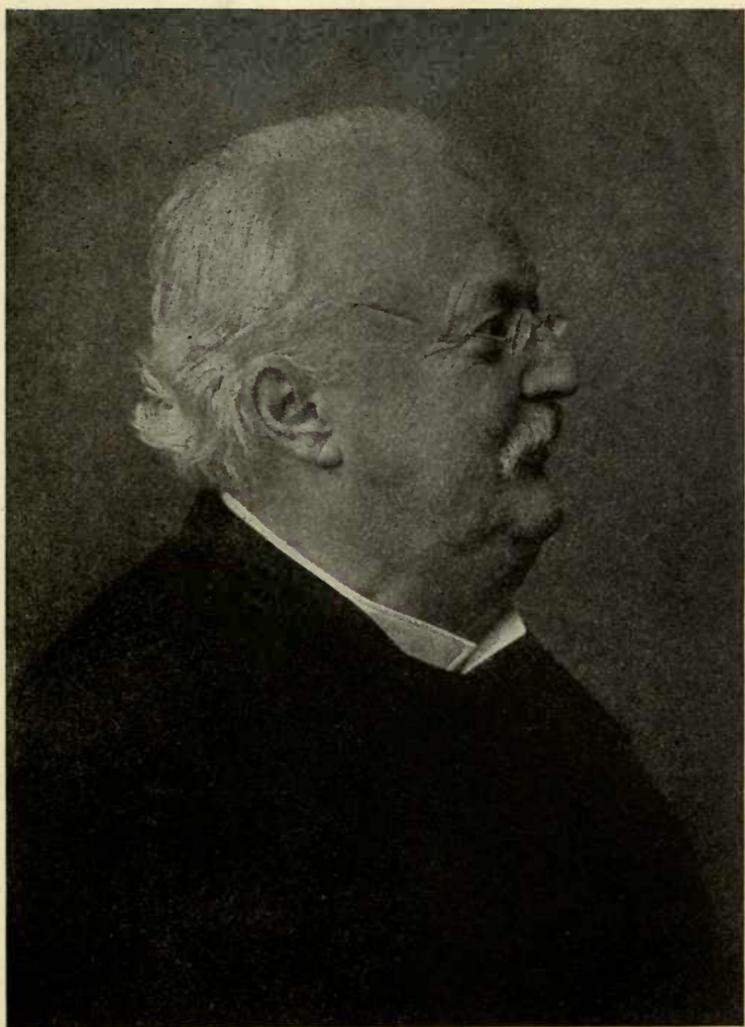
that the narrative (epic) poems preponderate. Notwithstanding the enthusiastic opinion of Gottfried Keller* and others, Meyer's ballads rank much higher than his lyrics in the opinion of most critics and the public. Meyer was not emotional. He shrank back from personal revelation to the world. He could not, as the lyric poet ought to do, pour forth his innermost joys and sorrows to the mob. He was sensitive to emotion, was responsive to nature and to the life about him, but the impressions of the world upon his responsive nature required time to take on poetic form in his soul. His lyrical poetry is reflective. Even the best and most personal of his love songs are largely narrative. They are not the direct outpouring of emotion or passion, but are reminiscences, revived pictures of his heart's experiences. As one critic puts it, "They are feelings about feelings." They are written with a heart full of deep sentiment, but no longer in its first rapture or still quivering with emotion. Furthermore, Meyer's lyrics, which are so perfected in form, expression, and metre, lack the singable quality. They are not in the least unmelodious, but neither do they sing themselves as the best lyrics should. Some of his best love poems are written in narrative form, without stanza or rhyme. Meyer is not ingenious or happy in the invention of new verse-forms that linger in the ear when the words are forgotten.

His ballads, which have been ranked with the best since the classical days of Goethe, Schiller, and Uhland, met with greater acceptance from their very appearance, and have been gaining steadily in popular favor. They are chiefly historical, ranging with their themes through the centuries from the times of Homer to the poet's own. In the lives of the great men Meyer found his chief source of inspiration, though his muse did not disdain humbler themes. He has a keen sense for incidents that are not only interesting in themselves, but symbolic of universal experience and

* He wrote to his friend Wilhelm Petersen, Nov. 21, 1882: "For years nothing as good in the way of lyrical poetry has appeared."

truth. His ballads are more felicitous than his lyrics in the variety and melody of their metrical forms; in them Meyer is most successful in wedding form to spirit and content. As in his tales, he can conjure up in a few lines the background and atmosphere of the ballad, which he develops with the skill of the dramatist. Plastic scenes, following in rapid succession, lead up to the climax, with which the ballads often close abruptly, as with the dropping of a stage curtain. Meyer is fond of the dramatic *finale*, though now and then the ballad gently closes like vanishing music. The style of Meyer's ballads is marked by vigor and power of expression, condensed, pregnant brevity, stately and dignified diction. They have not the sustained, sonorous rhythm of Schiller's ballads, even though Schiller may have stood sponsor to his earliest productions. For the most part in condensed, staccato sentences, often of a mere word, the heroic ballads hurry on breathlessly to their dramatic climax. Yet Meyer can, when the gentler theme or sentiment demands, find the appropriate, smoothly flowing, melodious verse. In spite of their dramatic power, their energy, and their artistic perfection, most of Meyer's ballads will never attain to the popularity which often rewards productions much feebler and less artistic. They suffer from two serious defects. They are too often condensed beyond intelligibility. Furthermore, the historical incidents and allusions are far too recondite for anybody but the learned historian or the encyclopedic commentator to appreciate.

As Meyer in his *Novellen* never swerved from his high ideals of art to win popular favor, so his poems too are the products of "art for art's sake." His works as a whole will probably never appeal to the masses nor "please the million," though they are sure to grow in favor with an ever-increasing number of cultivated, discriminating readers.



CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

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PLAUTUS IN THE CONVENT* (1882)

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM GUILD HOWARD, A.M.
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O enjoy the cool of evening after a hot summer day a company of cultivated Florentines had assembled, in front of a pavilion in the Medici gardens, about Cosimo de' Medici, the "father of his country." The dusk crept by slow degrees over a gorgeous but delicately shaded, cloudless sky above the group of temperate revelers, in which a sharp-featured, gray-haired man was conspicuous, whose eloquent lips held the listening circle spellbound. The expression of his animated countenance was a strange mixture: over the serene brow and the smiling corners of the mouth lay the shadow of a sad experience.

When a pause ensued, Cosimo, with the shrewd eyes in an ill-favored face, spoke out and said, "Poggio, my friend, I have lately been browsing again in the little volume of your *Facetiæ*. To be sure, I know it by heart, and this I could not but regret, since I was now able to take pleasure only in the happy turns of a supple style, without the former sensation either of curiosity or of surprise. Fastidious as you are, it is impossible that you should not have excluded from the authorized edition of the book one or another of your droll and amiable pleasantries, whether because it was too spicy, or because it was not spicy enough. Try to recollect. Favor these friends, who will understand the most veiled allusion and excuse the boldest jest, with a *Facetia inedita*. Telling your story and sipping your wine"—he pointed to the goblet—"you will forget your sorrow."

* Permission H. Haessel, Leipzig.

The fresh grief to which Cosimo alluded, as to a matter of common report about town, had befallen the venerable Poggio—present secretary of the Florentine Republic, past secretary to five popes, formerly a cleric and latterly a family man—at the hands of one of his sons, of whom all were brilliantly endowed and all worthless. This miscreant had disgraced the gray hairs of his father by an act which came close to theft and robbery, and which, moreover, imposed upon the thrifty Poggio, his bondsman, a serious financial sacrifice.

After a little reflection the old man replied, “Those and similar pleasantries which are to your liking, friend Cosimo, comport, like flowery wreaths, only with brown locks, and sound ill from the lips of a toothless graybeard.” Smiling, he displayed a fine row of white teeth. “And,” he sighed, “only with reluctance do I return to these youthful frivolities, harmless as in themselves they may be, now that I behold my open-mindedness and my easy-going philosophy of life degenerate in my son—I know not by what uncanny law of increase—into intolerable impudence, even into profligacy.”

“Poggio, you are preaching!” interposed a youth. “You, who have given back to the world the comedies of Plautus!”

“Thank you for your warning, Romolo!” cried the unhappy father, collecting himself; for, as a good companion, he too thought it improper to burden the guests with his domestic troubles. “Thank you for reminding me. *The Discovery of Plautus* is the *Facetia* with which, indulgent friends, I will entertain you today.”

“Call it rather *The Rape of Plautus*,” interrupted a scoffer.

But Poggio, without deigning to look at him, continued, “May it please you, friends, and at the same time demonstrate how unjust is the reproach with which the envious pursue me, that in a dishonorable, reprehensible way I have appropriated to myself those classics of which they

cannot deny I am the discoverer — that, to put it bluntly, I have stolen them. Nothing is farther from the truth.”

A smile went about the circle, in which Poggio at first gravely declined to join, but in which finally he also participated; for as one who knew human nature he was aware that even the falsest prejudices can be uprooted only with difficulty.

“My *Facetia*,” he said, with a parody of the inclusive summary usually prefixed to an Italian short-story, “has to do with two crosses, a heavy and a light one, and with two barbarian nuns, a novice and an abbess.”

“Fit for the gods, Poggio,” a neighbor interrupted him, “like those simple-minded German vestals with whom, in your admirable letters from abroad, you peopled as with naiads the healing springs along the Limmat — by the nine muses, the best thing you have written! That letter circulated in a thousand copies all over Italy.”

“I exaggerated, knowing your taste,” said Poggio jocosely. “At any rate, Ippolito, you, as a lover of simple-mindedness, will delight in my barbarian nun. And so I begin.

In those days, illustrious Cosimo, when we were lopping off the superfluous heads of our holy church, lately become a hydra, I found myself in Constance and actively devoted myself to the magnificent business of an ecumenical council. My leisure time, however, I divided between contemplation of the stimulating spectacle which had crowded upon the narrow stage of a German imperial city the piety, science, and statecraft of the century, with its popes, heretics, mountebanks, and courtesans, and the occasional search for manuscripts in the neighboring monasteries.

Following up various clues and trails, I came to the supposition, amounting to certainty, that in a nearby convent there was a Plautus in the hands of the barbarian nuns, having strayed thither as a legacy or as a pledge from some impoverished Benedictine abbey. A Plautus! Im-

agine, illustrious patron, what that meant at a time when our curiosity was being so unbearably goaded by the few fragments then extant of the great Roman comedian. That I could not sleep you may well believe, Cosimo—you who share and encourage my enthusiasm for the relics of a greater world which has declined and fallen. Would that I had left everything in the lurch and had hastened to the spot where an immortal, instead of delighting the world, lay moldering in ignoble obscurity! But those were the days when the election of a new pope occupied the minds of all men and the Holy Spirit was beginning to turn the attention of the assembled fathers to the merits and virtues of Otto Colonna; though this is not to say that the daily and hourly running about of his adherents and servants, of whom I was one, had thereby become any the less necessary.

Thus it happened that an inferior and dishonest searcher, unfortunately a fellow-countryman of ours, in whose presence I had, in the joy of my heart, indiscreetly mentioned the possibility of so great a discovery, anticipated me, and—blunderer that he was—instead of getting the classic by fair means or foul, aroused the suspicion of the abbess of the convent in which it lay buried in dust, and directed her attention to the treasure which she unwittingly possessed.

Finally I got a free hand and, in spite of the impending papal election, mounted a sturdy mule, leaving orders that a messenger should be dispatched to me upon the occurrence of the great event. My mule-driver was a Rhætian who had come to Constance in the retinue of the Bishop of Chur, and his name was Hans of Splügen. He had unhesitatingly accepted my first offer and we had agreed upon an incredibly low sum.

A thousand pleasantries passed through my mind. The blue ether, the summer air tempered by a cool, almost cold breath from the north, the inexpensive trip, the difficulties of the papal election happily overcome, the supreme

satisfaction awaiting me in the discovery of a classic—these heavenly benefits disposed me to infinite good-humor, and I heard the muses and the angels sing. My companion, on the contrary, Hans of Splügen, abandoned himself, as it seemed, to the most melancholy reflections.

Happy myself, I benevolently sought to make him happy also, or at least to cheer him up, and I gave him all sorts of riddles—mostly from biblical history, which is familiar to the people. “Do you know,” I asked, “the manner in which the prince of the apostles was freed from his chains?” And I received the answer that he had seen the miracle depicted in the church of the Apostles at Tosana. “Listen, Hänsel,” I continued. “The angel said unto Peter, ‘Bind on thy sandals and follow me.’ And they went, Peter not knowing that it was an angel, past the first and the second ward, through the gate and along a street. And forthwith the companion departed and then Peter said, ‘Now I know of a surety that an angel hath led me.’ From what circumstance, Hänsel, did this sudden knowledge, this incontrovertible certainty come to him? Tell me that, if you can guess it.” Hans thought a while and then shook the curly locks of his hard head. “Listen, Hänsel,” I said, “I will answer the question. From this circumstance Peter recognized the angel, that he asked no gratuity for his services. Such is not the way of this world. That is the way only of the heavenly beings!”

But one ought not to jest with the people. Hänsel suspected in this joke, born of nothing, a purpose or an allusion.

“It is true, sir, that I am conducting you for almost nothing, and that, though I am not an angel, I shall ask you for no gratuity. Know, then, that I also on my own account am drawn to Monasterlingen”—he mentioned the name of the nunnery which was the goal of our expedition—“where tomorrow Gertrude will wind the rope girdle about her hips, and her blond hair will be shorn from her head.”

Tears rolled down the sunburnt face of the hardy youth who, I may add,—perhaps there was a drop of Roman blood in his veins—possessed much natural dignity of speech and action. “By Cupid’s bow,” I exclaimed, “an unhappy lover!” and bade him tell me his story, which proved to be simple but by no means easy to understand.

Hänsel had, he said, come with his bishop to Constance, and being without employment, had sought work in the neighborhood as a carpenter. He had found it on some buildings in process of erection for the nunnery, and had made the acquaintance of Gertrude, who lived nearby. They had learned to like each other and found favor in each other’s sight. Gladly and often they had sat together—“in all decency and honor,” said he, “for she is a good girl.” Then suddenly she had withdrawn from him, without detriment to their love, but peradventure as though a strictly limited time had elapsed; and he had heard for certain that she intended to take the veil. Tomorrow she was to be invested, and he had in mind to attend this ceremony, in order to have the testimony of his own eyes to the fact that an honest and by no means impulsive girl could, for no conceivable reason, leave a man whom she confessedly loved, to become a nun—to embrace duties for which Gertrude, a natural woman and full of life, was as unsuited as she could possibly be, and for which, to judge from her own expressions, she had no desire, but rather recoiled from them with horror and dread.

“It is unexplainable,” the melancholy Rhetian concluded; and added that through the mercy of heaven his wicked stepmother had recently died, on whose account he had left his father’s house; so that this and the arms of his aged father were again open to receive him. His love, accordingly, would now find a warm nest awaiting her; but she was incomprehensibly determined to nestle in a cell.

At the close of this speech Hänsel relapsed into his dark brooding and obstinate silence, which he interrupted only

to answer my question concerning the kind of woman the abbess was. He said she was an ugly little person, but an excellent manager who had restored and rehabilitated from slovenliness the economic administration of the convent. She came from *Abbatis Cella* and people called her simply "Brigittchen of Trogen."

Finally the convent appeared above the sky-line of monotonous vineyards. Hänsel now asked me to leave him behind at an inn by the roadside, since he wished to see Gertrude only once more—at her investiture. I nodded assent and dismounted from the mule, in order to stroll at leisure toward the not distant convent.

There they were having a merry time. On the lawn of the convent yard an indistinguishable great object was being sold at auction or exhibited for some other purpose. A rough soldier, with his helmet on his head, blew from time to time a discordant trumpet, perhaps a piece of booty, perhaps an ecclesiastical instrument. About the abbess, with her nuns, and the questionable herald in a patched doublet and tattered hose, whose bare toes peered forth from his worn-out boots, laity and an aggregation of monks formed a motley group in the most free and easy attitudes. Among the peasants stood here and there a nobleman—in *Turgovia*, as this German district is called, there is an overabundance of such small and petty crested fowl—but minstrels, gypsies, vagabonds, strumpets, and rabble of every sort, attracted thither by the Council, also mingled in the strange circle. One after another, they stepped forth and tried the weight of the object in which, upon nearer approach, I recognized a gigantic old horrible cross. It seemed to be extraordinarily heavy; for after a short while it began to sway back and forth in the wearying hands of even the strongest bearer; it threatened to fall, and would have come crashing down if other hands and shoulders had not tumultuously put themselves under the ponderous beams. Shouts and laughter accompanied the scandalous performance. To complete the ignoble scene,

the boorish abbess danced about like one possessed upon the freshly mown lawn, inspired by the worth of her relic — the meaning of this country fair began to dawn upon me — and probably also inspirited by the convent wine which, without cups and without ceremony, passed in huge wooden buckets from lip to lip.

“By the tresses of the Virgin Mother!” shrieked the impious jade, “not a man of you, not even the stoutest, can lift and carry this cross of our blessed Duchess Amalawinta; but tomorrow our Gertrude will toss it like a shuttle-cock. I only hope the mortal creature will not grow vain! To God alone the glory, says Brigittchen. People, the miracle is a thousand years old and to this day is brand new. It has always worked, and upon my word it shall go off tomorrow without a hitch.” Manifestly the excellent abbess had had a drop too much in the course of this heavenly day.

Comparing these comical doings with similar events that I have witnessed in my own blessed country, I began to understand them and to estimate them at their true value — just as, an hour later, with fuller knowledge of the facts, I definitively solved the problem; but the trend of my thoughts was suddenly and unpleasantly interrupted by a shrill call of the clownish woman in the white cowl, with the flushed face, the blinking, crafty eyes, the scarcely discoverable pug-nose, and the bestial mouth gaping at an enormous distance below it.

“Hi, there, Italian scribe!” she yelled at me. I was on this day clad in a simple traveling costume and carry the evidence of my classical origin in my countenance. “Come a bit nearer and let me see you lift the cross of the blessed Amalawinta!”

All eyes were turned in expectation of amusement at me, people made way for me, and with rude jolts in the Swiss fashion shoved me forward. I excused myself on the ground, well known to you, my friends, of the shortness and weakness of my arms.—The narrator raised his arms enough to reveal the fact.

Then the shameless woman, looking me over, cried out, "Your fingers are all the longer for it, you smooth customer!"—and in fact, by the daily practice of writing, my fingers have become developed and pliant. The crowd of bystanders burst into a boisterous laugh, incomprehensible to me, but offensive, and I charged the abbess with it. In vexation I turned away, went around the corner of the church nearby, and finding the main portal open, I entered. The noble round arch of the windows and ceiling, instead of the new-fangled pointed arch and the foolish French filigree, restored my soul to peace and composure. Slowly I strode forward the length of the nave, attracted by a piece of sculpture which, lighted from above, stood forth in impressive solidity from the religious dimness and seemed, in its way, to be a thing of beauty. I went up to it and was not disappointed. The statuary consisted of two figures united by a cross, and this cross completely resembled in size and proportions the one exhibited on the lawn, whichever may have been imitated from the other. A powerful woman crowned with thorns was carrying it almost level in brawny arms and on her mighty shoulder, and yet was sinking beneath its weight, as was shown by her knees, roughly outlined on her gown. By the side and in front of this tottering giantess a smaller figure, with a little crown upon her lovely head, mercifully placed her more delicate shoulder under the unbearable burden. The old master had purposely—or more probably from lack of artistic resources—treated the forms and garments only in the rough, reserving his cunning and the ardor of his soul for the faces, which expressed despair and mercy.

Taken with the charm of this expression, I stepped backward to get a better light. Lo and behold, there knelt before me on the other side of the group a maiden, presumably a native, a peasant girl of the vicinity, almost as powerfully built as the sculptured duchess, and with the hood of her white cowl thrown back over heavy braids of blond hair and a sturdy neck unused to concealment.

She arose; for absorbed in meditation, she had not sooner become aware of my presence than I of hers; brushed away a flood of tears from her eyes, and made a move as if to depart. She was to all appearances a novice.

I detained her and asked her to explain the statue to me. I was one of the foreign fathers at the Council, I told her in my broken German. This information did not seem to make much impression upon her. She related to me in a simple way that the image represented an ancient queen or duchess, the founder of this convent, who, taking the vow here, had wished to proceed to the investiture, her head crowned with thorns and her shoulder laden with the cross. "They say," continued the girl doubtfully, "that she was a great sinner, heavy laden with guilt for the murder of her husband, but of such high station that secular justice could not reach her. Then God touched her heart and she fell into great distress, despairing of the salvation of her soul!" After a long and bitter atonement, craving a sign that she was forgiven, she had caused this great, heavy cross to be built, which the strongest man of her time was hardly able to lift alone; and she too would have succumbed beneath its weight, had not the Mother of God in visible form mercifully assisted her to bear it, placing her ambrosial shoulder beside the earthly one.

These words the blond German did not use, but simpler ones, indeed so crude and uncouth that they could not be translated from a barbarian speech into our cultivated Tuscan without becoming boorish and grotesque; and that, my lords, would in turn be inappropriate to the expression of large-mindedness in the defiant blue eyes and the bold but shapely features of the girl whom I then saw before me.

"The story is credible!" I said to myself; for this feat by a barbarian queen seemed to me befitting the times and the customs of the dark close of the first millennium. "It might be true!"

"It is true!" Gertrude asserted curtly and vehemently, with a gloomy glance of conviction at the statuary, and

again made a move as if to depart; but I detained her for the second time, with the question whether she were the Gertrude of whom my guide of today, Hans of Splügen, had told me. She replied in the affirmative, unabashed, not even embarrassed, and a smile like a wandering light spread slowly from the firm corners of her mouth over her brown face, now beginning to grow pale in the convent air.

Then she reflected and said, "I knew that he would come to my investiture, and I can have no objection. Seeing my tresses fall will help him to forget me. Since you happen to be here, reverend father, I will make a request of you. If the man returns with you to Constance, reveal to him the cause of my refusal to be his wife after"—and she blushed, though almost imperceptibly—"after I had been friendly with him in all honor, according to the custom of our country. More than once I have been on the point of telling him the story, but I bit my lip; for it is a secret compact between the Mother of God and myself, and secrets should not be disclosed. To you, however, who are versed in secrets of the soul, I can confide the compact without betrayal. You shall then acquaint Hans with as much of it as is fitting and to you seems meet. It is only that he may not deem me fickle and ungrateful, and remember me as such.

"This is how it is with me. When I was a mere child—I was ten years old and had already lost my father—mother was taken with a grave and hopeless sickness, and fear came upon me, lest I be left alone in the world. Out of this fear, and out of love for my mother, I dedicated myself to the Virgin Mary for my twentieth year, if she would preserve my mother's life until then, or nearly then. She did so, and mother lived until last Corpus Christi day, when she peacefully died, just at the time when Hans had work as a carpenter in the convent; so that he it was who made mother's coffin. Since I was now alone in the world, what wonder is it that I fell in love with him? He is honest and thrifty, as the Italians are for the most part; 'modest

and discreet,' as they say on the other side of the mountains. Moreover, we could converse in two languages; for my father, who was a strong and courageous man, had repeatedly accompanied a puny, timid tradesman, not without profit, over the mountains, and had brought home a few bits of Italian from the other side. If now Hans called me *cara bambina*, I returned the compliment by calling him *poverello*, and both ring true, though I will find no fault with the words of endearment usual in our country, when they are honestly meant.

“But it was at this time also that I was due to keep my vow, and every ringing of the Angelus reminded me of it.

“On the other hand, thoughts came into my mind and whispered to me such things as ‘The vow of an innocent child who does not know the difference between man and woman could have no power to bind you,’ or ‘Kind as she is, the Virgin Mother would likely have granted you your mother’s life of her own mercy and as a free gift.’ But I said in reply, ‘A bargain is a bargain,’ and ‘Honesty is the best policy!’ She has kept her part of the agreement, and I will keep mine. Without truth and faith the world cannot endure. What did my father say, who is no more? ‘I would keep my word with the devil,’ said he, ‘not to mention the Lord our God!’

“Hear now, reverend father, what I think and believe. Since the Virgin Mother bore the cross for the queen, she has, recruiting her convent, from time immemorial helped all novices without distinction to bear it. It has become a habit with her; she does it unconsciously. With my own eyes I, a nine-year-old child, saw how Lieschen of Weinfeld, a sickly creature who took the veil here, carried the ponderous cross as if in sport on her drooping shoulder.

“Now I shall say to the Virgin, ‘If thou wilt have me, take me!—although I—if thou wert Gertrude and I were the Mother of God—should perhaps not take a child at its word. But no matter: a bargain is a bargain!—only with this difference: the duchess, burdened with sins, felt re-

lieved and happy in the convent; it will be pain and sorrow for me. If thou bearest the cross for me, lighten my heart also; else there will be trouble, Mother of God! If thou canst not lighten my heart, then let me a thousand times rather to my shame and before the eyes of all the people plunge down and fall flat upon the floor!"

As I watched these laboring thoughts slowly draw deep furrows in Gertrude's young brow I smiled and suggested cunningly, "An adroit and clever girl could extricate herself from the difficulty by stumbling!" Then fire flashed from her blue eyes. "Do you think, sir, I shall cheat?" she exclaimed wrathfully. "So help me God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in my last hour, as I will honestly bear the cross with all the strength and sinews of these my arms!" And she raised her arms convulsively, as though she were already carrying the cross, so that the sleeves of her cowl and smock fell far back. Then I, as the Florentine that I am, beheld the slender, powerful, feminine arms with artistic delight. She observed me, frowned, and indignantly turned her back upon me.

After she had gone I seated myself in a confessional, rested upon my elbow, and meditated—verily not upon the barbarian maiden, but upon the Roman classic. Suddenly my heart rejoiced and I cried out exultantly, "Thanks, ye immortal gods. A darling of the comic muse is restored to the world! Plautus is won!"

Friends, a conspiracy of circumstances guaranteed me this success.

I know not, Cosimo, what your views are on the subject of miracles. I myself am a tolerable believer, neither superstitious nor presumptuous; for I cannot endure those absolutists who, when an inexplicable fact has gathered an atmosphere of superstition about it, either summarily believe or just as summarily reject the whole phenomenon—moon and corona—without investigation and without distinction.

The marvel and the fraud, both I believed I had here discovered.

The heavy cross was genuine, and a magnificent sinner, a barbarian woman, might have lifted it with the superhuman strength of despair and fervor. But this deed had not been repeated; on the contrary, it had for centuries been imitated by jugglery. Who was guilty of the fraud? Was it mistaken piety? Calculating avarice? The answer to these questions lay hidden in the darkness of the times. But so much was certain: the horrible cross, black with age, which was exhibited to the people, and the one which had been borne by a succession of simple or compliant novices — and only lately by the feeble and wily Lieschen of Weinfeldten at her investiture — were two distinct pieces of wood; and all the while that the heavy one was being shown and weighed on the lawn, a light counterfeit was carefully locked up in some secret place within the convent, in order on the morrow to change places with the true one and deceive the eyes of the people.

The existence of a counterfeit cross, of which I was as much convinced as of my own existence, afforded me one weapon. A recent event afforded me another weapon.

Three dethroned popes and two heretics burned at the stake did not suffice to reform the church; the commissions of the Council were busied, one with this, the other with that abuse to be corrected. One of the commissions, of which the most Christian doctor Gerson and the stern Pierre d'Ailly were members and I for the time being was secretary, sought to restore discipline in the nunneries. Counterfeit miracles, dangerous in the unreliable hands of women, and the evil books read by the sisters came up for discussion. Be it said in passing: these matters were treated by the two Frenchmen with a degree of pedantry simply incomprehensible to us Italians, without the suggestion of a jest, howsoever readily one might have found the humor of the situation. Enough! The fact of these discussions formed the warp, sinful participation in a fraudulent miracle the woof of my fabric, and the net was woven which unexpectedly I cast over the head of the abbess.

Slowly I mounted the steps of the choir and from there turned to the right into the likewise lofty and boldly vaulted sacristy, in which, designated by self-glorifying inscriptions, the empty spot appeared where the heavy cross usually leaned against the wall, and whither it was destined presently to return from the convent lawn. Two small portals led into two side rooms. One proved to be locked. Opening the other, I stood in a room dimly lighted by a circular window obscured with cobwebs. Behold, it contained the convent library huddled together upon a few worm-eaten shelves.

My whole being throbbled with excitement, as though I were a youthful lover entering the chamber of Lydia or Glycera. With trembling hands and shaking knees I drew near to the parchments; and if I had found the Umbrian's comedies among them, I should have covered them with insatiable kisses.

But alas! I turned the leaves of naught but rituals and liturgies, the sacred contents of which gave cold comfort to my disappointment. No manuscript of Plautus! The report had been true. Instead of finding the buried treasure, a stupid collector had, by clumsy importunity, caused it to sink into unfathomable depths. I came upon — as my only booty — a dust-covered copy of the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, and as I have always been fond of the subtle little volume, I mechanically thrust it into my pocket, thus providing myself, according to my habit, with reading matter for the evening. Lo, like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky, my little abbess, who had had the cross dragged back to the sacristy and, without my having noticed her in the all-absorbing keenness of my desire and my disappointment, had trailed me through the open door into the library — like a bolt of lightning, I say, the little woman, cursing and railing, descended upon me; nay more, she groped with unseemly searching about my toga and brought to light again the church father reposing in my bosom.

“Mannikin,” she shrieked, “I saw at once by your long

nose that you are one of those Italian martens which of late have been sniffing around after books in our convents. But I tell you there is a difference between a befuddled monk of St. Gall and a nimble woman of Appenzell. I know," she continued with a smirk, "what bacon draws the cats. They are watching for an opportunity to seize the buffoon's book which we have stored up here. No one of us knew what was in it until the other day an Italian scamp came to venerate our most holy relics and then tried to carry off the jester under his long priestly gown,"—she pointed to mine. "But I said to myself, 'Brigittchen of Trogen, don't be swindled! The pigskin must be worth its weight in gold, since the Italian risks his neck for it.' For in our country, man, we say, 'He who steals a rope's worth shall hang by the rope!' Brigittchen, who is up to snuff, privately consults a learned friend, a man without guile, the priest of Diessenhofen, who is fond of our humble wine and at times plays merry pranks upon our sisters. After he had examined the odd scrolls, yellow with age, he exclaimed, 'Odsnigs, Lady Abbess, you can get something for that! You can build your convent a barn and a wine-press! Take the book, my good woman, hide it under your pillow, lie with the podex—so it is called—beneath you, and by the crown of the Virgin stay there until an honest purchaser presents himself!' And so Brigittchen did, though she has lain somewhat uncomfortably ever since."

I suppressed a smile at the Umbrian's resting-place, to which the three judges of the lower world may have consigned him for his sins, and, assuming the dignity which I possess when circumstances call for it, I reproved her with a stern glance.

"Abbess," I said in a solemn tone, "you do not know who I am. Before you stands an emissary of the Council, one of the fathers assembled in Constance, one of the holy men commissioned to reform the nunneries." And I unfolded a splendidly engrossed bill of innkeeper's charges; for I was inspired by the nearness of the comic poet in hiding.

“In the name,” I read, “and by authority of the seventeenth ecumenical council! Let no Christian vestal sully her hands with one of those works dangerous to good morals, whether composed in Latin or in one of the vulgar tongues, whereof the invention hath corrupted the souls of . . . Pious Mother Superior, I may not offend your chaste ears by reading the names of these reprobates. . . .”

“Counterfeit miracles, traditional or once performed, we prosecute with inexorable severity. If intentional fraud can be proved, the guilty woman—though she were the abbess—shall without exception atone for the sacrilege by death in the flames.”

The abbess became as white as a ghost. But with admirable presence of mind the hypocrite immediately recovered her composure.

“Glory and honor to God!” she cried, “for finally setting His holy church in order!” And with an ingratiating smirk she fetched from a corner of the bookcase a daintily bound little volume. “This,” she said, “an Italian cardinal, our guest, left behind for us. He used to read himself to sleep with it after dinner. The priest of Diessenhofen, who examined it, pronounced the opinion that it was the grossest and most damnable thing that had been conceived since the invention of the alphabet—and that too by a cleric. Pious father, I confide this abomination to your keeping. Free me from its contagion!” And she handed over to me—my *Facetiae!*

Although this surprise was probably due to the malicious mischief-making of chance rather than of the Mother Superior, I felt hurt and indignant. I began to hate the little abbess. For our writings are our own flesh and blood, and I flattered myself that in mine I walk demurely, offending neither the modest muses nor the infallible church.

“It is well,” I said. “I only wish you might be found guiltless in the second and more essential point! To the assembled people you have, in the neighborhood and under the very eyes of the Council,” I remarked reproachfully,

“promised a miracle with so much vulgar advertising that you cannot now withhold the performance. I do not know whether that was wise. Do not marvel, abness, that your miracle is going to be put to the test! You have invited your own doom!”

The woman's knees knocked together and her eyes wandered. “Follow me,” I said sternly, “and let us inspect the instruments of the miracle!”

She followed in dismay and we entered the sacristy, to which the genuine cross had returned, and with its rifts and cracks and gigantic shadow in the spacious dimness of the noble room was resting as mightily on the wall as if only today a despairing great sinner had seized it and had sunk to her knees under its weight, touching the stone pavement with her forehead at the moment when the Queen of Heaven appeared and succored her. I tried to raise it, but could not lift it an inch. All the more ridiculous did the outrage appear, of replacing this crushing burden with a bauble. I turned resolutely toward the high narrow door behind which I suspected the latter to be.

“The key, abness,” I commanded. The little woman stared at me with eyes of horror, but boldly answered, “Lost, my lord bishop, more than ten years ago.”

“Woman,” I rejoined with terrible seriousness, “your life is at stake! Yonder dwells a retainer of my friend the count of Doccaburgo. Thither I shall send or go for help. If there be found here a counterfeit copy of the real cross, of lighter weight, you shall be consumed by flames of fire, you sinner, like the heretic Huss, and not less guilty than he!”

There was a moment of silence. Then the woman—I know not whether with chattering teeth or with gnashing of teeth—drew forth an antique key with complicated wards and opened the door. The result was flattering—my intelligence had not deceived me. There against the wall of the high, chimney-like room leaned a black cross with rifts and cracks, which I at once grasped and in my

feeble arms lifted without difficulty. In every one of its bumps and hollows, in all details the counterfeit conformed to the model of the genuine cross, and even for a sharp eye was indistinguishable from it—only that it was ten times lighter. Whether it was hollowed out or constructed of cork or some other light material, the rush and tumble of events never permitted me to ascertain.

I admired the perfection of the imitation and the thought dawned upon me that only a great artist, only an Italian could have brought this to pass; and, enthusiastic as I am for the fame of my native land, I exclaimed, "Perfect! Masterly!"—verily, extolling not the fraud, but the art expended upon it.

With a grin, the brazen woman, who had watched me attentively, shook her finger at me and said, "Crafty joker, you have outwitted me, and I know what there will be to pay! Take your jester, whom I will fetch at once, under your arm, keep your own counsel, and God be with you on your way!" Whenever, on one of the seven hills of Rome, two augurs met and, according to an ancient saying, smiled knowingly at each other, the play of features was surely more delicate than the gross laugh which distorted the face of my abbess and was translatable into the cynical words, "We all know where Bartolo gets his wine. We are rogues all together, and no one needs to put on airs."

But meanwhile I was pondering over a punishment for the worthless woman.

Then in the silence that had suddenly ensued we heard a tripping, a whispering and tittering in the adjacent choir and surmised that we were being watched by the idle and inquisitive nuns. "By my precious maidenhood," the woman implored me, "let us go, my lord bishop! Not for the wealth of the world would I have my nuns find me here with you; for you are a handsome man and my sisters' tongues are as sharp as scissors and knives!" This scruple seemed to me well founded. I bade her depart and take her nuns with her.

After a while I too left the sacristy. But I only carefully closed the door of the room in which the sham cross was concealed, without turning the key. This I drew out, put it beneath my cloak, and let it slip into a crevice between two stalls in the choir, where, for all I know, it may still repose to this very day. I did this, however, with no definite plan, but prompted by some whispering god or goddess.

When I sat in the low-studded prioress's room, alone with my abbess and an odor of sanctity, I experienced such a longing for the innocent play of the muse and such a repugnance for the twists and turns of entrapped mendacity that I determined to make short work of the matter. The Mother Superior had to confess to me how she had been initiated into the hoary swindle, and I closed the incident with few pretorian edicts. She confessed that her predecessor in office had, when at the point of death, called her and the father confessor into secret conference, and that both had commended the inherited sham miracle to her fostering care as the economic salvation of the convent. The confessor, she volubly related, had been inexhaustible in praise of the venerable age of the fraud, its deep meaning, and instructiveness. Better and more convincingly than any sermon, he said, the phantom miracle symbolized to the people the initial difficulty and the subsequent ease of a godly life. This symbolism had so turned the head of the poor woman that in one and the same breath she affirmed that she had committed no wrong and that as a child she too had once been honest.

“I will spare you for the sake of our Mother Church, upon which the flame of your burning at the stake would cast a false light”—with these words I cut short her rustic logic, and curtly commanded her to give the counterfeit cross to the flames after the loudly trumpeted miracle had been performed once more—from motives of prudence I did not venture to prevent this—but to deliver the Plautus without delay.



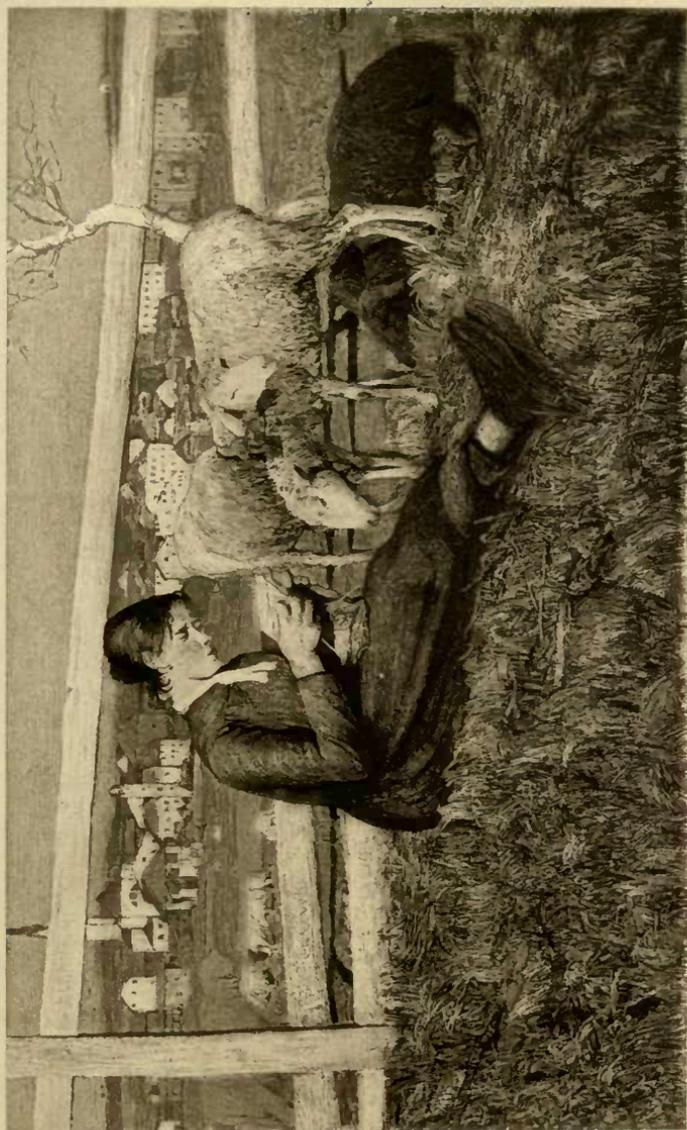
From the Painting by Giovanni Segantini

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From the Painting by Giovanni Segantini



FERNANDO F. BRUCKMANN, C. MUNICH

Scolding and reviling me, the abbess obeyed. She submitted to the decrees of the Council of Constance as they were formulated by me, not indeed with the foreknowledge of the assembled fathers, but certainly in their spirit and in conformity to their intention.

When Brigittchen, growling like a bear, brought me the codex—I had fled to a comfortable room in the visitors' quarters situated next the wall that encircled the convent—I forced her ill-bred ladyship out of the apartment and locked myself in with the Umbrian's comic characters. Not a sound disturbed me there, except the refrain of a children's song which some peasant girls were singing in the meadow beneath my window, and this made my solitude only the more enjoyable.

After a while, to be sure, the Mother Superior, highly excited, made a great pother outside, and with desperate fists pounded upon the heavy bolted oaken door, demanding the key to the open room of the counterfeit cross. I gave her, with my regrets, the brief and veritable information that it was not in my hands, paid no further attention to her, and, myself in the seventh heaven of delight, let the miserable woman wail and groan like a soul in Purgatory. But I reveled as one bidden to a wedding feast.

A classic author newly come to light—not an obscure thinker, nor a sublime poet—no, that which lies nearest at hand and eternally fascinates, the wide, wide world, the pulse of life, the hilarious market-places of Rome and Athens, wit, altercation, and equivocation, the passions, the effrontery of human nature in the extenuating exaggeration of the comic mirror. While I devoured one piece I was already keeping hungry watch over the next.

I had finished the witty *Amphitruo*, the *Aulularia* with the incomparable figure of the miser lay open before me—but I stopped and leaned back in my chair; for my eyes pained me. Twilight and darkness were coming on. The girls in the meadow outside had for at least a quarter of an hour indefatigably repeated the silly ditty,

“Adam, he had seven sons * * *”

Now they mischievously struck up a new refrain, and with droll resoluteness they sang,

“To the convent I’ll not go,
“I’ll not be a nun, no, no!”

I leaned out in order to catch sight of these little foes of celibacy and take pleasure in the contemplation of their innocence. But their game was in no wise an innocent one. Nudging each other with their elbows, and exchanging knowing glances, they sang, not without invidiousness and malice, up at a grated window, behind which they supposed Gertrude to be. Or was she already kneeling in the sacristy yonder, under the pale glimmer of the ever-burning light, according to the custom of those about to take the veil, who pass in prayer the night before their marriage to heaven? But what was that to me? I lighted the lamp and began to read the comedy of the Pot.

Not until my lamp burned out and the letters swam before my weary eyes did I throw myself down upon my couch and fall into a restless slumber. Soon the comic characters were again hovering about me. Here a soldier boasted with high-sounding words, there the drunken youth caressed his sweetheart, who with a graceful turn of her head met his kisses half way. Then, without warning, there stood in the midst of the merry antique rabble a broad-shouldered, barefoot barbarian maiden girdled with a rope, brought like a slave to the mart, staring at me, as it seemed, with reproachful and threatening eyes that gleamed forth from beneath her gloomy brow.

I was frightened and awoke with a start. The morning dawned. On account of the summer sultriness I had left one half of the little window open, and from the adjacent choir of the convent chapel I heard a monotonous orison that passed over into a smothered groan and then into a violent outcry.

Interrupting himself, the narrator turned to a grave man who sat over against him and, in spite of the summer heat,

had after the manner of the ancients draped the folds of his mantle about him. "My learned and far-famed friend," said he, "my great philosopher, tell me, I beseech you, what is conscience?"

Is it a universal attribute? By no means. We have all known men who had none, and, to mention only one, our holy father, John XXIII., whom we dethroned at Constance, had no conscience, but on the contrary, such a happy heart, such a cheerful, I had almost said childlike spirit, that in the midst of his evil deeds no spectre disturbed his slumbers and he awoke every morning more serene than he had lain down the day before. When at the castle of Gottlieben, where he was confined, I unfolded the scroll of complaints against him and with hesitant voice and flushed face read to him the sum of his sins—ten times greater than the number attached to his papal name, *scelera horrenda, abominanda*—he picked up a pen and to while away the time adorned a St. Barbara in his breviary with a moustache.

No, conscience is no universal attribute, and even among us, who have a conscience, it appears as a Proteus, in changing forms. In your humble servant, for example, it awakes every time that it can embody itself in an image or in a tone. When recently I was a guest at the court of one of those petty tyrants with whom our fortunate Italy swarms, and on that balmy evening sat to wine and music with fair women on an airy balcony that jutted out from the tower of the castle over a bottomless pool of cool water, I heard a sigh from below. It was the voice of a prisoner. Banished was my joy, and I could remain there no longer. It troubled my conscience to enjoy life, kissing, drinking, and laughing so near to misery.

In the same manner I could not now endure the cry of a woman in despair so close at hand. I threw a cloak about me and stole through the dim cloister to the choir, saying to myself that while I was reading Plautus a change

must have come over Gertrude: on the threshold of a decision she must have come to the incontrovertible conviction that she should surely perish in this community, in the nothingness—or worse, the corruption of the convent, confined as she should be together with the common herd, despising it and hated in her turn.

In the portal of the sacristy I stopped to listen, and saw Gertrude wringing her hands before the genuine, heavy cross. Believe me, they were bleeding, and I daresay her knees were bleeding too; for she had been upon her knees in prayer the whole night long; her voice was hoarse, and her converse with God, after her heart had sunk within her and no new words came to her lips, was convulsive and brutish, like a dying effort.

“Mary, Mother of God,” she cried, “have mercy on me! Let me fall beneath the weight of thy cross; it is too heavy for me! I shudder at the thought of a cell!” And she made a motion as if she were snatching or uncoiling a serpent from about her body; and then, in a paroxysm of anguish, even suppressing her shame, she exclaimed, “What befits me is sun and cloud, sickel and scythe, husband and child . . .”

In the midst of this misery I could not restrain a smile at this human confession made to the Blessed Virgin; but the smile died on my lips. Gertrude had suddenly jumped to her feet and fixed her great eyes, weirdly staring from out her blanched face, upon a spot in the wall which was marred by I know not what red stain.

“Mary, Mother of God, have mercy on me!” she cried again. “My limbs cannot abide in the cell and I shall strike my head against the ceiling. Let me sink under the weight of thy cross; it is too heavy for me! But if thou shouldst make it light upon my shoulder without being able to make light my heart, then beware”—and she stared at the uncanny spot—“lest some morning they find me lying with a crushed head at the foot of the wall!” Infinite compassion seized me—and not compassion alone, but anxious apprehension also.

Exhausted, Gertrude had seated herself upon a chest which contained some sacred relic, and was plaiting her blond hair which, during her wrestling with God, had loosened itself from the braids. At the same time she sang to herself half sadly, half playfully, not in her robust alto, but in a high-pitched child's voice not her own,

"To the convent I must run,
Must be a poor, unhappy nun . . ."

paraphrasing that refrain with which the peasant children had derided her.

This was madness, which sought to waylay her and slip with her into the cell. But Optimus Maximus availed himself of me as the instrument of his will and bade me save Gertrude at any cost.

Now I, too, addressed myself in unfeigned piety to that virgin goddess whom the ancients adored as Pallas Athena and whom we call Mary. "Whoever thou art," I prayed with uplifted hands, "Wisdom, as some say, Mercy, as others affirm—it is all one; Wisdom doth not record the vow of an inexperienced child, nor will Mercy hold an adult woman bound by the foolish promise of an infant. With a smile of clemency thou wilt annul this empty bond. It is thy cause I plead, goddess. Be gracious unto me!"

Since I had given the abbess, who feared treachery, my word that I should have no further speech with Gertrude, I determined after the manner of the ancients with three symbolical actions to bring the truth home to the novice, so manifestly that even the slow wits of a peasant girl could grasp it.

Paying no attention to Gertrude, I stepped up to the cross. "When I wish to recognize an object that I have once seen, I put my mark on it," I said pedantically; and drawing my sharp dagger, forged by our famous fellow-citizen, Pantaleone Ubbriaco the cutler, I cut a chip of some size out from under the head and the cross-beam, as it were the arm-pit of the cross.

Secondly, I took five measured steps. Then I burst out laughing and began with expressive gesticulation, "That porter in the hall at Constance cut a comical figure when my luggage arrived! He surveyed the biggest piece there was, an enormous box, rolled his sleeves above his elbows, spat upon his hands—the rude fellow—and, straining every muscle for a supreme effort, raised the trifling burden of an empty chest with ease to his deluded shoulder. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Thirdly and lastly, I placed myself in mock solemnity between the real cross and the sham cross in its unlocked abiding place, and repeatedly pointing this way and that, I oracularly murmured, "Truth in the air, falsehood in there!"—presto! and I clapped my hands, "Falsehood in the air, truth is in there!"

Out of the corner of my eye I looked over at the novice sitting in the twilight, in order to gather from the facial expression of the young barbarian the effect of these three oracles upon her. I perceived the tension of disquieting meditation and the first flicker of blazing wrath.

Then I repaired to my room, cautiously, as I had gone forth from it, threw myself without undressing upon my couch, and enjoyed the sweet slumber of a good conscience until aroused by the hum of the multitude proceeding to the convent and by the clangor of the festal bells above my head.

When I again entered the sacristy, Gertrude, deathly pale, as though she were being led to the scaffold, was just returning from a procession to a neighboring chapel, a traditional requirement no doubt instituted to give opportunity for the fraudulent exchange of crosses. The adornment of the bride of heaven began. In the group of psalm-singing nuns the novice girded herself with the coarse, thrice-knotted rope and slowly removed the shoes from her sinewy but well-shapen feet. Now they presented to her the crown of thorns. This, by contrast to the symbolical counterfeit cross, was a wreath of hard, real thorns, bristling with sharp points. Gertrude seized it eagerly and

pressed it with voluptuous cruelty so firmly upon her head that the warm rain of her young blood spurted forth and in heavy drops ran down her innocent brow. Sublime wrath, a present judgment of the righteous God, gleamed destruction in the blue eyes of the peasant girl; so that the nuns began to recoil from her in fear. Six of their number, whom the abbess had presumably initiated into the pious fraud, now laid the sham cross upon her honest shoulder, with clumsy grimaces, as though they were hardly able to lift the bauble, and with such stupid hypocrisy that I verily believed I saw the truth of God in the thorny crown, openly honored and glorified by human untruthfulness, but secretly reviled.

Now everything developed with the swiftness of a thunderstorm. Gertrude cast a quick glance at the place where on the genuine cross my dagger had cut a deep mark, and found the false one unscarred. Contemptuously she let the light cross glide from her shoulder, without clasping it in her arms. Then with a shriek of derisive laughter she seized it again, and triumphantly smote it to pieces upon the stone pavement. And with a bound she stood before the door of the room in which the real, the heavy cross was concealed, opened the door, found and lifted the cross, shouted wildly for joy, as though she had discovered a treasure, raised the cross unaided to her shoulder, embraced it exultantly with her valiant arms, and turned with her burden slowly toward the choir where, as upon an open stage, she was to appear before the multitude. Breathlessly waiting, nobility, clergy, peasantry, a whole people, crowded the spacious nave of the church. Lamenting, reproving, threatening, imploring, the abbess with her nuns threw herself in the way.

But she, with gleaming eyes lifted up to heaven, cried out, "Now, Mother of God, do thou conclude this business honestly!" And then with a loud voice, "Make way!"—like a workman carrying a piece of timber through a press of people.

All gave way before her and she entered the choir, where, with a vicar of the bishop at their head, the rural clergy awaited her. All eyes were focussed upon the heavy-laden shoulder and the blood-besprinkled countenance. But the true cross proved too heavy for Gertrude and no goddess made it lighter. She strode with panting bosom, ever more bent and more slowly, as though her bare feet were implanted and rooted in the floor. She stumbled a little, recovered her balance, stumbled again, sank down upon her left knee, then upon her right, and endeavored with all her might to rise again. It was in vain. Now her left hand let go the cross and, stretched forward to reach the floor, supported for a moment the weight of her entire body. Then the arm bent at the elbow and doubled up. The head with its crown of thorns fell forward heavily and struck the stone pavement with a thud. Over the body of the exhausted victim the cross rolled ponderously, released by the right hand only after Gertrude had been stunned by the fall.

That was bloody truth, not the illusion of jugglery. One sigh rose from the breasts of a thousand witnesses.

The horrified nuns drew Gertrude forth from beneath the cross and lifted her to her feet. She had swooned in her fall, but consciousness soon returned to the sturdy maiden. She passed her hand over her forehead. Her eye fell upon the cross which had overwhelmed her. A smile of thanks flitted across her face, to the goddess whose help had not been forthcoming. Then with heavenly humor she spoke the roguish words, "Thou dost not wish me, Virgin pure! Then another will have me!"

Still wearing the crown of thorns, without appearing to feel the bloody pricks, she now set her foot upon the first of the steps that led from the choir down into the nave. At the same time her eyes wandered searchingly about the congregation, and found him, whom they sought for. A profound silence ensued. "Hans of Splügen," Gertrude began in clear and audible tones, "wilt thou take me for

thy wedded wife?" "Indeed, I will, with joy a thousand-fold. Come down and see!" answered a happy and convincing masculine voice from the back of the nave.

She did so and descended calmly, but radiant with joy, one step after another, once more the simple peasant, who no doubt was glad soon to forget the affecting spectacle that in her despair she had given the multitude, now that her modest human desire was granted and she was permitted to return to the every-day sphere of her humble existence. Laugh at me, if you will, Cosimo; I was disappointed. For a short space the peasant girl had appeared to my excited senses as the incarnation of a higher being, as a demonic creature, as Truth exultantly unmasking Falsehood. But "What is truth?" asked Pilate.

Pondering this and following Gertrude from the choir down into the nave, I was plucked in the sleeve by my messenger, who informed me of the sudden election of Otto Colonna to the papacy by enthusiastic acclamation, and of sundry remarkable circumstances.

When I looked up again, Gertrude had vanished. But the excited multitude was shouting and clamoring with divided opinion. From yonder group of men the words resounded, "Hag! Witch!" They meant the abbess. Here women's voices shrilled, "Sinner! Impudent hussy!" That was Gertrude. Whether the former surmised the pious fraud, or the latter believed the miracle to be desecrated by Gertrude's worldliness,—no matter; in either case the spell of the relic was broken and the career of the miracle closed.

Coarsely reviled by the people, the valiant Brigittchen began to retort in kind, and the dumbfounded faces of the attending priests showed a complete scale of expressions from sly complicity down to the most incorruptible stupidity.

I felt my dignity as a cleric and put an end to the abomination. Mounting the pulpit, I solemnly announced to assembled Christendom, "*Habemus pontificem Dominum*

Othonem Colonna!” and struck up a resounding *Te Deum*, in which first the chorus of nuns and then the entire congregation lustily joined. After the hymn had been sung, nobles and peasants hastened to mount their horses or to set out afoot on the way to Constance, where, after the *triregnum* had come to an end, the blessing conveyed to the city and to the world must be trebly strong.

I, for my part, slipped back into the cloister in order with all secrecy to get the Plautus that was in my room. Going furtively away again, with the codex under my arm, I happened upon the abbess who, economical as she was, was carefully carrying the pieces of the sham cross in a great basket to the kitchen. I congratulated her upon the *dénouement*. But Brigittchen believed herself swindled and yelled at me in fury, “Go to the devil, you two Italian scoundrels,” meaning, so far as I could judge, the Umbrian Marcus Accius Plautus and the Tuscan Poggio Bracciolini, your fellow-citizen. A pretty blond boy, another curly-head, whom Hans of Splügen, before his departure with Gertrude, had thoughtfully engaged for me, then led out my mule, which carried me back to Constance.

Plaudite amici! My story is at an end. When the Council of Constance, which lasted longer than this little narrative, was likewise at an end, I returned with my gracious master, His Holiness Martin V., over the mountains, and found as our host and hostess in the inn at Splügen, to the north of the dangerous pass, Hänsel and Gertrude in health and prosperity—she not in a stifling cell but in a wind-swept rocky valley, with a child at her breast and the conjugal cross resting lightly upon her shoulder.

Let this *Facetia inedita*, illustrious Cosimo, be a not unwelcome supplement to the codex of Plautus which at this hour I present to you, or rather to our native land, whose Father you are, and to learning, to which your halls with their store of treasures are always open.

It was my intention to bequeath the unique manuscript to you, lest, as a living donor, I should invite the tenfold greater recompense with which you are wont in your incorrigible generosity to reward every gift presented to you in homage. But who knows—Poggio sighed resignedly—whether my sons would respect my last will?”

Cosimo replied amiably, “I thank you for both, your Plautus and your *Facetia*. Without a scruple you lived this and accomplished it, young as you then were. As a mature man you have recounted it to us in the wisdom of your years. This toast”—he lifted a noble bowl enclasped by a laughing satyr—“I pledge to my honest Poggio and his blond barbarian maiden!”

They drank and laughed. Then the conversation passed quickly from Plautus to the thousand discovered treasures and unrolled parchments of antiquity, and to the greatness of the century.

THE MONK'S MARRIAGE (1884)

By CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM GUILD HOWARD, A.M.

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It was in Verona. Before an ample fire that filled a spacious fireplace, youthful courtiers of both sexes were gathered in the most comfortable attitudes consistent with good breeding about a sovereign as youthful as any, and two fair women. On the left of the hearth sat this princely group, which the retinue joined in a quarter circle, leaving the other side of the hearth, in accordance with courtly custom, quite unoccupied. The ruler was that Scaliger whom they called Cangrande. Of the ladies between whom he sat, the one leaning somewhat backward into the semi-darkness next to the hearth appeared to be his wife, the other, in the full glare of the light, might have been a relative or friend; and there were stories told to the accompaniment of significant glances and suppressed laughter.

There now stepped into this voluptuous and wanton circle a grave man whose noble features and flowing garments seemed to mark him as coming from another world. "My lord, I come to warm myself by your fireside," said the stranger—half solemnly and half contemptuously, disdainful to add that in spite of the frosty November evening the careless servants had forgotten or neglected to make a fire in the guest chamber situated on one of the upper floors.

"Sit down beside me, my Dante," replied Cangrande. "But if you desire the warmth of good fellowship, forbear to gaze as is your wont mutely into the flames! We are telling stories, and the hand that today has been forging

tercets—mounting to my astrological chamber I heard some one in your apartment scanning verses in a mumbling sing-song—this mighty hand must today not refuse to take in its fingers the plaything of a merry tale, without crushing it. Dismiss the goddesses”—he meant to say the muses—“and enjoy yourself with these fair mortals.” With a casual gesture Scaliger indicated to his guest the two ladies, of whom the taller, sitting with apparent indifference in the shadow, had no idea of moving, whereas the smaller—a sprightly person—readily made room for the Florentine beside her. He, however, did not act upon his host's invitation, but proudly chose the last seat, at the other end of the line. He was either displeased with the prince's bigamy—though it were but the sport of an evening—or disgusted with the court fool who with outstretched legs was sitting beside Cangrande's armchair, on the prince's mantle which had slipped down to the floor.

The fool, a toothless old fellow with staring eyes and flabby, babbling, candy-smeared lips—except Dante the only aged man in the company—was called Gocciola, that is “Dropkin,” because he used always to drain the last sirupy drops from the empty glasses; and he hated the stranger with childish malice; for he saw in Dante his rival for the favor of his not very discriminating master. He made a grimace, and with a scornful grin impudently directed the attention of the pretty neighbor on his left to the poet's profile projected upon the illuminated ceiling of the lofty apartment. Dante's silhouette resembled a gigantic woman with a long hooked nose and protruding under-lip, a Fate or the like. The vivacious girl suppressed a childlike laugh. Her neighbor, a keen-eyed youth named Ascanio, helped her smother it by turning to Dante with that discreet reverence with which he liked to be addressed.

“Do not disdain, Homer and Virgil of Italy,” he entreated, “to mingle in our innocent amusement. Descend to our level, master, and tell a story, instead of singing.”

“What is your theme?” queried Dante, less uncompanionably than at first, but still gruffly enough.

“Sudden change of calling,” answered the youth briefly, “with good, or evil, or comical result.”

Dante reflected. His melancholy eyes surveyed the company, which was made up in a way that seemed not altogether to displease him; for he discovered in it, along with many a shallow pate, some heads of notable distinction. “Has any one of you treated the unfrocked monk?” he remarked, already more kindly disposed.

“Certainly, Dante,” answered a warrior of frank and open mien, Germano by name, who wore a coat of chain-armor, was adorned with a drooping moustache, and pronounced his Italian with a slight German accent. “I myself told of young Manuccio, who leaped over the wall of his monastery in order to become a soldier.”

“He acted rightly,” Dante explained. “He had deceived himself as to his native bent.”

“I, master,” said in a gossiping tone a forward, somewhat luxurious woman of Padua, named Isotta, “have told of Helena Manente, who had just sacrificed the first lock of her hair to the consecrated shears, but quickly protected the other locks with both hands and choked back her monastic vow; for among the people in the nave of the church she had caught a glimpse of her friend, who had been taken into paynim slavery, had been most miraculously rescued, and now”—she was about to say, “hung his broken chains on the wall;” but her chatter was interrupted by Dante’s words.

“She did well,” said he, “for she acted in faithful obedience to her lovelorn nature. Hereof I now in nowise speak, but of an entirely different case: suppose, namely, that a monk, not of his own motion, not from awakened worldly desire or lust of conquest, not because he has not known himself, but for another’s sake, under the pressure of another’s will—though it were perhaps from motives of sacred loyalty—becomes recreant to himself even more

than to the church, breaks vows that he has made to himself, and casts off a cowl that has fit his body and has never been irksome. Has this story been told? No? Very well; then I will relate it. But tell me, my patron and protector—how does such a matter end?" He had turned exclusively to Cangrande.

"Necessarily ill," replied the prince, without stopping to reflect. "He leaps well who may take a running start; but he who is thrust forward falls on the other side."

"You speak the truth, my lord," said Dante in confirmation, "and no other is the meaning of the apostle, if I understand him, when he writes that sin is whatsoever is not of faith, that is, is not of conviction and proceedeth not from the truth of our nature."

"Must there then be monks in the world?" tittered a subdued voice in the semi-obscurity of the corner, as if to say that any rescue from a manifestly unnatural state is a benefaction.

This reckless and heretical utterance gave no offense here; for at this court the freest speech concerning ecclesiastical affairs was tolerated, even smilingly fostered, while a frank or merely incautious word concerning the ruler, his person or his policy, might be fatal.

Dante's eye peered after the speaker and discovered him in the person of a high-born young cleric whose fingers were fondling the jeweled cross which he wore over his priestly garb.

"Not so far as I am concerned," answered the Florentine deliberately. "Let the monks die out as soon as a generation arises knowing how to unite the two supreme faculties of the human soul, justice and mercy, which seem mutually exclusive. Until that late hour comes in the history of the world, let the state administer one, and the church the other. Inasmuch, however, as the exercise of mercy demands a thoroughly unselfish soul, the three monastic vows are justified; for, as experience teaches, it

is less difficult to renounce pleasure altogether than in part."

"But are there not more bad monks than good ones?" asked the clerical doubter further.

"No," Dante affirmed, "not with due regard to human frailty. Otherwise there must be more unrighteous judges than righteous ones, more cowardly than courageous warriors, more bad men than good."

"And is not that the case?" whispered he in the shadow.

"No," said Dante decidedly, and a heavenly transfiguration illumined his stern features. "Does not our philosophy inquire and seek to learn how evil came into the world? If the wicked were in the majority, we should inquire how good came into the world."

These proud and dark sayings imposed their authority upon the company, but at the same time aroused apprehension, lest the Florentine might become absorbed in his scholasticism instead of his story.

Cangrande saw his young favorite trying to prevent a pretty little yawn. Under these circumstances he came forward with the question, "Will you tell us a true story, my Dante, based upon documentary evidence, or a tale taken from popular tradition? Or is it to be an invention springing from your own laureate head?"

"I shall develop my story from an epitaph," replied Dante with solemn deliberateness.

"From an epitaph?"

"From an epitaph that I read years ago in the Franciscan monastery at Padua. The stone upon which it was inscribed lay in a corner of the monastery garden, concealed, to be sure, by luxuriant rose-bushes, but still within reach of the novices, if they crawled on their hands and knees and could bear a few scratches of the thorns on their cheeks. I commanded the prior—or rather, I requested him to have the stone in question transferred to the library and committed to the care of a man of years."

“What, then, did the inscription say?” asked the prince’s consort in a tone of indifference.

“The inscription,” Dante replied, “was in Latin and read, *Hic jacet monachus Astorre cum uxore Antiope. Sepeliebat Azzolinus.*”

“What does that mean?” asked the lady curiously.

Cangrande translated fluently, “Here rests Astorre the monk beside his wife Antiope. Ezzelino buried them.”

“The abominable tyrant!” exclaimed the sentimental princess. “I am sure he had them buried alive because they loved each other, and heaped scorn upon his victim even in the grave by calling her the wife of the monk. He was cruel enough!”

“Hardly,” Dante opined. “This matter has shaped itself otherwise in my mind and your interpretation is also improbable according to history; for Ezzelino menaced obedience to the church rather than the breaking of monastic vows. I take *sepeliebat* in a good sense: He gave both a burial.”

“That is right,” cried Cangrande joyfully. “You think as I do, Florentine. Ezzelino was a born ruler and, as such men are, was somewhat rough and violent. Nine-tenths of his crimes are the invention of priests and the story-loving populace.”

“I would it were so!” sighed Dante. “As he appears in the plot of my story, I must say that he is not as yet the monster truly or falsely depicted in the chronicle, but that his cruelty is only just beginning to grave its sign, so to speak, in a wrinkle about his mouth—”

“A commanding figure,” Cangrande warmly completed the portrait, “with bristling black hair over his forehead, as you depict him, a dweller in hell, in your twelfth canto. Where did you get your idea of that head of black hair?”

“It is your head,” boldly answered Dante; and Cangrande felt flattered.

“The other figures in my story as well,” he continued, with a smile, though threateningly, “I shall take, you will

permit me?"— and he turned to those sitting about him— "from this company and give them your names; your characters I shall not touch, for I cannot read beneath the surface."

"My mien is at your service," said the princess with a lordly air, her indifference beginning to wane.

A murmur of the utmost excitement ran through the circle of auditors, and "Your story, Dante!" they breathed on all sides, "Your story!"

"Here it is," said he, and told as follows:

Where the course of the Brenta in a graceful curve approaches but does not touch the city of Padua, a bark adorned with garlands and filled to overflowing with a festive company glided on a heavenly summer day to the music of muted flutes upon its swift but noiseless water. It was the bridal party of Umberto Vicedomini and Diana Pizzaguerra. The Paduan had gone to fetch his bride from a convent situated on the upper course of the river, whither, by virtue of an old custom of the city, maidens of rank were wont to withdraw for the sake of religious exercises before marriage. She sat on a purple cushion in the middle of the boat between the bridegroom and his three rosy-cheeked sons by his first marriage. Umberto Vicedomini had buried the wife of his youth five years before, when pestilence raged in Padua, and, although in the full vigor of manhood, he had only painfully and reluctantly yielded to the daily urging of his old and sickly father and resolved upon this second marriage.

With oars drawn in, the bark drifted, yielding to the will of the stream. The boatmen accompanied the soft music with a low chanty. Then suddenly both music and song ceased. All eyes had turned toward the right bank, where a splendid horseman drew in his steed and with a wide sweep of his hand waved a greeting to those in the bark. A shy murmur passed from thwart to thwart. The oarsmen snatched their red caps from their heads and the

entire ship's company rose in fear and reverence, even the bridegroom, Diana, and the boys. With submissive gestures, waving of arms and half-bended knees, they turned toward the strand with such impetuosity and immoderate movement that the bark became unbalanced, listed to starboard, and suddenly overturned. A cry of horror, a whirling eddy, a vacant space in the middle of the stream which became dotted with bodies emerging only to sink again, and with floating garlands from the foundered bark! Help was not far to seek; for a short distance down-stream there was a small river port where fishermen and ferrymen dwelt, and where today the horses and litters were waiting to convey the company now perishing in the stream the rest of the way to Padua.

The first boats of rescuers put out from opposite shores. In one stood beside an old ferryman with a bushy beard, Ezzelino, the tyrant of Padua, the innocent cause of the calamity; in the other, coming from the left bank, a young monk and his ferryman, who was rowing the dusty pilgrim over the stream at the very moment when the accident occurred. The two boats met mid-way. Between them there floated in the river something resembling a wealth of blond hair, which with outstretched arm the monk resolutely seized, kneeling, while his boatsman, bracing himself, leaned backward as far as possible over the other side of the skiff. Grasping a thick tress, the monk lifted out of the swirling waters first a head, in which the eyes were closed, and then, with the aid of Ezzelino who had come close up to him, the body of a woman heavy with dripping garments. The tyrant had leaped from his skiff into the other and now contemplated the head, inanimate but retaining an expression of defiance and unhappiness, with a kind of rapt admiration, either of the distinguished features or of the peacefulness of death.

“Do you know her, Astorre?” he asked the monk. The latter shook his head, and Ezzelino continued, “See, it is your brother's wife.”

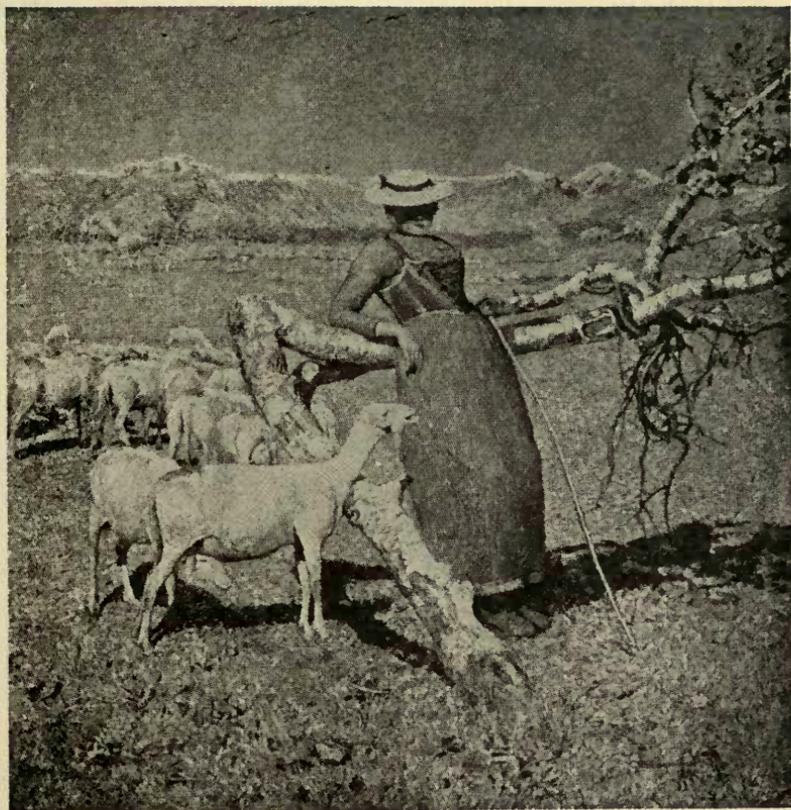
The monk cast a shy glance of compassion upon the pale face, and presently the slumbering eyes slowly opened.

“Take her ashore,” Ezzelino commanded. But the monk committed her to the care of his ferryman. “I will search for my brother,” he cried, “until I find him.” “I will help you, monk,” said the tyrant, “but I doubt our being able to save him. I saw him embrace his sons and, enclasped by the three, sink hopelessly into the depths.”

Meanwhile the Brenta had become covered with craft of all sorts. People cast about with poles, gaffs, hooks, nets, and in the quickly changing scene the figure of the ruler was everywhere at once, dominating the searchers and the burdens they raised.

“Come, monk,” he said finally, “there is nothing more for you to do here. Umberto and his boys have now been lying too long on the bottom ever to come back to life. The current has dragged them away. It will cast them up upon the shore when it has wearied of them. But do you see the tents yonder?” A number of these had been pitched along the bank of the Brenta for the reception of the expected wedding party, and now the dead or apparently dead were laid out in them, surrounded by lamenting relatives and servants who had already arrived in haste from the adjacent city. “There, monk, do what pertains to your office: works of charity! Comfort the living! Bury the dead!”

The monk had stepped ashore and had lost sight of the Imperial Governor. Out of the throng Diana came toward him, his brother’s bride and widow, disconsolate, but again in possession of her senses. Her heavy hair was still dripping, but the drops fell upon a changed garment: a compassionate woman of the people had in the tent given up her own gown and taken possession of the costly wedding dress. “Pious brother,” said Diana, turning to Astorre, “I have been left behind. The litter intended for me has in the confusion returned to the city with another, living or dead. Conduct me to the house of my father-in-law, who is your father.”



Permission F. Bruckmann A.-G., Munich

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI

NOON IN THE ALPS ⁷⁷.

The young widow was mistaken. Not in the consternation and confusion, but because of cowardice and superstition the servants of old Vicedomini had left her unattended. They were afraid to convey to the irascible old man a widow, and with her the news of the downfall of his house.

Since the monk saw many of his kind busied within and without the tents with works of charity, he acceded to the request. "Let us go," he said, and started with the young woman for the city, whose towers and cupolas loomed ever larger on the background of blue sky. The way was crowded with hundreds of people, hastening to the shore or returning thence. The two walked, often separated but always finding each other again, in the middle of the street, without saying a word to each other, and were already traversing the suburb in which the guilds are domiciled. The disaster on the Brenta had aroused the whole population. Here were collected on every hand loudly talking or whispering groups, who gazed with sympathetic curiosity at the pair joined by the accident of a lost brother and bridegroom.

The monk and Diana were figures with which every child in Padua was acquainted. Astorre, though we cannot say that he was thought a saint, was at least reputed an exemplary monk. He might have been called the monk of the city of Padua, whom the people revered, and of whom they were proud. And with good reason; for bravely and joyfully he had renounced the privileges of his high birth and the incalculable riches of his family, in order, without counting the cost, in times of pestilence or other public calamity to hazard his life for the humblest man or the poorest woman. Moreover, with his curly brown hair, his comforting eyes, and his noble bearing, he was a man to whom all hearts were open, such a man as the people love in their saints.

Diana was in her way no less noted, if for no other reason, because of her robust form, which the common

people admire more than delicate charms. Her mother was a German, indeed a Hohenstaufen, as some affirmed—only by blood, it is true, not according to law. Germany and Italy had like good sisters combined to produce this majestic figure.

Stern and austere as Diana was in association with her equals, she was gracious to the lowly, let them tell her of their affairs, gave terse and plain advice, and kissed the most ragged children. She bestowed and gave away without hesitation, probably because her father, old Pizzagueria, next to Vicedomini the richest man in Padua, was at the same time the meanest niggard, and Diana was ashamed of her father's fault.

Accordingly, the devoted people in their hostelries and gossiping rooms gave her every month in marriage to some Paduan patrician; but reality took no account of these pious wishes. Three obstacles blocked the way to matrimony: Diana's elevated and often portentously gloomy eyebrows, her father's close fist, and the blind attachment of her brother Germano to the tyrant, in the case of whose possible fall the faithful servant could not but go to destruction too, dragging all his kin after him.

Finally, without love, as was a matter of common knowledge, she had been asked in marriage by Umberto Vicedomini, who now lay drowned in the Brenta.

For the rest, the two persons in question were so absorbed in their rightful grief that they either did not hear the eager chatter which followed close on their heels or did not concern themselves much with it. The occasion of this talk was not the fact that the monk and the woman were walking side by side. That seemed quite in order, since the monk had the duty of consoling her, and both, moreover, were presumably going the same way—to old Vicedomini's—as the most nearly affected and most natural reporters of the event.

The women were sorry for Diana, whose fate it had been to marry a man who had taken her only to fill the place

of a dear departed; and in the same breath they lamented for her, that she had lost this man before the consummation of the wedlock.

The men, on the other hand, discussed with self-important gesticulation and cunning mien a burning question which had arisen on account of the drowning in the Brenta of the four heirs relied upon to perpetuate the name of the first family in Padua. The riches of the Vicedominis were proverbial. The head of the family, a man as energetic as he was crafty, who had contrived to keep on good terms both with the five-times excommunicated tyrant of Padua and with the church that had put him under its ban, had never in all his days busied himself in the least with public affairs, but had applied a tenacious life and magnificent powers of will to a single aim: the increase of the wealth and prosperity of his family. Now this family was annihilated. His eldest son and his grandsons lay in the depths of the Brenta. The second and the third son had in this very year of sorrow disappeared from off the face of the earth, one of them two months, and the other three months ago. The elder had been worn out in the service of the tyrant and left behind on one of his wild battlefields. The other, of whom the unprejudiced father had made a great merchant in the Venetian style, had, on some strand in the Orient, bled to death on a cross to which he had been nailed by pirates, weary of waiting for delayed ransom. As the fourth, there remained Astorre the monk. That with the expenditure of his last ounce of strength he would endeavor to extricate this fourth from the bondage of monastic vows — of that, the shrewdly calculating Paduans doubted not a moment. Whether he was destined to succeed, and whether the monk would lend himself to the enterprise, was the question now debated up and down the excited highway.

And the debate finally waxed so hot and vehement that even the mourning monk could no longer remain in doubt as to who were meant by the "he" and "she" that were

bandied about in the several groups. Therefore he turned, more for his companion's sake than for his own, into a shady, grass-grown street to which his sandaled foot was no stranger; for it led by the weather-beaten outer wall of his monastery. Here the air was cool even to chilliness; but the terrible news now broadcast over Padua had penetrated even these shadows. Through the open windows of the refectory that abutted upon the thick wall the conversation of the brothers at the belated noonday meal—the catastrophe on the Brenta had set awry all times and hours in the city—sounded so disputatious and uproarious, so full of *-inibus* and *-atibus*—for they talked in Latin or assailed each other with citations from the Decretals—that the monk readily divined that here too as on the street the same dilemma, or a similar one, was under discussion. And if he perhaps did not clearly determine of what, he knew to a certainty of whom the brothers were talking. One thing, however, which he did not discover—

Continuing all the while to speak, Dante sought out among his auditors the high-born cleric, who concealed himself behind his neighbor's back.

—was the fact that two gleaming hollow eyes were peering through a loophole in the wall at him and the woman by his side. These eyes belonged to a wretched creature, a forlorn monk by the name of Serapion, who was being consumed body and soul in the monastery. With his precipitate imagination he had immediately comprehended that his sworn brother Astorre had reached the end of his fasting and famishing according to the rule of St. Francis, and he madly envied him the possession of those worldly goods and joys which the caprice of death had allotted to him. He leered at the home-comer in order to scrutinize his features and in their expression to read what Astorre had resolved upon. His gaze devoured the woman and he followed her every footstep.

Astorre turned his steps and those of his sister-in-law to a little square formed by four castellated palaces, and with her entered the vaulted portal of the most splendid. On a stone bench in the court yard he caught sight of two recumbent figures, a boyish German clad in mail from head to foot and a hoary Saracen. The German, stretched out at full length in slumber, had laid his auburn curly head in the lap of the seated infidel who, likewise asleep, bent over him like a father with his snow-white beard. The pair belonged to Ezzelino's body-guard which, in imitation of his father-in-law's, the Emperor Frederick's, was composed of an equal number of Germans and Saracens. The tyrant was in the palace. He may have deemed it his duty to visit old Vicedomini. And in fact Astorre and Diana could hear, even from the winding stairway, what they were saying,—Ezzelino in brief and calm phrases, the old man, on the contrary, apparently quite beside himself, shouting and scolding at the top of his voice. The monk and the woman stopped at the door of the room in the midst of a palé group of domestics. The servants trembled in every limb. Their master had heaped the most violent imprecations upon them and had with clenched fists driven them out of his presence, because they had brought him belated news from the river-side and had hardly had the courage to stammer it forth. Moreover, this household had been petrified by the dreaded approach of the tyrant. On pain of death it was forbidden ever to announce his coming. Like an unheralded spirit he entered houses and apartments.

“And that, cruel monster, you relate as unconcernedly,” the old man raved in his despair, “as though you were telling of the loss of a horse or a harvest. It is you who have killed the four, no one else than you! Why must you ride at that particular hour along the river? Why must you wave a greeting out upon the Brenta? You did it as an injury to me! Do you hear?”

“Fate,” answered Ezzelino.

“Fate?” screamed Vicedomini. “Fate, and star-gazing, and conjurings, and conspiracies, and decapitations,—women casting themselves down from the roof to the pavement, and a hundred arrow-pierced youths falling from their horses in your infamous fool-hardy battles—that is the time and reign of Ezzelino, you accursed reprobate! All of us you drag in your bloody train, all life and death become violent and unnatural where your spirit rules, and no longer may any one await his end as a penitent Christian in his bed!”

“You do me wrong,” replied the other. “For my part, I have indeed no dealings with the church. It does not concern me. But I have never hindered you and those like you from having to do with it. You know as much; otherwise you would never dare to carry on a correspondence with the Holy See. What are you twisting about there in your hands, concealing from me the papal seal? A letter of indulgence? A brief? Give it to me! In very truth, a brief! May I read it? Will you permit me? Your gracious benefactor, the Holy Father, writes you that in case your family should be reduced to your fourth and last son, the monk, he shall *ipso facto* be released from his vows, provided he return to the world of his own free will and accord. Sly fox, how many ounces of gold did this parchment cost you?”

“Do you hold me up to scorn?” roared the old man. “What else could I do after the death of my second and third sons? For whom should I have gathered and garnered? For the worms? For you? Do you mean to rob me? . . . No? Then help me, gossip,”—before his excommunication Ezzelino had been godfather to Vicedomini’s third son, the one who had sacrificed himself for him on the battlefield—“help me prevail upon the monk to come back into the world and take a wife. Command him to do it, all-powerful prince. Give him to me to take the place of that son of mine whom you have slaughtered. Hold up my hands in this endeavor, if you love me!”

“That is no affair of mine,” replied the tyrant, without the least concern. “Let him settle that with himself. ‘Of his own free will and accord,’ says the brief. Why, if he is a good monk, as I believe, should he change his state? In order that the blood of the Vicedominis shall not run dry? Is that a question of life and death for the world? Are the Vicedominis indispensable?”

Now the other howled in insensate fury, “You fiend! You murderer of my children! I see through your villainy! You wish to be my heir and carry on your cracked-brained campaigns with my money!” Then he perceived his daughter-in-law who, while the monk hesitated, had passed on through the group of servants and across the threshold. Despite his feebleness he plunged toward her with tottering steps, and seized and tugged at her hands, as though calling her to account for the calamity that had befallen them both. “What have you done with my son, Diana?” he panted.

“He lies in the Brenta,” she answered sadly, and her blue eyes darkened.

“Where are my three grandsons?”

“In the Brenta,” she repeated.

“And yourself you bring me as a gift? You I may keep?” The old man laughed discordantly.

“Would to God,” she said slowly, “the waves were bearing me forth, and the others were standing here in my stead!”

She said no more. Then sudden anger seized her. “If the sight of me offends your eyes and you cannot bear my presence, then hold this man accountable. I was as good as dead; but he drew me by the hair out of the grave and restored me to life.”

Not until now had the old man observed the monk, his son; and he collected himself with an energy and rapidity which the heavy grief seemed rather to have steeled than lamed.

“ Really? He took you from the Brenta? Hm! Remarkable! The ways of God are indeed marvelous! ”

He seized the monk by the arm and shoulder, as if to take possession of him, body and soul, and dragged him to his armchair, upon which he dropped, without releasing the compliant arm. Diana followed and kneeled on the other side of the chair, with folded hands, and laid her head upon the arm of the chair, so that only the knot of her blond hair remained visible, as though it were a lifeless object. Opposite the group sat Ezzelino, his right hand propped upon the roll of the brief, as though this were a field-marshal's baton.

“ My boy, my boy, ” whimpered the old man with mingled tenderness of true affection and cunning, “ my last and only comforter! You staff and stay of my old age will not break asunder in these trembling hands! . . . You understand, ” he continued in a dryer tone becoming at once matter-of-fact, “ that as matters now stand there can be no question of your remaining in the monastery. The canon law itself provides—does it not, my son?—that a monk whose father becomes impoverished or falls sick shall be granted leave of absence by his prior to cultivate the family domain and support the author of his days. But I need you much more urgently. Your brothers and nephews are gone and you are now the only one to bear the torch which is the life of our house! You are a flame that I have kindled and it avails me nothing that it should flicker and consume itself in a cell. One thing let me tell you, ”—he had read unfeigned sympathy in the warm brown eyes, and the monk's reverent bearing seemed to promise blind obedience—“ I am a sicker man than you think. Am I not, Issachar? ” He turned backward toward an emaciated figure which, noiselessly entering by a side door, had come up behind the old man's chair with vial and spoon in his hands and now nodded his pale head in confirmation. “ I go hence; but I tell you, Astorre, if you leave me deprived of my wish, your father will refuse to

embark in the ferry of souls and will remain cowering on the gloomy strand!"

The monk tenderly stroked the old man's feverish hand, but answered with self-assurance, "My vows!"

Ezzelino unrolled the brief.

"Your vows?" said old Vicedomini ingratiatingly. "Loosened bonds! Parted fetters! Make a move and they will fall away. The holy church to which you owe veneration and obedience pronounces them null and void. Here it is in writing." His bony finger pointed to the parchment with the papal seal.

The monk humbly approached his sovereign, received the document, and read it, observed by two pairs of eyes. The letters swam before his vision and he reeled backward, as though, standing upon a high tower, he saw the railing suddenly give way.

Ezzelino came to the support of the staggerer with the brief question, "To whom did you make your vow, monk? To yourself, or to the church?"

"To both, of course," cried the old man in anger. "That is all cursèd hair-splitting. Be on your guard against that man, my son! He means to reduce us Vicedominis to beggary."

Without resentment Ezzelino put his right hand upon his beard and swore, "When Vicedomini dies, the monk here, his son, shall be his heir, and—should the family become extinct with him, and he loves me and his native city—he shall found a hospital of a certain magnitude and magnificence, which will make the hundred cities"—he meant the cities of Italy—"envious of us. Now, gossip, since I have cleared myself of the reproach of rapacity, may I put a few more questions to the monk? Have I your permission?"

Then such a passion seized the old man that he fell into a paroxysm. But he did not yet let go the monk's arm, which he had again grasped.

Issachar cautiously held a spoonful of some strong-smell-

ing essence up to the pale lips. With an effort the sufferer turned away his head. "Let me alone!" he groaned, "you are also physician to the Governor!" and closed his eyes.

The Jew turned his own eyes, which were lustrous black and very shrewd, upon the tyrant, as though beseeching pardon for this suspicion.

"Will he regain consciousness?" asked Ezzelino.

"I think so," answered the Jew. "He still lives and will awake again; but not for long, I fear. This day's sun he will not see at the setting."

The tyrant made use of the moment for a word with Astorre, who was busied with his unconscious father.

"Answer me, monk," said Ezzelino and—his favorite gesture—groped with the outstretched fingers of his right hand in his waving beard. "How much have the three vows cost you which, ten or more years ago—you are probably thirty?"—the monk nodded—"you solemnly took?"

Astorre opened wide his ingenuous eyes and replied without hesitation. "Poverty and obedience, nothing. I have no sense of proprietorship and I obey with ease." He paused and blushed.

The tyrant found something to admire in this masculine chastity. "Did this man here force your present state upon you, or wheedle you into it?" he asked, changing the subject.

"No," declared the monk. "Since time immemorial, as our genealogy relates, of every three or four sons in our house the last takes holy orders, whether in order that we Vicedominis may have an intercessor, or in order to keep intact the inheritance and the power of our house—no matter; the custom is ancient and venerable. I knew my lot, which was not repugnant to me, from early youth. No compulsion was put upon me."

"And the third?" Ezzelino resumed, meaning the third vow. Astorre understood him.

With a renewed blush, but this time a faint one, he replied, "It did not prove easy for me, but I have endured it as other monks have done, when they were well advised, as I was. By the blessed St. Anthony," he reverently added.

"This meritorious saint, as you know, my lords and ladies, dwelt for some years with the Franciscans in Padua," Dante explained.

"Why should we not know it?" jestingly remarked one of the listeners. "Forsooth, we have venerated the relic which swims around there in the convent pond—I mean the pike which whilom attended the homiletic ministrations of the saint, became converted, ate no more meat, was steadfast in well-doing, and even now, in his old age, as a strict vegetarian"—he swallowed the end of the farce; for Dante had frowned upon him.

"And what did he advise you to do?" asked Ezzelino.

"To take my state simply, rightly, and properly," the monk informed him, "as an exacting service, like military service, for instance, which also demands obedient muscles and imposes privations that a hardy soldier may not even feel to be such—to till the soil in the sweat of my brow, to eat moderately, to fast moderately, to hear confession from neither maidens nor young matrons, to walk humbly in the sight of God, and to adore his blessed Mother no more ardently than the breviary prescribes."

The tyrant smiled. Then he extended his right hand toward the monk, in admonition or blessing, and said, "Fortunate man! You have a lucky star! Your today grows easily out of your yesterday and imperceptibly becomes your tomorrow. You are something, and no slight thing either: for you fulfil the office of mercy, which I recognize, although I hold another office myself. Should you now enter the world, which obeys its own laws—laws that you are too old to learn—your bright star would be

transformed into a ridiculous will-o'-the-wisp and after a few silly zig-zags would sputter its life out amid the derision of the heavenly hosts.

“ One thing more, and this I say as I have a right to say it, as the ruler of Padua: your life was to my people an edification, an example of renunciation. The poorest man found comfort in it, seeing you share his frugal fare and his daily toil. If you abandon the cowl and as a man of rank woo a lady of rank, if with lavish hands you drain the riches of your house, you will defraud the people, who have adopted you as one of their own, you will make malcontents and insatiate busybodies in the state, and if anger, disobedience, and insurrection should ensue, I should not marvel. One cannot shake off the shackles of custom!

“ Neither I nor Padua can spare you! Your handsome and knightly figure strikes the eye of the multitude, and you have more courage, or at least a nobler courage, than your boorish brothers had. If the people, after their mad fashion, are about to murder this man here ”—he pointed to Issachar—“ because he brings them help—this was indeed near to happening to the Jew during the last pestilence—who will defend him, as you did, against the raving multitude, until I come and bid them halt? ”

“ Issachar, help me persuade the monk! ” said Ezzelino, turning with a grim smile toward the physician. “ For your sake, if for no other reason, he must not discard the cowl. ”

“ My lord, ” lisped the latter, “ under your sceptre the foolish scene, which you punished no less justly than bloodily, will hardly be repeated; and I, whose faith praises the permanence of the family as God’s supreme blessing, would not be the cause wherefore His Illustrious Highness ”—by this title he already called the monk, no longer “ His Reverence ”—“ should remain unwed. ”

Ezzelino smiled at the Jew’s subtlety. “ And whither do your thoughts tend, monk? ” he asked.

“ They stand still and hold their ground! But I would—

God forgive me the sin — that my father might nevermore awake, and not compel me to be harsh with him! If he had only received the viaticum!" He impetuously kissed the patient's cheek, who thereat came back to consciousness.

Revived, Vicedomini breathed a deep sigh, raised his weary eyelids, and from under the gray tangle of his heavy eyebrows directed a look of entreaty at the monk. "How is it?" he asked. "What have you ordained for me, my best beloved, — heaven or hell?"

"Father," Astorre begged with a trembling voice, "your life has run its course. Your hour has come! Put away from you the thought of worldly goods and cares; think of the salvation of your soul! Behold, your priests" — he meant those of the parish church — "have gathered in the adjoining room and wait to bring you the most holy sacraments of the dying."

It was true. The door of the next room was silently opened and a feeble candle, hardly visible in the daylight, was seen glimmering, while a choir softly chanted and the gentle tinkling of a bell became audible.

At this moment the old man, who felt his knees already sinking beneath the cold waters of Lethe, clung fast to the monk, as of yore St. Peter to the Saviour on the lake of Gennesaret. "You will do it for me," he mumbled.

"If only I could! If I had the right!" sighed the monk. "By all the saints, father, I implore you, think of eternity! Forget the things of this earth! Your hour has come!"

This veiled refusal fanned the last spark of life in Vicedomini to a roaring flame. "Disobedient, ungrateful son!" he cried in anger.

Astorre beckoned to the priests.

"By all the devils of hell," raved the old man, "keep away from me with your rubbing and smearing! I have nothing to lose — I am a damned soul at best, and should remain one in the midst of the heavenly choir, if my son wantonly rebuffs me and spoils the seed of life that I have planted in him!"

The horrified monk, shuddering in the depths of his soul at this blood-curdling blasphemy, saw his father irrevocably consigned to eternal misery. So he thought and was thereof firmly persuaded, as in his place I too should have been. In dark despair he threw himself upon his knees before the dying man and amid a flood of tears implored him, "Sir, I adjure you, have mercy on yourself and on me!"

"Let the sly dog go his way," whispered the tyrant. The monk did not hear him.

Once more he signaled to the astounded priests, and the rites of the dying were about to begin.

But the old man doubled up like a stubborn child and shook his gray head.

"Let the schemer take his own course," Ezzelino admonished in a louder tone.

"Father, father!" sobbed the monk, and his soul was melted in pity.

"Illustrious lord and brother in Christ," a priest now asked in an uncertain voice, "are you duly prepared to receive the body of your Creator and Saviour?" The old man made no answer.

"Do you stand fast in faith in the Holy Trinity? Answer me, sir!" demanded the priest for the second time, and turned as white as a sheet; for with a strong voice the dying man cried, "Denied be it and cursed, cursed and—"

"No farther!" exclaimed the monk and sprang to his feet. "I am yours to command, sir. Do with me as you will. Only cast not yourself down into the flaming pit!"

The old man breathed a sigh, as if after making a great effort. Then, relieved, I had almost said contented, he gazed about him. With a groping hand he grasped the blond hair of Diana, drew the woman upward as she rose from her knees, took the hand which she did not refuse him, opened the clenched fist of the monk, and placed one within the other.

"Valid! Before the most holy sacrament!" he exulted,

and blessed the pair. The monk did not contradict, and Diana closed her eyes.

“Quickly now, reverend fathers!” the old man urged. “There is need of haste, as I think, and I am in a Christian disposition.”

The monk and his betrothed started to withdraw behind the priestly band. “Remain!” murmured the dying man, “remain, that my comforted eyes may behold you together until the light goes out of them.” Astorre and Diana, retreating no more than a few steps, were obliged to stand hand in hand within the expiring sight of the stubborn old man. He murmured a brief confession, received the Last Supper, and passed away, while they were anointing the soles of his feet and the priest was calling to his deaf ears that splendid farewell, “Go forth, Christian soul!” Even in death his face plainly wore the expression of triumphant craft.

While round about all were kneeling, the tyrant watched the sacred office seated and with calm attention, somewhat as one observes a strange custom, or as a scholar contemplates an ancient people depicted upon a sarcophagus in the act of making a sacrifice. He stepped up to the dead man and closed his eyes.

Then he turned to Diana. “Noble lady,” he said, “I think we shall now do well to go home. Your parents, though informed of your rescue, are surely anxious to see you. Moreover, you are clad in a garb of lowliness which does not befit you.”

“Prince, I thank you and will follow you,” replied Diana. But she let her hand remain in the monk's, whose glance she had as yet avoided. Now she looked her husband full in the face and spoke with a deep but melodious voice, while her cheeks were suffused with purple, “My lord and master, it would not have been right for us to allow your father's soul to perish. So I became yours. Keep better faith with me than with the monastery. Your brother did not love me. Forgive me for saying it; I speak

the simple truth. You will have in me a good and obedient wife. But I have two peculiarities of which you must be careful. I am quick-tempered if my rights or my honor are impugned, and over-nice in demanding that no promise shall be made to me, unless it be kept. Even as a child I hardly or not at all suffered promises to be broken. I have few wishes and desire nothing beyond the ordinary; only, when one has held something in prospect and given me assurance of having it, then I need fulfilment of the promise; otherwise I lose confidence and am more deeply wounded than other women by wrong. But by what right do I speak thus to you, my lord and master, whom I hardly know? Let me be silent. Farewell, my husband, and give me nine days in which to mourn for your brother." Now she slowly withdrew her hand from his and disappeared with the tyrant.

Meanwhile the priestly band had removed the body, in order to place it upon the bier in the private chapel and to consecrate it.

Astorre stood alone in the monk's habit that he had forfeited and that covered a regretful breast. An army of servants, who had witnessed and sufficiently comprehended the strange scene, presented themselves in obsequious attitudes and with gestures of timidity to their new master, amazed and intimidated less by the change of employer than by the supposed sacrilege of the broken vows—the brief had been read in too low a tone for them to hear its purport—and the secularization of the reverend monk. Astorre could not bring himself to mourn for his father. There crept over him, now that he had regained self-control, the suspicion—let me rather say the revolting certainty overwhelmed him that a dying man had abused his confidence and taken unfair advantage of his pity. He discovered in the old man's despair of salvation the lurking-place of craft, and in his wild blasphemy a calculated game of chance on the threshold of death. Angrily, almost malevolently his thoughts turned to the woman who had

fallen to his lot. The fantastic monkish idea tempted him, to love her not with his own heart but only as the representative of his departed brother; but his sound sense and his native honesty rejected this shameful subterfuge. Regarding her now as his own, he could not repel a certain wonderment that his wife had confronted him with such plain speech and blunt sincerity, and had so dispassionately sought an understanding with him, without veil or cover—a much more real and tangible figure than the airy creatures of the legends. He had thought women were made of softer clay.

Now the monk suddenly became aware of the cloak of his order and the contradiction which it presented to his feelings and the trend of his thoughts. His cowl put him to shame and weighed heavily upon him. "Give me worldly garments," he commanded. Assiduous servants surrounded him, from whose midst he soon stepped forth clad in the garb of his drowned brother, with whom he was of about equal size.

At the same moment his father's jester, Gocciola by name, kneeled at his feet and paid him homage, not, like the others, to plead for retention in his service, but begging discharge and permission to change his condition; for he was weary of the world, he said, his hair was growing gray, and it would ill become him to wear his cap and jingling bells on the journey to the great beyond. With these querulous words he took possession of the discarded cowl, which the servants had dared not touch. But his muddled brain turned topsy-turvy and he added greedily, "I should like to have some *amarelle* to eat once more before I say farewell to the world and its delusions! There will not be long to wait for a wedding here, I think." He licked the corners of his mouth with his coated tongue. Then he bent a knee before the monk, shook his bells, and darted away, dragging the cowl after him.

"*Amarelle* or *amare*," Dante explained, "is the wedding cake of Padua, so called because of its bitter almond-

flavor and at the same time with a graceful allusion to the verb of the first conjugation." Here the narrator paused and shaded his brow and eyes with his hand, meditating upon the further course of his story.

Meanwhile the prince's major-domo, an Alsatian named Burkhard, walked in with measured steps, ceremonious bows, and circumstantial excuses for having to interrupt the conversation, presented himself to Cangrande, and asked for instructions concerning some domestic matter. Germans were at that time not infrequently found at the Ghibelline courts of Italy,—indeed, they were in demand, and were preferred to the natives on account of their probity and their instinct for ceremonies and usages.

When Dante again raised his head he caught sight of the Alsatian and heard his Italian, which persistently confounded soft and hard consonants, to the amusement of the court but to the excruciating torture of the poet's sensitive ear. His glance then lingered with visible pleasure upon the two youths, Ascanio and the mailed warrior. Finally, he allowed it to rest meditatively upon the two ladies, the princess Diana, who had become more animated and whose marble cheek had flushed slightly, and upon Antiope, Cangrande's friend, a pretty and ingenuous girl. Then he continued:

Behind the palace of the Vicedominis there formerly extended—now that the illustrious family is long since extinct that place has completely changed—a spacious estate down to the foot of the broad, fortified city wall, so spacious that it contained pasturage for herds, preserves for deer, ponds stocked with fish, dense shady woods and sunlit grape-arbors. On a glorious morning a week after the funeral Astorre the monk—for during his brief earthly career he kept this name among the Paduans, in spite of the fact of his secularization—Astorre, I say, sat in the dark shade of a cedar, leaning against the trunk and stretching the tips of his shoes out into the burning sunlight. He was

sitting or lying in front of a fountain that threw out a cool stream from the mouth of an indifferent mask, not far from a stone bench, which he did not occupy because of preference for the soft cushion of the luxuriant turf.

While he was thinking or dreaming, I know not of what, two young men, one in armor, the other daintily clad, though in traveling costume, dismounted from their dust-stained horses on the square in front of the palace, then almost entirely under the glare of the mid-day sun. Ascanio and Germano, as the horsemen were called, were the favorites of the Governor and had been youthful playmates of the monk, with whom as with brothers he had studied and disported himself up to his fifteenth year, the beginning of his novitiate. Ezzelino had sent them as messengers to his father-in-law, Emperor Frederick.

Dante paused and bowed at the mention of that great name.

With answers to their messages the two were returning to the tyrant, to whom, moreover, they were bringing the news of the day: a copy, made in the Imperial Chancery, of the pastoral letter addressed to the Christian clergy, in which, before the eyes of the whole world, the Holy Father accuses the witty emperor of extreme godlessness.

Although intrusted with weighty, perhaps urgent commissions and with this portentous document, the two young men could not bring themselves to gallop past their old playmate's home directly to the tyrant's palace. In their last baiting-place before reaching Padua where, without taking their feet from the stirrups, they had had their horses fed and watered, the talkative landlord had told them of the great public misfortune and the still greater public scandal, the drowning of the wedding party and the monk's throwing off of his cowl, with pretty much all the circumstances, save Diana's and Astorre's joining of hands, which had not yet become generally known. Imperishable the ties that bind us to the playmates of our

childhood! Appalled by the strange fate of Astorre, the two could not rest until with their own eyes they had seen him, the friend restored to them. For long years they had no more than met the monk, by chance on the street, greeting him with a nod, friendly indeed, but abashed by sincere reverence, and somewhat distant.

Gocciola, whom they had found in the palace courtyard, dangling his feet from a wall and munching a roll, led them into the garden. Strolling along ahead of the youths, the fool regaled them not with the tragic fate of the house, but with his own affairs, which seemed to him by far the more important matter. He related that he ardently longed for a blissful end, and in the course of his confession swallowed the rest of the roll without having taken it between his loose teeth, so that it nearly strangled him. At the faces that he made and at his longing for a cell in the monastery Ascanio burst out laughing so merrily that he would have driven the clouds from the sky if on this day the sky had not with its own joy beamed resplendently.

Ascanio could not refrain from bantering the wretch, if only to get rid of his undesirable company. "Poor old fellow," he began, "you will never see the inside of a cell; for, between ourselves, in the strictest confidence, my uncle the tyrant has cast envious glances at you. Let me tell you that he has four fools, the Stoic, the Epicurean, the Platonist, and the Skeptic, as he calls them. When his grave highness wishes to jest, the four take their places at a signal from him in the four corners of the hall, the vaulted ceiling of which is adorned with the starry heavens and the revolving planets. My uncle, in informal dress, steps into the middle of the room, claps his hands, and with a hop and skip the philosophers change corners. Day before yesterday the Stoic whined and howled his life out because, glutton that he was, he had devoured many pounds of noodles at a sitting. My uncle has intimated to me that he intends to replace him, and to ask for you, Gocciola, as an inheritance tax from the monk, your new master. That



From the Painting by Giovanni Segantini

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THE FRUIT OF LOVE

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is the way matters stand. Ezzelino is after you. Who knows but that he is now at your heels?" This was an allusion to the omnipresence of the tyrant, which kept the Paduans in constant fear and trembling. Gocciola uttered an outcry, as if the hand of the man of might were descending upon his shoulder, looked about, and, though nothing was following him but his abbreviated shadow, fled with chattering teeth to some convenient hiding-place.

"I will strike out Ezzelino's fools," Dante interrupted his narrative to say, and made a motion like the stroke of a pen, as though he were writing his story instead of telling it, as he was. "This trait is not true, or, if it is a part of my matter, Ascanio was lying. It is quite inconceivable that a mind so serious and naturally so noble as Ezzelino's should have kept fools and taken pleasure in their idiocy." This was a home thrust directed by the Florentine at his host, upon whose mantle Gocciola sat, grinning at the poet.

Cangrande did nothing of the sort. He made a secret vow to pay back Dante with interest at the first opportunity.

Satisfied, almost cheerful, Dante continued his narrative:

Finally the pair discovered the unfrocked monk leaning, as I have said, against a pine tree—

"Against a cedar, Dante," the princess, now become attentive, corrected him.

—a cedar, and sunning his toes. He did not notice those approaching him on either side, so absorbed was he in his vain or thoughtful dreaming. Now the mischievous Ascanio bent over to get a spear of grass, broke it off, and tickled the monk's nose, so that he sneezed loudly three times. Astorre cordially grasped the hands of his former playmates and drew them down upon the turf beside him, one to the right and the other to the left. "Well, what do you say of it?" he asked, in a tone more timid than challenging.

“First let me frankly praise your prior and your monastery!” said Ascanio in fun. “They have kept you in good shape. You look younger than either of us. To be sure, the close-fitting worldly garb and your smooth chin may have their rejuvenating effect. Do you know that you are a handsome man? You are lying here under your giant cedar like the first man, whom, as scholars affirm, God created a man of thirty, and I,” he continued with an expression of innocence, seeing that the monk blushed at his wantonness, “I am really the last to blame you for having escaped from the cowl; for to perpetuate its kind is the wish of every living thing.”

“It was not my wish nor free resolve,” the monk truthfully confessed. “With reluctance I did the will of my dying father.”

“Really?” smiled Ascanio. “Tell that, Astorre, to no one but us, who love you. In the eyes of others this lack of independence would make you seem ridiculous or even contemptible. And now that we are talking of the ridiculous, take care, I beg you, Astorre, to develop the man out of the monk without offending against good taste! The ticklish transit must be very discreetly guarded and graduated. Take my advice and travel for a year,—to the Emperor’s court, for example, whence to Padua and back couriers are incessantly running. Get Ezzelino to send you to Palermo! There, besides the most perfect knight and the most unprejudiced human being—I mean our Frederick the Second—you will make some acquaintance with women, and will break off the monkish habit of either deifying or contemning them. The spirit of the ruler gives its color to court and city. Wild, immoderate, and impetuous as life has become here in Padua under my uncle the tyrant, it gives you a false picture of the world. Palermo, where under the most humane of monarchs, jest and seriousness, virtue and pleasure, fidelity and inconstancy, simple faith and wise distrust are mingled in the right proportions—Palermo offers the truer picture. There for a year you

may dance attendance upon the ladies, friends or foes, in permissible or pardonable fashion"—the monk frowned—"you will perhaps take part in a campaign or two, without however incautiously exposing yourself—remember your destiny—merely to remind yourself how to handle a horse and a sword—as a boy you knew!—you keep your jolly brown eyes open to everything in sight—by the torch of Aurora, how they flash and sparkle since you quit the monastery!—and you will return to us as a man who has himself in hand and others at his command."

"There at the Emperor's he must marry a Suabian," good-naturedly advised the youth in armor. "They are more dutiful and more reliable than our women."

"Will you stop talking?" Ascanio admonished him with a threatening finger. "No more of your straw-colored braids for me!" But the monk pressed Germano's right hand, which he had not yet released.

"Honestly, Germano, what do you think of it?"

"Of what?" he asked bluntly.

"Why, of my new state."

"Astorre, my friend," responded the moustachioed warrior somewhat embarrassed, "when a thing has been done, we do not go around asking for advice. We stand our ground. But if you insist upon knowing my opinion, why, you see, Astorre, disloyalty, broken promises, desertion, and so forth, those are all given hard names in Germany. Of course, your case is quite different, there is no comparison—and then, your dying father! Astorre, my dear friend, you acted handsomely; but the opposite would have been handsomer. That is my opinion," he frankly concluded.

"Then, Germano, if you had been present you would have refused me your sister's hand?"

That was a bolt out of a clear sky. "My sister's hand? Diana's, who is in mourning for your brother?"

"Diana's. She is my betrothed."

“ Oh, magnificent ! ” cried now the worldly-wise Ascanio ; and with “ Delightful ! ” Germano chimed in. “ Embrace me, brother-in-law. ” Notwithstanding his directness the soldier had good manners. But he suppressed a sigh. Dearly as he loved and esteemed his austere sister, he would, according to his natural feeling, have given the monk now sitting beside him a different wife.

So he twirled his moustache and Ascanio steered the conversation in a new direction. “ Really, Astorre, ” chatted the gay fellow, “ we must begin by getting acquainted all over again. Nothing less than those fifteen contemplative monastic years of yours lies between our childhood and today. Not that meanwhile we have changed our natures — who ever does that ? — but that we have grown to the full stature of our manhood. This fellow, for instance, ” — he pointed to Germano — “ now enjoys a fine military reputation ; but I have to complain that he has become half a German. He ” — Ascanio crooked his arm, as though he were draining a goblet — “ and after that he grows melancholy and quarrelsome. Moreover, he despises our sweet Italian tongue. ‘ I will talk German with you ! ’ he boasts, and growls forth the ursine tones of an inhuman speech. Then his servants grow pale, his creditors flee, and our Paduan ladies turn their stately backs upon him. Consequently, he has perhaps remained as chaste as you, Astorre. ” And he laid his hand confidently upon the monk’s shoulder.

Germano laughed heartily and retorted, pointing to Ascanio, “ And this fellow here has fulfilled his destiny by becoming a perfect courtier. ”

“ In that, you are wrong, Germano, ” Ezzelino’s favorite contradicted him. “ My destiny was to take life easily and to enjoy it with a cheerful heart. ” And by way of proof of this assertion he summoned with an amiable command the gardener’s daughter whom he saw stealing by at a little distance and looking out of the corner of her eye at her new master, the monk. Laughing the while, the

pretty creature was carrying on her head a basket filled to overflowing with grapes and figs, and looked rather roguish than bashful. Ascanio had jumped to his feet. He put his left arm about the girl's slender waist and with his right hand helped himself to a bunch of grapes from the basket. At the same time he sought a taste of the ripe lips. "I am thirsty," he said. The maiden acted shamefacedly but stood still, because she did not wish to spill her fruit. Disapproving this frivolity, the monk turned away from the pair, and the startled little hussy hastily fled at sight of the severe monkish reproof, strewing her path with tumbling fruit. Ascanio, who had kept his grapes in his hand, picked up two other bunches from the trail of the fugitive, one of which he offered to Germano; but he contemptuously threw the unpressed grapes into the grass. The other bunch the mischief-maker passed to the monk, who likewise left them untouched for a while, but then without thinking tasted one juicy grape, and soon a second, and a third.

"A courtier?" Ascanio continued, who, amused at the daintiness of the monk of thirty, had again dropped upon the turf beside him. "Do not believe that, Astorre. Believe the contrary. I am the only one to urge my uncle, gently but in a way that he can understand, not to grow merciless, to remain a man."

"He is no more than just and true to himself," said Germano.

"A fig for his justice!" cried Ascanio. "And for his logic! Padua is a fief of the empire. Ezzelino is the Governor. Whoever incurs his displeasure is a rebel against the empire. Those guilty of high treason—" He could not bring himself to utter the word. "Horrible!" he murmured. "And in any event, why are we Italians not suffered to live our own lives under the warm rays of our own sun? Why this cloud of a phantom empire to take our breath away? I do not speak for myself. I am bound to my uncle. If the Emperor—whom God preserve—

should die, all Italy will fall with curses and execrations upon the tyrant Ezzelino, and they will just strangle his nephew in passing." Ascanio surveyed the radiant sky above this fertile earth and heaved a sigh.

"Both of us," Germano coolly added. "But there is time enough for that. The Governor has obtained a definite prediction. The learned Guido Bonatti and Paul of Bagdad, whose long beard sweeps the dust on the street, have with one accord, despite their mutual jealousy and their habit of mutual contradiction, read the riddle of a new and strange constellation as follows: sooner or later a son of the Peninsula will gain its undivided crown, with the help of a German emperor who for his part will roll together on the other side of the mountains everything German into a single hard ball, the apple of the empire. Is Frederick this emperor? Is Ezzelino this king? God knows; for He knows the time and the hour; but the Governor has staked his fame and our heads on this consummation."

"Whimsy, woven of sense and folly!" ejaculated Ascanio, while the monk marveled at the potent influence of the stars, the far-reaching ambition of rulers, and the irresistible current of the stream of life. Terrible also was the spectre of cruelty drawing ever nearer in the deeds of Ezzelino, whom the innocent monk had revered as justice personified.

Ascanio answered his unuttered queries by continuing, "May they both come to an evil end, the scowling Guido and the bearded heathen! They beguile my uncle into yielding to his whims and lusts in the belief that he is doing only what necessity demands. Have you ever seen, Germano, how at his frugal meal he colors the water in his transparent crystal goblet with the three or four drops of blood-red Sicilian wine that he allows himself? How his attentive eye follows the blood as it slowly unfolds like a cloud and spreads through the clear water? Or how he likes to close the eyes of the dead, so that it has almost become an obligation of courtesy to invite the Governor

to deathbeds as to a festival, and to leave this sad office to him? Ezzelino, my Prince, I adjure you, do not become cruel!" cried the youth, overwhelmed by his feelings.

"I think not, nephew," said a voice behind him. It was Ezzelino, who had drawn near unobserved and, though not an eavesdropper, had heard Ascanio's last painful outcry.

The three youths rose quickly and greeted the ruler, who seated himself upon the bench. His face was as imperturbable as the mask of the fountain.

"My messengers," he demanded of Ascanio and Germano, "what possessed you to visit this man here"—he nodded slightly in the direction of the monk—"before reporting to me?"

"He is the playmate of our youth and has had strange experiences," the nephew gave as his excuse, and Ezzelino let it pass. He took the letters which on bended knee Ascanio delivered to him. He thrust all into his bosom except the papal bull. "Behold," said he, "the latest news! Read it to me, Ascanio. Your eyes are better than mine."

Ascanio read the apostolic epistle aloud while Ezzelino buried his right hand in his beard and listened with demonic glee.

At the beginning the triple-crowned author gave the witty Emperor the name of an Apocalyptic beast. "You need not tell me that; it is absurd," said the tyrant. "In his letters the pontifex also gave me extravagant titles until I admonished him to chide me, who am called Ezzelino the Roman, henceforth in a classical language. What does he call me this time, I wonder? Find the place, Ascanio,—there must be one—where he reproves my father-in-law for his evil associations. Give it here!" He seized the document and soon found the passage. Here the pope accused the Emperor of loving his daughter's husband, "Ezzelino da Romano, the greatest criminal on the inhabited earth."

"Correct!" was Ezzelino's approving comment as he

returned the document to Ascanio. "Read to me about the Emperor's godless deeds, nephew," he smiled.

Ascanio read to the effect that Frederick had said there were, besides many fictions of diseased brains, only two true gods, nature and reason. The tyrant shrugged his shoulders.

Ascanio read on: Frederick had declared that three mountebanks, Moses, Mohammed, and — he held his breath — had imposed upon the world. "Superficial," Ezzelino objected, "they followed their stars and each had his day; but spoken or not, that sentence will sink in and is equivalent to an army and a fleet for him who wears the tiara. Proceed."

A weird tale came next in order. Riding through a field of waving grain Frederick was reported to have jested with his followers and in blasphemous allusion to the holy sacrament of the mass to have regaled them with this triplet:

There are gods as many as ears that grow
On the cornstalks ranged in a sunny row,
All nodding their heads when the breezes blow —

Ezzelino bethought himself. "Strange," he whispered. "My memory has retained these verses. They are quite authentic. The Emperor with a merry laugh called them out to me when, face to face with the ruined temples of Enna, we rode together through those teeming cornfields with which the goddess Ceres has blessed the Sicilian soil. My recollection is as clear as the sunlight which on that summer day illumined the island. It was not I who reported this merry jest to the pontiff. I am too serious for that. Who did it? I will let you be the judges, young men. We were a trio of riders, and the third — of this also I am as certain as of yonder luminous sun" — at that moment a ray pierced the foliage — "was Pietro della Vigna, the Emperor's inseparable companion. Can the pious chancellor have trembled for his soul and have eased his con-

science by writing a letter to Rome? Does a Saracen messenger ride today? Yes? Then quickly, Ascanio, I will dictate a line."

Ascanio took out his tablet and pencil, dropped upon his right knee, using his left as a support for the tablet, and wrote:

"Exalted master and dear father! A word in haste. The verses in the papal bull—you are too clever to repeat yourself—only two pairs of ears ever heard, mine and those of your Pietro in the cornfields of Enna a year ago, when you summoned me to your court and with you I traversed the island. No cock will ever crow because of them, unless it be the one in the gospel that confirmed the treachery of Peter. If you love me and love your own life, my lord, put your chancellor to the test of a sharp question."

"Bloody play on the name! I will not write that. My hand trembles," cried Ascanio, turning pale. "I will not put the chancellor on the rack!" And he threw down the pencil.

"Official business," remarked Germano dryly, picked up the pencil and finished the letter, putting it under his helmet. "It shall be dispatched today. The Capuan is not to my simple mind, and never has been; he has an inscrutable countenance."

The monk Astorre shivered in spite of the mid-day sun. For the first time, he who had left the tranquil cloister saw and comprehended, as though he held it like the slippery coils of an adder in his own hand, the suspicion or the treachery of the world. From his brooding he was aroused by a stern word which Ezzelino, rising from his stone bench, addressed to him.

"Say, monk, why do you bury yourself in your house? You have not once left it since you donned secular garb. You fear public opinion? Meet it squarely! It will retreat before you. But if you make a move to flee, it will cling to your heels like a howling pack. Have you visited Diana,

your betrothed? The week of mourning is past. Take my advice: this very day invite your kindred, and this very day make Diana your wife!"

"And then away with you to your farthest castle!" said Ascanio in conclusion.

"That I do not advise," the tyrant overruled him. "No fright. No flight. Today you wed and tomorrow you celebrate the wedding with music and a masquerade. Farewell." He departed, with a sign to Germano to follow him.

"May I interrupt?" asked Cangrande, who had been polite enough to await a natural pause in the narrative.

"You are the master," rejoined the Florentine briefly.

"Do you believe the immortal Emperor made that remark about the three great mountebanks?"

"*Non liquet.*"

"I mean, in your secret soul."

Dante shook his head in plain denial.

"And yet you have condemned him as one of the godless to the sixth circle of your hell. By what right did you that? Justify yourself!"

"Magnificence," answered the Florentine, "my Comedy addresses itself to my age. But this age rightly or wrongly reads the most frightful blasphemies in the lines of that sublime brow. I am powerless to oppose the pious opinion. The future will perhaps judge differently."

"My Dante," asked Cangrande for the second time, "do you believe Pietro della Vigna innocent of high treason?"

"*Non liquet.*"

"I mean, in your secret soul."

Dante repeated his gesture of denial.

"And in your Comedy you let the traitor avow his innocence?"

"My lord," the Florentine justified himself, "in the lack of clear proofs shall I accuse of treason one more son of the Peninsula, seeing that so many plotters and dissemblers go about among us?"

“Dante, my Dante,” said the prince, “you believe innocent and you condemn! You believe guilty and you acquit!” Then in a playful mood he continued the story:

“The monk and Ascanio also left the garden and entered the hall.” But Dante silenced him.

By no means. On the contrary, they mounted to a tower room, the very one that Astorre as a curly-headed boy had occupied; for he avoided the pretentious great apartments which he must yet accustom himself to regard as his, in the same way that he had avoided touching even with the tip of his finger the golden hoard that he had inherited. Following the two came, obedient to a mute command of Ascanio's, Burkhard, the major-domo, at a proper distance, walking stiffly and displaying vexation in every mien.

Cangrande's master of ceremonies who bore the same name had dispatched his business and returned intently curious to the hall; for he had perceived that there was a question of well-known persons. Hearing now his own name mentioned, and seeing himself without warning reflected life-size in the mirror of the tale, he found this liberty taken with his honorable person bold and altogether unseemly on the part of the fugitive scholar whom they suffered to abide with them for a season and to whom, in just consideration of circumstances and proper distinctions, he had assigned the plainest room conceivable in the upper story of the princely residence. What the others had smilingly endured he felt as an abomination. He frowned and rolled his eyes. The Florentine amused himself in all seriousness at the indignation of the pedant and refused to be disturbed in the continuation of his story.

“Worthy sir,” Ascanio asked the major-domo—have I said that he was an Alsatian by birth?—“how are marriages performed in Padua? Astorre and I are inexperienced children in respect to this science.”

The master of ceremonies struck an attitude, looking fixedly at his lord, without paying the slightest attention to Ascanio who, according to his ideas, had no authority over him.

“*Distinguendum est*,” he said solemnly. “There must be no confusion between asking in marriage, wedding, and nuptial celebration.”

“Where is that written?” asked Ascanio in mock seriousness.

“*Ecce!*” answered the major-domo, unwrapping a great book which he carried constantly with him. “Here!”—pointing with the extended finger of his left hand to the title, which ran, “The Ceremonies of Padua, compiled from strict Investigation for the Use and Profit of Honorable and Polite Society, by Messer Godoscalco Burcardo.” He turned the leaves and read, “Part I: Asking in Marriage. Paragraph I: The earnest suitor is accompanied by a friend of equal rank, as a competent witness—”

“By the superfluous merits of my patron saint,” Ascanio interrupted him impatiently, “a truce with your *ante* and *post*, your asking in marriage and nuptials; serve us the meat of the matter: how are marriages performed in Padua?”

“In Batua,” croaked the irritated Alsatian, whose barbarous accent was in his perturbation of spirits even more noticeable than usually, “the ten first families”—he enumerated them from memory—“are invited to esbousals among the nobility ten days in advance, neither sooner nor later, by the major-domo of the bridegroom at the head of six servants. In this illustrious assembly the rings are given and taken. Cybrian wine is served and for wedding cake *amarelle*—”

“God grant we may lose no teeth eating them!” laughed Ascanio; and snatching the book from the major-domo, he ran through the names, of which six heads of families—six out of twelve—and several young men had been stricken out with broad strokes of a pencil. They had pre-

sumably become involved in some conspiracy against the tyrant and had perished in consequence.

“Attention, old man!” Ascanio commanded, acting for the monk, who had sunk back into an armchair and, lost in thought, made no objection to his friend’s assumption of authority. “You make your rounds with the six slugs this minute, immediately, without delay, do you understand? And you will convey an invitation for today at the hour of vespers.”

“Ten days in advance,” repeated Herr Burkhard majestically, as though he were promulgating a law of the Empire.

“Today and for today, bull-head!”

“Impossible,” said the major-domo calmly. “Will you alter the course of the stars and seasons?”

“Do you rebel? Is your neck itching for the ax, old man?” Ascanio warned him with a peculiar smile.

That sufficed. Herr Burkhard guessed the meaning. Ezzelino had given the command and the most stubborn of formalists yielded without a murmur, knowing that the tyrant ruled with a rod of iron.

“So you will not invite the two Ladies Canossa, Olympia and Antiope?”

“Why not invite them?” asked the monk suddenly, as if touched by a magic wand. The light of his eyes became tinged with color and a vision took form, the bare outline of which captivated his soul.

“Because Countess Olympia is out of her head, Astorre. Do you not know the poor woman’s story? But, of course, you were then in your swaddling clothes—I mean in your cowl. It was three years ago, when the leaves were beginning to turn.”

“In the summer, Ascanio, just three years ago,” contradicted the monk.

“You are right—do you know the story after all? But how should you? At that time Count Canossa conferred

privily with the papal legate, was detected, seized, and condemned. The Countess prostrated herself before my uncle, who retreated behind the veil of his silence. She was then most criminally deceived by a covetous chamberlain who, to gain money, deluded her with the expectation that the Count would be pardoned at the block. This expectation was not fulfilled and when they brought home to the Countess her husband beheaded, she, hurled thus headlong from hope to despair, cast herself out of the window down to where he was—marvelous to relate, without injury, except that she sprained her ankle. But from that day on her mind was unbalanced. Whereas natural moods blend imperceptibly one into another, as expiring daylight into the growing dusk, her moods change in furious rotation a dozen times in as many hours. Goaded by constant restlessness, the wretched woman rushes from her desolate city palace to her country estate, and thence back to the city in endless wandering. Today she is determined to marry her daughter to the son of a tenant, because lowliness alone can guarantee protection and peace; tomorrow the noblest suitor—who, by the way, for fear of such a mother, fails to present himself—would hardly be high-born enough—”

If Ascanio, during this flood of eloquence, had cast the most fleeting glance at the monk, he would have stopped in amazement; for the monk's face was transfigured with pity and compassion.

“When the tyrant,” continued the unobserving narrator, “rides past Olympia's dwelling on his way to the hunt, she rushes to the window and expects that, dismounting before her door, he will conduct her, as one who has incurred his displeasure but has now been tried with tribulation enough, mercifully and graciously back to his court—where to, verily, he has no inclination. Another day, or even on the same day, she imagines herself persecuted and banished by Ezzelino, who does not bother himself with her. She believes herself impoverished and believes her

goods confiscated, which he has left untouched. Thus she suffers the hot and cold fits of the most violent contrasts, not only is herself distraught, but distracts all whom she draws into the eddy of her giddy mind and—being only half mad, she often speaks with precision and wit—she does mischief wherever people believe her. There can be no thought of inviting her to a social gathering and to a festival. It is a miracle that her daughter Antiope, whom she adores and whose marriage revolves about the centre of her cyclonic fantasies, keeps her wits with only this tottering ground to stand on. But the girl, who is in the first bloom of youth and is tolerably good-looking, has a healthy nature. . . .” So he went on for some time yet.

But Astorre became absorbed in his dream. I say this, because past events are a dream. For the monk saw what he had witnessed three years before—a block, the headsmen beside it, and himself, representing a sick clerical brother, as the comforter awaiting a poor sinner condemned to death. This man—Count Canossa—was brought in fetters, but would not on any account yield, either because, standing before the block, he trusted that his reprieve would not longer be delayed, or simply because he loved the sunlight and abhorred the grave. He rebuffed the monk and disdained his prayers. A terrible struggle was imminent if he continued his dogged resistance; for he held his child by the hand, who—unobserved by the guards—had run to embrace him, fastening the most expressive and most entreating eyes upon the monk. The father clasped the girl to his breast and seemingly wished by means of this young life to protect himself from destruction, but was forced by the executioner to kneel and place his head upon the block. Then the child laid her head and neck beside her father's. Did she wish to stir the headsmen to pity? Did she wish to encourage her father to suffer the inevitable? Did she wish to breathe the name of a saint into the ear that would not hear? Did she do

the unheard-of deed without reflection and forethought, from sheer excess of filial affection? Did she simply wish to die with him?

Now the colors shone so brightly that the monk saw in perfect lifelikeness only a few paces away the two necks lying side by side, the ruddy neck of the Count and the snow-white one of the child, with its ringlets of golden hair. This neck was most beautiful in form and of uncommon delicacy. Astorre trembled lest the falling ax might err, and he shuddered now in his inmost soul, not otherwise than the first time, save that his senses did not leave him as they had done when the frightful scene took place in reality before his eyes and he regained consciousness only when all was over.

“Has my lord and master any commission to give me?” Astorre was aroused from his trance by the rasping voice of the major-domo who was restive under Ascanio’s assumed authority.

“Burcardo,” replied Astorre in soft accents, “do not forget to invite the two Ladies Canossa, mother and daughter. Let it not be said that the monk holds himself aloof from those who are shunned and forsaken by the world. I respect the right of an unfortunate woman”—to this the major-domo eagerly nodded assent—“to be invited and to be received here. Should we pass her by, she might be deeply wounded, being as she is.”

“Not for the world!” cried Ascanio in warning. “Do not subject yourself to *that* injury! Your betrothal itself is fantastic enough! And the fantastic inspires lunatics with enthusiasm. As is her way, she will do some incredible thing and launch some mad speech in the midst of the festivity, which is already sufficiently exciting to the women of Padua.”

Herr Burkhard, however, who with bull-dog tenacity clung to the right of a Canossa, sane or insane, to join in every assembly of the twelve, and who believed himself bound to obey Vicedomini and no other, bowed low before

the monk. "Your lordship alone shall be obeyed," he said and departed.

"O monk, monk," cried Ascanio, "you bring pity into a world in which goodness itself is hardly suffered to go unpunished!"

"But we men being as we are," Dante interpolated, "a prophetic light often reveals to us the edge of an abyss; then, however, wit comes, and argues, and smiles, and makes us believe that there is no danger.

So the shallow courtier first questioned and then reassured himself, saying, What earthly connection is there between the crazy woman and the monk, in whose life she does not play the least part? And after all, if she provokes mirth, she will give spice to the *amarelle*! He had not the remotest premonition of what was passing in Astorre's mind; but even though he had guessed and queried, the monk would not have abandoned his chaste secret to the worldling.

Accordingly Ascanio let the matter rest, and remembering the other command of the tyrant, to get the monk out among people, he asked merrily, "Have you procured the wedding ring, Astorre? For it is written in the Ceremonies, Part II, Paragraph so-and-so, 'There is an exchange of rings.'" The monk replied that something of the sort would probably be found among the family treasures.

"Not so, Astorre," said Ascanio. "If you take my advice, you will buy your Diana a new one. Who knows what memories cling to rings that have once been used? Turn your back upon ancient history. Moreover, it happens most charmingly—you can buy her a ring of the Florentine on the bridge. Do you know the man? But how should you? Listen! Early this morning when I was returning to town with Germano and started to cross our only bridge over the canal—we had to dismount and lead our horses, so dense was the throng—faith, on the weather-

worn coping of the pier a goldsmith had opened shop and all Padua was rummaging among his wares and bargaining with him. Why upon the narrow bridge, Astorre, when we have so many public squares? Because in Florence the jewelers' shops are situated on the bridge over the Arno. For—wondrous is the logic of fashion!—of whom is jewelry bought if not of a Florentine, and where does a Florentine display his wares if not on a bridge? It is not done otherwise. Elsewhere his wares would be crude trumpery and he himself no true Florentine. But this man, I judge, is a Florentine. Indeed, over his booth he has written in gigantic letters, *Niccolò Lippo dei Lippi, the Goldsmith, exiled from home by a venal and unjust sentence, such as are usual on the banks of the Arno.* Come, Astorre, let us go to the bridge!”

Astorre did not refuse, since he might well feel the need of breaking the ban of confinement to the purlieus of the palace, which he had not left since stripping himself of the cowl.

“Have you put money in your purse, monastic friend?” queried Ascanio. “Your vow of poverty no longer holds and the Florentine will overcharge you.” The young men were then crossing the interior hall on the ground floor, at one side of which the counting room was situated, and Ascanio knocked on the little sliding window. A shrewd face appeared, every wrinkle a fraud, and the financial agent of the Vicedominis—a Genoese, if I am rightly informed—handed over to his master, with fawning bow, a purse filled with gold bezants. Then the monk was enveloped by a servant in the comfortable hooded summer cloak of Padua.

On the street Astorre drew the hood far down over his face, more from force of habit than as a protection against the burning rays of the sun, and turned with friendliness toward his companion. “I say, Ascanio,” he remarked, “this errand I had better attend to alone. Do you not think so? To buy a simple gold ring is not too high a

task for my monk's understanding? This at least you will believe me capable of? Good-by until vespers, when I shall see you at my wedding!" Ascanio turned away, calling back over his shoulder, "One ring, not two! Diana will give you yours. Mark that, Astorre!" It was just one of those iridescent soap-bubbles, of which the merry lips daily blew more than one and set it afloat in the air.

If you ask me, my lords and ladies, why the monk dismissed his friend, my answer is, he wished undisturbed to enjoy to the last echo the tone of heavenly music which the young martyr to filial love had caused to vibrate in his soul.

Astorre had reached the bridge which, in spite of the torrid sun, was crowded to the edge and bore on its short span a double throng of people proceeding from either shore to the Florentine's shop. Beneath his cloak the monk remained unrecognized, although now and then an inquisitive eye scrutinized the uncovered portion of his face. Nobles and citizens alike elbowed their way forward. High-born ladies descended from their litters and submitted to crowding and jostling in order to purchase a pair of bracelets or a coronet of the latest design. On all the public squares the Florentine had made announcement by means of the crier and his bell that on this day he should shut up shop after the Angelus. He had no thought of doing so; but what does a lie cost a Florentine!

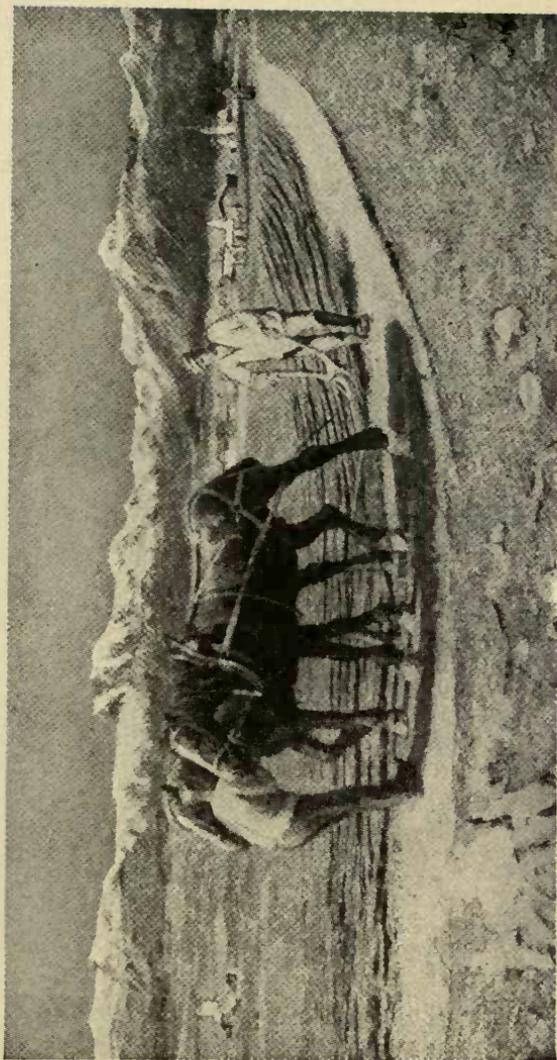
Finally the monk, hemmed in by the crowd, stood before the booth. The trader, assailed on all sides and turning ten ways at once, merely glanced at him out of the corner of his experienced eye and immediately perceived that he had to do with a novice. "What may I humbly offer to your lordship's refined taste?" he asked. "Give me a plain gold ring," answered the monk. The merchant reached for a goblet on which, after the Florentine style, some wanton scene was depicted in high relief. He shook the goblet, the bowl of which contained a hundred rings in a confused mass, and held it out to Astorre.

Astorre found himself in painful embarrassment. He did not know the size of the finger that he was to adorn, and picking up several rings, he visibly hesitated between a rather large and a rather small one. The Florentine could not let pass the opportunity for ridicule—we hear the chuckle of veiled derision in every speech uttered on the banks of the Arno. “Does my lord not know the size of the finger which he surely has pressed from time to time?” he asked with an innocent expression; but as a wise man he immediately corrected himself, and in the Florentine opinion that the suspicion of ignorance was insulting, that of sin, however, was flattering, he gave Astorre two rings, a large one and a small one, which he deftly let slip from the thumb and forefinger of his two hands into the hands of the monk. “For your lordship’s two ladies,” he whispered with a bow.

Before the monk had had time to be indignant at this loose speech he was violently pushed to one side. It was the shoulder-piece of a horse’s trappings that had scraped so hard against him that he let the smaller ring fall. At the same moment the deafening sound of eight trumpets blared in his ear. The military band of the Governor’s German body-guard was riding over the bridge in two files each of four horses, scattering the throng of people and forcing them against the stone parapets.

As soon as the trumpeters had crossed the bridge the monk, hastily concealing in his cloak the larger ring to which he had clung, rushed after the smaller, which had rolled away from him under the horses’ hoofs.

The old wooden pavement of the bridge had been worn away by travel and hollowed out in the middle, so that the ring rolled down one side and was carried by its own momentum up the other. Here a young lady’s-maid named Isotta, or Sotte, as they abbreviate the name in Padua, had snatched up the rolling, glistening object, at the risk of being trampled to death by the horses. “A lucky ring!” cried the foolish creature exultantly and with childish glee



Permission F. Bruckmann A.-G., Munich

PLOUGHING

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI

put the acquisition on the tapering finger of the young mistress whom she was accompanying — on the third finger of the left hand, which because of its delicate formation seemed to her especially worthy and qualified for the narrow band. In Padua, however, as also here in Verona, if I am rightly informed, it is the wedding ring that is worn on the left hand.

The lady showed some resentment at the practical joke which her maid had presumed to play, but was nevertheless herself somewhat amused by it. She exerted herself to remove the ring which belonged to another and yet fit her finger as if made to order. Then without warning the monk stood before her and lifted his arms in joyful amazement. What he actually did, though, was to extend his open right hand, holding his left on a level with his heart; for notwithstanding she had blossomed into young womanhood, he had recognized by the exceptionally slender neck and still more, no doubt, because of the thrill in his own bosom, the girl whose sweet head he had seen lying on the block.

While the dumbfounded maiden cast inquiring glances at the monk and kept twirling the recalcitrant ring, Astorre hesitated to ask it back from her. But he had to do so. He opened his mouth to speak. "Lady," he began — and felt himself enclasped by two strong mailed arms, which took complete possession of him and lifted him from the ground. At the same moment he saw himself seated, by the help of another mailed warrior, astride a prancing steed. "Let us see," some one called out with a good-natured laugh, "whether you have forgotten how to ride!" It was Germano, riding at the head of the German cohort under his command, which the Governor had ordered out for inspection on a plain not far from Padua. Unexpectedly catching sight of his friend and brother-in-law out of doors, he had allowed himself the innocent sport of hoisting the monk to a horse beside him, from which, at a given signal, a young Suabian had dismounted. The spirited animal,

noticing that it had a different rider, gave a few wild leaps. There was a surging mass of cavalry on the narrow bridge, and Astorre, whose hood had fallen back and who could only with difficulty keep his feet in the stirrups, was recognized by the people who gave way in horror before him. "The monk! the monk!" they cried, pointing at him from all directions; but the tumultuous squadron had already crossed the bridge and was disappearing around a street corner. The Florentine, still unpaid for his rings, ran after the troop, but scarcely more than twenty paces; for he grew anxious for his wares, left to the poor protection of a stripling; moreover, the cries of the crowd assured him that he had to do with a well-known personality whom he could easily find. He had Astorre's palace pointed out to him and presented himself there on that day, the day after, and the day after that. On the first two occasions he accomplished nothing, since everything was at sixes and sevens in the monk's dwelling; the third time he found the tyrant's seal affixed to the locked door. The coward preferred to have no dealings with him; and so he lost his money.

The women, however—Antiope and the flippant maid had been rejoined by a third, who had been separated from them by the tumult on the bridge—walked in the opposite direction. This third person was a strange looking, as it seemed, prematurely old woman, with deep wrinkles and unkempt gray hair, whose expressions betrayed an agitated mind, and who dragged her neglected but costly robes through the dust of the streets.

With stupid self-satisfaction Sotte was just relating to the old lady, evidently her mistress's mother, the occurrence on the bridge: Astorre—for she too had divined who he was from the outcries of the people—Astorre the monk who, as everybody knew, was obliged to take a wife, had furtively rolled a gold ring over to Antiope, and when she—Sotte—seeing in this the hand of Providence and understanding the monk's stratagem, had put the ring on

the finger of the dear young lady, Astorre himself had stepped up to her; and when Antiope modestly sought to return the ring to him, he put his left hand tenderly on his heart, thus—she imitated the action—but extended his right hand deprecatingly, with a gesture which throughout Italy could say and mean nothing else than, “Keep it, sweetheart!”

Finally the astounded Antiope put in a word and entreated her mother to pay no attention to Isotta's silly chatter, but in vain. Lady Olympia lifted up her hands to heaven, and on the public highway gave fervent thanks to St. Anthony that beyond all hope and expectation he had heard her daily prayer and had granted her treasure a virtuous husband of her own rank, one of his own sons. Withal she gesticulated so fantastically that the passers-by laughingly put their forefingers to their foreheads. In bewilderment Antiope took all conceivable pains to disabuse her mother's mind of this dazzling fiction; but she would not listen and passionately continued building her castle in the air.

So the ladies reached the Canossa palace and met at the portal a major-domo in stiff array, followed by six extravagantly uniformed servants. Herr Burkhard, obsequiously retiring, allowed Lady Olympia to precede him up the stairway. Then, having reached a desolate drawing-room, he made three graduated bows, each nearer and more profound than the one before, and announced slowly and solemnly, “Your ladyships, I am sent by Astorre Vice-domini humbly to invite you to his esbousal this day”—he painfully swallowed the complementary “ten days hence”—“at the hour of vespers.

Dante ceased speaking. The plot of his story lay spread out in all its fulness before him, but his exacting mind was selecting and simplifying. Then Cangrande spoke.

“My Dante,” he began, “I am surprised with what harsh and caustic traits you have sketched your Florentine! Your Niccolò Lippo dei Lippi is banished in conse-

quence of a venal and unjust sentence. He himself is, however, an extortioner, a flatterer, liar, mocker, a loose talker, and a coward—all 'after the manner of the Florentines.' And that is but a tiny flame from the volcano of imprecations which you pour out upon your Florence, a mere dripping dreg from those tercets overflowing with gall and bitterness which in your Comedy you give your native city to drink. Let me tell you, it is ignoble to vilify one's cradle, to put one's mother to shame! It does not become you. Believe me, it makes a bad impression.

"My Dante, I will tell you of a puppet show that, lately roaming about in disguise among the people, I witnessed in our arena. You turn up your nose at my vulgar taste for liking to amuse myself in leisure moments with puppets and jesters. Accompany me nevertheless to the standing room in front of the little stage. What do you see there? Husband and wife are quarreling. He beats her and she cries. A neighbor puts his head in through the crack in the door, exhorts, chides, takes a hand. But see, the brave woman rises up against the intruder and takes her husband's part. 'When it suits my fancy to be beaten!' she screams.

"Similarly, my Dante, a high-minded man speaks when his native city ill-treats him: 'It is my will to receive this blow.'"

Many young and sharp eyes were fastened upon the Florentine. He silently veiled his head. What passed through his mind no one knows. When he raised his head again his brow was more troubled, his mouth more bitter, and the point of his nose sharper.

Dante listened. The wind whistled about the corners of the palace and blew open a half-fastened shutter. Monte Baldo had sent his first storm of winter. They saw the snow-flakes flying and whirling in the light of the fire on the hearth. The poet watched the snow-storm, and his days, which he felt to be slipping away from him, appeared

to him in the guise of this pale scurry and flight through a wavering glow. He shivered with cold.

And his delicate auditors shared his feeling. They realized that no home of his own, but only the uncertain favor of changing patrons gave him a roof and protection from the winter which covered highway and byway with snow. All were aware—and Cangrande, who was magnanimous by nature, was the first to be aware, of the fact that there beside them sat a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

The prince arose, shaking the jester like a feather from off his robe, stepped up to the exile, took him by the hand, and led him to his own place next to the fire. "It belongs to you," he said, and Dante did not contradict him. On his part, Cangrande occupied the vacated stool. Sitting there, he could comfortably gaze at the two ladies between whom sat the traveler through hell, who now, in the full glare of the blazing fire, continued his narrative as follows.

While the smaller bells of Padua were ringing for vespers, there gathered under the cedar-beamed ceiling of the great hall of the Vicedominis what was left of the twelve first families, awaiting the entrance of the head of the house. Diana stood apart with her father and her brother. There was a hum of low conversation on all sides. The men earnestly and thoroughly discussed the political aspect of the union of two of the great families of the city. The youths jested under their breath at the marriage of a monk. The women shuddered, in spite of the papal brief, at the sacrilege, which only those surrounded by budding daughters saw in a milder light, excused because of the force of circumstances, or explained as proceeding from the monk's goodness of heart. The maidens were all expectation.

The presence of Olympia Canossa caused surprise and uneasiness; for she was arrayed in conspicuous, all but royal state, as though a chief part were hers in the approaching ceremony, and she was talking with eery volubility and

urgency to Antiope, who with an anxious heart, whispering and beseeching, endeavored to quiet her excited mother. Lady Olympia had been mightily enraged even on the stairway, where—Herr Burkhard was just then engaged with the reception of two other dignitaries—she had been bidden respectful welcome by Gocciola, who held in his hand a new scarlet cap with silver bells. Now, standing in a circle with the others, she wearied or worried her fellow-nobles by her immoderate gesticulations. With winks and shrugs one pointed her out to another. Nobody, if he had been in the monk's place, would have invited her, and everybody was prepared to see her play one of her pranks upon her host.

Burcardo announced the master of the house. Astorre had escaped from the Germans, had hastened back to the bridge, without finding there either the ring or the ladies, and reproaching himself—although at the bottom only chance was to blame—he had, in the hour remaining to him before vespers, formed the resolution to act, in the future, ever according to the rules of expediency. With this determination he entered the hall and stepped into the midst of the gathering. The impress of the attention directed upon him and the forms and requirements of social intercourse which, so to speak, were palpable in the very air, made him feel that he must not utter the reality of things, electric and sometimes hateful as it is, but must give reality a softened and pleasing form. Thus he kept involuntarily midway between truth and fair semblance and spoke irreproachably.

“Ladies and peers,” he began, “death has reaped a rich harvest among us Vicedominis. As I stand clad in black before you, I wear mourning for my father, three brothers, and three nephews. That I, released by the church, believed, after careful consideration”—here his voice did not ring quite clear—“and conscientious scrutiny before God that I had not the right to leave unfulfilled my dying father's wish to live on in son and grandson,—this you

will judge differently, approving or blaming according to your native disposition for justice or mercy. But in one matter you will all agree: that it would not have been becoming in a man with my antecedents to hesitate and select, and that under these circumstances only the taking of that which was nearest to hand and unsought could be pleasing to God. Who, however, was nearer to me than the virgin widow of my sole remaining brother, united with me as she was by our common inconsolable grief? Accordingly I clasped this hand over the deathbed of a dear one, as I clasp it now"—he stepped up to Diana and led her into the middle of the hall—"and place the wedding ring upon her finger." He did so. The ring fitted. Diana did likewise, slipping a gold ring on the monk's finger. "It was my mother's," she said, "and she was a true and virtuous woman. I give you a ring that has kept faith." A solemn murmur of congratulation from all present concluded the grave ceremony, and old Pizzaguerra, a worthy graybeard—for avarice is a wholesome vice and conduces to longevity—wept the usual tear.

Lady Olympia saw her air-castle burst into flame and burn with falling columns and crashing beams. She took a step forward, as though to convince her eyes that they saw falsely, then a second step in waxing wildness, and presently she stood close in front of Astorre and Diana, her gray hair on end, while her furious words rushed and tumbled like a city in uproar.

"Scoundrel," she shrieked, "against the ring on this woman's finger cries out another given before now." She dragged Antiope, who in growing anxiety had followed her, beseeching her to desist, out from behind her back and held up the girl's hand. "This ring less than an hour ago at the Florentine's on the bridge you put upon my child's finger!" In such distorted form was the event mirrored in her fantastic mind. "Reprobate! Adulterous monk! Does not the earth open up to swallow you? Hang the brother door-keeper who snored in his drunken stupor and

permitted you to escape from your cell! You sought to satisfy your lusts; but you might have selected another victim than a wrongfully persecuted, desperate widow and a defenseless orphan!"

The marble pavement did not open up, and in the eyes of the assemblage the unhappy woman, who thought she had given poor and feeble words to a mother's righteous wrath, read the answer of undisguised contempt, or of a different kind of pity from that which she had hoped to find. She heard behind her back the clearly whispered word, "Maniac!" and her wrath changed to insane laughter. "Why, just look at the fool," she bawled derisively, "who could make so stupid a choice between these two! You shall be my judges, my lords and ladies, and any one who has eyes. Here the darling blossom, the young rose-bud"—the rest I have forgotten; but one thing I know: all the young men in Vicedomini's hall—and more than one among them may have lived loosely—all the young men, the continent and the incontinent, shut their eyes and ears to the revolting acts and words of a mother who trampled upon morality and shame before the child that she had borne, and like a procuress offered to give her away.

Everybody in the hall pitied Antiope. Only Diana, little as she doubted the good faith of the monk, felt, I know not what indefinite anger at the beauty thus impudently exhibited to her bridegroom.

Antiope may have been to blame, because she kept the unholy ring upon her finger. Perhaps she did so in order not to excite her self-deluded mother, thinking that, undeceived by the reality, she would plunge, as was her wont, from haughtiness to humility, and all would pass by with the rolling of her eyes and the muttering of a few words. Or else young Antiope herself had dipped her finger into the bubbling fountain of fairy-land. Was not the meeting on the bridge marvelous, and would the monk's choice of her have been more marvelous than the fate that snatched him from the monastery?

Now she suffered a cruel punishment. So far as the power of an unbridled tongue extends, her own mother had stripped her of every shred of protection.

A deep blush, and another deeper than the first, suffused her brow and neck. Then in the general silence she began to weep loudly and bitterly.

Even the gray-haired Mænad listened with emotion. Thereupon her face twitched with horrible pain and her fury redoubled. "And the other!" she screamed, pointing to Diana, "this hulk of marble, hardly more than rough-hewn! This lumbering giantess that God the Father botched when he was not yet a master and was learning to model. Fie on the clumsy body without life or soul! Who should have given her a soul anyway? Her bastard mother, stupid Orsola? Or the dried-up niggard over there? Only reluctantly did he allot to her the mere pittance of a soul!"

Old Pizzaguerra remained undisturbed. With the perspicacity of the miserly he did not forget whom he had before him. But his daughter Diana forgot it. Incensed and outraged at the brutal vituperation of her body and soul, she contracted her brows and clenched her fists. She became quite beside herself when the lunatic dragged her parents into her invective, insulted her mother in the grave and held her father up to public scorn. A paroxysm of anger seized and overwhelmed her.

"You bitch!" she cried and struck a blow—in the face of Antiope; for the desperate and courageous girl had thrown herself in front of her mother. Antiope uttered a cry that vibrated through the hall and in every heart.

Now the wheel made a complete turn in the lunatic's mind. The utmost fury was swallowed up in unspeakable grief. "They have struck my child!" she groaned; she sank upon her knees and sobbed, "Is there no longer a God in heaven?"

By this time the measure was full. It would have been full to running over before this, but destiny strode faster

than my lips could relate—so fast that neither the monk nor Germano, who stood nearby, could seize and hold Diana's uplifted arm. Ascanio grasped the mad-woman about the waist, another youth took her by the feet, and with scarcely any resistance she was carried out, placed in her litter, and taken home.

Diana and Antiope still stood face to face, each one paler than the other, Diana rueful and grief-stricken after the quick abatement of her outburst of wrath, Antiope struggling for speech; she could not even stammer—she moved her lips without uttering a sound.

If the monk now took Antiope's hand, in order to escort away the girl whom his betrothed had maltreated, he did no more than fulfil the duty of chivalry and hospitality. All thought this a matter of course. Especially must Diana have desired to lose sight of the victim of her violence. She too then departed with her father and her brother. The assembled guests, however, found that the most delicate course for them was likewise to disappear, even to the last man.

There was a jingle of bells under the buffet set with *amarelle* and Cyprian wine. A fool's cap came to view, and Gocciola crept on all fours out of his greedy hiding place. According to his way of looking at things, everything had gone delightfully; for he now had unhampered freedom to munch *amarelle* and drain one glass after another. So he amused himself, until he heard footsteps approaching. He was about to slip away; but casting a peevish glance at the intruder, he judged that no flight was necessary. It was the monk returning; and the monk was as jubilant and intoxicated as he; for the monk—

“Was in love with Antiope,” the prince's friend interrupted the narrator, laughing convulsively.

“You have said it, my lady, he was in love with Antiope,” Dante repeated in a tragic tone.

“Of course!” “How could it be otherwise?” “It

had to come to this!" "That is the way it usually goes!" resounded in the narrator's ears from the entire circle of listeners.

"Gently, young men," Dante admonished. "No, that is not the way it usually goes. Do you think a love with unlimited devotion of body and soul is an every-day occurrence? And do you even believe that you have loved, or now love, with such devotion? Be undeceived! Every man speaks of ghosts, but few men have seen them. I will procure you an unchallengeable witness. There is lying about the house a book of fairy tales in the mode of the day. Cautiously turning its leaves, I found in the midst of much rubbish one true word. "Love," it says in one place, "is rare, and for the most part comes to a bad end." Dante had said this seriously. Then he made mock of them, saying, "Inasmuch as you are all so learned and expert in love, and, besides, it does not become me to put into my toothless mouth the words of a youth overpowered by passion, I will pass over the self-betraying soliloquy of the returning Astorre, and briefly say that when the sensible Ascanio heard his raving, he was terrified and exhorted him to reason."

"Do you mean so pitifully to mutilate your touching story, my Dante?" protested the susceptible friend of the prince, turning supplicating hands toward the Florentine. "Let the monk speak, so that with sympathy we may learn how he turned away from a rude to a tender woman, from a cold woman to a woman of feeling, from a stony to a beating heart—"

"Yes, Florentine," interrupted the princess in deep emotion and with purple glowing cheeks, "let your monk speak, so that we may hear and marvel how it could happen that Astorre, however inexperienced and gullible, betrayed a noble woman for a vixen. Have you not perceived, Dante, that Antiope is a vixen? You have little knowledge of women! In truth I tell you"—she raised her powerful arm and clenched her fist—"I too should have struck, not

the poor fool, but wittingly the schemer, who at any cost would stand in the sight of the monk!" And she struck a blow in the air. The other woman trembled a little.

Cangrande, who had not taken his eye from the two women opposite whom he now sat, admired the princess and rejoiced in her strength of passion. At this moment he found her incomparably more beautiful than the delicate and smaller rival against whom he had pitted her; for the height and depth of emotion attain to expression only in a strong body and a strong soul.

Dante, for his part, smiled for the first and only time this evening, when he saw the two ladies so insistently weighing themselves in the balance of his story. He even went so far as to tease them a little. "What do your ladyships ask of me?" he said. "Talking to one's self is unreasonable. Did ever a wise man talk to himself?"

Now a playful curly head emerged from the shadow and a page, who may have been crouching in cosy concealment behind a chair or some lady's train, confidently cried out, "Great master, how little you know yourself, or pretend to know yourself! Learn, Dante, that nobody talks more glibly to himself than you do—to such a degree that you not only fail to notice us foolish fellows, but even let beauty pass close by you without paying it any homage."

"Really?" said Dante. "Where was that? Where and when did it happen?"

"Why, yesterday on the bridge over the Adige," smiled the boy. "You were leaning on the parapet. Then the charming Lucretia Nani passed by, brushing against your robe. We boys followed her admiringly, and from the opposite direction came two fiery warriors, trying to catch a glance from her mild eyes. But she sought your eyes; for not every man has come back with a whole skin after a walk through hell! You, master, were intent upon a rolling wave in the middle of the Adige and were murmuring something."

“I was sending a greeting to the sea. The wave was more beautiful than the maiden. But let us come back to the two fools! Listen, they are talking together! And by all the muses, let no one again interrupt me, else midnight will find us still telling tales around the fire.”

When the monk, after conducting Antiope home, again entered his hall—but I forgot to say that he did not meet Ascanio, although Ascanio with the litter and Lady Olympia had gone the same way as he. For the nephew, after giving over the woman in a state of complete collapse to the care of her servants, had immediately hastened to his uncle the tyrant, in order to serve him with this madcap morsel while it was still hot. He would rather convey to Ezzelino a bit of city gossip than news of a conspiracy.

I know not whether the monk was as comely as Ascanio the mocker had called him. But I see him striding like the handsomest of youths. With winged feet he traverses the hall, as if borne by Zephyrus or led by Iris. His eyes gleam with brightness and he is murmuring sounds that belong to the language of the blessed. Gocciola, who had imbibed a good deal of Cyprian wine, felt likewise filled with a new courage and renewed youth. Under the soles of his feet, too, the marble floor dissolved into snow-white clouds. He felt an unquenchable desire to hear the murmur on Astorre's rosy lips, as one bends over a bubbling spring to listen, and he began to go back and forth the length of the hall beside him, striding and hopping in turn, his fool's sceptre under his arm.

“The tender head that offered itself for the father has now offered and given itself for the mother!” Astorre murmured. “The modest girl, how she blushed! Maltreated, how she suffered! When struck, how she shrieked! Has the image of that head ever left me since I saw it lying on the block? It was ever in my thoughts, accompanied me whithersoever I went, hovered in my prayer, illumined

my cell, lay upon my pillow! Did not the lovely head with the slender white neck lie beside St. Paul's—"

"St. Paul's?" chuckled the simpleton.

"St. Paul's on our altar piece—"

"With the curly black hair and the ruddy neck on the broad block, with the headsman's ax above it?" Gocciola sometimes performed his devotions in the church of the Franciscans.

The monk nodded. "Whenever I gazed at it for a long while the ax began to quiver and I shuddered. Did I not confess it to the prior?"

"And what did the prior say?" interrogated Gocciola.

"My son," said he, "what you saw was a child in the advance of the heavenly triumphal procession. Fear nothing! No harm will come to the ambrosial neck!"

"But," the naughty fool goaded him, "the child has grown so tall!" He raised his hand. Then he lowered it and held it just above the floor. "And your lordship's cowl," he grinned, "lies thus low!"

The monk was beyond the reach of anything common and unclean. Fire as though from heaven had passed from Antiope's hand into his own and began to burn, at first gently, then hotter and more and more fiercely in his veins. "Glory to God the Father," he suddenly shouted in exultation, "who created man and woman!"

"Eve?" asked the fool.

"Antiope!" answered the monk.

"And the other, the tall woman? What are you going to do with her? Let her go begging?" Gocciola wiped his eyes.

"What other?" asked the monk. "Is there any other woman than Antiope?"

This was too much even for the fool. In wide-eyed amazement he stared at Astorre; but a strong hand seized him by the collar, dragged him to the door, and put him out into the passage way. The same hand was then laid on Astorre's shoulder.

“Wake up, sleep-walker!” cried Ascanio, returning just in time to hear the last infatuated speech of the monk. He drew the visionary down upon a bench by the window, looked him straight in the eye, and addressed him with the words, “Astorre, you are out of your mind!”

As though blinded, Astorre at first avoided the searching glances, then he met them with his own, still jubilant, but only shyly to drop his eyes again. “Do you wonder?” he said finally.

“No more than at the blazing up of a flame,” responded Ascanio. “But since you are not a blind element, but a creature endowed with reason and will, stamp out the flame, else it will consume you and all Padua. Must a worldling preach to you the laws of God and man? You are wed! Thus saith this ring on your finger. If you now break your troth as you have broken your vow, you will commit a breach of morality, duty, honor, and the peace of the city. If you do not quickly and heroically pull the blind god’s arrow out of your heart, it will be the murder of you, of Antiope, and of sundry others, whomever it happens to hit. Astorre! Astorre!”

Ascanio’s wanton lips were themselves amazed at the grave and earnest words which in the anxiety of his heart he had given them to utter. “Your name, Astorre,” he added half in jest, “is a trumpet call to you to battle with yourself!”

Astorre’s manhood reasserted itself. “Some one has given me a philter!” he cried. “I am beside myself, I am a madman! Ascanio, I give you authority over me. Bind me!”

“It is to Diana that I will bind you!” said Ascanio. “Follow me, and let us go seek her!”

“Was it not Diana who struck Antiope?” asked the monk.

“You only dreamed that! You have dreamed everything. You were out of your senses! Come, I implore

you. I command you to come! I seize you and take you with me!"

If Ascanio's design had been to banish reality, Germano's clanging footsteps in the passage way restored it. With a resolute countenance Diana's brother stepped up to the monk and grasped his hand. "An interrupted festival, brother!" he said. "My sister sends me—that is a lie, she does not send me; for she has shut herself up in her chamber and is wailing there and cursing her quick temper—we are drowning today in women's tears! She loves you; but she cannot bring herself to say so—it is the way of our family; I cannot do it either. She has not doubted you for a single instant. It is a simple matter: you threw away a ring somewhere, if it was yours that the little Canossa girl—what is her name? Oh yes, Antiope—wore on her finger. Her crazy mother found it and wove her fairy tale out of that unsubstantial accident. Antiope is naturally as innocent of all this as a new-born babe—if any one thinks otherwise, he shall hear from me!"

"Not I," cried Astorre. "Antiope is as pure as heaven! The ring was started rolling by chance!" and he related the occurrence with rapid words.

"But neither must you blame my sister for her violent outburst," Germano maintained. "The blood rushed to her head; she did not see who stood before her. She thought to chastise the mad-woman who had insulted her parents, and she struck the sweet innocence. But the latter must be restored to honor and dignity before God and man. Leave that to me, brother-in-law! I am Diana's brother. It is a simple matter."

"You speak in a torrent of words and are yet obscure, Germano! What is your plan? How shall you atone to the poor girl?" asked Ascanio.

"It is a simple matter," Germano repeated. "I shall offer Antiope Canossa my hand and make her my wife."

Ascanio clapped his hand to his forehead. This move of

Germano's dumfounded him. But when, with quick presence of mind, he looked at the matter more closely, he found the heroic measure not so bad; nevertheless he cast an anxious glance at the monk. Astorre, again master of himself, kept as still as a mouse and listened attentively. The soldier's sense of honor sounded like a clarion call through the wilderness of his soul.

"Thus I shall kill two birds with one stone, brother," Germano explained. "The maiden will be restored to her rights and honors. I should like to see the man who will whisper a word behind my wife's back! And secondly, I make peace between you two as husband and wife. Diana need no longer be ashamed of herself either in your sight or in her own, and is thoroughly cured of her quick temper. I tell you, she is immune from that all the days of her life."

Astorre pressed his hand. "You are a true fellow!" said he. The will to subdue his heavenly or earthly passion waxed strong in the monk. But this will was not free and this virtue not unselfish; for it clung to a dangerous sophistry: "Not otherwise than as I shall embrace a woman whom I do not love," Astorre consoled himself, "shall Antiope be embraced by a man who takes her out of hand, to make good the wrong another has done her. We all renounce! Self-abnegation and mortification of the flesh in the world as in the monastery!"

"What must be done I will not delay," Germano urged. "Otherwise she will pass a sleepless night." I know not whether he meant Diana or Antiope. "Brother, you accompany me as a witness; I mean to act in accordance with the customary forms of procedure."

"No, no," cried Ascanio in alarm. "Not Astorre! Take me!"

Germano shook his head. "Ascanio, my friend, you are not qualified for this duty. You could not be seriously regarded as a witness in matters of wedlock. Moreover, my brother Astorre will not allow any other than himself to plead my cause. It is in large part his own. Is it not,

Astorre?" The monk nodded. "Then get ready, brother. Make yourself handsome! Put on your golden chain!"

"And," added Ascanio with a forced jest, "when you cross the courtyard, dip your head in the fountain. But are you yourself, Germano, going to wear your coat of mail? So warlike? Is that proper for a suitor?"

"It is long since I doffed my armor, and it becomes me. Why do you survey me from head to foot, Ascanio?"

"I am asking myself what makes this armored warrior so sure that he shall not, scaling-ladder and all, be hurled into the moat?"

"There can be no question of that," said Germano with the utmost composure. "Will a maiden who has been put to shame and beaten in public refuse the proffered hand of a knight? In that case she would be even crazier than her mother. That is as clear as daylight, Ascanio. Come, Astorre."

While Ascanio thus left behind pondered with folded arms this new turn of affairs, doubting whether it was destined to lead to a nursery of hopeful children or to a cemetery, the friends of his youth were taking the short walk to the Canossa palace.

The cloudless day expired in a glow of pure evening gold, and hark! the bells were just ringing the Angelus. The monk repeated to himself the customary prayers, and it so happened that his own monastery, situated on a slight elevation, prolonged the familiar sounds by a few gently plaintive strokes, to which the other bells in the city yielded the reverberating air. Even the monk shared in the universal peace.

Then his glance fell upon the face of his friend and he contemplated the weather-beaten features. They were lighted up and joyful, with a sense of duty fulfilled, no doubt, but also with the unconscious or unguarded satisfaction of reaching port in the Islands of the Blest under sail of a chivalrous action impelled by the breath of honor. "Sweet innocence!" sighed the warrior.

With the quickness of fury the monk comprehended that Diana's brother was deceiving himself, if he deemed himself unselfish, that Germano was on the point of falling in love with Antiope, and was his rival. He felt a sharp pang, then another and sharper, so that he would have cried aloud to ease his pain. And now a whole nest of angry vipers wriggled and writhed in his breast. My lords and ladies, God save us all, men and women, from jealousy! It is the most tormenting of afflictions, and whoever is afflicted with it is more wretched than the damned in my vision of hell.

With a drawn face and an oppressed heart the monk followed the confident wooer up the steps of the palace that they had now reached. It was empty and neglected. Lady Olympia had probably locked herself in her own apartment. No servants in sight and all doors wide open! Unannounced they passed, in the gathering twilight, through a series of apartments: they stopped at the threshold of the last chamber, for young Antiope sat there by the window.

The arched opening, ending in a trefoil, was filled with the splendor of evening, which in a half-circle enveloped the charming form from breast to neck. Her disheveled hair resembled a crown of thorns, and the parched lips drank in the effulgent heaven. The stricken maiden lay weary under the weight of the shame she had suffered, her eyelids closed and her arms falling limp by her side; but in the quiet closet of her heart she rejoiced and blessed her disgrace; for this had united her forever with Astorre.

And is not even today the loftiest devotion kindled from the deepest pity, and shall it not be so till the end of time? Who can resist the sight of beauty when it suffers undeservedly? I will not blaspheme and I know the differences, but even the Son of God was stricken, and we kiss his stripes and wounds.

Antiope was not painfully seeking to determine whether or not Astorre loved her. She knew that he did; there was

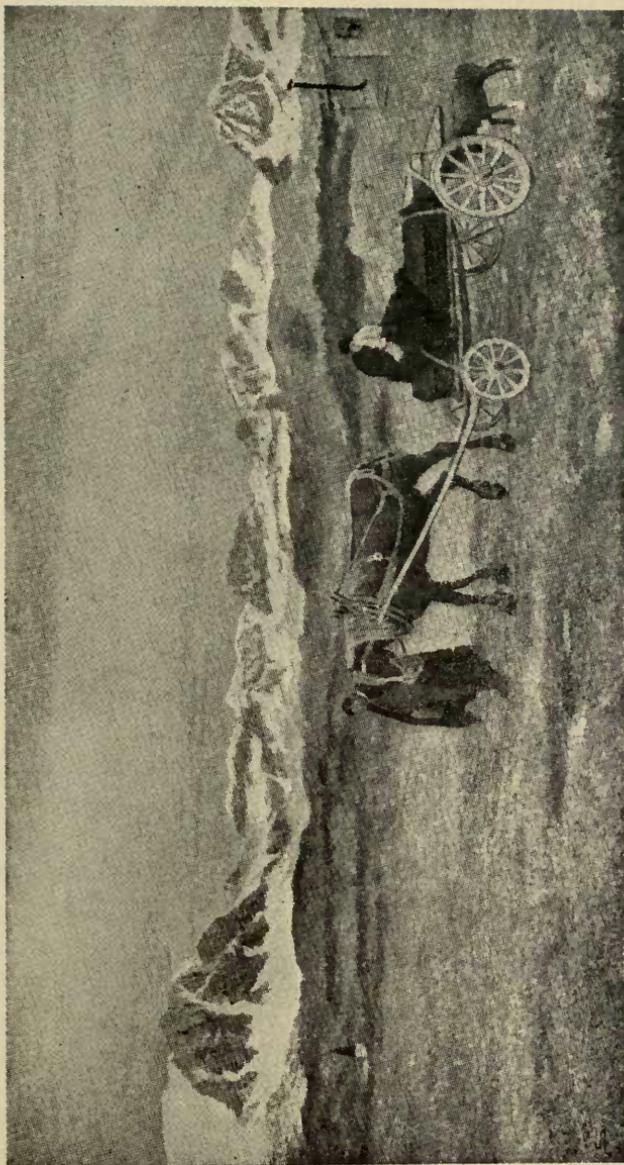
no doubt about it; she was more firmly persuaded of it than of the breath in her nostrils and the beating of her heart. Not a syllable had she exchanged with Astorre from the first to the last step that they had taken on their way together. Their hands were not any more firmly clasped at the last: they grew together without pressure; they interpenetrated like two light spirit-flames, and yet at the moment of leave-taking were hardly more to be separated than a root from the ground.

Antiope was appropriating another's property and committing theft on Diana almost in innocence; for she no longer had either a conscience or even consciousness. Padua, with its towers in plain sight, her mother, the monk's espousal, Diana, the whole earth—all were blotted out; nothing remained but the abyss of heaven, and this was filled with light and love!

Astorre had struggled with himself from the bottom to the top of the stairway, and thought he had won the victory. "I will make the sacrifice complete," he boasted to himself, "and stand by Germano in his suit." On the topmost step he once more appealed to all his saints, in the first place to St. Francis, the master of self-conquest. He thrust his hand into his breast and believed that, through heavenly aid as strong as Hercules, he had strangled the vipers. But the saint with the five stigmata had turned away from the unfaithful disciple who had disdained his cord and his cowl.

Germano, standing beside him, was meanwhile composing his speech, but could get no farther than the two arguments that at the very beginning had flashed upon his mind. As to the rest, he was of good courage—he had often enough made a speech to his Germans in the thick of the combat—and he was not afraid of the girl. But the waiting he found as hard to bear as before the battle. He rattled his sword against his coat of mail.

Antiope was startled, looked up, arose quickly, and stood with her back to the window and her face scarcely visible,



Permission F. Bruckmann A.G., Munich

THE HOME-COMING

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI

opposite the men who in the twilight were bowing before her.

“Be of good cheer, Antiope Canossa,” spoke Germano. “I bring to you this man, Astorre Vicedomini, whom they call the monk, the husband of my sister Diana, as a competent witness. Behold, I am come to ask you yourself—fatherless as you are, and your mother being as she is—whether you will be my wife. My sister, in her treatment of you, forgot herself”—he could not bring himself to use a stronger word and thereby compromise Diana, whom he respected—“and I, her brother, am come to repair the injury which my sister has inflicted. Diana with Astorre, you with me,—thus meeting, you women can take each other by the hand.”

The sensitive soul of the listening monk was wounded by this blunt equalization of wrong-doing and suffering, of offender and offended—or did an adder rear its head?—“Germano, that is not the way to ask in marriage!” he whispered to the armored warrior.

The suitor heard him, and since Antiope remained as still as a mouse in the gloom, he was disconcerted. He felt that he ought to speak more gently, and he spoke more brusquely. “Fatherless as you are, and your mother being as she is,” he repeated, “you need the protection of a man! This day has taught you that, young lady. You will not wish for the second time to be disgraced and struck before all Padua! Give yourself to me as you are, and I will protect you from head to foot!” Germano was thinking of his coat of mail.

Astorre found this wooing revoltingly harsh: Germano, it seemed, treated Antiope as though she were his prisoner of war—or did the serpent hiss?—“That is not the way to ask in marriage, Germano!” he gasped. The latter turned half around. “If you know a better way,” he said in an ill humor, “speak for me, brother.” And making way, he stepped to one side.

Then Astorre drew near with bended knee and uplifted

hands, bringing the finger-tips together in supplication to the delicate head on the background of pale gold. "Can love find words?" he stammered. Twilight and silence.

Finally Antiope murmured, "For whom do you speak, Astorre?" "For my brother here, Germano," he said with an effort. Whereupon she buried her face in her hands.

Germano's patience was now at an end. "I will speak to her in a language that means something," he blurted out, and "The long and short of it is, Antiope Canossa," he bluntly inquired, "will you be my wife or not?"

Antiope shook her little head softly and gently but, in spite of the gathering dusk, in unmistakable denial.

"My offer is refused," said Germano dryly. "Come, brother!" and he left the room with as firm steps as those with which he had entered it. But the monk did not follow him.

Astorre remained in his supplicating posture. Then, trembling himself, he took Antiope's trembling hands and removed them from her face. Whose lips sought the other's I do not know; for the chamber was now shrouded in darkness.

Moreover, it became so still there that had the lovers' ears not been filled with the pæans of tumultuous joy and the singing of heavenly choirs, they might easily have noticed the murmuring of prayers in an adjoining room. This is how it was: next to Antiope's chamber, down a few steps, was the private chapel, and on the morrow came round for the third time the day on which Count Canossa had met his death. Shortly after midnight mass for the dead was to be celebrated in the presence of the widow and the orphan. The priest had already arrived and was awaiting his acolyte.

No more than the murmuring below them did the pair hear the shuffling slippers of Lady Olympia who came to find her daughter, and now by the frugal light of the lamp in her hands watched the lovers quietly and attentively.

That the most impudent fiction of an unrestrained imagination became fact and truth in this tender embrace before her eyes,—this caused Lady Olympia no wonderment; but, to the credit of the mad-woman be it said, no more did she taste the sweets of revenge. She did not gloat over the bitter sorrow that lay in wait for the impetuous Diana; on the contrary, the simple motherly joy prevailed over every other feeling—the joy of seeing her child esteemed at her true worth, desired in marriage, and loved.

When now, illumined by a bright beam from her lamp, the two looked up in surprise, she asked in a gentle and natural voice, “Astorre Vicedomini, do you love Antiope Canossa?”

“More than all the world, my lady!” answered the monk.

“And will protect her?”

“Against the whole world!” cried Astorre defiantly.

“That is as it should be,” she said in an appeasing tone, “but tell me, you are in earnest, are you not? You will not put her away as you put away Diana? You are not beguiling me? You will not make miserable the poor fool, as they call me? You will not let my child be again put to shame? You will not seek any evasions or postponements? You will let our eyes see the truth, and like a faithful Christian and true gentleman you will at once lead Antiope to the altar? You will not need, either, to go far in search of a priest. Do you hear the murmuring? One is kneeling in prayer down there.”

And she opened a low door, behind which a few steep steps led down to the domestic sanctuary. Astorre cast a glance thither: beneath the rude vault he saw praying before a small altar in the uncertain light of a candle a bare-foot friar who was of about his own age and build and who also wore the cowl and rope-girdle of St. Francis.

I believe it was foreordained by Divine Providence that this Franciscan should be kneeling and praying at this place and precisely at this hour, in order that for the last

time Astorre might be deterred and warned. But in his feverish veins the medicine changed to poison. When he saw before him the embodiment of his monastic life, a spirit of criminal recklessness and assurance came over him. "With a single bound I cleared the barrier of my first vow," he laughed, "the bar fell away as I leaped over it—why not leap over the second? My saints have not saved me from sin; perhaps they will save and protect the sinner!" In incipient madness he seized Antiope and rather bore than led her down the steps; Lady Olympia, on the other hand, again distraught after a brief moment of sanity, closed the heavy door behind the monk and her daughter, as if to keep a captive and secure a piece of booty, and peered through the key-hole.

What she saw remains uncertain. According to popular belief Astorre with drawn sword threatened and compelled the friar. That is impossible; for since reaching manhood Astorre had never buckled on a sword. It may be nearer the truth to say that the Franciscan—sad to relate—was a wicked monk, and that perhaps the very purse found its way beneath his cowl that Astorre had taken when he went to buy the wedding ring for Diana.

But that the priest was at first refractory, that the two monks struggled with each other, that the cavernous vault concealed an ugly scene—this and more I can read in the blanched and horrified face of the eavesdropper. Lady Olympia realized that down there an outrage was being perpetrated, that she as the instigator and accomplice exposed herself to the severity of the law and the vengeance of the betrayed bride; and, since this was the anniversary of the execution of the Count, her husband, she believed her own foolish head irrevocably forfeit to the ax. She thought she heard the footsteps of Ezzelino: then she fled, crying, "Help! Murder!"

The tortured woman rushed into the passage way to a window that opened out upon the narrow inner court. "My mule! My litter!" she called down, and laughing at the

double order — the mule was for the country, the litter for the city — her servants slowly and at their own sweet will rose from a corner where by the light of a gourd-lantern they had been drinking and playing at dice. An old riding master, who alone remained faithful to the unhappy lady, woefully saddled two mules and led them through the gateway to the open space in front of the palace next to the street: he had before now accompanied Lady Olympia on many an aimless wandering. Cracking jokes, the others followed with the litter.

On the grand staircase the fleeing mad-woman, whose impulse of self-preservation, dominant as this instinct is even in the insane, had caused her to forget her dear child, ran into the anxious Ascanio, who, left without news and impelled by apprehension, had gone forth to make a reconnoissance.

“What has happened, my lady?” he asked hurriedly.

“Misfortune!” she croaked like a raven rising from cover; ran down the stairs, mounted her animal, drove her heel furiously into its flank, and disappeared in the darkness.

Ascanio groped his way through the gloomy apartments until he reached Antiope's chamber, which was lighted by the lamp left there by Lady Olympia. As he surveyed the room, the door of the chapel opened and two splendid apparitions emerged from below. The man of assurance began to tremble. “Astorre, you are united to her in marriage!” The resonant name rumbled in the echoing vault like the blare of the trumpet on that day. “And you wear Diana's ring on your finger!”

Astorre tore it off and flung it with all his might.

Ascanio rushed to the open window through which the ring had flown. “It has slipped into a crevice between two flagstones,” said a voice from the street. Ascanio caught sight of turbans and iron helmets. It was a squad of the Governor's troops beginning its nightly rounds.

“One word, Abu Mohammed!” he cried, with quick presence of mind, to a white-bearded old man, who courteously replied, “A wish from you is a command to me!” and with two other Saracens and a German disappeared in the doorway of the palace.

Abu-Mohammed-al-Tabîb not only was responsible for the security of the streets, but also entered the innermost parts of houses to arrest those guilty—or those denominated by the Governor guilty—of high treason. The Emperor Frederick had given him to his son-in-law, the tyrant, in order that he might recruit for Ezzelino a Saracen body-guard; and at the head of the guard he had remained in Padua. Abu Mohammed was an elegant figure and had affable manners. He sympathized with the suffering of the family, a member of which he conducted to prison or to the block, and in his broken Italian consoled the sorrowful relatives with citations from the Arabian poets. Though he may have possessed some surgical knowledge and rules of thumb, I suspect that he owed his nickname of “al Tabîb,” that is, the physician, first and foremost to certain medical manners: encouraging gestures, comforting words, such as, for example, “It will not hurt,” or “It will soon be over,” wherewith the disciples of Galen are accustomed to prelude a painful operation. In short, Abu Mohammed treated the tragic tenderly and was at the time of my story, notwithstanding his stern and bitter office, no hated personality in Padua. Later, when the tyrant took pleasure in torturing human beings—you cannot believe this, Cangrande!—Abu Mohammed left him and returned to his kindly Emperor.

At the threshold of the apartment Abu Mohammed signaled to his three followers to halt. The German, who bore the torch—a defiant-looking fellow—did not wait long. At the hour of vespers on this day he had accompanied Germano to the palace of the Vicedominis, and Germano had laughingly told him, “Leave me now! This is where I am going to betroth my little sister Diana to the monk!”

The German knew his captain's sister and cherished a kind of secret fondness for her on account of her tall figure and her honest eyes. Seeing now the monk, by whose side he had ridden at mid-day, standing hand in hand with a small and dainty woman, who, compared with the ample form of Diana, seemed a mere doll, he scented breach of faith, angrily smote his flaming torch upon the marble floor, and hastened away to report the monk's treachery to Germano.

Ascanio, guessing the German's purpose, asked Abu Mohammed to recall him. But the Saracen refused. "He would not obey," he said softly, "and would cut down two or three of my men. With what other service can I wait upon you, my lord? Shall I arrest these youthful buds of promise?"

"Astorre, they are going to separate us!" shrieked Antiope and sought protection in the arms of the monk. She who had transgressed at the altar had forfeited, along with the innocence of her soul, the courage that was hers by nature. The monk, rather emboldened and inspirited by his guilt, took a step toward the Saracen and ere he was aware snatched his sword from its scabbard. "Be careful, boy! You might cut yourself," the old warrior admonished him good-naturedly.

"Let me tell you, Abu Mohammed," Ascanio explained, "this madman is the playmate of my youth, and was for a long time the monk Astorre, whom you surely have seen upon the streets of Padua. His own father defrauded him of his monastic vow and gave him in marriage to a woman whom he did not love. A few hours ago he exchanged rings with her, and now, as he stands before you, he is the husband of this other woman."

"Fate!" was the Saracen's mild judgment.

"And the deserted bride," continued Ascanio, "is Diana Pizzaguerra, Germano's sister! You know him. He will believe and trust for a long time; but if he sees and comprehends that he is a victim of fraud and deceit, the blood spurts into his eyes and in his fury he will kill."

“So he will,” said Abu Mohammed in confirmation of this opinion. “He is a German on his mother’s side, and Germans are children of loyalty.”

“Give me your advice, Saracen. I know only one expedient, perhaps a rescue. We will take the matter before the Governor. Let Ezzelino pass judgment. In the meantime have your men guard the monk in his own stronghold. I will hasten to my uncle. But do you yourself, Abu Mohammed, take this woman to the Marchioness Cunizza, the Governor’s sister, the good and kindly matron who for a few weeks past has been in residence here. Take the fair sinner. I intrust her to your white beard.” “You may,” Mohammed assured him.

Antiope clung convulsively to the monk and cried, more piteously even than the first time, “They are going to tear me away from you! Leave me not, Astorre! Not an hour! Not an instant! Or I shall die!” The monk raised the sword.

Ascanio, who abhorred all violence, looked inquiringly at the Saracen. The latter contemplated the inseparable lovers with paternal eyes. “Let the shades embrace!” he then said in tender melancholy, perhaps because he was a philosopher and deemed life but a vain appearance, perhaps because he meant to say, “It may be that Ezzelino will condemn them to death tomorrow; do not begrudge the devoted butterflies their hour of life!”

Ascanio did not doubt the reality of things; all the more sensible was he, therefore, of the second meaning of the speech. Not merely as prone to levity, but also as a kindly and humane gentleman he hesitated to tear the lovers asunder.

“Astorre,” he asked, “do you know me?”

“You were my friend,” answered the monk.

“And still am. You have no truer one.”

“Oh, do not separate me from her!” the monk now implored him in appealing tones that Ascanio could not withstand. “Then remain together,” he said, “until you

shall appear before the tribunal." He whispered to Abu Mohammed.

The Saracen stepped up to the monk, gently took the sword away from him, prying one finger after the other from the hilt, and let it glide into the sheath by his side. Then he walked to the window, signaled to his followers, and they took possession of Lady Olympia's litter, which was still standing before the door.

Through a dark narrow street they moved in hasty flight: Antiope in advance, borne by four Saracens, by her side the monk and Ascanio, then the turbaned guards. Abu Mohammed brought up the rear.

The little procession passed a small square and a lighted church. Entering the dark continuation of the street, it collided with another procession moving in the opposite direction and accompanied by a multitude of people. A wordy quarrel ensued. "Make way for the young bride!" shouted the multitude. Altar boys brought long candles from the church, shielding with their hands the flickering flames. The yellow gleam revealed a litter tilted to one side and an overturned bier. The "young bride" was a favorite little woman of the common people whose body was being borne to the grave. So far as the body was concerned, it was without more ado replaced on the bier. But the assembled people caught sight of the monk clasping Antiope to shield her as she leaped from the litter, and knew that he had this day been married to Diana Pizzaguerria. Abu Mohammed restored order. Without further mishap they reached the palace.

Astorre and Antiope were received by the servants with wonder and amazement. They disappeared in the doorway without having taken leave of Abu Mohammed and Ascanio. Ascanio wrapped himself in his cloak and walked along a few paces with the Saracen whose duty it was to keep watch of the palace and who therefore circled it, counting its windows and gauging the height of its walls.

"A busy day," said Ascanio.

“A blessed night,” the Saracen replied, gazing at the star-dotted heaven. The eternal candles, whether they rule over our fate or not, wandered according to their silent laws until a young day, Astorre’s and Antiope’s last, swung the divine torch in the east.

In a morning hour of this day the tyrant, with his nephew, was looking through a small round-arched window of his citadel down upon the adjacent square, which was filled with an excited multitude, murmuring and roaring like an undulating sea.

The collision of yesterday between the litter and the bier and the ensuing tumult had with the quickness of lightning been reported throughout the city. Waking and sleeping, all minds were occupied exclusively with the monk and his wedding: not only with heaven had the dare-devil broken faith, but also now with the earth; he had betrayed his bride, flung away his ring, and, his passions once aroused, had, in the precipitate changeableness of fury, married another woman, a girl of fifteen years, a very blossom on the tree of life; and from the tattered cowl a ravenous bird of prey had come fluttering forth. But the just tyrant, who was no respecter of persons, had caused the house which harbored the sinful pair to be watched by his Saracens; he would today, soon, this very moment, sit in judgment over the crime of the two aristocrats—for the young sinner Antiope was a Canossa—would see that justice should be done the chaste Diana, and would throw out of the window to the virtuous populace, offended by the evil example of its nobles, the bleeding heads of the two culprits.

The tyrant listened to Ascanio’s account of the events of yesterday while he cast an observant glance upon the seething mass below. The falling in love did not affect him; only the rolling of the ring occupied him a moment, as a new form of fate. “I blame you,” he said, “for not separating them yesterday. I approve your having them kept under guard. The marriage to Diana is valid accord-

ing to law. The sacrament constrained by the sword or purchased for money is as void as it can be. The parson who allowed himself to be intimidated or bribed deserves the gallows, and if he is caught, he shall hang. Once more, why did you not step between the irresponsible youth and the child? Why did you not snatch a reeling insensate from the arms of a girl intoxicated with a new rapture? Now they are husband and wife."

Ascanio, whom sleep had restored to clarity of mind and flippancy, tried to hide a smile. "Epicurean!" Ezzelino reproved him. But he said in his ingratiating way, "The deed is done, dread uncle. If you take the case in hand, everything is saved. Both parties I have summoned before your judgment-seat at the ninth hour." A bell-tower opposite struck the hour. "Let it but be your will, Ezzelino, and your firm and skilful hand will unravel the knot as though it were child's play. Love is prodigal and avarice has no notion of honor. The enamored monk will toss over to the miserable niggard that we all know this worthy Pizzaguerria to be, whatever he demands. Germano, to be sure, will draw his sword; but you will bid him sheath it again. He is under your orders. He will gnash his teeth, but he will obey."

"I wonder," said Ezzelino, "whether I do right to put the monk out of reach of my Germano's sword. Is it fitting that Astorre should live? Can he, now that, after casting away his sandals, he has worn down at the heels the shoes of a gentleman which he put on, and now that the *cantus firmus* of the monk pierces our ears in a ribald song? So far as in me lies, I will save his vacillating and worthless life. But I am powerless to ward off his fate. If Astorre is destined to die by the sword of Germano, I can bid Germano lower it, but Astorre will run into it nevertheless. I know how these things come to pass. I have had experience." And he fell to brooding.

Ascanio shyly turned his eyes away. He knew a horrible story.

Once upon a time the tyrant had captured a castle and had condemned to death by the sword the rebels who had defended it. The first soldier who happened to be by swung the sword. Then, to receive the death-blow, a handsome boy, whose features attracted the tyrant, knelt before him. Ezzelino thought that in them he recognized his own, and asked the boy about his parentage. He was the son of a woman whom Ezzelino in his youth had sinfully loved. He pardoned the condemned boy. But he, goaded and persecuted by his own curiosity and by the envious taunts of those who had lost their sons or relatives in this massacre, could not rest until he had solved the riddle of his exemption. He is said to have drawn his dagger against his own mother and to have forced the shameful secret from her. The discovery of his illegitimate birth poisoned his young soul. He again conspired against the tyrant, attacked him on the street and was struck down with the same sword by the same soldier, who chanced to be the first who hastened to Ezzelino's aid.

Ezzelino covered his face with his hand and recalled to view the scene of his son's death. Then he slowly raised his head and asked, "But what will become of Diana?"

Ascanio shrugged his shoulders. "Diana was born under an unlucky star. She has lost two husbands, one in the Brenta, the other to a lovelier woman. And besides, she has the niggardly father! She will take the veil. What else could she possibly do?"

From the public square below there now arose a roar of grumblings, reproachings, curses, and threats. "Kill the monk!" a few isolated voices urged; but when these were about to blend in a general clamor the popular wrath was strangely transformed into an amazed and admiring "Ah! How beautiful she is!" The tyrant and Ascanio could observe the scene at ease through their windows: Saracens astride of trim Arabian steeds surrounding Astorre and his young wife mounted on mules. The newly-wedded Lady Vicedomini was veiled. But when the thou-

sand fists of the multitude were clenched to assail the monk her husband, she had passionately thrown herself in front of him. This act of love tore her veil asunder. It was not the charm of her face only, nor the youthfulness of her figure, but the free play of her soul, a feeling that took visible form, the breath of life, which disarmed the crowd and carried it away as yesterday it had carried away the monk, who now as a conquering hero rode on without the slightest fear—for he believed he bore a charmed life—in triumph with his warm-blooded captive.

Ezzelino regarded this victory of beauty almost contemptuously. He turned his eye with interest toward the second group of persons who came out upon the square from another street. Three notables, like Astorre and Antiope attended by a numerous retinue, sought to make their way through the multitude. In the middle a snow-white head: the dignified figure of old Pizzaguerra; on his left Germano. The young man had yesterday stormed in terrible anger when his German trooper had brought him news of Astorre's perfidy, and he had started full tilt for revenge, but had been overtaken by the Saracen, who summoned him, his father, and his sister to the citadel and before the tribunal of the Governor at the first morning hour. This had compelled him to reveal to his sister the monk's outrageous deed, which he would rather have concealed from her until it had been avenged; and he had marveled at her composure. Diana rode at her father's right, the same woman as ever, except that her broad neck was inclined by the weight of one heavy thought farther forward than it had been the day before.

The multitude, which a minute earlier would have acclaimed with sympathetic indignation the offended bride on her way to obtain justice, were now, their eyes still blinded with the dazzling beauty of Antiope and their minds comprehending and condoning the monk's treachery, satisfied to murmur "Poor creature! Always made to suffer for somebody or something!"

Now the five appeared before the tyrant who in a bare room sat upon a chair raised only two steps above the floor. Before him stood plaintiffs and defendants face to face; here the Pizzaguerras, father and son, and somewhat to one side the tall form of Diana, there the monk and Antiope hand in hand—all in attitudes of respect, while Ascanio leaned against the tyrant's lofty chair as though wishing to preserve his impartiality and occupy the middle ground between the playmates of his youth.

“My lords and ladies,” Ezzelino began, “I will not treat your case as an affair of state, where breach of faith is treason and treason is a crime against the majesty of the law, but I shall treat it as a disputable family matter. Indeed, the Pizzaguerras, the Vicedominis, the Canossas are of as noble blood as I, with the only difference that our sublime lord, His Imperial Majesty, has made me his Governor in these his lands.” Ezzelino inclined his head at the mention of the supreme authority, he could not bare it; for except when he wore the military helmet, he always went about bareheaded, after the manner of the ancients, even in wind and rain. “Thus the twelve patrician houses form one great family, to which I too belong through one of my ancestresses. But how we have shrunken through pitiable blindness and the criminal insurrection of some few among us against the highest temporal office. If you believe as I do, then let us bend all our efforts to save what is yet left. This is what impels me to restrain the Pizzaguerras from taking vengeance on Astorre Vicedomini, although I pronounce it in and of itself a just revenge. If you,” he turned to the three Pizzaguerras, “are not in accord with my clemency, hear and ponder one thing: I, Ezzelino da Romano, was the first, and am therefore the chief wrong-doer. Had I not on a certain day and at a certain hour let my horse gallop along the banks of the Brenta, Diana would have been married as befits her rank and this man here would still be conning his breviary.

Had I not ordered out my Germans for inspection on a certain day and at a certain hour, my Germano would not have inopportunately set the monk astride a horse, and he, the monk, would have drawn from the finger of the lady whom he now holds by the hand the bridal ring that his evil angel—”

“ My good angel,” exulted the monk.

“ —that his angel rolled over to her. Therefore, my lords and ladies, grant me your help in the unravelment and settlement of this complicated matter; for if you should insist upon severity, I must needs condemn myself,—myself first of all!”

This unusual speech did not in the least disturb the equanimity of old Pizzaguerra; and when the tyrant addressed him with the words, “ Noble lord, your complaint is now in order,” he said briefly and curtly, “ Your Magnificence, Astorre Vicedomini betrothed himself publicly and quite according to law and precedent with my daughter Diana. Then, however, although Diana had done him no wrong, he broke his troth. This was without due cause, illegal, sacrilegious. Such a deed is a grave offense and demands, if not blood, which your Magnificence does not wish to see shed, at least a heavy penalty,” and he made a motion as of a shopkeeper who puts one weight after another in the scales.

“ Diana had done no wrong?” repeated the tyrant. “ It seems to me that she did wrong. Had she not a maniac before her? And Diana vilifies and strikes. For Diana is quick to wrath and unreasonable when she thinks her rights are not respected.”

To this Diana nodded, saying, “ You speak the truth, Ezzelino.”

“ That is the reason,” continued the tyrant, “ why Astorre’s heart was turned away from her; he saw in her a barbarian.”

“ No, my lord,” the monk protested, offending anew the woman whom he had betrayed, “ I did not look at Diana,

but at the sweet face that received the blow, and my heart and entrails were moved to compassion."

The tyrant shrugged his shoulders. "You see, Pizzaguerra," he smiled, "the monk is like a demure maiden who for the first time has sipped strong wine and demeans herself accordingly. But we are sober old men. Let us see how the matter can be adjusted."

Pizzaguerra replied, "Much, Ezzelino, would I do out of good will toward you; for you have deserved well of Padua. But can outraged family honor be otherwise satisfied than with a drawn sword?" Thus the father of Diana spoke and made with his arm a noble sweep which, however, degenerated into a gesture indistinguishable from an open palm—indeed, perhaps even an extended hand.

"Give, Astorre!" said the Governor in the double sense of 'Give your hand' or 'Give money and merchandise.'

"My lord," said the monk turning now with frankness and dignity to the tyrant, "if you see in me a man without principle, indeed without command over his senses, I shall bear no resentment; for a strong god whom I denied, being unable to apprehend his existence, has avenged himself upon me and overpowered me. At this moment he is still driving me like a hurricane and blowing my mantle about my ears. If I must pay for my happiness—beggarly word! miserable language!—if I must pay for the highest pitch of life with my life, I understand the need and find the price low for the privilege. But if I may live, and live with this woman, my wife, I shall not haggle over the cost." He smiled blissfully. "Take all my goods, Pizzaguerra!"

"My lords and ladies," decreed the tyrant, "I assume the guardianship over this extravagant youth. You and I shall negotiate, Pizzaguerra. You have heard that I have far-reaching authority. What should you say to the Vice-domini mines?"

The honorable graybeard said nothing, but the two eyes

lying close together in his hatchet face gleamed like diamonds.

“Take my pearl fisheries to boot!” cried Astorre; but Ascanio, who came swiftly down the steps, closed his mouth.

“Noble Pizzaguerra,” Ezzelino now urged, to test the old man, “take the mines! I know that you hold the honor of your house above rubies and that it is not for sale at any price; but I know also that you are a good Paduan and will do something for the sake of peace within the city.”

The old man maintained a stubborn silence.

“Take the mines,” repeated Ezzelino, who loved plays upon words, “and let him have his minion!”

“The mines and the fisheries?” asked the old man, as though he were hard of hearing.

“‘The mines,’ I said, and let that be the end of the matter. They yield many thousands of pounds. If you should demand more, Pizzaguerra, I should have to confess myself in error as to your way of thinking and you would expose yourself to the ugly suspicion of trading with your honor.”

Inasmuch as the miser feared the tyrant and could get no more, he swallowed his vexation and offered the monk his dry hand. “Just a word in writing, in case of death or other accident,” he said then; and taking a pencil and notebook from his wallet, he drew up with trembling fingers the agreement *coram domino Azzolino* and had the monk sign it. Thereupon he bowed to the Governor and begged to be excused if he, though one of the twelve, should be prevented by the infirmities of age from attending the monk's wedding feast.

Gritting his teeth to suppress his fury Germano had stood beside his father. Now he removed one of his mailed gloves. He would have hurled it into the monk's face had not a commanding gesture from the tyrant bidden him halt.

“My son, will you disturb the public peace?” old Pizzaguerra now also admonished him. “My word duly given

includes and guarantees yours as well. Obey, on pain of my curse and your disinheritance!" he threatened.

Germano laughed. "Attend to your own dirty business, father!" he muttered contemptuously. "But you too, Ezzelino, Lord of Padua, are without authority to forbid me. It is a man's right and his private affair. If I refuse obedience to the Emperor or to you, his Governor, behead me; but righteous as you are, you will not prevent me from throttling this monk who has made a fool of my sister and a dupe of me. If perfidy should go unpunished, who would care to live? There is too little room on this earth for both the monk and me. He himself will see that when he recovers his senses."

"Germano," commanded Ezzelino, "I am your superior officer. Tomorrow perhaps the trumpet will sound. You are not your own master; you are subject to the Empire."

Germano made no reply. He buckled on his glove. "In days of yore," he said then, "among the blind heathen there was a divinity to avenge broken faith. That has not been changed, I think, by the ringing of church bells. To that divinity I commend my cause!" Quickly he raised his hand.

"It is well," said Ezzelino with a smile. "This evening the wedding will be celebrated in the Vicedomini palace with a masquerade, in exact accordance with custom. I shall give the festival and I invite you, Germano and Diana. Without armor, Germano! With the short sword!"

"Cruel tyrant," groaned the warrior. "Come, father! How can you wish to prolong the spectacle of our disgrace?" And he dragged the old man away.

"And you, Diana?" asked Ezzelino, seeing that only she and the newly wedded pair remained standing before his throne. "You do not accompany your father and brother?"

"With your permission, my lord," said she, "I have a word to say to Lady Vicedomini." Glancing past the monk, she looked straight at Antiope.

Antiope, whose hand Astorre had not released, had taken a passive but deep-seated interest in the tyrant's adjudication of the case. At one moment the loving wife blushed; at another it was a woman conscious of guilt who lost color when she discovered beneath Ezzelino's smile and under cover of his clemency his real judgment, condemning her. Sometimes she rejoiced like a child escaping punishment; again the first consciousness of being the young wife of his lordship, of being Lady Vicedomini, stirred within her. Now, directly addressed by Diana, she met her with shy and hostile glances.

Diana was not to be disconcerted. "Behold, Antiope," she said. "My finger,"—extending it—"wears your husband's ring. You must not forget that ring. I am no more superstitious than others, but in your place I should feel ill at ease. Gravely have you sinned against me; but I will be kind and charitable. This evening you celebrate your wedding with a masquerade, as is the custom. I shall be present. Come in repentance and humility and take the ring from my finger!"

Antiope uttered a cry of terror and clung to her husband. Then, safe in his arms, she spoke tempestuously, "I am to humiliate myself? What say you, Astorre? My honor is your honor! I am now only yours, your heart-beat, your breath, and your soul. If it be your will and command, then I obey!"

Tenderly quieting his wife, Astorre said to Diana, "She will do it. May you be reconciled by her humility, and mine! Be my guest this evening and let my house continue to enjoy your favor." He turned to Ezzelino, thanked him respectfully for his justice and mercy, bowed, and led his wife away. But on the threshold he turned once more to Diana, with the question, "And in what costume will you appear at our house, that we may know you and do you honor?"

Diana smiled contemptuously. Once more she addressed Antiope. "I shall come in the guise of her whose name I

bear and like whom I am, the chaste, the maidenly goddess!" she said proudly. Then she repeated, "Antiope, remember: in repentance and humility!"

"Your intention is honorable, Diana? You have nothing in reserve?" inquired the tyrant in doubt, now that Diana alone stood before him.

"Nothing," she replied, disdaining every formula of assurance.

"And what is to become of you, Diana?" he asked.

"Ezzelino," she answered bitterly, "before this judgment seat of yours my father has bartered away his honor and just retribution for his child in exchange for a few paltry lumps of ore. I am not worthy that the sun should shine upon me. It is for such as I that convents have cells!" And she left the hall.

"Most excellent uncle," jubilated Ascanio, "you unite the blissest couple in Padua, and out of a dangerous complication of events you make a charming tale with which some day as a venerable graybeard I shall delight my grandchildren, boys and girls clustered about the hearth."

"Idyllic nephew!" was the tyrant's satirical comment. He stepped to the window and looked down upon the square where the multitude still held its ground in feverish curiosity. Ezzelino had given orders that those whom he had summoned to appear before him should be dismissed by a rear door.

"Paduans!" he now spoke with a powerful voice; and thousands became silent, as though the square were a desert. "I have investigated the business. It was complicated and there was guilt on both sides. I forgave the offenders; for I am disposed to mercy in every case in which the majesty of the Empire is not involved. This evening Astorre Vicedomini and Antiope Canossa celebrate their wedding with a masquerade. I, Ezzelino, give the feast and I invite you all. Come and enjoy yourselves; I am the host. Tap-room and street are free for your use. But



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LIFE

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI

let no man enter or molest the Vicedomini palace, or, by my hand I swear . . . And now let each one quietly return to his home, if you love me."

A vague murmur rose to their ears. It trickled away and vanished.

"How they do love you!" jested Ascanio.

Dante stopped for breath. Then he concluded in swift sentences.

After the tyrant had given his judgment he rode out at midday to one of his fortresses which was building. He was eager to return betimes to Padua in order to observe Antiope humbling herself before Diana.

Contrary to his expectation, however, and against his will he was detained at the castle, which was situated several miles away from the city. Thither a dust-covered Saracen came galloping after him, to hand him a letter written by the Emperor's own hand, which demanded an immediate answer. The matter was of importance. Ezzelino had recently by a night attack surprised an imperial stronghold in the Ferrara country, in the commandant of which, a Sicilian, his keen eye seemed to discern a traitor; he had captured the fortress and had put the suspected commandant in chains. Now the Hohenstaufen called him to account for this shrewd but bold invasion, of his sphere of authority. Resting his thoughtful brow in his left hand, Ezzelino let his right hand glide over the parchment and his pencil carried him along from the first point in his exposition to the second, and from the second to a third. He thoroughly discussed with his illustrious father-in-law the possibilities and aims of a campaign that was impending or at least mapped out; and so he forgot the hour and the flight of time. Not until he again mounted his horse did he perceive from the stars, the course of which he knew—they were shining in perfect clearness—that he

should hardly reach Padua before midnight. Leaving his retinue far behind, he flew with the speed of a spectre over the nocturnal plain. Yet he chose his way and cautiously circled a shallow ditch that the intrepid rider would on any other day have leaped over for sport: he gave fate no opportunity to endanger his return and cause his steed to fall. Once more in full career he devoured the miles of intervening space; but it seemed as though the lights of Padua would never appear.

There, in front of the broad palace of the Vicedominis, which grew dark with the fast-falling night, the drunken populace had assembled. Scenes of unbridled license alternated with harmless merry-makings in the comparatively small square. The throng of people was bubbling over with the spirit of a wild, angry gaiety, a Bacchic frenzy, into which the boisterous students of the university injected an element of mockery and wit.

Presently a drawling ditty could be heard, in the style of a litany such as our country folk are accustomed to sing. It was a troop of peasants from one of the numerous villages possessed by the Vicedominis. These poor people who in their remoteness had heard nothing about the secularization of the monk, but only in dim outlines about the marriage of the heir, had set out before daybreak with the usual wedding gifts, and were just now reaching the goal of their journey after a long pilgrimage in the dust of the highway. They kept close to each other and cowered together, slowly advancing across the surging square; here a curly-headed boy, hardly more than a child, with a golden honeycomb, there a shy, proud lass with a bleating beribboned lamb in her protecting arms. All eagerly desired to see the face of their new master.

Now they gradually disappeared in the vaulted portal where to the right and left lighted torches flared in the iron rings, vying with the last rays of sunlight. At the entrance Ascanio, ordinarily so amiable, was giving directions, as master of ceremonies, in a loud and irritated voice.

From hour to hour the wilfulness of the people mounted and when finally the aristocratic masqueraders arrived they were jostled, the torches were snatched from the hands of their servants and stamped out on the pavements, the ladies were separated from their escorts and made the object of lewd jests unavenged by the sword-thrust which on ordinary evenings would have summarily rebuked such impudence.

In this manner a tall woman in the costume of a Diana battled not far from the palace-gate with a circle of clerics and students of the basest sort which was closing more and more in upon her. A haggard fellow made a show of his knowledge of mythology. "You are not Diana," he said with an amorous drawl, "you are another! I recognize you. Here is your dove!" And he pointed to the silver crescent above the forehead of the goddess. She, however, did not blandish like Aphrodite, but was indignant like Artemis. "Away, you swine!" she upbraided them. "I am a chaste goddess and I abhor clerics!" "Goo, goo!" cooed the beanpole and groped with his bony hands, but at the instant he uttered a penetrating cry. Whimpering, the wretch raised his hand and showed his hurt. The hand was pierced through and through and blood was gushing over it. The angry maiden had reached behind to her quiver—the hunting quiver of her brother which she had appropriated—and with one of the sharp-pointed arrows had chastised the disgusting hand.

This rapidly enacted scene was already replaced by another equally horrid, though bloodless. A jumbled music of all conceivable incongruities and strident discords, resembling a furious quarrel of the damned in hell, made its way through the deafened and delighted mob. The lowest and vilest rabble—cut-purses, panders, strumpets, beggars—were blowing, scratching, drumming, whistling, squeaking, bleating, and grunting before and behind a fantastic couple. A large unkempt woman despoiled of her quondam beauty walked arm in arm with a besotten monk

in a tattered cowl. This was Brother Serapion who, incited by the example of Astorre, had one night escaped from his cell and for a week had been wallowing in the mire of the street. In front of an illumined bay-window that projected from the dark wall of the palace the horde halted, and with a shrill voice and the motions of a public crier the woman yelled, "Know all men by these presents, ladies and gentlemen! 'Yet but a little while and the monk Astorre shall slumber by the side of his wife Antiope.'" Uncontrollable laughter accompanied this announcement.

Now from the narrow arched window of the oriel Gocciola's jingling fool's cap nodded and a melancholy face showed itself to those in the street.

"Good woman, be still!" the fool complained in a tearful voice that descended to the square. "You hurt my good breeding and offend my modesty."

"Good fool," answered the jade, "be not offended. We but give the name to what the high-born do. We put the labels upon the apothecary's jars!"

"By my deadly sins," gleefully shouted Serapion, "that is what we do! Before midnight my dear brother's wedding shall be loudly proclaimed to the jingle of bells on every square in Padua. Forward, march! Ta-ra-ra!" And he raised his bare leg and sandaled foot through the hanging rags of his dirty cowl.

This clownish performance was madly applauded by the crowd, but the noise of it merely echoed from the steep dark walls of the palace, in which most of the windows and apartments opened upon the inner courts.

In a quiet, secluded chamber Antiope was being dressed and adorned by her maids, Sotte and another, while Astorre at the head of the stairway was receiving the interminable swarm of guests. She peered into her own anxious eyes reflected in a silver mirror which the second maid with expressions of envy held in her impudent bare arms.

“Sotte,” whispered the young woman to the servant who was braiding her hair, “you resemble me and have my figure. Change clothes with me, if you love me! Go and take the ring from her finger! In repentance and humility! Bow before the Pizzaguerra girl with folded arms like the meanest slave. Fall upon your knees! Grovel on the ground! Cast all self-respect to the winds! But only get the ring away from her! I will give you a princely reward!” And as she saw that Sotte hesitated, “Take and keep every jewel that I wear!” implored the mistress, and this temptation the vain Sotte could not withstand.

Astorre, who stole a moment from his duty as host to seek out his dearest, found in the apartment two women exchanging their clothes. He guessed what this meant. “No, Antiope!” he commanded. “You must not so evade a duty. We must keep our promise. I require this of your love. I command you to do it!” In the act of transforming this stern decree into a word of endearment by means of a kiss on her beloved neck he was snatched away by Ascanio, who hurriedly represented to him that his peasants wished without delay to present their gifts, in order in the cool of night to start for home. When Antiope turned to reciprocate her husband’s kiss, she kissed the empty air.

Now she permitted the dressing to be quickly completed. Even the frivolous Sotte was startled by the pallor of the face in the mirror. There was nothing of life in it except the gleam of dread in the eyes and the glistening of tightly compressed teeth. A red stripe, Diana’s blow, became visible on the blanched forehead.

When fully arrayed, Astorre’s wife arose with beating heart and throbbing temples, left the security of her chamber, and hastened through the halls in search of Diana. She was driven by the courage of fear. She wished in triumph to fly to her husband with the recovered ring, having spared him the sight of her penance.

Soon she distinguished among the masqueraders the tall goddess of the chase, recognized in this figure her enemy, and trembling and murmuring angry words, she followed Diana, who with deliberate steps passed from the main hall into one of the adjoining rooms which were dimly lighted and only half so high studded. The goddess seemed to exact not public humiliation but heartfelt humility.

In the twilight Antiope now bowed before Diana. "Give me the ring!" she gasped and groped about on the strong finger.

"In humility and repentance?" asked Diana.

"How else, my lady?" raved the hapless victim. "But you are playing with me, monster! You are bending your finger; now you are crooking it!"

Did Antiope imagine this? Did Diana really play with her victim? What a little thing the crooking of a finger is! Cangrande, you have charged me with injustice. I will not undertake to decide.

Suffice to say that Lady Vicedomini raised her lithe form to its full height and meeting with flashing eyes the stern glance of Diana Pizzaguerra cried out, "Girl, will you flaunt a wife?" Then she bent over again and with both hands strove to separate the ring from the finger—a flash, and she was pierced through. Surrendering her left hand, the avenging Diana had with her right withdrawn an arrow from her quiver and had slain Antiope. She sank first upon her left, then upon her right hand, turned half round, and with the arrow in her neck, lay upon her side.

The monk, who after dismissing his rustic guests had come hastening back, longing to see his wife, found her lifeless. With a smothered outcry he cast himself down beside her and drew forth the arrow from her neck. A stream of blood gushed after it. Astorre lost consciousness.

When he awoke from his swoon Germano stood over him

with folded arms. "Are you the murderer?" asked the monk.

"I do not murder women," sadly answered the other. "It is my sister who has sought justice."

Astorre groped for the arrow and found it. On his feet with one bound and brandishing the long missile with the bloody point as though it were a sword, he fell in blind fury upon the playmate of his youth. The warrior quailed slightly before the black-clad pallid spectre with hair on end and the arrow in his hand.

He retreated a step. Drawing the short sword which, unarmored as he was, he carried this evening, and warding off the arrow with it, he said compassionately, "Go back, Astorre, to the monastery that you ought never to have left!"

Then suddenly he was aware of the tyrant who, followed by the whole company that had rushed to the outer door to receive the late comer, stood face to face with him as he entered the room.

Ezzelino extended his right hand, commanding peace, and Germano respectfully lowered his weapon to his superior officer. The raving monk seized this moment when Germano's eyes were upon Ezzelino and drove the arrow into his breast. But he too received a mortal wound from the sword which, quick as lightning, the warrior had again raised.

Germano had succumbed without a sound. The monk, supported by Ascanio, took a few tottering steps toward his wife and, lowered by his friend, lay down by her side and lip to lip.

The wedding guests gathered about the wedded pair. Ezzelino stood in silent contemplation of death. Thereupon he dropped upon one knee and closed the eyes first of Antiope, then of Astorre. In the stillness discordant tones were wafted through an open window. Out of the

darkness were heard the words, "Now the monk Astorre slumbers by the side of his wife Antiope." And distant laughter.

Dante arose now. "I have paid for my place by the fireside," said he, "and go to seek the happiness of slumber. The Lord of peace preserve us all!" He turned and strode through the door which the page had opened for him. All eyes followed him as he slowly climbed the torch-lit stairway.

SOWERS' SONG *



KEEP your step and keep your swing!
 The earth is young with every spring.
 Yon seed that dies will bear no wheat,
 Yet it fares well, for rest is sweet.
 Another through the sod makes way,
 It too fares well, for sweet is day.
 Not one from out this world may fall
 And God's good-pleasure guides them all.

DO THOU SPEAK NOW †

To thee I wandered daily, dearest wood,
 In hazy days of youth, now long gone by,
 I would confide thee so much dreamed of good,
 From such true sorrow thou wouldst hear me sigh.

And thee again, my sombre haunt, I seek,
 The murmur of thy tree-tops' mighty sea—
 Do thou speak now! For I will let thee speak!
 Joy, pain are dumb. I'll hearken now to thee.

BUT THE SUN IS EVER YOUTHFUL †

Now the long forgotten valley of my youth I went to seek,
 And I saw the dale lie barren and the mountains stand out
 bleak.

Oh, my trees and oh, my dreams, and sombre heights with
 beeches grown—

But the sun is ever youthful and his beauty lasts alone.

* Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

† Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

Yonder where the sedge is growing, where I see the
 withered pool,
 In my youth there was the bubbling of a stream alive and
 cool—
 From the herds, through heaths and pastures would arise
 a lowing moan—
 But the sun is ever youthful and his beauty lasts alone.

THE DEAD CHILD*

THE child had of the garden made a friend,
 Till both in autumn withered to an end,
 The sun was fled and both had gone to sleep,
 Enfolded in a cover white and deep.

The garden now has wakened to the light,
 But still the child is slumb'ring in her night.
 "Where are you?" So 'tis buzzing here and there.
 For her the garden clamors everywhere.

The morning-glory climbing up with grace
 Peeps through the window: "Leave your hiding-place!
 Come out, or else 'twill be your own distress!
 Come, let me see your fine new summer-dress!"

CHRISTMAS IN AJACCIO*

ORANGES all ripe and golden we have seen and myrtle
 growing,
 And the lizard flit along the wall, in sunlight glowing.
 O'er our heads beside a wilted bush a butterfly was gliding,
 There is here no border, sharply youth and age dividing.
 Buds are born before the wind has blown away the leaves
 that wither,
 In a sweet entanglement the train of hours flies hither.

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

Tell me what your eyes are dreaming? Of a winter — ay,
a white one?

Dear, 'tis by a spring that you are richer, and a bright one!

For you love the ling'ring suns and glowing colors strong,
unshaded,

And for home you're longing, where they long ago have
faded?

Hark! Through mildest airs of Paradise the Christmas
bells are calling!

Tell me what your eyes are dreaming? Of the snow-flakes
falling?

SCHILLER'S BURIAL*

Two dim and paltry torches that the storm
And rain at any moment threaten to put out,
A waving pall. A vulgar coffin made of pine
With not a wreath, not e'en the poorest, and no train!
As if a crime were swiftly carried to the grave.
The bearers hastened onward. One unknown alone,
Round whom a mantle waved of wide and noble fold
Followed this coffin. 'Twas the Spirit of mankind.

AGAIN †

AGAIN to be roaming in rapturous flight
By swift-foaming torrents agleam in the light
While the snow on the rock wall above me is bright!

From north-wind and south-wind the landlord divine
Is mixing a cup of ethereal wine.
I drink and the soul of my youth becomes mine.

O breath of the mountains, delirious and rare,
Red roses that sway on your branches so fair,
Ye huts whose blue smoke eddies high in the air! —

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

† Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

The thick-woven cloud-veil that hovered so low
Sweeps back, the live blue is beginning to show.
How calmly yon eagle soars up through the glow!

And my heart which it bears in its feathery breast,
With a sense of that heavenly region possessed,
Now trembles with gladness like one of the blest.

Bold hunter, you too I can plainly descry,
Round the gray cliffs your gray form is clambering sly,
You raise your bright barrel and point toward the sky.

Descend to the valley? How sore were the smart.
No, hunter, take aim with the best of thy art,
In the mid-flight of joy shoot me straight to the heart.

THE FEET IN THE FIRE *

WILD lightnings flash. A tower looms in pallid light.
The thunder rolls. A rider struggles with his steed,
Dismounts and bangs upon the gate. His windblown cloak
Is flutt'ring. By the reins he holds his shy brown horse.
A barred and narrow window gleams with golden light.
The grating gate is opened by a nobleman—

—"I am the servant of the King with tidings sent
To Nimes. Oh, shelter me! You know the royal garb!"

—" 'Tis storming. You're my guest. I care not for your
dress!

Step in and warm yourself. I'll look out for your horse!"

Into an old ancestral hall the horseman steps,

Lit dimly by a fire within a mighty hearth;

According to the moody flick'ring of its light

A Huguenot in armor threatens here, and there

A noblewoman proud from some brown painting old—

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

The horseman sinks into the armchair by the fire
 And stares into the living blaze. He broods and stares—
 His hair now stands on end. He knows the hearth, the
 hall—

The wild flames hiss. Two feet are twitching in the fire.
 An aged stewardess the supper-table sets
 With linen dazzling white. A noble maiden helps.
 A boy brings in the jug of wine. The children's eyes
 Stare at the guest in fright, in horror at the hearth—
 The wild flames hiss. Two feet are twitching in the fire.
 —“Damnation! 'Tis the self-same blazon—self-same
 hall!

Three years ago—When we were hunting Huguenots—
 A fine and stubborn woman— ‘Where's the squire? Now
 tell!’

Silence. ‘Confess it!’ Silence. ‘Show him!’ Silence
 still.

Now I grow wild. I force the creature, pull her hard—
 Her naked feet I clutch and thrust them down right deep
 Into the fire—‘Now give him up!’—She's silent still.
 She writhes—Did you not see the blazon at the gate?
 Who bade you enter here as guest, you wit-less fool?
 If he has but a drop of blood he'll strangle you.”
 The nobleman now enters. “Dreaming! Come, and sup—”

Now there they sit. The three, all clad in garbs of black
 And he. But neither of the children will say grace.
 They stare at him with eyes wide open—But he fills
 His cup, and spills the wine and quaffs it swiftly down,
 He rises all at once: “Sir, show me now my bed!
 I'm weary as a dog!” A servant lights his way;
 But on the threshold glancing back he sees the boy
 Whisper into his father's ear—But on he reels,
 Follows the servant to the turret-chamber high.
 He bolts the door, examines pistol well and sword.
 The wind is shrill. The flooring shakes. The ceiling
 groans.

The stairway creaks—A thund'ring—now a sneaking
step?

His ear is fooling him. And midnight passes by.
Lead weighs upon his lids, he sinks upon the bed
Right drowsily. Outside the rain is beating down.
He dreams. "Confess now!" Silence. "Show him!"
Silence still.

He forces her. Two feet are twitching in the fire.
Up flares a hissing flood of fire devouring him—
—"Awake! You should have left here long ago! 'Tis
dawn!"

For, come into the chamber through an arras-door,
Before his bed the master of the castle stands—
Gray, he whose locks but yesterday were darkest brown.

They ride across the wood. No breeze is now astir.
The broken, ruined boughs are scattered in their path.
The earliest of birds are twitt'ring, half in dreams,
And peaceful clouds are floating in the lucid air,
Like angels from a nightly watch returning home.
Dark soil is giving forth a strong and earthy scent.
The plain now opens. In the field there moves a plough.
The horseman watches from the corner of his eye:
"Sir, you are wise and prudent and you know that I
Belong as servant to the greatest King. Farewell.
We ne'er shall meet again!" The other speaks: "'Tis
true.

Belong unto the King! To serve my King today
Was hard—For you have murdered in a dev'lish way
My wife! And yet you live!—Mine the revenge, speaks
God."

JOSEPH VICTOR WIDMANN *

By KUNO FRANCKE, Ph.D., LL.D., Litt.D.

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OR the last two decades, Joseph Victor Widmann and Carl Spitteler have stood out as literary leaders of German Switzerland. Both reached eminence late in life; both held themselves aloof, throughout their career, from the strife of critics and the noise of the literary mart; both have given us some of the finest artistic symbols of contemporary German life that we possess: Spitteler by vying with Böcklin and Stuck in adapting the world of ancient Greece to modern feeling, Widmann by discovering a new message in popular tradition and Christian lore.

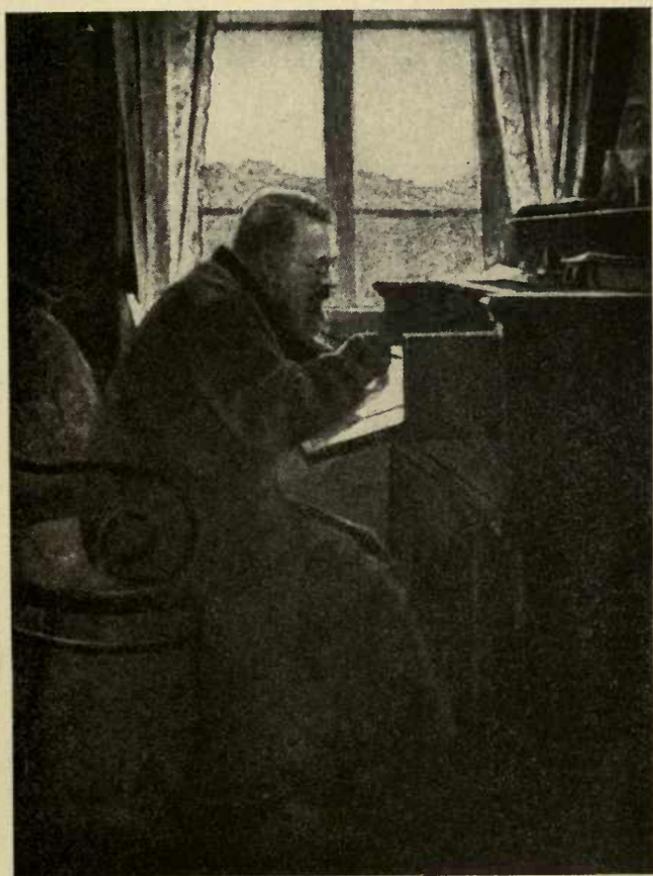
Widmann was born in 1842 in Moravia; his youth and early manhood he spent mostly in the Canton of Basle; in 1868 he settled in Berne, where he died in 1911. He has written essays, sketches of travel, epics, novels, dramas, graceful in form and replete with ideas. Besides, as literary editor of the leading Swiss paper, the *Bernese Bund*, he has commented for tens of years, week in and week out, with singular fairness and breadth of view, on all the important manifestations of the new life in German letters and art. And in all this he has revealed a very unusual personality, keenness of observation, wealth of fancy, spiritual earnestness and insight, and above all, a most delightful sense of humor—the true humor which springs from a warm heart for all that is genuine and fine, in however humble a form it may appear, and which detects the false and the hollow even under its most glittering guise.

The two works, however, by which, I believe, Widmann will speak to posterity are the *May-Beetles' Comedy* and

* Permission Houghton, Mifflin & Co., New York.

Christ in the Wilderness. It is not easy to classify these works in accordance with the accepted standards of literary nomenclature. Indeed, they defy, both in form and in matter, the traditional conceptions of art. They combine dramatic dialogue, epic narrative, and lyric effusions; they are satirical and rhapsodic, fantastic and realistic, far removed from our daily life and yet entirely up to date. They seem to be a capricious pot-pourri of tragedy and farce, of mysticism and rationalism, and yet they are held together by a wonderful artistic harmony. They contain elements on the one hand of the animal lore of primitive peoples, on the other of the medieval miracle plays; and yet they are deeply poetic symbols of the modern view of life. They are indeed *sui generis*, a new phenomenon on the literary horizon, a new kind of poetic creation; and esthetic theory will have to enlarge its classifications in order to find room for them.

The May-Beetles' Comedy, the earlier work of the two, is, in spite of its name, a tragedy, of insect life, and at the same time an allegory of human existence with its ephemeral joys, its eternal longings, and its endless suffering. Astounding is the art by which the poet succeeds in bringing this tiny world of insects within the range of our own feelings and aspirations, so that we cannot help thinking of these beetles and worms as being endowed with human intellect and emotions, and are not in the least surprised to hear of them as striving, like ourselves, for higher forms of existence. This striving forms, indeed, the starting-point of the plot. It is early spring; below the surface of the earth as well as above a new life is throbbing; it is stirring also among the larvæ of the May-beetles that lie imbedded under the turf. A gospel has spread among them of a country of marvelous beauty, of regions of eternal light and joy stretching out above the darkness of the underground world that encompasses them; and they are thrilled by the hope that it is for them to win this land of promise. To be sure, there are skeptics in their midst



JOSEPH VICTOR WIDMANN

who doubt this message, who claim to know of the dangers, the cruelty, and the horrors of this upper world, and who raise their voice of warning against the attempt to reach it. But these voices are drowned in the general enthusiasm, in the wave of religious craze that has seized the masses as well as their leaders. The king, a romantic, mystically inclined idealist, calls upon his people to gather around him; a universal movement forward and upward is undertaken, the crust of the earth is broken, the surface is reached, and now the little army lifts its wings to fly toward the joys of light.

It may be imagined what their fate is. How they are caught and tortured by boys who amuse themselves by inflicting pain upon helpless animals; how they are chased and eaten by birds; how they are persecuted by farmers who guard their orchards and gardens against them; how they enjoy swarming and buzzing during a few brief summer nights; how they burn to death by flying into the fire; how they are crushed under wagon wheels and horses' hoofs, and how, at last, in the autumn their benumbed, half-lifeless little bodies lie scattered over the fields like the bodies of fallen heroes, until either the rain or the frost makes an end of them—all this is brought before us with a truly marvelous art, with a mixture of pathos and pity and humor which makes this story of insect life a true counterpart to the lot of human kind.

Deeply poetic and full of meaning as is the *May-Beetles' Comedy*, it cannot be compared in sweep and significance of thought with Widmann's last work, *Christ in the Wilderness*, as its curious title, *Der Heilige und die Tiere*, may perhaps be paraphrased. The motto taken from the first chapter of Mark: "And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him," indicates that here again the animal world with its cruelty, its blind desires, and its dumb suffering forms the background of the action, but it also leads us to look forward to human grappling with the

deepest problems of existence, to a battle with evil and sin, and to a note of redemption and spiritual triumph. And this hope is by no means disappointed by the poem itself.

It opens with a prelude of exquisite humor and poetic power, transporting us into the midst of the philosophical and theological controversies of today. Two theological students are tramping in the Black Forest. One of them quotes with much moral indignation a passage from Nietzsche: "God is dead; but, such as human kind is (*i. e.*, sheep kind), there will perhaps for thousands of years continue to exist caverns in which his shade will be worshipped. And we, we must conquer even his shade." To his comrade this passage does not seem so very blasphemous; he is inclined to think that a Godless, or rather a God-free Christianity may be destined to be the religion of the future; sympathy with all forms of life, whether human or animal or vegetable, seems to him a much more essential part of religion than the traditional church belief. As an illustration of his own views he tells of a minister in the Canton of Zurich who once on a Christmas Day, after the communion service, stepping out of the church, saw a flock of hungry crows sitting on the cloister walls, and moved by pity for the starving creatures, fed them with the holy bread. Of course the community was scandalized and the kindly man lost his ministry. He found, however, a refuge in a little country parish in the Black Forest; and as this village is near to where the two young men are wandering, they decide to make a descent upon him chiefly in the hope of a good supper and a good glass of wine at his table.

In the following scenes we come to know this heretical theologian himself, Lux by name. He is a man to whom nothing human is foreign, a passionate lover of nature, a friend of beast and plant, a delver in old books, steeped in Jewish and early Christian legend and in Gnostic thought, in spite of his advancing years of a fiery, explosive, thoroughly artistic temper—altogether a most lovable and unique personality. He is just coming back from

an evening walk, very much wrought up over a sight which would perhaps have seemed trivial to most men, which to him, however, seems of tragic import. He had been reveling in the quiet and calm of the sunset, all nature seemed to him at harmony with itself, when he is suddenly awakened from his dreams by a pitiful squeal at the wayside; his own pet dog, Prince, has been chasing a field mouse and bitten her to death. The bleeding little thing lies on the ground dying; and dying gives birth to a litter of young ones. This sight of purposeless cruelty, of guiltless suffering, of a life being sacrificed while giving way to a new life, arouses in the old minister all his latent moral indignation. What kind of a world is it in which such things are commonplace events? What kind of a God is it who permits such things? In vain does his sister remind him that in saner and more composed states of mind he himself is wont to think of God as being within, not above the world, as striving, struggling, suffering in common with it. In vain does she call to help the serene equanimity of Spinoza, the contemplative calmness of the Hindoos; he does not want to contemplate or to reason; he wants to despise, to protest, to castigate. His clerical life seems to him now a mockery—away with the ministry, away with sermonizing! Doing, healing—that is the only true kind of worship!

Now the sister, in order to divert him, recalls to his mind his favorite relaxation of former years whenever the cares of the parish or religious scruples were worrying him: the stage of shadow pantomimes which of many a winter evening his fancy used to people with heroes of sacred or profane legend. With youthful enthusiasm he enters upon her suggestion to perform such a play now; and since the two theological students just then appear at the house, he decides on the spur of the moment to give to them his views of God and the world in this semi-dramatic form. After supper, while the gentlemen are smoking in the study and conversing with Fräulein Esther, Prince lying at their feet

with a face as innocent and devout as though he had never even heard of the killing of a field mouse, Lux retires to his little puppet stage, and soon he is heard from behind the curtain announcing to his audience the title of the play about to be performed, *The Saint and the Beasts, a Biblical Mystery*. Here the prelude ends. From the parsonage in the Black Forest we are now transported to the desert on the shores of the Dead Sea, and to the end of the book we remain in the sphere of a fantastic Oriental animal life and of ancient Jewish folk-lore.

The first scene is on a rocky ledge overlooking the desert. A lioness, her cub, and a jackal are lying in wait for prey, and conversing with each other. How they hate and fear and despise human kind! The jackal tells with great relish of a ravine nearby which in the time of his great-grandfather was heaped full with human carcasses—the aftermath of a battle between the Maccabeans and the sons of Iambri. With a mixture of rage and admiration, the young lion repeats the tale of Samson, the lion-killer and tormenter of foxes. Then the conversation turns to the old lion, his father, who meanwhile is roaring through the desert in quest of blood. In the midst of this, the low roar of the lion himself is heard. He is returning from his expedition, but not victoriously, in a frame of mind entirely different from his usual temper. He has met a man, but he has not dared to attack him!—a frail, ascetic-looking man with a face that seemed surrounded by the radiance of the sun; and he looked at the lion fearlessly and kindly and passed by as if lost in thought! Who is he, and what is he, this strange, defenseless, and all-conquering being? What is his errand in the wilderness?

In the next scene we hear more about him, from the mouth of Azazel, the desert demon of ancient Jewish tradition. In the apocryphal book of Enoch and similar works, Azazel is identified with Satan, he is the leader of the rebellious giants that rise against the Lord, and he is finally bound by the archangel Raphael to the rocks, to

await in fetters the day of judgment. Widmann has evidently drawn from his apocryphal Jewish literature, but he has modified the conception of Azazel and adapted it to the central conflict of his whole poem, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. Azazel is to him a gigantic, monstrous being, the very incarnation of the horror and the awfulness of wild nature; but he also represents the irresistible, untamed forces of primitive life, the rugged natural instinct not yet "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." He, too, is agitated by Jesus' appearance in the wilderness. He feels instinctively that Jesus has retired to it in order to gather strength in the solitude for his work among men, and this work Azazel fears. He fears that humanity is on the point of what he sarcastically calls "a great boost," a spiritual upheaval. To prevent this "watering of life's warm blood," this "improving of healthy bodies into feeble minds," this "changing of the gay Lady World to an anemic nun," he considered his satanic duty; and he sets about to block the way of the spiritual reformer.

His first thought is of Lilith, the archtemptress of Jewish popular lore. He lifts his mighty voice to call her. It is a long time before she appears; for she has spent the night in Jerusalem hovering about the sleeping Salome and whispering voluptuous thoughts into her ear. But at last she alights from a cloud before her master and asks for his commands. He bids her to tempt Jesus with her charms; but to his great disgust he must hear that she has already tried to seduce him, that in the noonday glare of the desert she has unveiled her beauty before him. But Jesus has looked at her with a dreamy, far-away, pitying glance; and the words that fell from his lips, "Thou poor erring spirit," have not only disarmed her entirely, but even planted a longing for sinlessness and purity in her heart. So Azazel must think of some other means of leading Jesus astray.

Before we hear of this attempt, the poet introduces an

irresistibly humorous intermezzo of animal life, drawn from the Jewish ritual and satirizing formalistic views of religion. A herd of wild goats are quietly grazing on the grassy slope of an oasis, when they are suddenly alarmed by the sight of an animal galloping at break-neck speed toward them through the desert. At first sight they think it to be some new strange beast of prey; they are therefore greatly relieved when at nearer view it turns out to be a goat like themselves. "Ah, children," calls out their leader, Queen Melka, "a false alarm! The same old story again; another scapegoat! Apparently he doesn't know what good luck his misery has brought him." Now the unfortunate fugitive has reached the herd, he rages in frenzy through their midst, warning them not to touch him, not to come near him:—

"My breath brings pestilence! A curse"—

"What curse?"

"I am the scapegoat!"

"Is that all?"

"Ah, but you don't know"—

"Oh, yes, we do. The same stupid affair happens over again every year. But if it eases your mind, let's have it." And now the poor, terrified beast blurts out the whole story of the Jewish Day of Atonement,—how he and his brother had been led to the altar, how the lot was cast over them, how the high priest drew his knife and sacrificed the brother, and how he then pronounced the curse upon himself, that terrible frightful curse fraught with the sins of all Israel and winding up with the command, "Away with thee, away to the desert, to the demon Azazel!" This whole tragic story produces no other effect upon the listeners except that of mild amusement over the gullibility of the poor, frenzied victim who takes the curse so seriously. They congratulate him for having escaped this murderous, savage race of men; they assure him that scapegoats are particularly welcome in their midst—"We like goats with a past!"—they introduce him to a scapegoat of former

years, who now leads a most jolly and enviable bachelor-existence among them; in fine, the tragedy ends as a satyr-play of exultant, effervescent gayety.

From this truly Erasmian farce, a farce lifting weighty moral questions into the realm of sovereign playful fancy, we return to Azazel's attempts against Jesus. Azazel, as we saw before, wishes to prevent Jesus from collecting himself in the wilderness, from gaining certitude of mind and firmness of purpose for his spiritual task. The attempt to seduce him by sensual charms has failed. Will it, perhaps, be possible to lead him astray by entangling him in the animal world? If he is made to see the whole tragedy of animal life, its blind appetites, its relentless cruelty, its horrible selfishness, and, alongside with this, its dumb suffering, its quiet steadfastness, its faithfulness to instinct, its defenselessness, its submission to Fate, will not this sight absorb his sympathy to such an extent as to make him forget his mission to mankind? Will he not fritter away his strength in a vain effort to help dumb creation? Will he not be distracted and bewildered by the nameless woe of all existence and despair to accomplish anything for the betterment of the world? Will he not, in short, fail to find in the wilderness what he has come to seek, spiritual power and courage? Will he not return from it depressed and dispirited, not any longer a moral enthusiast, but a skeptic and a cynic? Thus, perhaps, we may formulate the motives which induce Azazel to tempt Jesus by endowing him with the gift of understanding the language of beasts.

I frankly confess that the means by which this gift is bestowed upon Jesus—the magic ring of King Solomon, which Azazel forces Lilith to fetch from the bottom of Lake Siloah—seems to me the one point in Widmann's poem which it is hard to accept as a truly poetic symbol of spiritual truths. It seems too artificial and too fantastic a device to satisfy our imagination. The change brought about thereby in Jesus' state of mind, in his understanding

of animal existence, is too sudden to be entirely convincing. But granting the poet's premises, accepting this device for opening Jesus' ear to the voices of the wilderness, we cannot help being impressed with the effect which it has upon the further psychological development.

Jesus has been roaming through the desert without receiving an answer to his inner questionings. The "Great Silence" is oppressive to him; he longs for a word of enlightenment, for a message of sympathy from this vast mysterious world about him. Now the magic gift unlocks to him the secrets of animal life; he stands and listens, eagerly, breathlessly. And what does he hear? A tale of endless, ceaseless war and murder, of fear, of anguish, of oppression, of fierce passion and savage brutality. The scenes of wild humor and fantastic grotesqueness by which this side of animal existence is revealed to him, it would be a hopeless task to reproduce in ordinary prose. Perhaps the most grimly humorous among them is a quarrel of a flock of ravens over the dead body of a rabbit, which finally leads to a compromise dinner, during which one of the guests, an old raven that has come from the North, delights his table companions with a gruesome account of the toothsome corpses of the Roman army scattered over the battlefield of the Teutoburg Forest. The important thing in all these scenes is that their effect upon Jesus is just the reverse from the one hoped for by Azazel. Instead of being brought to a low level of moral energy, instead of being dragged down spiritually and of measuring human life by the standard of animal instincts, Jesus is stimulated to a wider and freer humanity by this very sight of beastly appetite and avidity. He comes to recognize that animal life is bound up by instinct, that herein lie both its doom and its redemption, its horror and its beauty. He comes to see that sin has no part in it, that it is exempt from remorse and mental agony, and that in so far it may stand to man as an image of the ideal life. But he also sees that its sufferings are beyond the pale of

human interference; that all we can bestow upon beasts is friendly sympathy and kindly forbearance. He learns the great lesson that acceptance of reality, of life in all its infinite variations and degrees of consciousness, is the only sound basis for higher spiritual striving.

Thus inwardly fortified, he is able, on the mount of temptation, to face the Evil One himself, to defy Azazel's final attempt to divert him from his human mission by illusive phantoms of his divinity. And at last—here the poet combines once more Biblical and Apocryphal tradition—he is surrounded by the heavenly host; he receives from them joyous messages of a living, glorious, ever-struggling, ever-striving universe; and he is led by the archangels toward a life of loving, self-sacrificing, sin-combatting activity.

It is self-evident that this brief and inadequate account of a world-embracing poem cannot in any sense do justice either to its artistic worth or to its spiritual significance. But enough perhaps has been said to make clear that here there has come to light a work of genius, a work which will have a permanent place in the history of literature. Unique and incomparable as it is, it nevertheless suggests a number of other attempts to express in poetic symbols the modern view of the universe. There are accents in it of Goethe's *Faust*, of Ibsen's *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, of Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*. It is most welcome and convincing proof of the fact that modern thought is not antagonistic to art, but, on the contrary, has enlarged her sphere by opening the eyes of mankind to the mystery and sacredness of all forms of life.

JOSEPH VICTOR WIDMANN

THE SAINT AND THE BEASTS *

A SONG OF THE BLUE THRUSH



H lovely world, good-by! For woe,
I must be gone, my heart is ill.
But, dearest world, before I go
My life's last thanks oh take thou still.

It seems, at first I was not there,
I was not at the very start.
Yet round me waved the light and air
When once a prison broke apart.

Oh, light and air, you long stayed true,
Until this twilight sank today,
And you were daily fair and new,
And I was young and I was gay.

My blood was warm, my blood would boil,
My breast would rise in joyful song,
And there was joy in busy toil,
The longest day was not too long.

I wove a house of many a blade
And hung it on the steep cliff-side,
One early morn my flight I made
Away into the world so wide.

Then came the unforgotten day
When once, on such a flight in spring,
In answer to my fairest lay
I first heard love's sweet echoing.

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg. (From the German original published by Huber & Co., Frauenfeld, Switzerland.)

It seemed a game and was an aim
And helped our lives at last unfold.
And even care that often came
Would give us but a stronger hold.

Why seems it now a feast-day blest
What once in pain I scarce could brook?
The serpent crept into our nest!
The falcon wild my lifemate took!

When I had reared with pain and care
My youthful brood, soon came the day
When all had left, away to fare
And their own courage to essay.

And once more lonely was my flight,
And many a gloomy night passed by
When all my heart would beat in fright,
For murder tracked me on the sly.

If life was easy, who can say
'Twas after all but full of woe?
Now that I feel it pass away,
It showers over me a glow.

Oh, mighty world! I am so small
And now must go—my heart is ill—
And now I shall not be at all—
Oh, lovely world—thanks—thank you, still—

MAY-BEETLES' COMEDY *

PROLOGUE TO THE FIRST ACT

A NIGHT of spring on valley and on height!
The first that follows on chill winter-tide.
The mild south wind is roused again to flight,
The gentle billows of his breathing glide
Into the deeps of earth, so dark as night,
And dwell where still and secret beings hide
Which yon blue stream of light can never show
That from the island of the moon doth flow.

The deep is not the realm of death alone.
Of life-seeds there a host of millions lies.
From grubs, so pale and weak and bloodless grown,
Soon legions of them, armed in mail, will rise,
Who still in caves, dark chambers of their own,
Are dwelling like a shadow-folk. Surmise
Of its salvation has begun to grow
Upon the restless little world below.

Now that the breath of May its greeting brings,
Come, let us hark to what they do and say.
For resurrections to the beat of wings
Each clod of earth a coffin is today.
Now from the earth-born heavenly courage springs;
Within them life's sweet poison works away
That with delirious longing makes them pine
For worlds far distant from their own confine.

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg. (From the German original published by Huber & Co., Frauenfeld, Switzerland.)

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF CARL SPITTELER

By ALBERT WILHELM BOESCHE, PH.D.

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It is a curious coincidence that of the four greatest modern representatives of German literature in Switzerland, not one knew the inspiration of fame and acclaim until his life was past its zenith. Gottfried Keller's fiftieth birthday found him admired by the discerning few, but as yet quite unknown to the many. Not much younger was Conrad Ferdinand Meyer when, in the full maturity of his genius, he at last no longer restrained the creative impulse. Josef Victor Widmann, to be sure, attained a fair measure of success before his day was far advanced. But even he was past fifty when in the *May-Beetles' Comedy* and in *Saint and Beasts* he revealed that fulness of poetic power which entitles him to a place among the best. But the most remarkable case of delayed fame is that of Carl Spitteler who, the youngest of this group of four, is still with us today. On the threshold of the Psalmist's three score years and ten, but still vigorous in body and mind, he is now gathering the rich reward of life-long loyalty to a high ideal.

It was at the age of twenty-two that Spitteler jubilantly recognized his mission as an epic poet. He was fifty-five when the first part of his *Olympian Spring* appeared, and he had reached sixty before its last volume was published. That by this work he has fulfilled that mission, that in the *Olympian Spring* he has given to German literature an epic poem of the highest rank, is gradually coming to be recognized. But the remarkable fact remains that a poet of undoubted genius has been so long in realizing his own ambition. All the retarding factors will probably not be

known until an extensive biography of this author appears. But as he reveals himself to us in his works, we recognize in him a man, whose exalted devotion to an ideal was, in his younger years at least, a source of such torment to him that the very storm and stress of his feelings interfered with their crystallization into works of art; and when, with heroic resolve, he at last did succeed in overcoming this obstacle, his first work, *Prometheus and Epimetheus*, a profound allegory of the sufferings of exalted idealism, met with absolutely no response. The condition of mind in which this bitter disappointment left the poet, has been compared by himself to that of "a wounded bird which with desperate flapping of wing tries to maintain itself in the air, but at last falls crippled to the ground to fight with dogs, cats, and crows." Then bitterness of heart gives way to resignation, and this in turn to new attempts at flight. It is a period which is marked by what we may call his minor works. When, at last, the old strength and courage have come back, the soaring flight to Olympus is resumed.

The story of Carl Spitteler's life and works, up to his *Olympian Spring*, can be briefly told. He was born on the 24th of April, 1845, in Liestal, near Basel. His father was a high functionary in the cantonal service as well as in that of the federal government, and it was due to his holding the portfolio of Federal Secretary of the Treasury from 1849 to 1856 that the poet's earlier childhood memories are associated with Berne, the Swiss capital, rather than with his native town. To the latter, however, the family returned when the boy was eleven. The proximity of the city of Basel provided excellent schooling. Indeed, in the higher classes of the gymnasium, he was fortunate enough to draw inspiration from such men as Wilhelm Wackernagel, the eminent Germanic philologist, and Jakob Burckhardt, who just about that time published the first of his two famous works on the Italian Renaissance. From 1863 to 1868 he studied at the universities of Basel, Zürich, and Heidelberg, changing, after the first two years, from juris-

prudence to theology, for reasons which seem to have been philosophic rather than religious in the stricter sense. For when, after passing all the required examinations, he received his first call as pastor, he did not feel justified in accepting it. This decision was serious enough in that it shut him out from the one career for which he had regularly prepared himself. But we can fully understand his step if we know that the poet, who as such had been revealed to himself at seventeen, and who five years later had come to realize his special mission as an epic poet, was now living in those visions and ecstasies, those doubts and torments, of which the first great work of his pen is the reflection. But it was not until he had returned from an eight years' sojourn in Russia, where he filled the position of tutor in the family of a general, that he gave his *Prometheus and Epimetheus* its final form. Its first part appeared in 1880, the combined first and second parts a year later.

Prometheus and Epimetheus is a profound allegory. It symbolizes the untold misery and sublime ecstasy of an exalted soul unswervingly loyal to its ideal, even though the distant hope for one supreme hour of joy in the attainment of this ideal must be purchased at the price of a life full of anguish. The disdain for the ordinary standards of human ethics, which finds expression in this remarkable work, as well as its style, a prose whose solemn diction and rhythm have been very aptly characterized as "hieratic," remind one vividly of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and curiously enough, when Spitteler's work at last found readers, the common impression was that he had been influenced by Nietzsche's famous work. This is chronologically impossible, and indeed, it is now known that the reverse is true. Nietzsche was influenced by Spitteler's work, although, as far as is known, he never acknowledged his indebtedness. There is this difference, however, between Spitteler's long-neglected *Prometheus* and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Poetically the earlier work is undoubtedly

the better of the two, but it is far more difficult to unravel the mysteries of its symbolism than it is to comprehend Zarathustra's powerfully direct preaching; and indeed, it may be said that if today Spitteler's allegory is less of an enigma to us than it was to a great contemporary poet, this is in large part due to our having in the meantime passed through the Zarathustra phase. The contemporary poet just referred to was none other than Gottfried Keller who was one of the first to read *Prometheus and Epimetheus* and who recognized in it the product of a creative imagination of the highest order, without however being able to solve its strangely fascinating Pythic mysteries. This we know today from a letter of his to Josef Victor Widmann, who had brought his friend's production to Keller's notice. In the light of Spitteler's subsequent development, the following lines are particularly interesting: "But is this still an age for Sibylline books? Must we not regret to see a creative mind of this order turning to 'allegorified' rather than to real life? Or is the peculiar character of this talent such as not to be capable of expressing itself except in these hallowed, mystic, consecrated strains?" Even though today Spitteler's "Sibylline" book is better understood and must be rated as one of his two greatest works, it is nevertheless fortunate that Keller's question has since been answered by the *Olympian Spring*.

The bitter experience of the world's almost absolute unresponsiveness to his first appeal for a hearing, might in itself have been enough to retard further poetic effort. But it appears that the "wounded bird" would soon have taken flight again, had it not been deprived of its liberty. For with his first work a seemingly complete failure, Spitteler could not hope to support himself by a literary career. He had, upon his return from Russia in 1879, accepted a position in a girls' high school in Berne, whose principal was Josef Victor Widmann. From 1881 to 1885 he filled a similar position in the little town of Neuveville (Neuen-

stadt), not far from Berne and situated in the same canton. Here the author of *Prometheus and Epimetheus* bravely endured the slavery of thirty teaching hours a week. In 1883 he married. In the same year he published his *Extramundana*, a collection of "cosmic myths." It was, if we may accept the poet's own judgment, a premature attempt at flight which Spitteler later regretted as an inadequate expression of his genius. Not until the end of the eighties did new works from his pen begin to appear in rapid succession. In 1889, four years after he had given up teaching for a journalistic career in Basel, he published *Butterflies*, his first collection of poems; in 1891 *Friedli der Kolderi*, his first collection of short stories; in 1892 his prose idyl *Gustav* and another collection of poems under the title of *Literary Parables*, which in 1896 was followed by his *Ballads*. Another prose epic, *Conrad the Lieutenant*, appeared in 1898, and in the same year a collection of essays under the title of *Laughing Truths*. It is difficult to date his charming tale *The Girlhaters*, for though it was first serially published in the early nineties, it did not meet with success until, in 1907, it was republished in a condensed form. Thus it might be regarded as a product of the decade of the *Olympian Spring*, and to this period of highest attainment belong also the short novel *Imago* and a collection of lyrics under the title of *Bell Songs*, both of which appeared in 1906.

It would lead us too far afield to characterize each of these productions with any degree of fulness. Coming from the author of the *Olympian Spring*, all of them may be regarded as minor works, and indeed, it appears that the poet himself looked upon them as preparatory tasks. Needless to say, they are of high literary merit. They reveal gifts of which the *Prometheus and Epimetheus* had given no indication. Thus the music of Spitteler's *Butterflies*, varying from capriccioso to pensive adagio, and the melodious ringing and singing of his *Bell Songs* show him

a master of lyric poetry. In his short stories, the former symbolist astonishes us by a sharp and varied character delineation, by a truth to real life which would have delighted Keller, and by a wide scope of scene and subject. If in *Friedli der Kolderi* we get a taste of what Spitteler himself calls Russian realism, if in *Conrad the Lieutenant* a tragic story of village life is told with an intense rapidity of action and an almost cruel naturalism, we on the other hand meet with a genial humor in the *Girlhaters*, a sunny little story of two real boys and a most bewitching little tease of a girl, while in *Gustav*, 'mid idyllic scenes of rustic simplicity, we behold the first flights of a young genius, inspired by a deep and pure love. Quite different from all these is *Imago*, an almost harrowing tale of the dreadful conflicts in a man's soul between what he believes to be his sacred mission and the reawakening of a passionate love which he once sacrificed to his higher calling, and which now is without hope. That in this novel, which appeared only a few years ago, the poet has given us a key to his *Prometheus and Epimetheus*, he has told us himself: "*Imago* is the explanation of *Prometheus and Epimetheus*. *Imago* relates what really happened, *Prometheus* shows what a poet made of it." That the poet at the age of sixty once more reverted to his earlier theme, can now be understood. The ideal for which he had once suffered was at last attained. He was nearly fifty when a fortunate change in his affairs permitted him to give up the grinding duties which so far had absorbed the greater portion of his time and strength. Since that time his home has been in Lucerne, and here on the shore of the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons, in the famous Tell country, he could now concentrate his still marvelously youthful poetic power upon the accomplishment of the one greatest task of his life and bestow upon it the full richness of matured genius. To the masterpiece on which Spitteler's enduring fame will rest we will now turn our attention.

The *Olympian Spring* is most decidedly not what, from its name or even from a partial acquaintance with its contents, one might take it to be. Unlike Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* or Keats's *Endymion* and *Hyperion* or Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, unlike these and other poems inspired by a profound poetic and philosophic sympathy with the spirit of ancient Greece, Spitteler's epic does not represent a poetical revival of classical legends. It cannot even be said to avail itself of classical mythology for a setting. It rather uses it as an appeal to the imagination. The mythic long-ago, relieving the poet and ourselves of the fetters of every-day reality, sets his creative and our receptive imagination free to fathom eternal reality. Even this, to be sure, presupposes on our part some acquaintance with classical mythology, as does the *Divine Comedy* or the second part of *Faust*. We are supposed to be susceptible to the appeal of such names as Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, and to know, or rather to feel, what Ananke, Necessity, and Moira, Fate, meant to the ancient Greeks. It is well that we should come thus prepared; but it is far more important that we should not be so hampered by traditional associations as not to recognize the new or deeper signification which in the *Olympian Spring* ancient gods and ancient conceptions have acquired.

Spitteler's *Olympian Spring* is not a philosophic poem in the didactic sense. It is, first of all, an epic and must be judged as such. But it goes without saying that no epic of the heroic type—and such is Spitteler's—would fail to reveal the poet's attitude toward what Tennyson in his lines on the great epic poet of ancient Rome so beautifully calls "the doubtful doom of humankind." And, indeed, Spitteler does not leave us in uncertainty about his answer to the old question of the "Why" and "Wherefore." His interpretation of life is as grandiose as is the heroic tale he tells of the doings of gods and men. It is hoped that the following outline will give some idea both of the tale and of its meaning.

Ananke,* Necessity, the dread cruel ruler of the universe, from whose decrees even divinity cannot appeal, has ordained the fall of the old gods, Kronos and his adherents. Their place is to be taken by the gods of the future, who as yet are held imprisoned in gloomy Erebus. They are loath to leave the nether darkness and would fain continue in the hopeless stupor of forgetfulness in which they have slept through æons of time. But Ananke's decree is unalterable, and so they depart accompanied by Hades, the ruler of Erebus, who guides them safely past the dangers which threaten them on their journey to the world above. When, from the Mount of Morning, they first behold the sunlit beauty of the earth over which they are to rule, deepest emotion finds expression in sobs of joy. If thus far they have been dumb-driven by fate, now the love of life and the sense of its beauty fill their hearts to overflowing, and songs well up from their lips glorifying the radiant orb of day. The world seems new and young to them, but, alas, it is not long before a shrill discord mars the sweet harmony of this youthful, trustful faith. As they travel onward, they find the rocks beneath their feet worn by footsteps. For here, in an eternal cycle, the new gods and the old have passed on their journey of hope or of despair.

“Then cried a voice, a sigh: ‘Alas, the world is old!
How much of sorrow may its history enfold!’
And from the yawning cleft the echo's thunder rolled:
‘For aye no spot on earth but witnessed grief untold.’”

They are soon to have a taste of this “grief untold.” For it is not long before they meet the old dethroned gods on their way to that gloom of oblivion from which they themselves, the gods-to-be, rejoice to have escaped. They, the younger rivals and heirs, are greeted by angry glances and cries, but gentle words melt this wrath into a pathetic

* It should be noted that Spitteler personifies Ananke as a male force, thus disregarding the Greek gender of this word.

plaint. The fallen sadly revel in the memories of the golden days cut short by Ananke's cruel decree. It is an inexpressibly beautiful passage. Memory, bitter in its sweetness, is symbolized by a blue flower which the fallen gods, in reverent silence, pass from hand to hand.

"And each who took the flower, adoring bent his knee,
Breathed in the balmy fragrance, kissed it fervently.
But as he passed the flower on, he hid his head
Upon his neighbor's breast and bitter tears he shed."

From this the old gods are aroused by the arrival of mighty Kronos, who is unable to find solace in memories alone. His anger at his dethronement is lashed into fury by the sight of those who are to take his place. Defying Ananke, he calls upon his former fellow-gods to retake by force the throne and power which are theirs by right. Onward they rush, up the steep mountainside, only to be dashed into the abyss by an avalanche of rocks. The last to meet this fate is majestic Kronos himself. His bitter words of farewell are a curse for his successor: "too exalted to be happy, he shall taste the emptiness of all that is."

Profoundly moved by this appalling spectacle, the gods sadly proceed on their journey, which wearies them more and more. But Hebe, sent by Uranus, ruler of the starry heavens, brings them cheer and leads them to her master's palace, where they are hospitably received. A peculiar charm pervades the story of this visit. The serenity of the astral palace, the kindheartedness of the host, the loveliness of his daughters, all of this is told with Homeric naïveté, and indeed, not without touches of genial humor. This idyl however is not without an episode which, in grandeur of conception, could not easily be surpassed. Urged by their kindly host to relate the experiences of their journey, the gods tell him of the fate of Kronos and of other dismal sights they have beheld. Wild anger seizes the king. His generous heart rebels against the pitilessness of Ananke's rule. "Tell me," he cries,

“Would you Ananke’s final doom and downfall know,
Of the Meontian Land behold the far-off glow?
Behold Nirvana and the Rock of Eschaton?
The Angel, sleeping ’neath the Tree of Thateron?
See in the fiery forge, where engines grind and groan,
Creation stamp its writ of plaint on granite stone?”

Then Uranus takes his eager guests on a strange journey, which brings them first to the roaring, fiery forge where, driven by mighty engines, a hundred hammers are striking runes into an endless strip of rock. Iron giants, with trumpets to their lips, proclaim, in blasts above the deafening roar, the meaning of all this: on this book of stone creation’s curse is recorded. Every wail, every tear, every cry of anguish, though it be gasped out into lonely night and darkness, is here hewn into rock,

“That on the Day of Doom when justice shall be done,
This book of stone accuse the nameless Guilty One.”

The journey is now resumed and takes the gods to the very bounds of Time and Space, where Ananke’s rule ends. From a dun, dreary coast, whose desolate stillness is broken only by the dismal, monotonous splash of wave after wave, they behold the Sea of Nirvana. Endless is its expanse, no shore beyond is to be seen, but a tinge of light on far-off clouds seems to come from an other-world land. Is it another, fairer world which knows not the ruthless rule of fate? Even Uranus does not hold out more than a hope:

“A land of Meon lies, they say, beyond this sea.
Devoutly prays the hoping heart that so it be.”

This undying hope for a better world is symbolized by a beautiful angel sleeping in a little church at the foot of the Rock of Eschaton, who, like one in a trance, chants this message:

“I hear a world beneath its weight of evil groan.
I feel its sorrows, hear its every sob and moan.
Be comforted! I tell you of a coming morn,
When reparation from the womb of Time is born.
Then shall Redemption’s flower heal the sick and sore.
Then sobs shall turn to sighs of joy for evermore.”

When will this day come? To this eager question the angel replies:

“When you shall hear the cocks from far-off Meon crow.
When through Nirvana’s fields the mower’s scythe shall mow.”

The gods are loath to leave, for the sight of that little church of hope seems more beautiful to them than aught else in this world. Might they not wait for the great promise to be fulfilled?

“Who knows, perchance the cocks will crow this very day.
The world is old. Its saviour should no more delay.”

But Uranus urges them to depart. Since the beginning of time, he himself has been vainly waiting for Redemption’s day to dawn. “We will continue to hope for the Land of Meon, but in the meantime let us set about the tasks that are ours in this world to do.” Reluctantly the gods return with him.

There is something grandiose about this vision of the Land of Meon. It loses nothing of its poetic beauty and fascination if we know that the word “Meon” itself is strangely and sadly symbolical. Its underlying Greek significance may either be “Better” or “That which is not.” There can be little doubt that this ambiguity of the word is intentional.

If it were not for Fate’s inviolable decree, the gods would remain forever with Uranus and his lovely daughters. But, vexed at the delay, Ananke, by a subtle poison, changes love and friendship into aversion and discord. It is a poison known in ordinary life by the name of “satiety.” Indeed, nothing could be psychologically truer than this passage. As soon as the parting has become a certainty, the poison ceases to work and now, when it is too late, the gods deplore their own fickleness. Even when they have arrived at the foot of Olympus, their thoughts longingly wander back to the astral court of Uranus, and not until the great struggle for supremacy sets in, do they become reconciled to the loss of a happy dream. It is the old tragic

story of life: ambition, lust of power win out against the gentler longings of the heart; some day utter disillusion will prove the futility of the sacrifice, but not until the doors of the astral palace of youth have closed forever.

The second part of the poem relates the winning of Hera. She, the queen of the Amazons, ruler of Olympus and of the earth inhabited by man, mortal herself, is, by Fate's decree, compelled to yield her person and power to him among the immortals who shall come out victor in three contests. In all of these, in the interpretation of dreams, in the gift of song, and in steering the chariot, Apollo, the god of light and beauty, easily defeats his rivals. His, then, should be Hera's hand, his the royal crown of Olympus. But that would little suit the purpose of Ananke, who needs a ruler of coarser, sterner fibre, one more like himself. His choice is Zeus. Others are nobler of heart than he, greater of soul. Of all the suitors he is the most odious to Hera. But he alone has the essential qualities to win: an inordinate love of power and an absolute unscrupulousness in seeking his end. While the people are offering prayers of thanks for Apollo's victory, Zeus, his meaner rival, stealthily picks his way to Hera's castle; urged on and shielded by the demon Gorgo he forces an entrance. He foully murders a gentle hind which reproaches him with her big child-like eyes, and now the castle, and with it the kingship, is his. For Hera, no less ambitious and unscrupulous than he, when once she realizes that Zeus alone will rule, is quick to betray the noble Apollo, to whom she has plighted her troth. Still more despicable is her treachery in delivering her faithful Amazons into the hands of their enemies, as part of a bargain to obtain full recognition as queen. Zeus, by winning Hera, is now in undisputed possession of the throne. But the curse of crime weighs heavily on him. And a bitter disillusion has already come to him. For when, after possessing himself of the castle, he stands on its battlements to survey his domain, it is but a dreary sight.

“ Here, from the world’s own roof, what cold and dreary waste!
And ah, the breath of earth, how bitter to my taste.”

But as from below toiling, suffering humanity recognizes
in Zeus its new ruler,

“ Then, to his shudd’ring ear came complaints from far away:
‘ O Zeus, what is the meaning of our mortal day?’ ”

When he has no answer to give, the cries grow louder and
louder, until at last the castle is surrounded and beset by
an angry, desperate mass of mortals, still demanding a
reply:

“ We hold thee fast. Thine answer now no more delay.
Tell us! Wherefore and why? What means this mortal day?”

The rebellious host is driven back, and Zeus remains shud-
dering at what he has seen and heard. The nobler part
of his nature is not unresponsive to the piteous appeal of
his new wards, and he solemnly vows to open his heart to
their sorrows. Nor does he fail to realize the limits set
him by his own nature and by the character of his task. Be
his rule never so wise, it is still subject to Ananke’s heart-
less decrees. To make this world tolerable, he needs the
help of another, of the god of life and beauty, Apollo, who,
cheated out of his victory, has left Olympus in resentment
and disgust. Zeus appeals to him: “ This world, beset
with ills, stained with blood, needs a glimpse of heaven,
needs beauty and imagination. Share my rule with me.
In the noise and bustle of this world, in its stress and strife,
I will wield the dread rod of ordained necessity. Thine
be in ethereal radiance the realm of beauty, through which
the creative mind wafts the melody of its music.” Apollo
is won over, the pact is concluded, and this reconciliation
of power and beauty ushers in the real Olympian Spring-
tide.

To this glorious interval, which the dread rule of Neces-
sity has vouchsafed the world, is given the third part of
the poem. It is superinscribed *The Festal Era* and repre-
sents the culmination of the poet’s story. As long as Zeus

and Hera find happiness unalloyed in each other's love, so long shall last a "world's springtide feast," during which all the gods shall be free to follow their hearts' desires. Hence it is their exploits of which the poet sings. With a marvelous exuberance of imagination, he unfolds picture after picture. Some of these, like *Boreas with his Lash* and *Poseidon with the Thunderbolt* are full of the joy of life and action; by their gorgeous coloring, as well as by an occasional reveling in the fantastic or even grotesque, they remind one vividly of some of Boecklin's famous paintings. Others, like *Dionysus the Seer*, are profoundly sad, yet inspiring tales of self-sacrificing idealism or love. Still another group tells of victorious conflicts with powers hostile to light and liberty and beauty, whether these be antiquated superstitions, enthralling the minds and hearts of man, or the equally noxious self-conceit and self-assumption of spiritual plebeianism. It must not, however, be inferred from this characterization, which cannot attempt more than the merest outline, that the poet ever loses himself in allegory. Even where the reader cannot fail to detect the deeper meaning of a story, its primary appeal lies in its purely poetic beauty. In this remarkable wreath of little epics, there is not one which does not first of all fulfill what a great German critic has called the purpose of all epic poetry: to satisfy our pleasure in splendid events; while those of the second and the third group, as characterized above, go far beyond this in their appeal to what is finest in our feelings and loftiest in our aspirations. A good example of this is the story of *Apollo the Discoverer*. Taken merely as epic poetry, it is a fascinating description of a great exploit, so realistically told, so convincing in all its marvelous details that it holds us spell-bound by this alone. The deeper meaning, however, is unmistakable. Apollo, the god of light and beauty, is aroused by his "daemon" from a lethargy due to his noble disgust with the baseness and meanness of this world. This daemon is, of course, Apollo's own higher self, which rebels

against the deadening torpor of pessimism. But this symbolism in no way affects the poetic illusion; this daemon is as real to us as is Apollo himself. Again, Apollo's achievement itself is profoundly symbolical. Accompanied by noble Artemis, one as pure of soul as himself, he steers his chariot in a bold flight to Metakosmos, a world beyond this common world, where neither baseness nor pettiness nor malice nor envy is known. Unlike distant Meon, it is not merely a land of hope; no, Metakosmos can be found by the few who are chosen. In other, non-symbolic words: there must be and always will be great seers, poets, and prophets though there will never be more than few. But even those who, unlike Apollo, fail in the final feat, win their reward and their glory in having believed in the land of Metakosmos and in having had the heart to attempt the journey thither. This is beautifully expressed in the daemon's greeting, as victorious Apollo enters the realm of Metakosmos:

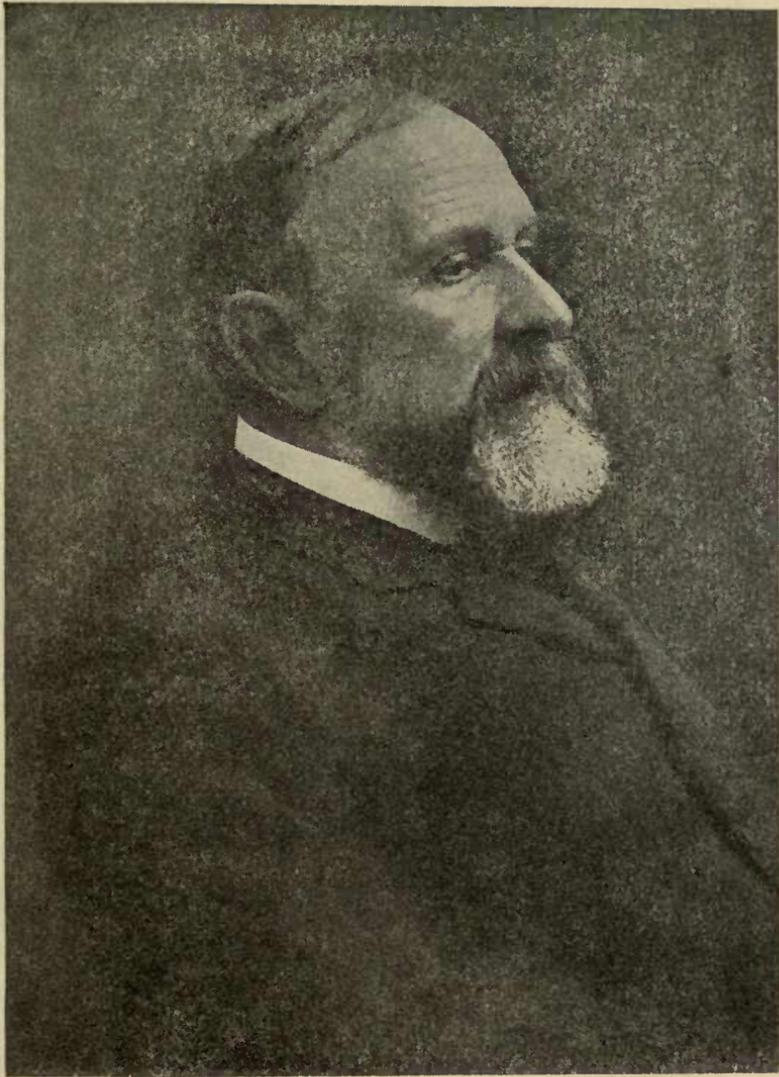
“Melodiously shall mount and vale reëcho thy renown,
 But now, Apollo, victor, of fame accept the crown.
 Thrice shall its royal radiance thee, Conqueror, extol.
 Thou hadst the faith: that marks thy nobleness of soul.
 Thou hadst the will to win: that proves a hero's heart.
 And thine the deed: thou art from thousands set apart.”

If, in Apollo's voyage of discovery, the “festal era” attains its zenith, it ends with Aphrodite's exploit. Spitteler's Aphrodite, like her classic prototype, is the goddess of love, and as such wondrously beautiful. But it is not the beauty and love of Apollo and Artemis; it is of a far lower, earthly type. A beautiful woman, all too conscious of her irresistibility, turning the heads of men with consummate skill, then reveling in the helplessness of her victims, such is Aphrodite. Being, however, mischievous rather than malicious, playful rather than cruel, she does not, like Hera, represent the demonic type of woman. Nevertheless, her rather enjoyable recklessness in turning things topsy-turvy in the world below, and her proud boast

of being the real ruler of things terrestrial excite the displeasure of Ananke, who resolves to put an end to all this dilly-dallying by rousing Zeus from happy inaction to a sense of responsibility. This brings us to the last part of the epic, which relates how from bitter disillusion as a lover and from utter disgust with mankind, Zeus rises to a truer conception of his duty toward a blindly groping, suffering humanity, pitiable in its pathetic plight rather than contemptible for its failings. Since it has been decreed that the "festal era" should last as long as Zeus' and Hera's love, it is Ananke's first move to poison Hera's heart against her lord and lover. Seemingly, then, the rupture which follows is due to a cruel decree of fate, but we recognize in the gradual estrangement of king and queen the old story of aversion begotten of satiety. It is the death of a love which, unlike that of Apollo and Artemis, is carnal rather than spiritual. When its flickering flame finally dies, it leaves Hera, whose gross selfishness is incapable of a nobler conception of life, utterly without anything to live for, and for that very reason she now becomes obsessed with a horrible fear of death. In wild desperation, she wanders from place to place, seeking to avert the inevitable, until, at last, she flees affrighted from a sight which deprives her of all hope. It is a vision in which the poet once more symbolizes the dreadful cruelty of life. Mounted on a steed of steel, pitiless Ananke, himself an iron colossus, belching flame and smoke, thunders along his course. Before him on his track a million little specks seem to be moving. What are they? Worms? No, not worms, but creatures endowed with reason.

"They're swinging banners, shouting 'Onward to the fight
For good against the bad' and 'Wrong must yield to right.'
They talk of 'Folly's Woe,' of 'Wisdom's blessed Weal,'
And clanging comes the monster upon its steed of steel.
A shout of terror; then they're crushed; a cry of pain;
A smoking, choking stench; and on it flies again."

Hera stands aghast at the appalling spectacle. A nobler soul would now be lifted up to a lofty resignation, would



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lose its own grief in an all-embracing compassion. But, far from rising above her wretched selfishness, Hera now kindles in her own heart a venomous hatred, not of Ananke, against whom she is impotent, but of helpless humanity. She still is queen and powerful. If she must suffer, she will avenge herself by making others suffer; she will be as cruel as Ananke himself.

In the meantime Zeus has recalled all the gods to Olympus, where their reunion occasions much joy and merrymaking. He, too, in a lonely hour beneath the starlit sky, has by a dread vision been reminded of Ananke's supremacy, and he now half jestingly, half seriously offers a prize for an answer to the very question which once was put to him: "What is the purpose of this world?" With playful rather than bitter irony, the poet reports:

"Of plausible solutions were offered not a few,
Each soothing to the heart, except it was not true."

And with equal playfulness the poet lets Aphrodite win the prize; she, with roguish glance and flippant tongue, had pronounced herself to be the only purpose of existence. After some meditation, Zeus accepts her answer though he gives it a wider and deeper sense than Aphrodite had intended:

"Though not an edifying thought, methinks, 't is true.
Life's greatest boon is this: Illusion's form and hue."

The love and cult of beauty alone can lift us above the wretchedness of existence even though what we call beauty be but a fair illusion. We are vividly reminded of Schopenhauer's philosophy, in which likewise an intellectual pessimism is offset by an esthetic imaginativeness so grandiose that his teachings have been a source of inspiration rather than of gloom. Nor is it difficult to name a poet of kindred spirit. As Spitteler's profound sympathy with suffering creation reminds us of his friend Widmann's *Saint and Beasts*, so Zeus' final answer to his own inquiry into the purpose of this world is quite in keeping with the pathetic

farewell greeting of the dying king in Widmann's *May-Beetles' Comedy*, who forgives the world its cruelty because it was so fair.

That this, however, is not our poet's only answer, we know from the heroic tales of the "festal era," above all from that of Apollo's glorious flight to Metakosmos. That in Ananke's world there is such a thing as nobility of soul, unselfishness of endeavor, and that in this rests mankind's salvation, not indeed from its doom, but from self-contempt, is brought out plainly again in the conclusion of the poem. Zeus has found mankind a mass of gullible fools, blind to real greatness and merit, easily swayed to stone today whom yesterday they acclaimed. Like Hera, but with better reason than she, he is filled with anger and loathing and determines to wipe this vermin off the face of the earth. The prayers of goddesses and gods are of no avail, but a dream which once more reveals the pitiable plight of all creation and threatens him with Ananke's wrath, changes his purpose, and now, at last, he bethinks himself of his real duty as god supreme. From Genesis, the pond of unborn souls, he summons the noblest and bravest and purest one. It is Herakles. Him he trains to be the champion of all that is lofty and true, and to defy fate itself. Then he sends him down to the earth of man, where he is needed. The one reward which Zeus holds out to him is that of fame. He offers him a farewell draught from the Spring of Truth and bids him remember Zeus' friendship when dark days shall come. Unafraid, Herakles starts on his journey, acclaimed by joyous shouts, full of youthful ardor and hope. But Hera, in her hatred of that very humanity of which she is the cruel queen, is not willing to let Zeus have his will. On the wanderer on whom Zeus has set such high hopes, she inflicts the curse of persecution on earth, of hopes blasted, of bitter disappointment. But when this dreadful prospect leaves Herakles aggrieved, to be sure, but not discouraged, the goddess, angered by her failure to humiliate him, adds the still greater curse

of human frailty. Endowed with a foolish heart, he shall become ridiculous in his own sight and in that of his fellow-men by slavish craving for woman's favor. This time the young hero recoils. He appeals to her generosity to heap every other curse upon him, but to spare him the blush of shame. Gloating over her success in humbling his proud heart, Hera departs, and now Herakles turns to Zeus in prayer; then, firm of purpose once more, willing to suffer all for the sake of truth, he wends his way toward the earth to which Zeus sends him.

Josef Victor Widmann, Spitteler's loyal friend and the first to recognize and proclaim the grandeur of the *Olympian Spring*, has this to say of epic poetry: that the great epics of world literature have all been a reflection not of prior ages, but of each poet's own day, and that in this, in their giving expression to the wishes and hopes, the joys and sorrows of the poet's own living age, lies their appeal to all eternity. This is true in fullest measure of Spitteler's *Olympian Spring*. To be sure, our all too realistic age has become somewhat unaccustomed and averse to what Matthew Arnold, in speaking of Homer, calls the "grand style." But Spitteler has demonstrated once more that there is a higher realism which calls for a higher form. To quote Widmann again: "We need the great epic because beside the good we must have the best: a thousand novels cannot take its place. There must be houses to live in, to be sure, but there must also be Cologne Cathedrals."

CARL SPITTELER

THEME*



ELL, my silver tonguéd bell,
Oh, thy secret prithee tell:
Dwellst where bats and night-owls roam,
Lonely in thy moldered home;
Tell me, whence thy solemn ring?
And who taught thee, pray, to sing?

When in gloomy shaft I lay,
Night of hell I saw always.
In this tower high and free
Through the whirling winds I see
Human sorrow graced by soul.
And thou wonderst why I toll?

“HERACLES’ PASSING TO EARTH”*

FROM THE “OLYMPIAN SPRING”

BUT now the king the host of heralds did invite.
“The harpers bring, the singing maids, into my sight,
That Heracles unto the lovely sounds of mirth,
With courage fortified, may tread his way to earth!”
Before the gate there rose the buzz of strings subdued,
And laughter from the throat, as if a bird had cooed,
Betrayed the sportive singing-maidens’ coming nigh.
Spake Zeus to Heracles: “It hurts to say good-by!”
And leads him to the court and fountain. At the brink
He fills a glass ’neath bubbling water and doth drink
A little, and the rest he gives his son with cheer:

* Translator: Margarete Münsterberg.

“Drink heartily!” he says, “this spring is true and clear!”

Then, with his hands upon the youthful shoulders:
“Man!

Now let there happen what there will and come what can:
Into a royal font baptismal thou hast dipped,
And from the dripping fountain-flood of truth hast sipped.

That thou hast drunk with Zeus out of one glass today
The might of thousand rascals cannot wrench away.
In some dark hour shouldst thou in want of comfort be,
Look up, remember then: thou hast a bond with me.
What I could do for thee is done. The retinue
That is to follow on thy way, come let us view.”

With playing of the strings and bursts of song about,
Now from the house the king doth with his son step out.
Hark: cracks of whips and jingling! Plumes and pinions bold!

A chariot train of princely Titans now behold.

“I welcome ye!” spake Zeus. “What do ye bring me now?”

“We came the son of Zeus with talents to endow.”

“Then thanks! For thus I know the way of kinsmen dear.”

And now round Heracles the princes formed a sphere:
Nobility from Artemis and from Apollo
Comes valor, thought so keen that no mistake can follow
From Pallas—Hermes now his glance with kindness fills,

And Aphrodite mirth into his heart instils.

Zeus spake and bound about the bosom of his son
The scroll of fate: “Now that thou really must be gone,
Receive my counsel: keep a stubborn head!
And be no simple fool—no rascal dread!”

The escorts then round Heracles with song and play
All turned into the fields to journey far away.

Ahead into the sky rang high the travel-song,
 And golden grain looked down the hillsides all along.
 No working-man, when Heracles did come in sight,
 But sent to him some little words of kindness bright.
 "Fare well on earth and prosper in the human land!"
 And every lad ran toward him with outstretched hand.
 A maiden laughs with eyes and mouth and cheeks—in
 zest
 A bunch of flowers now she fastens to his breast.
 And other human souls that came across his ways
 At him with wonder in their dreamy eyes would gaze:
 "Who cometh there whose steps sound victory so loud?
 This hero's stature is of upright stock and proud!"

A maiden, of the human beings one, but fairer
 By far than all the other maidens be and rarer,
 Drew near to him, her locks as if in slumber swaying,
 And made him halt, upon his breast her finger laying.
 Then pensively she bowed her forehead, sighing: "Oh,
 Where is the street that we on earth do not yet know
 — Oh, tell me this, thou great unknown, oh tell thou me —
 That over mountains, sombre forests, leads to thee?
 If 'twere a thousand miles through many nights and days,
 I would with quick'ning pulse o'ertake thee on thy ways.
 If sharpest thorns should give me wounds, I would not
 bind

My bleeding foot at all, until I thee should find.
 For see: on earth I know not where my home may be,
 So I will go and dwell where thou shalt be with me."
 Thus, dreaming, sighed the maid. Her speech was done;
 at last

She passed along her way with glances backward cast.
 And Heracles, with all about him loving, kind,
 In ecstasy of soul began within his mind:
 "On earth I see a mountain looming to remind me.
 A vow I'll make in solemn worship that shall bind me:
 Ye joyous fields of high Olympos, beauty-bright,

Thou sky that floatest o'er the clouds in lofty height,
Ye dear ones all, unto my vow oh witness bear:
Now for my work I live, not for myself, I swear,
With heart and hands, nor rest nor pleasure taking more,
To love the great and do what ne'er was done before.
Oh, ye my human brothers, human sisters dear,
Your friend I'll be, your help devoted and sincere.
And no reward, except upon accomplished deed,
A silent, knowing glance but from the best, I need.
Hail, earth! I gladly pay the tax of pain you ask,
With courage spirited I come to do my task."
Thus cried he. Harps resounded, choirs rejoiced in song,
And through the folds of golden fields they passed along.

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