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VOLUME I.

HERMAN OF UNNA

SERIES OF ADVENTURES

OF THE

ALFRED THE GREAT

IN THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GREAT UNIVERSAL COUNCIL
THE EMPEROR'S DEEDS AND HIS OWN
AND HIS OWN

IN THREE VOLUMES

WRITTEN IN LATIN

BY PROFESSOR KRAMER

THE SECOND EDITION

VOLUME I

L O N D O N

Printed and Sold by G. G. & Co. Stationers, Pall Mall
1841

HERMAN OF UNNA:

A

SERIES OF ADVENTURES

OF THE

FIFTEENTH CENTURY,

IN WHICH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL UNDER
THE EMPERORS WINCESLAUS AND SIGISMOND,
ARE DELINEATED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

WRITTEN IN GERMAN

BY PROFESSOR KRAMER.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOLUME I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. G. and J. ROBINSON, Pater-noster Row,

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PREFACE.

THE author of the following work is known in Germany, for the eminent situation he holds in one of their universities, and for his literary productions, particularly his celebrated piece of Alcibiades.

The present performance is generally interesting, not only for the merit of the story, but for the information it affords us respecting the secret tribunal, an institution which, though it could never be traced to its recesses, made monarchs tremble upon their thrones. It was composed of more than a hundred thousand individuals, held together by an invisible chain,

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known to each other, but indistinguishable to the rest of the world, whose sittings were covered with the most impenetrable secrecy; whose decrees were arbitrary and despotical, and were executed by assassins, whose steel seldom failed to reach the heart of its unfortunate victim.

In this situation we have a striking example of the evils in which ignorance and imposition are capable of involving mankind. The consequences that follow, when men yield up their understandings to the dictate of authority, are dreadful and destructive beyond the power of human penetration to calculate. This is but a small part, and, however dreadful and detestable, is comparatively an insignificant part, when we contrast it with auricular confession, the inquisition, the star-chamber, the court

of high commission, and the bastile. Let us remember this, and congratulate ourselves that we are born in an age of illumination, and at a time when the artifices of superstition and tyranny are fated to vanish before the torch of truth.

In addition to this high historical moral, this romance has another merit by which it is farther allied to history. It comprises a curious detail as to the character and adventures of the emperor Winceslaus, the empress Sophia, Sigismund, king of Hungary, and queen Barbe, together with the manners of the antient chevaliers, monks and nuns of those times. These portraits are in general of distinguished fidelity, and introduce us, as it were, to the personal intercourse of men, the dates only of whose transactions are handed down to us in chronicles.

The translator has prefixed to the work, an essay on the secret tribunal and its judges, by baron Bock, which will probably be thought an useful accompaniment to the majority of readers.

ESSAY

On the Secret Tribunal and its Judges, formerly existing in Westphalia.

Extracted from the second volume of the Miscellaneous Works
of Baron BOCK.

THE free counts and free judges of Westphalia, whose power and constitution rendered them so famous and redoubtable about the beginning of the fifteenth century, that they were on the point of experiencing as rigorous a persecution as the Templars, are at present nearly forgotten, few traces of them being preserved in history. The singularity of this institution, of which so little is known, and which has a near resemblance to that of the *illuminated*, so rapid in its progress within these two or three years, in Germany, induces me to give some account of it here.

The origin of the free counts and free judges may be traced back to the reign of Charlemagne. They pretended to be the successors of the imperial commissioners, (*missis per tempora discurrentibus*) who made their circuits through the empire once a year or oftener. To these commissioners complaints might be preferred against the governors of provinces, and other principal

officers; and before them might be pleaded causes of which the decision belonged exclusively to the emperor. It appears too, that the ordinary magistrates had no power to inflict severer punishment than pecuniary fines, so that these commissioners were the sovereign judges of almost all causes, having the power of condemning in the emperor's name to corporal pains, either those whose crimes were such, that the sentence was not allowed to be commuted for a mulct, or those, who, refusing to pay what they had been amerced by the common judge, incurred the guilt of rebellion.

The nature of this commission required two different kinds of proceeding; one public the other private. Sorcery, magic, and sacrilege, ranked in the class of crimes not to be committed; and respecting these inquiry must necessarily be made in secret. Hence may be inferred, that, if the first sittings of this tribunal were held in public, there were others to which every body might not be admitted.

As it was not practicable for these commissioners to remain long in one place, their proceedings were usually conducted in a summary way. In general two persons of known probity, sometimes more were chosen in each district: these, being sworn, were charged

to examine into the crimes of the accused, and on their report sentence was definitely passed. The names of these Jurors were carefully concealed, that they might not be mistrusted, so that people lived in perpetual disquietude, and a man could repose no confidence even in his own brother.

If we compare these extraordinary commissions, established by Charlemagne, with the secret tribunal, which was posterior, we shall find between them the most perfect resemblance.

The sittings of the latter were called free proceedings (*freidinge*); the place where they were held, free tribunal (*freie stuhl*); the commissioner a free count (*freigraf*); and the jurors, free judges (*frieschoeppen*). The duke of Saxony, who was the sovereign chief of the commissioners in the time of Charlemagne, held the same rank in the free tribunals; in which quality he had the right of presenting to every seat, and nominating the free counts, who were afterwards invested with their offices by the emperor as feodaries.

At this tribunal, as at the old, offences of all kind were tried; complaints were received against those, who refused to be tried by their regular judges; and the sittings were held in the open air, though there were others in secret, where the principal

business was conducted. From the latter circumstance is derived the name of the secret tribunal *heimliche amt*. The people knew not the free judges, who were bound by a terrible oath to deliver up father, mother, brother, sister, or friend, without exception, if they had done any thing cognizable by the tribunal. In such cases they were obliged to relate all they knew concerning the affair, to cite the culprits, and, if they were condemned, to put them to death wherever they found them. Thus the members of the tribunal, in quality of imperial commissioners maintained the authority of the emperor throughout the whole extent of the empire, without troubling themselves about the rights of the territories in which they exercised their power; and would infallibly have overturned every other territorial sovereignty, had they continued to subsist.

The secret tribunal is mentioned in history, as an establishment publicly known, so early as 1211, soon after the extinction of the grand duchy of Saxony. Before that time the free counts probably derived their powers from the dukes of Saxony, by whom they were undoubtedly nominated as sovereign chiefs of the imperial commissioners. It was not, therefore, till after the extinction of that duchy, that the secret tribunals were

known publicly. No prince of the empire would longer suffer in his dominions an imperial commission, independent of his control; and every one consequently endeavoured to become himself the chief of that commission. The archbishop of Cologne, who had obtained the duchy of Westphalia, was the only person who opposed this; and so effectually, that, throughout almost all Westphalia, he was acknowledged sole chief of the secret tribunals. For a time the free counts of that country were nominated by him, and of him received the investiture of their offices.

In this state the secret tribunals remained for some time: but towards the end of the fourteenth, and beginning of the fifteenth century, they suddenly rose to so formidable a degree of power, that all Germany became alarmed. I shall not, I believe, exaggerate, if I say, that at this period there were more than an hundred thousand free judges in the empire, who put to death, in all manner of ways, those whom the tribunal condemned. When in Bavaria, in Franconia, in Suabia, any one refused to appear before his regular judge, immediately recourse was had to one of the free tribunals of Westphalia, where sentence was passed, which was no sooner known to the order of free judges,

than a hundred thousand assassins were set in motion, who had sworn not to spare their nearest relation, or their dearest friend.

If a free judge were known to say to a person condemned by the secret tribunal, whom he wished to save, "The bread of any other country is as good as the bread of this," a mode of expression used on those occasions, his comrades were bound by their oath to hang him up on the first tree, 7 feet higher than any other criminal. To the sentences passed by this tribunal no demur was to be made. They must be executed out of hand, with the utmost punctuality, and the most implicit obedience, though the person to whose lot it fell had considered the person condemned as the most virtuous man in the world. This induced almost all persons of birth and fortune to seek admission into the order. Every prince had some free judges in his council; and there were some even amongst the magistrates of the Imperial cities*. In those days more gentlemen were free judges than are now freemasons. In the process which the city of Osnabruck had to carry on against Conrad

* Werlich relates, in his *Chronicles of Augsberg*, p. 2. c. 9. that there were thirty-six judges in the city of Augsberg alone. From this an estimate may be formed how many there were in the whole of Germany.

of Langen, when the latter was condemned, near three hundred free judges were present at the sitting, of whom part was of the order of nobility, part simple burghers*. In short, many princes also sought admission, as the duke of Bavaria, the margrave of Brandenburg, &c.

The servile obedience exacted by the secret tribunal from it's members, appears in the following speech of duke William of Brunswic, who was one of the free judges: " I must hang duke Adolphus of Sleswic, if he come to see me, or my comrades will hang me †."

It was extremely rare for any one to escape from the pursuit of the secret tribunal; for the free judges, not being known watched the moment when a prince went abroad from his palace, a gentleman from his castle, or a burgher from the place of his abode, to go by night and nail to his gate the citation of the secret tribunal. If he did not appear, after this ceremony had been three times performed, he was condemned; though he was usually cited a fourth time before the execution of the sentence; after which he was delivered over to the vengeance of that invincible army

* Beim Kreff. vons archid. Wefen, in App. p. 161.

† John von Busche de Reform. Monast. III. 42, p. 942-

of the free judges, which quitted not the pursuit till he was hunted to death.

When a free judge was not of himself strong enough to seize a criminal and hang him, he was bound not to lose sight of him, till he found a sufficient number of his comrades to enable him to execute his purpose, and these were bound to assist him, without asking any questions, on his making certain signs. They hung up the person condemned with a willow branch, instead of a rope, to the first tree in the high road, but never to a gallows. If they were obliged, by circumstances, to kill the criminal with a poniard, or in some other way, they fastened the corpse to a tree, and left their knife in it, that it might be known he had not been assassinated, but executed by a free judge.

All their operations were enveloped in the profoundest mystery, and even now it is unknown by what sign * the sages, as they called themselves, knew each other: still less are we acquainted with the greater part of their regulations. Though the emperor was reputed chief paramount of the order, what passed in the secret tribunal was for-

* In a writing at Hertfort have been observed the following letters: S. S. G. G. These according to some signify in German: *stoc, stein, gras, grein*, in English, "stock, stone, grass, grean." S. Pleffinger, T. IV. p. 490.

bidden to be revealed to him; only if he asked whether such a person had been condemned, he might be answered yes, or no. If, however, he asked the name of a person condemned, this he was not to be told. A proof of this may be seen in the answers the free counts gave the emperor Robert in 1404.*

The emperor, or the duke his representative, could make free judges no where but on the red soil, that is to say, in Westphalia: moreover it must be in a free tribunal, and with the assistance of two or three free judges, as witnesses. As to the mystical meaning of the appellation red soil, it has not yet been explained. Perhaps it was given to Westphalia, because the field of the arms of Saxony was gules. The free judges were so tenacious of their rights, that, king Winceslaus having intended to create free judges in Westphalia, of his own authority, when the emperor Robert asked how the real free judges were to behave to them, was answered, that they should hang them up on the spot without mercy.

The emperor alone had a right to grant protection to those who had been condemned by the secret tribunal. This was one of the reserves inserted by Charlemagne in his capitularies.

* App. datt. De Pace publica. p. 177,

The real cause of the decline of these tribunals was the territorial sovereignty the princes gradually acquired in their states. In their endeavours to suppress an establishment independent of their authority, they were so assiduous, that they finally succeeded. It has never been entirely abolished; however, by the laws of the empire, it has only been confined to its original purposes, and to certain districts. The emperor still bestows free tribunals as feoffs, and many are still to be found in the county of Mark, and in the duchy of Westphalia: but they have lost their independency, and exercise their functions only in the name of the sovereign in whose territories they are established.

It appears highly probable, that the prodigious increase of power acquired by the secret tribunals at the end of the fourteenth century, and beginning of the fifteenth, was owing to the anarchy which then prevailed in the empire. Neither the chamber of Wetzlar, nor the aulic council then existed; and it was impossible for an individual to obtain justice of a prince, or of any of the states of the empire: thus the secret tribunal for some time remedied this defect in the Germanic constitution, and rendered themselves equally feared and respected.

HERMAN OF UNNA.

A

*Series of Adventures of the Fifteenth
Century, &c.*

CHAPTER I.

“**I**T was on a Monday, the morrow of
“ All-Saints, that the emperor Win-
“ ceslaus conducted to his palace the
“ princess Sophia, daughter of John duke of
“ Bavaria.”

Thus begins the manuscript which we take for our guide. We cite this introduction, in order to observe to the reader, that our business is to copy, not to invent: and, having premised this circumstance, we shall convey him at once, without farther circumlocution, into the midst of those scenes of festivity, of which, as the manuscript informs us, the emperor's marriage was the occasion.

Already, in conformity to the customs of the age, had three days elapsed in every kind of pleasure. The fourth, that of celebrating the marriage, was at length ushered in, and it was usual to spend it in greater sobriety.

To this, it is to be ascribed, that the spirits of the emperor were joyless and depressed, when he received the hand of his bride: nor was it till the approach of the evening, when the ample halls of the palace of Prague began to be filled with the dancers, that he applied himself to his bottle, thence to acquire the gaiety and dissipation of thought, of which he had need, in his present so critical situation.

Indolence and love of ease had never, even in his early years, suffered him to join in the pleasures of the dance; and he resigned them now to the young men and maidens, noble and plebeian, whom the singularity of his character had induced him, without distinction, to admit to this entertainment. For himself, he retired to a corner of the hall to play with the duke of

Ratibor at draughts; an amusement, it must be confessed, more suitable to his dignity and age than that of dancing.

In another corner of the hall the august bride was seated, as little participating in the tumultuous joys of the assembly as her phlegmatic husband. Her person was charming, and had all the bloom of ripening youth. Educated in the solitude of a convent, she had readily left it to assume the Imperial diadem; and as readily would have returned, to spend there the rest of her days, the moment she beheld him by whom it was to be placed on her head.

The emperor Winceslaus, a prince who, though in the vigour of his years, (he was not yet forty) seemed already given up to indolence and sloth, the usual companions of old age; his countenance pale and cadaverous, his eyes dull and lifeless, unless when the circling glass gave them an appearance of animation; the emperor Winceslaus, whose mind was as destitute of noble qualities, as his person of the graces; he, whom, but for the external symbols of his station, it would have been impossible to distinguish

from the meanest of his subjects—what a husband for Sophia!

It is not known whether this unfortunate princess ever felt for another that attachment, which, at the foot of the altar, and against the wish of her heart, she had just vowed to Winceslaus. Certain, however, it is, that in this numerous assembly, in which she was first in beauty as in rank, there was not a man, if we except the old Duke of Ratibor, the intimate friend of her husband, to whom that husband could be preferred. Judge from this circumstance, how deplorable was the situation of this young maiden, whose heart, formed for tenderness, asked only to love; and who, as virtuous as innocent, regarded as criminal every reflection to which she was led, by comparisons, that continually obtruded themselves to the disadvantage of her lord.

Meanwhile, Sophia had been so fortunate as to find, in the duke of Bavaria, what few daughters meet with in a father; a friend, the confident of her most secret thoughts. It was, from affection to him, she had given her hand to Winceslaus;

which she would willingly have with-held, had she not known that her father had placed his happiness on seeing her empress. She saw no alternative, therefore, but to submit to her destiny, or destroy all the hopes of a man to whom she was sincerely attached, and become the instrument of his ruin and disgrace.

The duke of Bavaria, too prudent to abandon his daughter in so distressful a moment, and unable to prevail upon her to join in the tumultuous pleasures of her nuptials, partook of her solitude in this crowded assembly, listened to her sighs and her regrets, and, by the counsels of wisdom, traced out the conduct it would henceforth become her to pursue.

“ It is time, my daughter, and more
“ than time,” said he to her, “ to banish
“ the gloomy train of ideas that occupies
“ your mind. These comparisons, to the
“ disadvantage of your husband, this desire
“ of not being elevated to the rank destined
“ you by fortune, and of returning to your
“ convent, these sighs, these regrets, are

“ all too late. I shall always, indeed, be
“ ready to listen to them ; but, at the same
“ time, I will never cease to remind you of
“ the advantages attached to your elevation,
“ and to which you seem too much inclined
“ to shut your eyes.”

“ Advantages, my father!” exclaimed
Sophia. “ What! this crown! the title of
“ empress!”

“ Doubtless, these are trifles,” replied
the duke. “ But do you regard, as equally
“ insignificant, the power of promoting the
“ happiness of so many nations? The
“ power, perhaps, by your virtues, by that
“ angelic and irresistible sweetness, which
“ enchants even me, of restoring a depraved
“ prince to virtue, whom no other means
“ have been able to reclaim?”

Ah! thought Sophia, her eyes overflowing
with tears, this would be attempting to
transmute lead into gold.

“ Do you regard, as equally insignifi-
“ cant, the having paid obedience to your
“ father’s will, and rendered him happy by
“ the sacrifice of your inclinations to his?”

Sophia pressed the hand of the duke to
her lips, and assured him, that this motive

was her only consolation, when she reflected on the crowd of sorrows that were about to be her portion as the wife of Winceslaus.

“Tell me not,” said the duke, “tell me not, my child, of sorrow. Is it possible she should be unhappy, who—”

Reader, let me stop. Thou wilt easily divine what were the arguments which this prudent father employed with his daughter. History informs us, that the venerable duke was one of the most eloquent princes of his time; and that nothing could resist the force of truth when it proceeded from his lips. Nor were his endeavours ineffectual.

Sophia became calm for the moment: and her conduct, during a long and afflicting marriage with a man, who could inspire her with no sentiment but aversion; her fidelity, patience, and the attentive cares she bestowed on her husband, under the misfortunes in which he was frequently plunged by his misconduct, were certainly the fruit of the lessons she received, on this occasion, from her father, and which were interrupted by an event, that we shall reserve for the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE night being far advanced, the dancers ceased their sport. Part of the guests seated themselves to take refreshment, and rest their wearied limbs; others, tired of the scene, and intoxicated with wine, sunk in the arms of sleep. Among the latter, was the august spouse of Sophia. After a dispute with his antagonist at draughts, which, according to custom, he had decided in favour of himself, a vast goblet, which he twice emptied to celebrate his victory, laid him senseless in his chair.

Sophia and her father were too deeply engaged in conversation, to think whether he were asleep or awake; and, probably, nothing but the scene which on a sudden broke on them, could have distracted their attention.

Silence had reigned undisturbed in the hall for the space of half an hour, when it was interrupted by the sound of harmonious instruments, approaching at a distance, and

saluting the ear with tones far more grateful than the harsh and discordant ones which had animated the dancers. "What," cried Sophia, looking at her father, "do I hear?" The music continued to approach. "Celestial harmony!" added she, clasping her hands together; "as sweet, as affecting as that of the nuns in the choir of my convent! happy, happy days, that I spent in that peaceful retreat!"

Who does not know the power of harmony, even over hearts awake to no tender sentiment? What then must have been its effect on that of Sophia! Her eyes were filled with tears, and the spectacle that in a few moments presented itself, completed her emotion. The gates opened: a troop of young damsels appeared, and advanced with slow and measured steps to the place where Sophia was seated. They sung to the accompaniment of harps and flutes. Their song, had it been handed down to us entire, would, no doubt, have been far from exciting the applause of modern connoisseurs, for both the words and the music

were adapted to the unpolished taste of the age: yet such was their effect on the empress, that her inmost soul was moved; and it was, probably, the first occurrence of the day that had awakened in her the least sensation of pleasure.

“O thou!” sung the damsels, forming an ample circle round the empress, “who
“hast this day exchanged thy virgin zone
“for an imperial diadem, may happiness
“be the result of the exchange! Thou hast
“relinquished the title of maiden, to assume
“the more grateful appellation of mother
“of thy people. Accept it, then, with
“satisfaction; accept it with joy. Inspire
“our master with paternal feelings, and we
“will ever regard thee as the source of our
“happiness. Behold these flowers, to
“which the spring gives birth, and which
“we lay at thy feet amidst the frosts of
“winter. Our hearts, and these orna-
“ments, so dear to us, are the only pre-
“sents we have to offer.”—Thus saying,
the floor round Sophia was strewed with all
the native perfumes of spring, and the

damsels kneeled at the feet of their sovereign. While they eagerly endeavoured to kiss the hem of her robe, she who led the band, advanced with a timid air towards the princess, and kneeling, presented her a coronet of flowers in a vase of gold.

The empress, in the excess of her emotion, was unable to express her feelings; she held out her hands to the damsels that kneeled round her, and, regardless of her rank, stooped to embrace them.

“ Charming angelic creatures!” cried she, at length. “ Dearest children, with
“ what emotions you fill my heart! yes, I
“ will be your mother: through my instru-
“ mentality your lord and mine shall be-
“ come your father. But what are the
“ words of your song? O repeat them to
“ me again!”

They were preparing to execute her commands, when she made a motion with her hand and said, “ I would not hear
“ them sung; your music is enchanting,
“ but I wish only to have the words.”

The leader of the troop obeyed, and repeated what her companions had sung, with a grace and expression that gave new charms to what she delivered.

Sophia wept, and tenderly pressing the hand of the young maiden: "Yes," exclaimed she, looking at her father, "yes, " I swear to you, and to these innocent " young women, that I will be a mother to " them. All the affections of my heart " shall be engrossed by my people. Pa- " tiently will I endure——."

A glance from the Duke reminded her that she was in the midst of a numerous assembly, and not alone with him.—She stopt. After a moment's silence, "What is your " name?" said she, in the gentlest and most endearing tone, to the young damsel who had recited the words of the song. "Ida," replied the young woman, casting down her eyes.—"Ida!" resumed Sophia. "I " once knew a princess of that name: is it " possible you can be——?"

"My name is Ida Munster," said the young woman, blushing instantly

like scarlet. "I am the daughter of a statuary."

"The daughter of a ——— What! so handsome, of so noble a deportment, so ——— what shall I say? and the daughter only of a statuary!"

"My father is a very honest man, and a loyal subject of the emperor."

"Wonderful girl! matchless of thy kind!"

"O no!" cried Ida, retiring a few steps, and pointing to her companions. "How many among these are my equals! how many superior to me!"

We beg to inform the reader, that Ida was mistaken in this particular. Her companions were good sort of girls, and their persons far from disagreeable: but not one of them could at all compare with her.—In them every thing betrayed a want of education; every thing evinced that it was to the solemnity of the day alone they were indebted for an appearance above their station; while Ida, in spite of the elegance of her dress, seemed as much at her ease as the ladies of the court by whom she was sur-

rounded, and who sought by their whispers to abash her.

Sophia took in good part the indirect lesson Ida had given her. "You are all my children, you are all equally dear to me:" cried she, stretching out her hands to the young women, who had remained on their knees. "Rise, and let me give you some token of the satisfaction I have received. Here, pretty blue eyes; and you, my little sparkler, take these remembrances; and let them sometimes remind you of your empress, your mother."—Instantly she began to disencumber herself of her magnificent bracelets and diamond bows, and distribute them amongst the young women, who timidly withdrew their hands, on her offering them such valuable presents. "Take them, take them," said Sophia; who conceived that all the trappings she wore were her own, and was yet to learn, that an empress had less command over her jewels than the lowest person of her court; "take them, my dear children, and bear me in your remembrance."

Sophia was in an ecstasy, a delirium of joy: but it was a delirium from which she was quickly awakened by the princess of Ratibor, governess of the household, who whispered something in her ear. “Am I
“ empress,” replied Sophia, “and not at
“ liberty to dispose as I please of my orna-
“ ments?” Then recollecting herself:
“ This at least,” added she, “ is my own,”
loosing a chain of gold from her neck.—
“ Take it, my dear Ida, it was a present
“ from my godmother, the countess of
“ Wirtemberg, and is no jewel of the
“ crown.”—Ida made a low reverence, and
casting her eye modestly on herself said,
“ I am already more splendidly adorned
“ than becomes my station; yet, were it
“ not too bold in me, while I decline this
“ gift of my sovereign, I would request of
“ her another more agreeable to my wishes.”
“ Ask what you will: there is nothing I
“ can refuse you.”

“ O! one of those beautiful ringlets
“ that flow down that bosom: what a pre-
“ sent would it be to me! I should deem

“ it the proudest ornament and most distinguished mark of honor; it should be —” —“ Enthusiast!” cried Sophia, and at the same time she cut off a lock of her hair with such eagerness, that the point of the scissars scratched her neck, and tinged her handkerchief with blood.

Ida had sufficient presence of mind to be one of the first to stop the bleeding with her veil. The hall instantly resounded with the cry of “ the empress is wounded!” though neither the pain nor the wound was greater than the prick of a pin might have occasioned. The guests approached in crowds to witness the disaster, and the uproar that prevailed about Sophia, terrified her more than the trifle that had given rise to it. The trembling Ida and her companions were dismissed by the princess of Rator with the severity of a rigid governess; and the company broke up:

CHAPTER III.

ON the arrival of the young damsels, all the company had gathered together, and even Wincelauus was roused from his stupor of intoxication. The last incident redoubled their murmurs. Dissatisfaction was marked on the countenance of the emperor; the duke of Bavaria appeared embarrassed; and it is said, that the bride, before she retired, had received a severe reprimand from the princess of Ratibor. The old lady could not forgive Sophia, for excluding her from the conversation she had had with her father. A signal from the young empress had forced her to withdraw, after in vain observing, that explicit orders were given her not to quit her majesty for a moment. The spite she had conceived against the princess, in consequence of this exclusion, manifested itself in the remonstrances she made her,

respecting the conduct it became her to pursue in her new situation, and her recent behaviour to the young women. The extreme pleasure Sophia had felt from a circumstance of so trivial importance as the coronet of flowers, familiarity with persons of no condition, her conversation with Ida, her presents, and particularly the adventure of the lock of hair, were all canvassed and represented in colours so unfavourable, that Sophia herself was confounded, and carried her condescension so far as to acknowledge, that she had gone too great lengths, that she did not yet know what decorum permitted an empress to do, and that she had too much of the simplicity usually acquired in a convent, of which she would endeavour to correct herself.

Sophia was conducted to her chamber, and there compelled a second time to hear, from the mouth of her husband, the lecture she had already received from the governess of the household. The reproaches of Winceslaus were chiefly respecting the jewels of the crown, which the empress had

been so liberally distributing, but which were preserved by the interference of the princess of Ratibor. "I believe," said he to her, as he examined the jewels inclosed in their casket, "that you would have given away even your wedding ring."—"O no," replied Sophia, "I am not ignorant how necessary it is I should keep that to remind me of my duty."—Winceslaus was too stupid to perceive the point of this reply; but the bride was alarmed at what she had said. She was afraid of being asked whether she had need of such a monitor; and she hastened therefore to give another turn to the conversation. She possessed one of those gentle and benevolent hearts, which, if ever they inflict an involuntary wound, are eager to apply to it the healing balm; and soften, by obliging expressions, the poignancy of a thoughtless repartee.—"Have not I too received a present?" said she, showing Ida's coronet of flowers, which was placed on a table in its vase. "But no: this precious gift is not for me; I lay it at the feet of my emperor."

Winceslaus must have been even a more contemptible being than he was, had he not been moved by the affecting air with which the charming Sophia offered him her coronet. He clasped her in his arms, called her a good girl, which was one of his tenderest expressions, and then let her go, in order to set down the gift, which, in his eyes, was of no value. But perceiving the golden vase, in which Ida had presented the coronet of flowers, and to which Sophia had paid little attention, he exclaimed with astonishment, "What is this?"—"It is the vase in which the flowers were presented to me", said she.—"And this silk handkerchief?"—Sophia imagined, that it had been employed as a screen to the flowers, that the moisture of the air might not diminish their bloom.—Winceslaus shook his head, as he removed the handkerchief, fancying he understood this method of making presents. — "Ah," resumed he, contemplating the vase with complacency, the weight of which assured him that it was equal to a good number of crowns: "Ah,

“ I thought no one would have presumed
“ to offer an empress so paltry a present as
“ a coronet of flowers. Let us calculate
“ the value of this vase ?”

While Winceslaus was making his calculation, Sophia withdrew to a window to hide her tears. She felt a sensation which she could not define. Her heart was so oppressed, that she was ready to faint. She opened the casement for air. “ O
“ heaven !” said she in a low voice, and with a sigh, “ grant me strength always to
“ acquit myself with propriety of the long
“ and painful task I have to perform.
“ Such sentiments in an emperor ! and that
“ emperor my husband ! What a being !”

“ The vase,” cried Winceslaus at last,
“ is worth precisely three hundred crowns.
“ What is the name of the young woman
“ who brought it you. ?”

“ Ida Munster,” answered Sophia, with a voice that almost betrayed the tears she had been shedding.

“ Ida Munster ! very well. But come,
“ my dear, why do you remain so long
“ exposed to the cold air ? What ! you have

“ been crying! Is any thing the matter
“ with you?”

“ Alas; what can be more distressing,”
replied Sophia, clasping her hands, “ than
“ to receive presents from one’s subjects,
“ and not have the power of requiting
“ them? The trifles I distributed to those
“ kind-hearted girls were taken from them,
“ while I am obliged to keep what they
“ have given me.”

“ You are mistaken; the present you
“ would have made them was incompar-
“ ably greater than that which you re-
“ ceived.”

“ And is it not thus sovereigns should
“ recompence their subjects?”

“ But the people are intended to share
“ with their emperor what they gain under
“ his protection.”

“ Oh! take without scruple what your
“ princes, your nobles may give you: but
“ these tradesmen, these artists, these
“ mechanics, who——”

“ I tell you again, you are mistaken.
“ Among this class of my subjects there are

“many who are able to pay, and they do
“so. The nobility are poor in comparison
“with them: labour and industry procure
“treasures to these, which the great can
“only acquire by plunder and the spoils
“of an enemy.”

Winceslaus was in the right: the circumstances of the different ranks of society were nearly as he had depicted them. But Sophia was not to be conciliated by this logic, and she continued to weep; perhaps from regret at not being able to make compensation for the present she had received, and partly, perhaps, from a prospect of the melancholy pilgrimage that lay before her.

The emperor called his valet to undress him; and Sophia's women entered to put their mistress to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

SOPHIA was not rendered so happy by her new situation as to forget, like many young married ladies, every preceding attachment and pleasure. The scene of the young damsels presenting their flowers, the only one she had found interesting during the celebration of her nuptials, had never quitted her mind. It was the last object of her thoughts as she resigned herself to sleep, and the first image that presented itself when she awoke in the morning. She sent for Ida, but Ida was indisposed. She sent a second time, ordering the messenger, if Ida were unable to come to court, at least to enquire the names of her companions. These, not being indisposed, repaired immediately to the empress.

The generous wife of Wincellaus could not support the idea of receiving a present from persons of that class of her subjects, which is supported by industry, without making them a return. She accompanied,

therefore, her obliging thanks to the young women, with presents that could not be taken from them, as they constituted no part of the jewels of the crown, but had been the property of Sophia while she was yet unmarried.

The princess of Ratibor deemed both the presents and the thanks superfluous; and conceived that the empress compromised her dignity by the conversation she held with such plebeian simpletons. The term *simpletons*, which she employed on this occasion, was not altogether improper. In the whole company there was not a single *Ida*. They knew nothing beyond singing their song, and answering Sophia with awkward timidity. The empress questioned them concerning *Ida*, being at a loss to comprehend how this young woman had been able so far to surpass her companions, who were of the same class as herself, and must consequently have received the same education. Through the answers they gave, she sometimes perceived traces of secret envy, sometimes of contempt for

merit which it was impossible for them to attain. Sophia discovered, however, from their account, that Ida was an only child; that her parents were rich and loved her tenderly; that she was too handsome, too attractive, to be loved by her companions; and that her inclination for solitude, owing to a consciousness of her superiority, or, as they termed it, her pride, seldom permitted her to mix in the circle, in which she had performed, the day before, so brilliant a part.

The many commendations bestowed on these young women by the empress, would have been more than sufficient to procure them the admiration of the whole court, had not Ida so far outshone them, that her name was repeated from every mouth, and her idea alone occupied the attention of every mind. The young courtiers had not forgotten the inexpressible grace with which she had presented herself. They enquired into the minutest circumstances respecting her; besieged her father's house; asked where she was to be seen; were

astonished at not meeting her any where, and pitied her for not being born to a more elevated rank. Among them, however, was one, the young Herman of Unna, a gentleman of Westphalia, whose conduct was the reverse of all this. He never pronounced her name, asked no questions concerning her, and neither pitied nor admired her in public: but, filled with her idea, he thought of her incessantly in private, and had discovered the church to which she regularly repaired to hear mass, before his comrades had gone through half their researches.

Herman was only eighteen years of age. Admitted early to the court of Winceslaus, which was far from being the best possible school, his principles upon the chapter of love, his virtue and his morals, could not be supposed very strict; and of course he regarded his inclination for a girl, whom, from disparity of rank, he could never think of marrying, as a matter of trivial importance. A favourite and confident of the emperor, in whose service he had been, almost from

infancy, in quality of page, he had frequently been his agent in a variety of intrigues; which proved Winceslaus to have had little delicacy in affairs of love, and that he could make himself happy without scrutinizing matters too nicely. Thus circumstanced, whence was Herman to have imbibed sentiments suitable to his birth and the virtue of Ida? It must be acknowledged, however, in his favour, that he had formed no criminal designs: he suffered himself to be led on by his passion, without once looking forward to its consequences.

Notwithstanding every attempt of our young courtier, he could not gain access to the house of old Munster. His door was open to those only who had business with him; and he had too much penetration to be the dupe of artifice. Herman was obliged, therefore, to content himself with the pleasure of seeing the object of his attachment at the church to which she went daily to offer up her orisons; but her devotion was too sincere, her attention too profound, for a single glance to stray

towards her admirer. Besides, she seldom appeared at church without a large thick veil, not put on to attract the eyes of gazers, rather than screen the countenance from observation; for it was as coarse and unadorned as the veil of a common mechanic's daughter.

It was only on Sundays, when her father went to church in his best suit of clothes and with a sword by his side, that she appeared with her face unveiled, walking by her mother. A new light then seemed to Herman diffused through the aisle, though it was a light that shone not for him. What would he not have given for one of those looks, so tender and so devout, that were directed sometimes to St. Ursula, and sometimes to the Virgin!

The name of Ida, which had been so often repeated at court the week after All-Hallows, was soon so completely forgotten, that scarcely was it remembered at Christmas. Sophia herself had ceased to recall her image. The attachment she had felt for her, was, doubtless, too vivid to be last-

ing. Ida, besides, had taken no steps to keep it alive. After the first marks of esteem she had received from the empress, she no more appeared at court to solicit new ones; and, probably, had she not been guilty of that omission, those testimonies of affection would insensibly have diminished. Sophia was a woman and a princess. Her partiality for Ida was, at bottom, nothing more than the sentiment felt by a young person, yet new to the world, towards those who relieve her from the languor of a wearisome circle, and excite sensations of pleasure in her breast, where only chagrin existed before.

Independently of all this, new subjects of reflection daily presented themselves to the mind of Sophia, and entirely occupied her thoughts. Every day discovered to her some new imperfection of her husband, gave her fresh light respecting her unfortunate situation, or brought her acquainted with persons who rendered that situation still more painful. Shortly after her marriage, a lady appeared at court, and was

presented to her under the name of madam von Baden. To Sophia her manners appeared so vulgar, that she would have paid no farther attention to her, had she not found her at supper seated by the side of the emperor, and remarked, from their familiarity, that they had long been acquainted.

Sophia had been brought up in a convent, in total ignorance of the occurrences of the times. The adventures of Wincelans with the fair maid of Baden, were known to every body but her. Become empress, no one was so officious as to acquaint her with the frailties of her husband; and had it been otherwise, she would probably have had the goodness to place to the account of the past, his still subsisting attachment to Susanna.

Besides, to see madam von Baden was sufficient. Her air was indolent and heavy; her look bold and immodest; her cheeks crimson; and her bloated face could boast no other charm than a tolerable fine set of teeth. That such a woman should capti-

vate an emperor, and that emperor the spouse of Sophia, appeared an utter impossibility.

Winceslaus himself took the trouble, during supper, to recite his adventures with Susanna, omitting, however, some few particulars; and Sophia saw, in his attentions to that lady, nothing more than ill-timed, or excessive proofs of gratitude, which she did not fail to interpret with her usual indulgence. The commendations which the emperor bestowed on madam von Baden, induced even Sophia to shew her some esteem. Soon, however, she was made acquainted with the foolish amours of Winceslaus; and she was then first convinced, that to all her other troubles must be added that of having a rival, and a rival too so unworthy of her. She frequently wept in secret; and the princess of Ratibor once surprising her in tears, seized that opportunity of gaining her confidence, which she had before attempted in vain.

Sophia thought she could not deposit her griefs in the bosom of a person attached

to her more sincerely. The sole confident of her most secret thoughts, her father, (to whom her husband had hinted, in a manner far from equivocal, a desire of his absence,) had quitted Prague a few days after the marriage; and his unhappy daughter was thus left, without resource, to the guidance of her own discretion. For the first time in her life Sophia embraced the governess of the household; and though this lady seemed to employ herself only in giving her disagreeable information respecting the cause of her chagrin, yet she found a sort of consolation in speaking of her misfortunes, and giving free vent to her complaints, and to the contempt she felt for so unworthy a husband.

From this moment the princess of Rati-
bor began to assume despotic authority over the empress. She exalted or depressed whom she pleased; prescribed to Sophia what objects to love and what to hate; and, as Ida was forgotten at court, it would not have been allowable to revive the remembrance of her, had even the empress desired it.

CHAPTER V.

HERMAN, meanwhile, never ceased to think of his beloved Ida. The difficulty he found in speaking to her, or obtaining a single look, inflamed him the more, and exalted her in his eyes. Her obscure birth, which at first had been a matter of so total indifference, now began to disquiet him. He wished either to raise her to his own rank, or reduce himself to a level with her's. To effect this, a thousand romantic expedients occurred to his mind: for though romances did not then exist, the heads of young persons were not less fertile in imagining extraordinary adventures, which amused them as much as books of this stamp amuse our contemporaries.

To elevate Ida to an equality with himself, to address her with honourable designs, and to make her his wife, appeared to Herman impossible. The consent of the emperor to an unequal match might, probably, be obtained; for on that head, as

as on many others, he was extremely indulgent; but Herman had relations who were not so indifferent. He was poor, and the place of chamberlain, which he had filled with distinction for six months, was far from lucrative. It is true, the parents of Ida were rich; nevertheless, all things considered, Herman began to be of opinion, that he should find the second road to happiness the most easy. He resolved, therefore, to reduce himself to a level with her; and to sacrifice to his love, rank, family, and all his future hopes of preferment.

It is not known what steps he took to obtain this end. He probably attempted to gain admission into old Munster's house as an apprentice: but whether the crafty statuary recollected the figure he had so often seen in different disguises, or whether he had other reasons to be on his guard, it appears that Herman failed in his scheme; for our manuscript represents him, shortly after the period in which he must have made those attempts, in as hopeless a situation as at the commencement of his amour.

We have observed, that Herman was the favourite and confident of Winceslaus. Pale and dejected, he was more officious than ever in attending his master; and all his looks seemed to express the desire he felt of being asked the cause of his despondency, and receiving proffers of assistance. But Winceslaus said not a word. He resembled not those princes who are always ready to gratify the wishes of their favorites; on the contrary, he possessed one of those cold and insensible minds, which receive from those around them but slight and fugitive impressions. One might have been tortured before his eyes without his betraying any emotion; have died without his perceiving it; and returned to life again without his expressing any astonishment.

This frigid indifference to the love-sick torments of a chamberlain of eighteen, will, probably, be thought of little importance, though to him, whom it concerned, it doubtless appeared otherwise.—But to go on with our story,

Herman was of the number of those fortunate mortals, who frequently owe to some unexpected event, the accomplishment of their dearest wishes. To the languishing looks of our hero, the emperor paid no attention, and understood nothing of their meaning. Meanwhile, regardless and ignorant as he was of them, he resolved to employ his young confidant in a business as auspicious to his views as Herman himself could have desired.

“Herman,” said he to him one day, “what am I to think of thee? Art thou blind, or dost thou wish not to see the chagrin of thy master? Why dost thou not ask what disturbs my repose?”

Herman bowed, without answering; for what indeed could he have said? How was it possible to discover, in features like those of Winceslaus, traces of sorrow, or of any other sentiment? How conjecture inward trouble from the countenance of a person whose manners were at best neither mild nor engaging? The reproach of the emperor was supremely unjust, and silence

was the only answer that could be given it.

“Yes, Herman,” continued Wincelaus, “I am in the greatest embarrassment; and as you have extricated me from difficulties on so many former occasions, I am disposed to think you may serve me on this.”

Again Herman bowed, and felt a secret satisfaction from the words of the emperor, as they recalled to his memory certain adventures in which he had been the principal actor, and even kindled in his heart a vague kind of hope of speedily attaining his purpose.

“I am in the greatest want of money,” resumed the emperor. “The dower of my wife has been all swallowed up by the expences of the nuptials. You know I was not sparing. Forty thousand florins were a good round sum, and required me to be generous. Well, they are gone; and with them have I obtained an insupportable censor of my conduct. This is what I have left; while that alone which

“ rendered her person desirable is vanished
“ for ever.”

The heart of Herman revolted at this language. He had long indeed witnessed the imprudent prodigality of his master, as well as his blindness to the knavery of those by whom he was surrounded: but forty thousand florins, the whole dower of a princess considered as rich, and which were equal to the portion which the king of England had lately given with his daughter, to the great satisfaction of his son-in-law—the dissipation of such a sum confounded all the ideas of Herman; and had not the emperor named madam von Baden, to whom he ascribed a part of this extraordinary expence, it would not have been possible for our young chamberlain to have unriddled the mystery.

Herman was not unacquainted with the character of Susanna. He had heard of her rage at the marriage of Wincellaus; he knew that she had been daring enough to threaten her paramour with discovering certain circumstances to Sophia and her

father, that would infallibly have broken off the match; and it required, therefore, little penetration to guess, that her silence had been purchased by large sums of money, which the emperor ingeniously carried to the account of the necessary expences of the nuptials.

“What is to be done?” continued Wincellaus. “Do not suppose I am poor, because my coffers are empty. In those of my subjects there is money enough, and the only question is, to devise how to convey it into mine. Old Munster, for example, who on the day of my wedding, made so handsome a present to my wife, is certainly rich. I am told that he can give his daughter a portion equal to the sum I received with the princess of Bavaria. You see, from this, that he is able, and of course it is his duty to assist me. Go to him in my name, and ask him to lend me a thousand crowns. A prince is never without resources for discharging his debts; and I empower you to grant him permission on the spot,

“ to wear on Sundays, like the nobility, a
“ gold chain round his neck ; a permission
“ which many other artists have long solicit-
“ ed in vain.”

Herman was thunderstruck. Joy at having at last found a pretext to enter the dwelling of Ida, to speak to her father on behalf of the emperor, to offer him a mark of honour that would so greatly distinguish him from others of his station, absorbed all his thoughts ; and it was not till he arrived at Munster's door, that he began to be uneasy respecting the manner in which his proposals might be received, and to reflect on the inconveniences attached to this mark of the emperor's confidence. He feared that this embassy, if successful, would be often repeated ; and that it might not merely diminish the wealth of a family become so dear to him, but in time reduce Ida and her father to poverty and wretchedness.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE reflections of this nature were rapidly passing in the mind of our youth, he had already knocked twice at Munster's door. It was opened by an old domestic. The figure of Herman was of the class of those to which the father of Ida had forbidden access to his house. Young, handsome, and elegantly dressed, his appearance was by no means calculated to obtain a favourable reception from a man, who, in his master's absence, considered himself as the guardian of his honour. Besides, this trusty domestic imagined that he had already seen his face, and shewn him the door on some former occasion; which was far from being unlikely, considering the various attempts Herman had made to introduce himself.

The door, therefore, was shut in his face, without ceremony; and before our hero had time to mention whom he wanted, a surly voice exclaimed, that his master

was gone out. — “But his wife,” said the young courtier, in a gentle and soothing accent, “is she at home?”—The answer would probably have been the same, had not the question reached Ida’s mother, whom chance had luckily brought within hearing.

Herman heard through the door a slight altercation between the wife and the servant. He knocked again: when she obliged the merciless porter to withdraw, and she herself opened the door. The appearance of our hero drew from her a profound courtesey. “May I beg the favour of your name, sir knight!” said she, with an air of embarrassment, and blushing.

“My name is of little consequence,” answered Herman, with impatience; “but the embassy with which I am charged, gives me a title to admission every where: I come on the part of the emperor.”—“Of the emperor!” cried she: “I hope not to bring us ill news; for, thank God, I know not that we have any

“-thing of which to accuse ourselves: and
“ as to what money can purchase——But
“ have the goodness to walk in; I will just
“ see where my daughter is, and wait upon
“ you in a moment.”

Herman was conducted into a parlour, where the first object that met his eyes was a beautiful young woman whom he instantly would have taken for Ida, had she not appeared a thousand times more charming: he was soon, however, convinced that it was Ida herself.

Our young lover had never seen the object of his passion but with the thick veil she wore at church, or in a very unbecoming dress, which was then in fashion. The high stiff collar, the enormous folds of the gown, and the antient gothic head-dress; left, indeed, this beautiful young woman charms enough easily to be distinguished from her companions, disguised in the same manner; but how different did she appear in her undress, with no other ornament than a slight veil fastened to her lovely tresses!

Herman stood motionless as a statue; and Ida, occupied at her spinning wheel, scarcely raised her eyes. In those days, it was customary for young women to put some restraint upon their looks, and to repress the eager stare of curiosity.

At his entrance, the mother had requested our hero to sit down, and expressed a hope that he would not be tired of waiting. But, so near his Ida, it was impossible for him to feel any sensation of weariness.—Intoxicated with the pleasure of beholding her, he thought not of changing his posture, and he stood, nailed as it were to the floor, with his eyes fixed on the lovely spinster. Once or twice she opened her lips to remind the young man of her mother's request, but instantly closed them again, doubting whether it would not be a breach of decorum to address herself to a stranger.

The behaviour of Herman was equally extraordinary. The charming spinster let fall her distaff: and our hero, instead of running with eagerness to take it up, and availing himself of the opportunity it afforded

of approaching and speaking to the object of his affection, suffered her to stoop for it herself, without making the least movement to her assistance.

Ida, to whom this trifling accident had not happened from coquetry, blushed with shame, and resumed her spinning with fresh eagerness, careful to avoid all seeming reproach of the stranger for his want of address. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to say, whether, had the same event been repeated, it would, after the failure of the first opportunity, have been successful in bringing about a conversation between the lover and his mistress. Be this as it may, an insurmountable obstacle was put to it by the question which the mother who entered at this moment, addressed to Herman.

“And what intelligence from the emperor does his envoy bring us?” said she, again pressing Herman to be seated, while she remained herself modestly standing before him. The chamberlain was a little embarrassed; he even blushed, a quality at present rare among courtiers, and found it

no easy matter to execute with propriety the commission with which he was honoured. Nor does our manuscript relate the manner in which he acquitted himself; it only mentions the effect it produced on Mrs. Munster, who smiled, and, giving a significant nod to Ida, observed: “ Now, daughter, my dream is out. In your father’s absence, I thought I found roses in our garden; now roses signify honors.”

Thus saying, she went to a large chest, which she opened with some noise, and took out of it a small ebony casket. “ I am highly delighted,” said she, seating herself by the side of Herman, and emptying the casket on the table, “ that my husband is not at home, to deprive me of the honor of rendering a service to so great a personage. Here, sir knight, take what you please, take all without counting it, except this chain indeed, and this ring, which belong to my daughter.— Assure our emperor of my profound respect, and tell him that we love him with all our hearts since he has given us

“so good an empress. We hope that
 “through her, things will be better than
 “they have been.”

Herman was surprised at the readiness with which this woman sacrificed, what he conceived to be all her wealth, to a sovereign like Winceslaus. He looked at her with astonishment; said a few words to assure her that the sum, whatever it was, should be faithfully repaid, though he believed no such thing; and then spoke of the favour which the emperor had authorised him to bestow on Munster, as a recompense (or as was most likely a compensation and requittal for the loan.) “But who,” added Herman, “has the greatest right to wear
 “the gold chain? he, for whom it was intended
 “by the emperor, or the generous woman
 “who has displayed such a readiness to
 “serve him?”

“My husband is not vain enough for
 “that,” answered Mrs. Munster with a smile; “and, I should certainly make a
 “charming figure among the females of my
 “station, decorated with such an ornament!”

“ Be that however as it may, if the emper-
“ or should be disposed to recompence
“ me, I mean, upon a proper occasion, to
“ ask him a favor of another kind, which I
“ hope he will not refuse me.”

Herman assured her, that he would obtain for her from the emperor whatever she desired, and that he believed he might authorize her, without detriment to the favour which she intended to ask, to wear at present in public any ornament she pleased.

Our young man, who transferred to the mother a portion of the sentiments which he felt for the daughter, spoke with such warmth, that the smile of self-complacency was again lighted up in the countenance of Mrs. Munster. “ I am happy,” said she, “ to find that you have such influence with your master, and I thank him for the permission he gives me to use my own jewels, which I may now at any rate wear in my house, should I feel so disposed. But as you are so much in favor with the emperor, how is it he does not permit you to wear a gold chain? I have

“ seen you, I think, at church, and other
“ places, but never with this badge of
“ honor; and yet you are a nobleman?”—
Herman blushed—The narrowness of his
fortune, and the mean parsimony of Win-
ceslaus, he well knew to be the cause of this
omission.

“ What,” continued she, “ would you
“ say, were I for once to act the emperor,
“ and decorate you with a chain? Ida, will
“ you give your consent?” The mother,
as she said this, held up a chain, which she
had just before declared to be her daughter’s.
Ida made a sign of approbation. “ Come
“ hither then,” resumed the mother, “ and
“ with your own hands place about his
“ neck the present which I make him at
“ your expence.

Ida was confused. She rose however,
at length, upon a second summons of her
mother, with trepidation approached our
hero, took the chain, put it about his neck
and returned hastily to her distaff, without
scarcely looking at Herman, while he, al-
most beside himself, gazed on her with rap-
ture, and would have caught her in his arms.

A long silence ensued. Ida sat at her reel, with her eyes fixed upon it, but without resuming her occupation: Herman regarded her with tenderness unutterable; and the wife of Munster, sitting in a chair behind them, observed them both with attention.

This dumb scene was at length put an end to, by the latter asking our youth, if he was not the chevalier Herman of Unna?—Herman was about to answer in the affirmative, and to ask by what means she had come to the knowledge of his name, when Mrs. Munster, hearing her husband's foot-step in the porch, requested him to conceal Ida's present in his pocket. He obeyed, without asking the reason, and Munster made his appearance. He was a good looking old man, and as decently dressed as his station permitted. A loftiness of carriage announced the independent citizen, who considered himself as equal to any of the nobility; but such goodness beamed from every feature of his countenance, that it was impossible not to pardon in him so slight a failing. The presence of the cham-

berlain excited his surprise. He looked with severity at his wife, ordered Ida to withdraw, and then asked Herman what he wanted.

The name of the emperor softened a little his features, and the commission with which the envoy was charged caused him to smile. "I am charmed," said he, as soon as he was informed of what had passed, the present of Ida excepted. "I am charmed that my wife has acted precisely as I should have done myself. The next time the emperor has occasion for me, and it will not, I trust, be long first, it will then be my turn. We are bound to sacrifice to our sovereign both our fortunes and our lives. In one of the loyal cities of his majesty I found assistance and protection when I was poor and persecuted. It is in his dominions I have gained a portion of what I possess: and he has a right to share it with me. On the part of your master, therefore, you may come, young man, as often as he shall desire you; but, on your own account never."

After such a declaration, Herman was desirous of prolonging the conference: but the answers he received were brief. He spoke of renewing his visit, and added some compliments to Munster: but the old man was silent. Herman then retired. What, indeed, would it have availed him to have staid? She, who so powerfully attracted him, his dear Ida, was withdrawn; and her mother, before so complaisant, was so changed since the arrival of her husband, as not to be known for the same person.

Our hero, with slow and pensive steps, returned to the palace, revolving, as he went, every event that had passed. Ida's looks, the mother's kindness, the present she had in so flattering a manner bestowed upon him by the hand of her daughter, and a thousand things beside, occupied his thoughts, enchanted him with hopes of which he examined not the solidity, and made him forget his chief business, and the success with which it had been attended: nor was it till he felt the burden of the money which the good old lady had given

him, a burden which, in the first moments of his joy, he had not perceived, that he recollected what he had to do, and hastened to impart to his master the event of his commission.

It was a law with Winceläus never to be satisfied; and he departed not from it on the present occasion. The present which the generous citizen had made him, fell a few crowns short of the sum he had requested. In his eyes the wealth of Munster appeared inexhaustible, and he talked of having shortly a second recourse to it.

His confident paid little attention to what he said. He wished to be alone, that he might again reflect on his adventure, and contemplate at leisure the chain he had received; a jewel of no inconsiderable value, and with which he was in every respect satisfied, except that the medallion attached to it, instead of representing the charming features of Ida, exhibited the bearded visage of an old count of Wirtemberg, respecting whom he had little curiosity.

While Herman gave a loose to his reflections, and recalled to his mind the beauty of Ida, and the kindness of her mother, he must certainly have forgotten the severity of the father; for, the next morning, as soon as it was light, he repaired to the house of old Munster, and was surprised at not finding admittance. He was told that neither the master nor the mistress was at home; that it was to be presumed, after so recent an application, he had no commands from the emperor; and that he could have no other business there.

It was to no purpose that he persevered in his visits, he was always dismissed in a similar manner, and he began at last to wish that the emperor might again have need of money, and might apply, as before, to the strong box of Munster. But Winceslaus had too much cunning not to have discovered other more copious sources from which to supply his wants. He created earls, counts, princes, exacting from each a sum proportionate to the dignity conferred. He also invented a new way

of enriching himself by the appointment of free-judges, and other officers of that dreadful tribunal, by the terrible arm of which justice was then administered in secret. It is true, the emperor had no right to such nominations, the privilege belonging exclusively to Westphalia, where those tribunals were in force. But Winceslaus was a man little given to scrutinise things too narrowly; he took what did not belong to him, as if it had been his own, and felicitated himself on the advantages to be derived from it.

CHAPTER VII.

A SECRET enmity subsisted between count Victor of Milan, and a prince of the house of Visconti. The cause of their misunderstanding, and the motives that prompted them to reciprocal injuries, are foreign to our history. Ambition, however, and a thirst of vengeance, brought the former to the court of Winceslaus, to whom he offered a hundred thousand florins,* (an enormous sum in those days) if the emperor would raise him to the dignity of a duke. Winceslaus, deaf to the remonstrances of the princes of the empire, who would have dissuaded him from compliance, listened only to his interest; and granted to the count, in spite of the laws, which were formally against it, not only the favor which he publicly solicited, but another, as the event proved, which he had demanded in private, namely, the establishment in his territories of a secret tribunal.

* Eleven thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

This was authorising him to arm, on the slightest pretext, against any one who offended him, a thousand executioners, who might put the unhappy person to death, wherever they met him, without any one daring to take vengeance of the deed.

This last motive of the count's visit is not sufficiently known for us to speak positively respecting it; but it is certain that he obtained all he asked, and paid the emperor for his complaisance even more generously than he had promised.

Winceslaus now imagined himself in possession of inexhaustible mines of wealth. Nothing was thought of at Prague but scenes of dissipation. The most licentious entertainments, of which the preferment of the duke of Milan was the pretext and the support, rapidly succeeded each other. The people, while they murmured at the follies of the emperor, had the greater folly to imitate him. His extravagance gave a temporary circulation to money, and the pleasures with which his courtiers were intoxicated, found their way to the most distant corners of the city.

It was about this time, that a dreadful fire, of which some ancient chronicles still speak, broke out in the eastern quarter of Prague. The clock had just struck twelve. The emperor, and his inseparable companion, the prince of Ratibor, were emptying their capacious bumpers, which were to divest them of the little reason that remained, while around them lay, dead drunk on the floor, all who had dared to enter the list with such noble antagonists. Stammering, and bursting with laughter, they descanted on the manner in which their companions had fallen. They then disputed about the order in which it had happened, and the time they could themselves hold out, so warmly as to be on the point of coming to blows.

During these riotous proceedings, the younger part of the company, who, though least in number, were by far the most interesting, had drank out of no cup but the cup of pleasure, and were amusing themselves with the noble exercise of dancing. In the midst of this brilliant circle was

Herman ; but he partook not of its joy, for Ida was not there. Sometimes he went to the window which looked towards that part of the city in which she resided ; then again he would hastily retire, renewing the oath which he had already a thousand times broken, to think of her no more. At length he joined the dance, as the only way of dissipating his chagrin. Though delicacy had prevented him from becoming inebriated, yet had he drunk enough to give him a momentary elevation of spirits ; and his imagination led him in turns to see the idol of his heart in every nymph with whom he lightly tripped round the hall.

On a sudden, extraordinary cries were heard, which spread trouble and confusion through this joyous assembly. " It is the centinel," said a pretty blue-eyed girl to Herman, pressing his arm, which she held to her heart : " it is the centinel, announcing the approach of day ; let us not spend in vain the precious moments that are on the wing." The cries being repeated, a stop was put to the music. The

company listened. "It is fire!" exclaimed a hundred voices at once. The dancers instantly crowded together, and as quickly separated, running, some to the doors, others to the windows, to discover where the accident was, or fly from a danger of which they were ignorant.

Herman flew to the window from which he had so little absented himself during the evening. All the eastern part of the sky was a sea of fire. The remembrance of Ida rushed instantly to his mind, and dissipated, in a moment, the kind of intoxication in which he was plunged. Invoking her name, he abruptly quitted the hand of his partner, which he had hitherto held; and, almost beside himself, endeavoured, by incredible exertions, to pierce through the crowd which prevented him from getting out of the apartment. This he effected, by throwing down every one that opposed his passage, and having at length gained the street, he ran with the wildness of insanity, regardless of the distance, till he arrived at the scene of devastation.

There——But the reader will spare me the recital of the dreadful and wide-spreading ruin to which Herman would have been witness, had he been susceptible of any other idea than that of the peril of his mistress.

The inhabitants of that part of the city where the conflagration had taken place, were probably late informed of their danger; for many of them, who had been celebrating the festival of Wincelous, were overcome with intoxication, and others, exhausted by their daily labour, were as profoundly sunk in sleep.

In the number of the latter was the family of Munster. They were strangers to the impure pleasures of dissipation. On the contrary, their days were employed in industry, and their nights in repose. The event, beside, had happened on the eve of the exaltation of the cross; and to spend such a night in pleasure, would have appeared highly criminal to a family so religious.

Herman, half dead with apprehension, found Munster and his wife, with folded

arms, gazing at their house, which was in flames, and calling incessantly on their dear Ida. It was with difficulty these unfortunate parents had saved their own lives. The father, who, after his escape, had returned through the fire in order to rescue his daughter, whom he sought in vain in the apartment where she had been accustomed to sleep, felt, so great was his anxiety, no pain from his arm, which had been scorched in the attempt; and the mother seemed every moment ready to rush into the flames to save her beloved child, or perish with her.

“Ida!” exclaimed the frantic Herman, “Is Ida then missing? Oh! let me seek, let me save her!” Thus saying, he seized a ladder, and placed it against that part of the house which the mother pointed out. The wind having for an instant blown away the flames from it, he mounted on burning beams and heated stones, and reached the chamber of his mistress. A thick smoke enveloped and concealed him from every eye. The parents of Ida could

no longer distinguish the deliverer of their daughter. "Ah! it is over with him too!" exclaimed the mother, wringing her hands. But, in a moment he appeared again, penetrated still farther into the fatal ruins, disappeared a second time, again came in sight, descended the ladder, and fell senseless into the arms of those who hastened to his assistance.

"Ah! he is returned without her!" cried the distracted mother, running towards him; "he is returned without her! "O God, where is my child?"

While the mother thus bewailed the loss of Ida, the father was endeavouring to revive the intrepid youth, who had so generously, and so unsuccessfully hazarded his life for her. While traversing the house in search of his beloved, the smoke had nearly suffocated him: anxiety also, and the efforts he had made, had totally exhausted his strength, so that his fainting assumed the very image of death, and nothing but the torture occasioned by his wounds could have recalled him to life.

Day began to break; the crowd increased; the drunkards, and weary artisans of Prague had been roused, and methods were at length taken to put a stop to the conflagration.

The parents of Ida quitted the melancholy spot, which they supposed to be the grave of all their felicity, in order to retire to a small house belonging to them, which the flames had not reached. At their entreaty, the unfortunate Herman directed his servants to convey him to the same place; the mother having declared, that no one but herself should have the care of him.

Scarcely had they gotten half-way, when a young woman rushed from the crowd, and threw herself into their arms. It was Ida.

To describe the impression that was made upon these unhappy beings, by her sudden appearance, is impossible. Her lover and mother fainted away. The father alone had sufficient presence of mind to ask her by what strange miracle she had been saved.

“Saved!” answered Ida, “I have never been in danger. God be praised that

“ you are safe. It was but a few moments ago that I heard of the fire, when I instantly ran to assist you, or perish with you in the flames.”

The father now, for the first time recollected, that the evening before, Ida had begged leave to go with their servant to a distant church, dedicated to the Virgin, to hear matins, which were to begin at midnight, and last till break of day. It was there this excellent young woman first heard the news of the calamity of her parents. Her good angel, who watched over her safety, had reserved her for the consolation of others, and decreed that she should taste, in the very lap of misfortune, a happiness which she was far from expecting.

Herman being recovered from his swoon, Ida was presented to him. She thanked him in terms of the liveliest gratitude. She did more; she became his nurse, and bestowed on him the tenderest care, which contributed not a little to feed the flame of love in the heart of one, and to kindle it in that of the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

AS soon as Herman was cured, decency obliged him to quit the house of Munster. He accordingly returned to the palace; but Wincelaus expressed little or no concern for him, and was even so unfeeling as to make his adventure the subject of ribaldry. The courtiers imitated the example of their master, and the amours of Herman and Ida were for several days the standing jest of the court. Sophia alone was generous enough not to banter the young chevalier, or utter a single pleasantry on the dangers he had so gallantly braved. Neither the reflections that had occupied her mind, nor the endeavours of the princess of Ratibor, had been able wholly to stifle the lively inclination with which Ida had at first inspired her heart. She could not hear of the calamity that had befallen the parents without emotion; she rejoiced that their excellent daughter had been so providentially saved; and she commissioned Herman to deliver,

in her name, to the unfortunate family, a present, which, considering the little Sophia had in her power, was far from being trifling. Herman was transported to find the secret wishes of his heart thus agreeably accomplished. The diminution of Ida's happiness, in consequence of the loss her father had sustained by the fire, hung heavy on his mind. He contemplated with sorrow the chain of gold he had received from her in happier days, and thought it incumbent on him to return it; but, of such a sacrifice, he found himself incapable, and he chose rather to divest himself of all he had that was valuable, though that indeed was little, in order to make the best compensation in his power. He added, therefore, to the present of the empress, some jewels of his own; sure, under that respected name, of their being received. Our youth had, independently of this, another project for the relief of this good family. He remembered the sum that had been lent by Mrs. Munster; he knew that the emperor had not spent the whole of what he had

received from the duke of Milan, and he ventured to hint to him the repayment of what he had borrowed. This freedom was taken amiss, and was apparently the first cause of the emperor's coolness towards his favourite.

“Have you been desired,” said Wincel-
laus, with an air of discontent, “to remind
“me of this trifle?”—“No,” replied Her-
man. “On the contrary, I have reason to
“believe that the generous wife of Munster
“intended it as a present, not as a loan.
“But such disinterestedness, is it not an
“additional motive ——? The emperor
interrupted him. “Did you not mention,”
said he, “some favour which this woman
“talked of asking?” Herman bowed assent.
“Well,” continued the emperor, “let us
“wait till we know what it is; and I give
“my word of honour that I will not ——”
refuse, he was going to say; but the fear of
pledging himself for something he might not
chuse to perform, induced him to break off
the conversation, and a sign of impatience,
which he made with his hand, obliged the
young chamberlain to withdraw.

Herman took his way towards the humble habitation of Munster, regretting, as he went, that he had not been able to increase the present of Sophia as much as he wished. Had he been emperor, no sum would have appeared to him too great to recompence the the kindness of this honest citizen's wife.

He found the father of Ida alone. He was uneasy that what he had to offer him was not more considerable ; meanwhile he presented it in the name of Sophia. Munster hung down his head with an air of pensiveness, and his eyes overflowed with tears. "How generous, how noble a creature!" cried he at last : "the true mother of her people! What she now does for me, she is doing every day for a thousand of her unfortunate subjects. She deprives herself of the little which the parsimony of Winceslaus allows her, to relieve the wants of others. What pity, that her influence over our master is not so great as was expected! — And yet our burdens are in many respects lightened, and the people feel towards him less hatred since he has

“given them such an angel for their
“mistress.”

The heart of Herman was still full of bitterness against the emperor, and he could not avoid reciting to Munster the conversation he had just had with him. “You
“were wrong,” said the old man. “Who-
“ever lends to Winceslaus, never dreams
“of being repaid: and as to the favour my
“wife may have to ask, I beg you will not
“interfere in it. Women have often
“strange whims in their heads: and should
“my wife ask any thing of the emperor,
“which, being attended with no expence to
“him, he may, therefore, not refuse, it is
“possible that the favour, when obtained,
“may prove more detrimental than advan-
“tageous.”

To the latter part of this discourse, Herman made no reply; but he swore not to rest, till the sum borrowed by the emperor was repaid. “I consider myself,” added he, “as your debtor. Would it were in
“my power to act up to my wishes! O
“heaven! grant me but a part, a small

“ part of the wealth, which thou hast, per-
“ haps, one day destined for me, and I will
“ cheerfully renounce the rest! Enable
“ me to ——.”

“ Young man,” interrupted Munster, assuming a serious countenance, “ you give
“ yourself too much concern about this
“ business; and to calm a little your agita-
“ tion, I will disclose to you a secret, with
“ which even my wife and daughter are not
“ fully acquainted. I am not so poor as
“ you may imagine; as I was less rich than
“ the world believed me. I knew the
“ reports spread respecting my wealth by
“ my enemies; and had long expected, on
“ the part of the emperor, some attempt to
“ make himself master of it. I would have
“ obliged him with pleasure; I would have
“ granted him whatever he should have
“ asked, as long as it had been possible to
“ satisfy his rapaciousness, without ruin to
“ myself. But had my situation become
“ critical, I should have considered what
“ steps I had to take. Princes first begin
“ with borrowing, and end at last with

“plundering. I know what has happened
“to others. It is easy to find pretexts for
“stripping an honest man of his property.
“If then I had suspected any such disaster.
“approaching, I would have collected what
“I have buried in this house, and have fled
“with my family. My larger house, which
“is burnt, and which I can rebuild if I
“please, though I have no such intention,
“Winceslaus might, in that case, have kept,
“to indemnify himself for the loss of a good
“and loyal subject.

Herman listened with the utmost surprise to the old man, who thus continued his recital. “My wife, indeed, knows I have buried some money here, but she is ignorant of the sum. A woman is always a woman, that is to say, a being vain and presumptuous when fortune smiles, timid and humble when she frowns.”

“But Ida?” interrupted the young man, vexed at these injurious complaints against the sex, and in which his mistress seemed to be involved.

“As to Ida, she is out of the question,” replied Munster, who, at the mention of her name, seemed to fall into a profound revery. After a moment’s silence, “since we are speaking of her,” resumed he, “I must beg you not to take it amiss, if you should in future see her less frequently, or rather not at all. I know that you love her; you have given the noblest proof of it; but you must not think of her indeed you must not And you will not, I hope, require what it is impossible for me to grant.”

Herman echoed the word *impossible*, in a tone expressive of the despair into which he was thrown by a declaration that obliged him to renounce an union on which depended the happiness of his life. Though he had hitherto not known himself what hopes he could or ought to entertain; yet still had he continued to hope, and he trembled when he perceived a stroke aimed at the fragile edifice which his imagination had fondly erected in some obscure and uncertain futurity.

The old man strenuously combated the passion of our youth, who no less strenuously defended it. He was ready, he said, to sacrifice to Ida his birth, his situation, and all his future hopes; or he would enter the list of combatants and raise himself by his bravery, (the surest way to distinction in the times of which we are speaking) to a degree of power, that the world should not dare to object to the marriage as unequal.

“ The opinion of the world is not what I fear; for things may be different from what you imagine. But enough: I cannot tell you all. There are circumstances in the case, which——In short, I must insist on your not attempting to see my daughter, but that you endeavour to stifle an unhappy passion, which, should it steal into the heart of Ida, would render her as unfortunate as yourself.”

An impenetrable obscurity reigned in this discourse. The sort of half confidence of Munster appeared unintelligible to Herman, and he was disposed to believe that what he had heard was only meant as a veil

to the old man's disinclination, which, unable to justify himself by reasonable motives, had obliged him to resort to pretended mysteries.

But a cordial squeeze by the hand, assured Herman that he was mistaken. "No, young man," said he, "I love you: I had even an affection for you when I sought to frustrate your endeavours to gain access to my house: judge then if my sentiments can be altered, now that I am attached to you by gratitude."

Herman received these protestations with coldness, and left the house of Munster with the firm resolution never more to return to it, though his steps continually led him thither without his being aware of it. It is true he had as yet not totally renounced the hope of once more seeing Ida, or her compassionate mother. Even Munster himself, cruel as he thought him, he found it impossible to hate, and to be long absent from the good old man was painful to his heart.

The inclinations conceived by this youth educated in the fastidious notions of a court,

for the society of a simple and unpolished citizen, will be thought perhaps extraordinary. But let it be considered, that this citizen was a man of no vulgar merit; and that our hero, beside, who felt for him so tender an affection, had sense and virtue enough to prefer the style of his actions and conversation to the manners of a court so dissolute as that of Wincellaus; he also frequently owned to himself, that his detestation of vice, and love of virtue, had been greater, since his acquaintance and intimacy with this upright plebeian.

But sentiments of this nature were not always sufficient to deter him from measures, which he knew would be displeasing to his frank and guileless friend: for he formed the design of procuring a secret interview either with Ida, or her mother; and respecting the latter he was one day successful.

He found the good wife as much prejudiced in his favor as ever. She united with him in complaining of the folly of her husband; told him that she had something of importance to disclose; and appointed an

evening, when he would have an opportunity of seeing her, as well as Ida, during the absence of her rigid guardian.

Herman was punctual to the appointment. A female servant, admitted into the secret, informed him however, on his arrival, that her master was not yet gone out, and placed him in a closet adjoining the parlour, where he could hear what was passing between the parents of Ida, and which we shall communicate to the reader.

“And can you still,” said Munster, as Herman began to listen, “can you still suppose, after what I have said, that I have any dislike to the young man? Believe me, the happiness of Ida is scarcely more dear to me, and her happiness is the sole object I have in view.”

“Nor am I,” said the wife, in a tone discontent, “governed by any other motive.”

“And yet you would take the worst means of attaining it.”

“No, they are the best. It is necessary she should emerge from the obscurity in

“ which she has lived, if we would not eternally repent of what we have done.”

“ I grant that it is necessary; but not by the instrumentality of Herman. Let us take the shortest and most direct road. What can she hope from a young man who has yet to make his fortune, and whose return from foreign countries she will probably have long to wait? Beside, he belongs to a family, which ——.”

“ Well, then, agree to my other proposal.”

“ In God's name, wife, abandon so dangerous a scheme! What would Ida do in a court like that of Winceslaus? Reflect on the anxieties we suffered by your whim of letting her appear before Sophia, on the morrow of All-Saints, with a valuable present. Would you renew those anxieties? O how I regret having consented to a measure so absurd! It is lost labour to make sacrifices to the great: they soon forget those from whom they receive obligations.”

“ The event would have been different, had Ida gone the next day, when the

“ empress sent for her, instead of being
“ obliged, by your orders, to feign indis-
“ position.”

“ Alas! had the empress felt for her a
“ stronger inclination than is usual to wo-
“ men of her rank, would she have con-
“ tented herself with a single invitation;
“ or, what is more, so totally have forgot-
“ ten the object that interested her? No:
“ and had I been so imprudent as to com-
“ ply with your wishes, Ida would have
“ experienced the same fate as others, and
“ after spending a few days, or a few weeks at
“ court, would have been obliged, perhaps,
“ to return to her original obscurity, envied,
“ ridiculed, and hated.”

The wife was silent.

“ You acknowledge, then, resumed the
“ husband, that your first project was
“ irrational, ill calculated to answer its
“ purpose; and that your second is the
“ same?”

“ I acknowledge no such thing. My
“ project was the reverse of irrational, and
“ produced the consequence I expected.

“ I knew that Ida’s appearance would secure
“ her the conquest of one heart at least;
“ and this has actually happened. The
“ good and amiable Herman loves her
“ tenderly. He is the man by whom the
“ hand of fate means to draw her from her
“ present retreat; and he will certainly
“ have her; he will one day share her hap-
“ piness.”

“ Must I a second time remind you of
“ the impossibility of what you propose?
“ An impossibility greater with respect to
“ him, than any other person.”

“ Do not give yourself the trouble;
“ you will never convince me.”

“ What obstinacy! promise at least that
“ you will renounce your new chimera, and
“ leave matters to me.”

“ The fate of Ida interests me more
“ nearly than it does you, and——.”

“ Relinquish your project, Maria; I beg
“ it as a favour. You know how dear she
“ is to my heart, and how much I should
“ rejoice, if ——.”

The entrance of Ida put an end to the
conversation. Munster declared his inten

tion of staying at home that evening, and the daughter was desired to take her harp instead of her distaff, to dissipate the clouds of discontent which hung on the minds of her parents.

Herman was entitled to some indemnification for the disappointment of his hopes. The pleasure of hearing Ida sing, play, and talk, made him forget he was deprived of that of seeing her; and when the confidante came to inform him, that the purpose of his coming was defeated, and that he must depart, she appeared, he thought, too soon. He quitted with regret his obscure retreat, and returned pensively to his home.

CHAPTER IX.

HISTORY does not inform us whether, after the failure of the first, new attempts to obtain a secret interview were made, or whether they were frustrated by the vigilance of Munster. Thus much is certain, that Herman succeeded not in seeing either the mother or the daughter; nor indeed was his residence in Prague long enough for him to practice many manœuvres by which he could at all hope to deceive so circumspect a character as the father of Ida.

Herman remarked, that the coldness of his master, of whom he had so long been the favourite, increased towards him every day. "The face of that buffoon," said the emperor one day to madam von Baden, with considerable sarcasm, "bears the exact impression of a note of hand, which he conceives to be due to the family of Munster." Now a countenance like this could not fail to give his majesty sovereign displeasure.

But Winceslaus was mistaken in his conjecture. Munster had too often assured his young friend, that he neither desired nor expected the repayment of what he had lent, for Herman to entertain a thought of reminding his master of so unpleasant a subject. Had the emperor possessed a little more skill in the science of physiognomy, he would have discovered, in the face of his chamberlain, very different sentiments. Secret chagrin, weariness and disgust of every thing around him, and an ardent desire of happier days, were depicted on it; perhaps there was visible also, a degree of regret at having offended a master, who imagined no one had a right to be dissatisfied but himself.

Our young man no longer doubted the fate that awaited him. Well acquainted with Winceslaus, he read in his eyes the sentence of his disgrace, and he seriously thought of withdrawing himself from court; a resolution which Munster, from whom he had no secret, seconded with all his might.

“ I am glad,” said the old man, “ to see
“ you at last inclined to do yourself, what
“ I should long ago have advised. What
“ can you expect here? You are spend-
“ ing the prime of life in idleness, and
“ wasting the time and strength that ought
“ to be employed in the career of honour.
“ Quit, young man, quit this place of sloth,
“ and seek, at a distance, some theatre
“ more worthy of your talents, a theatre
“ where you may find at once happiness
“ and glory. Enter the service of some
“ powerful sovereign. Every part of the
“ world is not governed by princes like
“ Winceslaus. We have the dukes of
“ Austria and Brunswick: in Hungary lives
“ king Sigismond. These are men who
“ do honour to their rank. Chuse from
“ among them a master; and be assured
“ that he, whom you have so often called
“ your father, will not abandon you. I trust
“ you will not think it degrading to receive
“ from a citizen who is wealthy, that suc-
“ cour of which your ill fortune has left

“ you in want: such pride has, doubtless,
“ no place in your heart.

“ What I would farther recommend,”
said the old man, perceiving that Herman
was disposed to interrupt him, “ is, that
“ you should demand that title of the em-
“ peror which, indeed, you already enjoy
“ by courtesy. But I would have you be
“ in reality a knight; though it is whim-
“ sical enough to hear this appellation
“ bestowed on beardless courtiers, whose
“ whole armour consists of a gold hilted
“ sword, which they frequently wear, by
“ mistake, on the right side instead of the
“ left. You, however,” added he, perceiv-
ing that Herman was piqued at the reflec-
tion, “ are not of this number; your cou-
“ rage, and your dexterity in the use of
“ arms, are well known: but it is time that
“ you should quit such effeminate youths,
“ whose society can do you no sort of
“ honour.”

Herman complied with his friend's
advice, and solicited of Winceslaus the
honour of knighthood. Winceslaus, whose

enmity to his former favourite was not so great as to wish to deprive him either of his reputation or his life, was pleased to find so easy a way of getting rid of him, and granted his request.

Munster, the oracle of our young man, had farther advised him to procure admission into one of the numerous orders which existed at that time, and the members of which were spread all over Europe. To this Herman equally consented, and, in consideration of the state of his heart, he chose the *order of fidelity*, or as it was called, even in a period so remote, and not without reason, the *order of the good old times*.

Our honest plebeian could with difficulty refrain from laughter, when the young knight made his appearance, decorated with the badge of his fraternity, which consisted of a rose coloured sleeve peeping from under his mail; and he expressed to him a wish that he had entered into an order commanding more respect: an observation to which Herman, who knew of nothing more

serious or respectable than his love, made no reply.

Our new dubbed hero had never suffered himself to doubt that he should at least be permitted to see Ida on the evening of the day of his instalment, and had exulted in the hope; but he soon found himself mistaken, and was given to understand that this was a happiness he must not expect till the day of his quitting Prague: an expedient to which Munster had recourse in order to hasten his departure. To resist the daily importunities of his wife, and the solicitations of his young friend, was an effort too painful for the old man. Beside, according to his mode of thinking, Ida and Herman ought not to see each other at all, as it was impossible for them to be united; and he thought it, therefore, of the utmost consequence, that the latter should be gone.

Meanwhile, the mother of Ida was extremely desirous of speaking, at least once more to the young knight, that she might be enabled to execute, by his means, a project she had long had in her head, and of

which the reader must have perceived some traces. But this was what Munster was anxious to prevent, and was one of the reasons which made him urge so strongly the departure of Herman. Thus the wished-for interview could not take place.

On the evening that preceded our knight's departure, Munster expressed a wish to be informed of the reasons that had brought him, at so early an age, to the court of Winceslaus. Herman, who had too much gratitude to his old friend to refuse him such a request, readily consented: "but," added he, "may I not, in my turn, ask a similar favour? I find in your family such extraordinary circumstances — Ida, for example, possessing so many accomplishments, without rank, without birth; yourself, more noble minded, displaying truer dignity of sentiment, than any lord of the court, and yet a humble plebeian —. It is impossible."

"You do extreme honour to our station," replied the old man in a tone of

irony, “ but it may perhaps exhibit at pre-
“ sent, more proofs of true nobility than
“ your’s. Since, however, you deem me
“ so extraordinary a personage, know, that
“ in my youth I bore arms; that I long
“ resided at the courts of princes, and have
“ travelled through Italy and England,
“ where I studied the best performances of
“ the art which I have for many years
“ exercised. The profession of a soldier
“ did not enrich me; I grew tired of it,
“ and returned to that which I had first
“ been taught. It has afforded me sub-
“ sistence, and made me what I am; that
“ is to say, a free and independent being,
“ standing in need of the protection of no
“ sovereign whatever, whereas the sword
“ would ever have left me their slave. I
“ was the subject of a prince, who, after I
“ had rendered him a thousand services,
“ refused me a single one, which to him
“ was a trifle, though of the utmost import-
“ ance to me. I was in love with a hand-
“ some young woman, who was in the ser-
“ vice of his wife. As she was not a free

“ woman, I demanded her liberty, in order
“ espouse her; a request which he thought
“ proper to deny. At length an event
“ happened which gave us an opportunity
“ of escaping. The business, I must con-
“ fess, was not conducted in a manner
“ altogether seemly; but to what will not
“ the love of women drive us?

“ We found an asylum at Nuremberg.
“ Our late master was the sworn enemy of
“ the imperial cities, and they, in their
“ turn, as cordially hated him. Our flight
“ served us as a recommendation. The
“ freedom of the city was granted me, and
“ I entered upon my profession. My per-
“ formances were admired: I acquired re-
“ putation, and money poured in upon me
“ from every quarter. I was happy, and
“ should have continued so to this hour, if
“ the fickle disposition of my wife had not
“ led me to remove. Out of politeness to
“ her, I accepted an offer that was made
“ me of ornamenting the cathedral at
“ Prague; though I had much rather have
“ refused it, not only from attachment to a

" place where I had found so welcome a
 " reception, but for other reasons which I
 " could mention. But these are foreign
 " to the matter in question. Such are the
 " outlines of my story. And now, my
 " friend, begin the recital of your's, which
 " will, doubtless, prove more interesting.

CHAPTER X.**HISTORY OF HERMAN.**

“MY recital would certainly interest
“you,” replied the chevalier, “could I
“relate to you at large the story of my father
“and grand-father, and the different events
“that reduced me to the state in which you
“find me. A state of such poverty, that
“either I must remain in the service of a
“dissolute prince or turn monk, if I re-
“fuse assistance from those to whom I
“would much rather give it. Pardon me,
“my dear Munster, and do not be offended
“that I wish to change places with you,
“that I would rather load you with bene-
“fits, than receive them from you.”

Munster readily comprehended his meaning. The young man had been obliged that very evening to accept, under the name of a loan, the present that had been lately made to the honest citizen by the em-

press, and which Herman had secretly augmented with what he had been able to add of his own. The manner in which this loan was offered him, was so noble, and at the same time so urgent, that it was impossible for him to refuse it, a circumstance which contributed to heighten his gratitude.

Returning the old man's squeeze by the hand, the only answer which Munster made him, Herman thus continued his recital.—
“ My ancestors had their faults, and it is I
“ who am doomed to suffer for them. My
“ grandfather, the youngest son of his fami-
“ ly, quarrelled with his eldest brother, the
“ present reigning count of Unna. My
“ father drew on himself the anger of my
“ uncle still more, by the part that he and
“ his elder sons took in the war which the
“ knights of St. Martin waged with the
“ count of Wirtemberg; and I, who was
“ then a child, shared in the punishment,
“ without having participated in the offence.”

At the name of the count of Wirtemberg, a profound sigh escaped from Munster and Herman continued his narrative.—“ I

“ know not whether you are acquainted
“ with the adventures of count Everard of
“ Wisbaden; but I will endeavour to give
“ you some idea of them.”

“ You may spare yourself the trouble,”
said Munster, with a look of discontent. —

“ I know count Wirtemberg and his history
“ somewhat better than you. The knights
“ of St. Martin got intelligence of his resi-
“ ding at Wisbaden. Instigated by the
“ hopes of a rich booty, or perhaps by other
“ motives, they besieged it, and would have
“ made the count and all his people prison-
“ ers, had he not contrived to escape by the
“ hollow way which leads by the mountain.”

“ It was that unfortunate and inglorious
“ expedition,” resumed Herman, “ which
“ cost my father and one of my brothers,
“ their lives, rendered their names odious,
“ and involved them in the implacable ha-
“ tred of the chief of our house. With the
“ consent of the emperor, the old count of
“ Unna seized the greater part of our pro-
“ perty, and threatened to employ against
“ us the secret tribunal, of which he was

“ chief in the district, should any of us dare
“ to justify my father, or oppose the punish-
“ ment inflicted on us.

“ At that time, all this was unintelligible
“ to me, though I heard much talk about it :
“ but of the consequence that ensued I dai-
“ ly became more sensible.

“ I was the youngest of all my brothers
“ and sisters, some of whom were old
“ enough to be my parents, and ought to
“ have supplied to me the place of those I
“ had lost. Bernard, the eldest, and, of
“ course, chief of the younger branch of the
“ house of Unna, was treated by them all
“ with the profoundest respect; and, whe-
“ ther from attachment to him, or pride of
“ birth, the greatest part embraced a reli-
“ gious life, to enable him to support with
“ decency the name of our house. Hence
“ among my relations I can produce eccle-
“ siastics of every description: canons,
“ abbesses, knights of religious orders, nuns
“ in abundance, and there would have been
“ at least one monk among them, had I
“ been disposed to submit my will to that.

“ of others, for the honor was reserved for
“ me of making my vows at the convent of
“ Korf. To procure me this honor the
“ more speedily, a dispensation, by means
“ of a sum of money, was obtained from
“ our holy father the pope, purporting,
“ ‘ that, in consideration of his early wis-
“ dom, extraordinary piety and wonderful
“ tokens of a divine call, the noble Herman-
“ of Unna was permitted, at the age of thir-
“ teen, to quit the world, and embrace a
“ heavenly life.’ ”

“ Our family must have been fruitful
“ in prodigies of this sort; for two of my
“ sisters, who were but a few years older
“ than myself, had lately obtained a similar
“ favor. But, as I was present when they
“ took the veil, and consequently witnessed
“ the dejection with which they accepted
“ the benefit conferred on them, I began to
“ doubt my premature wisdom, and signal
“ piety, and was ashamed to avail myself of
“ an honor I so little merited.

“ Poor Agnes! unhappy Petronilla!
“ thought I, as I quitted one morning the

“ convent, never to see it again; would
“ that I could as easily deliver you from
“ the life of angels, which you are compelled
“ to lead on earth, as I voluntarily re-
“ nounce it for myself! Adieu, unfor-
“ tunate saints! Adieu, ye tombs! Adieu,
“ ye echoing vaults of this fatal prison!
“ Perhaps, half a century hence, we may
“ meet again.

“ My disposition had been always gay
“ and active. When only eight years of
“ age, I took a pleasure in handling my
“ elder brother’s sabre, and in being placed
“ by the servants on his charger. What
“ in my infancy was my sport, became, as
“ I grew up, the object of my most ardent
“ desire. And they wanted me to devote
“ myself to the indolent life of a cloyster!
“ It was a project that never pleased me.
“ If I appeared to consent, it was only to
“ render my flight the more easy: and I
“ managed matters so well, that, by the
“ assistance of a domestic of my brother,
“ I effected my escape, and arrived, with-
“ out accident, at the asylum I had chosen.

“ This asylum, in which I hoped to find
“ my safety, was the court of Winceslaus.
“ I had heard, that it was the duty of an
“ emperor to protect the oppressed, and
“ considering myself as the most perse-
“ cuted being on earth, I presented my-
“ self before his majesty with as much
“ confidence, as if what I had to ask
“ were not of the nature of a favor, but
“ something to which I had an indisputable
“ right. I conceived it to be an act of
“ justice. But does Winceslaus under-
“ stand the claims of oppressed humanity?
“ This was a question I never asked myself.
“ Alas, I little knew the risk I incurred.
“ My lucky star, however, brought me into
“ his presence precisely at one of those
“ moments, so rare, in which he found
“ himself disposed to benevolence. You
“ are not to be informed, that there is no
“ tyrant, however cruel, who has not slight
“ intervals of this kind.

“ I was admitted among his pages. My
“ gratitude, which I in a thousand ways
“ evinced, my liveliness, and my gaiety,

“ attached him to me. He would have me
“ sleep in his apartment; day and night I
“ must be the agent of his secret com-
“ missions; and the indefatigable zeal with
“ which I acquitted myself, obtained me
“ every day a greater share of his confi-
“ dence. In spite of the guise of flattery,
“ it was impossible but Wincellaus must
“ sometimes have perceived, in the eyes
“ of those who attended him, a secret dis-
“ approbation of his conduct. With me,
“ however, he had no such inconvenience
“ to dread, for I imagined that every thing
“ which an emperor did, must necessarily
“ be right. It was for this reason he wished
“ to have me constantly about his person;
“ and thus I was gradually initiated into all
“ the secrets of his debauched life.”

“ Poor young man!” exclaimed Mun-
ster. “ What a school for thy heart!”

“ No very dangerous one, be assured.
“ I was too young to have any inclination
“ for the practices of my master: beside,
“ I thought them becoming only in him;
“ and felt as little desire to swallow his

“ bumpers, or share his mistresses favours,
“ as to wallow in the mire with the swine.

“ On the other hand, my love of arms,
“ and my continual occupations, contri-
“ buted not a little to preserve me from
“ such vicious propensities. When Win-
“ ceslaus was asleep, and even when awake,
“ but incapable of thinking, from intoxi-
“ cation, moments when he wished not to
“ see me, I used to repair to old Herman
“ of Hertingshausen, esquire to the em-
“ peror, who, from the similarity of our
“ christian names, had conceived a regard
“ for me. He spared neither pains nor
“ expence to make me an accomplished
“ knight, even while I was yet but a simple
“ page. Success rendered me vain. All
“ my comrades hated me, not accepting
“ Kunzman, the son of old Hertingshausen,
“ for the haughtiness with which I carried
“ myself, on account of the preference
“ which was shewn me; and a sword,
“ which the emperor permitted me to wear,
“ by distinguishing me from other youths
“ of my age, filled up the measure of their
“ jealousy. They styled me the page in.

“ armour; and I was vain of the title,
“ though it was given me in derision.

“ The desire of perfecting myself in
“ the exercises of chivalry, and of serving
“ the emperor with fidelity, wholly occu-
“ pied my mind: every thing else was in-
“ different to me. It was known that I was
“ the favourite of Wincellaus, and of con-
“ sequence every one refrained from
“ speaking before me, who never concealed
“ from him a syllable of what formed
“ the common conversation of his subjects;
“ I mean the indignation excited by his
“ extravagances. Few had the simplicity
“ to believe with me, that there were
“ things allowable in an emperor, which
“ ought to be punished in a private indi-
“ vidual. Thus he was hated and despised
“ by the people, and they secretly formed
“ a plan to rid themselves of him.

“ It was not till late that the emperor
“ was apprized of this conspiracy. When
“ at length he found it necessary to be
“ upon his guard; things had been car-
“ ried so far, that he did not think himself

“ safe at Prague, and was obliged to make
“ his escape in the night, accompanied by
“ the most faithful of his servants, of whom
“ I was one. He betook himself to a castle
“ a few leagues from the city, to which he
“ had given the name of Conradsbourg,
“ and which he had fortified purposely as a
“ retreat in case of an event of this nature.

“ Here I first learned the cause of our
“ sudden flight. I was astonished to find
“ that an emperor could incur any danger ;
“ and, from the notions I had formed of
“ the rights of sovereigns, I conceived the
“ treatment of Wincellaus, who had told
“ me of his situation, to be so unjust and
“ unworthy, that I swore to defend him to
“ the last drop of my blood.

“ Wincellaus laughed, and addressing
“ me by a filthy nickname, with which he
“ sometimes honoured me: ‘ Were things
“ come to that pass, said he, that thou
“ wert to be my only defender, I should
“ be in a woeful plight indeed. Leave
“ thy sword in its scabbard, let thy arm be
“ at rest, and make use of thy ears. Listen

“ when thou seest two people talking toge-
“ ther privately; pretend to be asleep;
“ speak of me with contempt; say that I
“ have beaten thee, that thou hatest me,
“ and wishest me dead; thus will they
“ place confidence in thee, thou wilt learn
“ every thing, and we shall know what
“ measures to take for our safety.

“ This advice of my master was so con-
“ trary to my own way of thinking, and I
“ trusted so much to the goodness of my
“ sword, that I neglected every other mode
“ of serving him; and, though we had
“ none but secret attempts to fear, I
“ thought only of opposing myself to open
“ force.

“ The general discontent towards Win-
“ ceslaus continued to encrease. Soon
“ after his arrival at Conradsbourg, he had
“ caused three of the principal malcontents
“ to be publicly executed; and the same
“ day, my faithful instructor in chivalry,
“ old Hertingshausen, was found assassinated
“ on the road from Conradsbourg to
“ Prague. In the bark of the tree, at the

“ foot of which he fell, the perpetrators
“ had stuck two poinards, stained with his
“ blood, on which were engraven, in ill
“ formed letters, the following words: *
“ *Executed by the free judges for the crime of high*
“ *treason.* No one, except myself, was
“ ignorant of the author of this infamous
“ deed. I ran to wash with my tears, the
“ body of my unfortunate friend; but it
“ was already conveyed away from the
“ curiosity of the people. -On my return,
“ I met Kunzman, son of the deceased,
“ who said to me, with despair in his coun-
“ tenance: ‘ This is one of the noble
“ exploits of that dear master, of whom
“ thou art so fond !’

“ I hesitated not to appear before the
“ emperor, and repeat to him what I had
“ just heard from Kunzman. The pusil-
“ lanimity of Winceslaus was so great, that

* Winceslaus, as history informs us, had thought proper to usurp the right of creating free counts and free judges of the secret tribunal; but these were not acknowledged by the ancient ones legally established. This remark will perhaps be found necessary for the understanding of what follows.

“ he condescended to justify himself to one
“ of his servants; and I, who had the
“ utmost confidence in him, was easily per-
“ suaded. ‘ you see plainly enough, said
“ he to me, that it was not I, but the agents
“ of the secret tribunal, who committed the
“ murder. I did not even know that
“ Hertingshausen had been guilty of trea-
“ son: but be that as it may, you may be
“ convinced from his example, that the
“ most secret crimes are punished by divine
“ vengeance.’

“ I blindly believed all that Wincelaus
“ told me, and promised to bring over
“ Kunzman to the same way of thinking.
“ The next day, as I was passing under an
“ arched passage in the fortress, I received
“ a violent blow on the side, without see-
“ ing the person by whom it was given: I
“ thought, however, that the voice I heard
“ was Kunzman’s. — ‘ Cursed informer,’ it
“ cried, ‘ thy tongue is the cause that I must
“ fly my country.’ — With the violence of
“ the blow I had fallen to the ground. I
“ got upon my feet as expeditiously as I

“ was able, but saw nobody. I reflected
“ on the words but could not comprehend
“ them. I forgot them, therefore, and
“ thought of them no more, notwithstand-
“ ing I learned the next day, that Kunz-
“ man, whom I had never loved, and who
“ was one of the pages of Winceslaus, had
“ disappeared. It never once entered my
“ head that I had spoken imprudently of
“ him to the emperor, and had, by that
“ means, exposed him to persecution, and
“ obliged him to fly.

“ These, and other instances of ven-
“ geance, inflicted by the emperor, led
“ persons to act with greater circumspec-
“ tion. He was hated in secret and flat-
“ tered in public. As I was also feared,
“ whatever was likely to give umbrage was
“ carefully concealed from me; and thus
“ both master and servant thought them-
“ selves as much in safety as ever.

“ Winceslaus, however, durst not yet
“ return to Prague: but he found it so easy
“ to satisfy his inclination for women, as
“ well as wine, in the environs of Conrads;

“ bourg, a place indeed too well calculated
“ for so vile a debauchee, that he gave
“ himself little concern about his capital.

“ In the district were various sorts of
“ monks, and they so well understood how
“ to make their court to him, that the
“ emperor frequently invited them to come
“ and get drunk with him, and visited
“ them in return, to procure himself the
“ same pleasure. Winceslaus was at heart,
“ no great friend to monks; but their wine
“ was delicious, and that was sufficient to
“ induce him to forget his antipathy, and
“ live with them on terms of the most
“ brotherly affection.

“ During one of these visits to the con-
“ vent of Braunau, his enemies, probably
“ with the connivance of his jovial hosts,
“ attacked him, and carried him prisoner
“ to Prague. I was not present. My rea-
“ son, which began to unfold with my
“ ripening years, prevented me from re-
“ maining, as heretofore, the tranquil spec-
“ tator of the emperor's debauchery. His
“ aspect, when intoxicated, was dreadful;
“ and the addition of perhaps a dozen

“ drunken monks, who surrounded him
“ on these occasions, was to me, who had
“ frequently been forced to witness similar
“ scenes, so disgusting, that I thought my-
“ self happy to be excused from attending
“ him at Braunau, and instead of it to go
“ a hunting. It was, therefore, not till
“ my return from the chace, that I learned
“ the news of his being taken. My zeal
“ to serve him was immediately roused.
“ Both gratitude and affection loudly called
“ upon me to save a man, who merited, in
“ reality, neither of these sentiments. I
“ galloped full speed towards the city,
“ hoping to overtake the conductors of
“ Winceslaus, and promising myself to
“ achieve miracles of valour; but I found
“ every thing quiet on the road, as well as
“ in the city.

“ When I arrived at the gate, I fell
“ from my horse out of breath. Some
“ persons who were near came to my assist-
“ ance, and asked me some questions. I
“ spöke in high terms of the imprisonment
“ of my master, and demanded where he

“ was.—‘Hold your peace,’ said a soldier
 “ on guard; ‘thank God, we have him, and
 “ be not so singular as to grieve for an
 “ event at which every body else is re-
 “ joiced: but it is not proper to talk of
 “ this business yet, the emperor has too
 “ many partisans among the people.’

“ I had no occasion to know more; I
 “ escaped, and ran through the city, pro-
 “ claiming the imprisonment of Wincēs-
 “ laus, and my intention to deliver him;
 “ and before a single person interposed to
 “ stop me, I found myself at the head of a
 “ considerable troop, who accompanied me
 “ to the tower where the emperor was con-
 “ fined, and swore to conquer or to die; in
 “ rescuing their good, their generous prince,
 “ the protector of liberty, and the friend
 “ of the people.

“ Certainly, none of the subjects of
 “ Wincēslaus had so much reason to love
 “ him as the lower class of the people.
 “ Their poverty screened them from those
 “ extortions to which the rich were ex-
 “ posed. He permitted them every sort

“ of liberty, and was not ashamed, upon
“ occasion, to drink even with a porter.
“ He knew, also, how to procure them
“ bread at a cheap rate; but it was always
“ at the expence of the rich, and without
“ the smallest cost to himself.

“ Circumstances of this nature, were
“ vaunted to the skies during our march to
“ the prison, which we attacked so vigo-
“ rously, that a little more firmness, or a
“ better leader, would infallibly have gained
“ us the victory. But we were quickly
“ dispersed, and the only advantage I de-
“ rived from the enterprise, was the being
“ made prisoner, and shut up in the tower
“ in which my master was confined.

“ This consoled me. I hoped that we
“ should be placed in the same apartment,
“ and that I should enjoy the pleasure of
“ hearing from his mouth the praises of my
“ fidelity. But my expectations were cruelly
“ disappointed. I was thrown into a filthy
“ dungeon, where I remained till the em-
“ peror had contrived to set himself at
“ liberty, without my having in the

“ slightest degree contributed to it, a cir-
“ cumstance at which I was very sorely
“ grieved. The idea suggested to him by
“ madam von Baden, of throwing himself
“ into the river, and then saving himself
“ by swimming, or by means of a boat, was
“ so simple, and so easily executed, that
“ I could not forgive myself for not think-
“ ing of it. I envied Susanna the part she
“ performed on this extraordinary occasion,
“ and was vexed to perceive that another
“ had rendered my master more essential
“ service than myself.

“ At length I was also set at liberty.
“ Perhaps Winceslaus began again to ren-
“ der himself feared, and it was not thought
“ prudent longer to ill-treat one of his
“ servants; or perhaps I was considered as
“ a person of too little importance to be
“ detained after my master had escaped.

“ I was no sooner at large, than I has-
“ tened to Conradsbourg. There I related
“ to the emperor what I had done, and the
“ disaster that had befallen me: but instead
“ of the praises I expected, or the least

“ token of pity for my misfortunes, I was
“ received with an air of coolness and dis-
“ satisfaction. My want of address, he
“ pretended, was the sole cause of my
“ failure. I ought to have planned my
“ scheme as wisely as Susanna had planned
“ hers. It was a disgrace to me to have
“ been surpassed by a woman.—Such, and
“ more mortifying still, were the reproaches
“ he made me.

“ I burned with impatience to see this
“ heroine Susanna. No one else was
“ talked of at Conradsbourg. I had formed
“ the sublimest idea of her: but my ex-
“ pectations were once more disappointed.
“ Instead of a beauty, as she was styled by
“ the flattery of the courtiers, out of
“ deference to the emperor, who was dis-
“ tractedly fond of her, I saw a coarse
“ ordinary creature, whose greatest merit,
“ in the eyes of Wincseslaus, I quickly per-
“ ceived, consisted in her complaisance,
“ which, indeed, was boundless.

“ Unable to conceal the contempt with
“ which this woman inspired me, I sunk

“greatly in my master’s opinion; beside
“that, he sometimes took it into his head
“to be jealous of me. I was tall, young,
“tolerably well made, and madam von
“Baden had said that I was handsome. All
“this disgusted me, and the attachment I
“had hitherto felt for Winceslaus, rapidly
“diminished.

“I was now become so little necessary
“to the emperor, that I might spend whole
“days in hunting, without being missed
“by him. On one of those days he fell a
“second time into the hands of his enemies.
“I took care not to repeat on this, the im-
“prudence into which I had fallen on the
“former occasion. Meanwhile, the libera-
“tion of the emperor was resolved on in
“my mind; but my motive was the love
“of glory, for I no longer felt either grati-
“tude or attachment. I was desirous only
“of retrieving the reputation I had lost by
“my first successful enterprise, and of
“wiping away the reproach of having been
“surpassed by a woman.

“As I could not bear the idea of being
“in any respect compared with the despi-

“ cable mistress of Wincelous, I rejected,
“ the instant they presented themselves,
“ every project that bore the least resem-
“ blance to hers. And yet, in spite of my
“ repugnance, fate decreed, that I should
“ be reduced to the necessity of employing
“ precisely the same means. All the arti-
“ fices I practised to extricate the emperor
“ from the tower of Prague, were frustrated;
“ and it happened, after the time and pains
“ I had wasted, and money I had spent in
“ corrupting his guards, that he was sud-
“ denly removed to Krumlau, where my
“ efforts to deliver him proved equally
“ abortive, till I resorted to the expedient
“ of Susanna, which I had so positively
“ determined to avoid.

“ I gained over to my purpose a fisher-
“ man. We rowed at night under the
“ window of the prison where the emperor
“ was confined. Luckily this window had
“ no bars; and my voice informed him
“ that we were there to assist his escape.
“ We spread a large net on the water, and
“ begged his majesty to throw himself into

“ it. This operation we were obliged to
“ repeat for several nights together, before
“ the dastardly Winceslaus could summon
“ resolution enough to take the leap. On
“ the third evening wine came to our aid;
“ and it is impossible to say whether it was
“ his own free will, or the fumes of intoxi-
“ cation that threw him into our arms. Be
“ that as it may, he was saved: but instead
“ of thanking us, he complained of his fall,
“ refused the fisherman the reward I had
“ promised, and would certainly have been
“ delivered up to his enemies by our in-
“ terested conductor, had I not appeased
“ him by some trifling presents, and by
“ assuring him that, as to the remainder of
“ his claim, it was I, not the emperor,
“ whom he might consider as his debtor.

“ This promise, on my part, satisfied
“ the fisherman. Winceslaus, one would
“ suppose, must have been mortified to find
“ the word of one of his servants have
“ more weight than his own: but he dis-
“ covered no such sentiment. He rubbed
“ his arms and sides, and grumbled and

“moaned over his pains till we reached
“the opposite bank of the river.

“I delivered him into the hands of
“Susanna, who nursed him for two or
“three days, when he found himself per-
“fectly recovered. It was then he first
“thought proper to return me some slight
“acknowledgment for the service I had
“rendered him.

“‘Herman,’ said he to me, ‘I am satis-
“fied with thy conduct. Thou hast had
“the skill to catch in thy net the greatest
“fish in the empire. If thou canst spread
“it so as to take also my enemies, I will
“load thee with favours, and thou shalt
“have no farther need to be a fisherman.’

“I perfectly understood what was
“meant by this figurative language. I
“begged time to consider of it, avowing,
“however, to his majesty, that I was more
“inclined to open war, than secret ma-
“nœuvres.

“In the mean time we had every day
“deserters from Prague, who informed us
“that it was seriously intended to attack

“ Conradsbourg, as it was by no means
“ likely, after what had happened, that
“ Wincellaus would again suffer himself to
“ be surprised out of his castle. It appeared
“ also, that the appointment of a new em-
“ peror was in contemplation; and that
“ the day when Wincellaus should fall a
“ third time into the hands of his enemies,
“ would be that of his death.

“ Prague had a numerous garrison.
“ Not that it was thought necessary on our
“ account, whose strength excited little
“ apprehension; but to act against those
“ who, after the death of Wincellaus, might
“ dispute the crown. Every day fresh
“ troops arrived in the city, and we were
“ told that there was shortly expected a
“ considerable reinforcement from Hun-
“ gary, sent by king Sigismond.

“ Sigismond was the brother of Win-
“ cellaus, and, on his demise without chil-
“ dren, heir to the crown of Bohemia.
“ Though this was sufficient for the em-
“ peror to hate him, yet were the senti-
“ ments of Sigismond too noble to seek to

“merit his brother’s enmity, either by
 “attempting his life, or seizing his throne:
 “and it appears, that, in consenting to
 “assist the dissatisfied subjects of Winces-
 “laus, his view was to enable them to
 “check the career of his dissipation, and
 “prescribe terms to him on which he
 “should still be permitted to reign. It
 “seems too, that Sigismond was ignorant
 “of the ill-intentions of the Bohemians,
 “towards their master..

“I had heard enough of the king of
 “Hungary to form this opinion of his cha-
 “racter, and I fortunately brought over the
 “emperor to the same way of thinking.
 “He accordingly resolved to write to him,
 “and demand his assistance. This was
 “his letter:

“ ‘And are you also against me? Oh!
 “think of our father. Wrest not from me
 “what was given me by him. Employ not
 “your power in favour of my enemies, but
 “employ it rather to save an unfortunate
 “brother.’

“ The court of Winceslaus was then so
“ deserted, so destitute of persons of con-
“ sideration, that he was obliged to confide
“ to me, a page of seventeen, the delivery
“ of this important letter. I believe, how-
“ ever, that few would have executed the
“ office better. I was to supply, by con-
“ versation, what he dared not commit to
“ paper; and the warmth with which I
“ pleaded my master's cause, made such an
“ impression on Sigismond, that he deter-
“ mined in favour of Winceslaus. ‘ A so-
“ vereign,’ said he, ‘ who has such ser-
“ vants, cannot be so bad as my brother is
“ represented.’

“ Sigismond at length thought proper
“ to make trial of my fidelity, and not
“ being dissatisfied with me, he loaded me
“ with his confidence. Nothing but my
“ youth prevented his giving me the com-
“ mand of the troops which he sent to his
“ brother. He recommended me, how-
“ ever, strongly to his general, a warrior of
“ no common merit, yet who had the
“ modesty to ask my advice on the order of
“ our march, and to follow it.

“ The inhabitants of Prague had long
“ expected the troops of king Sigismond,
“ which they supposed were to side with
“ them against the emperor. Accordingly
“ we gave ourselves out for their allies;
“ nor was it till we were in the heart of the
“ city, that we declared ourselves their
“ enemies.

“ The taking of the castle of Wischerad
“ was, in the general's opinion, the point of
“ most importance. In the attack much
“ blood was spilt, but we at last carried it;
“ and the emperor, who was apprised of all
“ our measures, was sufficiently near, to
“ come, at the first signal, to take posses-
“ sion of this fortress.

“ From the battlements of the castle he
“ shewed himself to the people, with a
“ numerous train of attendants. Having
“ refrained that day from drinking, he was
“ capable of speaking with a certain degree
“ of energy; and he was proclaimed sove-
“ reign anew. He granted a general am-
“ nesty, and, to confirm it, the principal
“ inhabitants of the city were invited to his

“ table. My heart beat with joy, when I
 “ beheld the preparations for such an enter-
 “ tainment. For the first time in my life I
 “ thought Winceläus great, and worthy of
 “ his rank, since he was capable of pardon-
 “ ing his enemies with such true magnani-
 “ mity. I threw myself at his feet, as if to
 “ thank him for his mercy to others. I had
 “ always apprehended scenes of blood,
 “ should Præge again fall into his hands;
 “ and I was delighted at so agreeably find-
 “ ing myself mistaken. The emperor, however, rudely repals-
 “ ed me from him, and called me an effemi-
 “ nate fool. It was not till the end of the
 “ repast, that I began to suspect what had
 “ rendered the expression of my feelings so
 “ disagreeable to him. Winceläus could
 “ not receive with pleasure testimonies of
 “ gratitude and admiration of which he knew
 “ himself so little deserving. The guests were sitting tranquilly at
 “ table. The wine, which flowed plentifully
 “ inspired them with gaiety. The good ci-
 “ tizens of Præge, at their sovereign’s re-

quest, pointed out to him with confidence, the changes they wished to see take place under his future government. Wincel-
laus promised every thing; and these poor deluded people, swore to him eternal fidelity, and a devotion without bounds.
The emperor then took his glass, and drank to the stability of the peace that had just been concluded. His guests pledged him: but, alas! it was the signal of their death. Twenty sabres instantly glittered behind them. The greater part fell beneath the murdering steel, before they perceived themselves in danger, and the floor was deluged with mingled streams of blood and of wine.
It is impossible to describe to you what I felt on this terrible occasion. Despair for an instant rendered me motionless: but speedily recovering myself, my first thought was to intreat Wincel-
laus to spare those unhappy beings; my second to stand up in their defence. Then reflecting, that neither of these steps could save them, and having beheld an honest

“ old man of fourscore, whom I had always
“ always respected for his venerable appear-
“ ance, murdered by my side, I fell sense-
“ less on the floor. My agitation, my sur-
“ prise, my despair, were too great to be
“ resisted. I was young too, and though I
“ had seen the blood of an enemy flowing in
“ battle, I had never beheld that of the
“ innocent shed at a feast. Do not laugh
“ at my weakness: I was forced to sink
“ under it.”

“ Why,” cried Munster, “ attempt to
“ justify yourself? What would deserve
“ praise, if your conduct on that occasion
“ could be blamed?”

“ And yet blamed it was. Wenceslaus
“ treated me as a weak and pusillanimous
“ being, terrified at the sight of blood; and
“ for three days I was forbidden to appear
“ at court.”

“ I ardently wished never to see again
“ that cavern of murderers. My heart was
“ completely alienated from the emperor;
“ and I imparted to the commander of the
“ Hungarians, the only person who visited

“ me during my confinement, the desire I
“ had to enter into the service of the king
“ his master.

“ That brave soldier, who loved me,
“ counselled me to remain at the court of
“ Bohemia. ‘ You behold,’ said he, what
“ has passed with a too rigid eye: reasons of
“ state justify many actions that have an
“ appearance of injustice. It was in a man-
“ ner impossible the emperor should let the
“ rebels go wholly unpunished.’

“ I made a long speech in defence of
“ my opinion; to which my friend answer-
“ ed only by his silence: and I saw too
“ plainly, that the world, and even the most
“ enlightened part of it, thought of certain
“ matters very differently from inexperi-
“ enced innocence.

“ My confidence in the general at length
“ determined me to pardon Wincelous an
“ action of which I had no right to consti-
“ tute myself the judge. He advised me to
“ re-establish myself in the emperor’s favor,
“ should he be disposed to receive me as be-
“ fore; to turn to advantage the influence I

“ had over him, and not forfeit, by a precipitate retreat, the recompence due to me for the important service I had rendered him.”

“ The time of my confinement, which I would willingly have prolonged, being expired, I again appeared at court. The kindness with which the emperor received me, attached me to him afresh; and the decree condemning those who had been killed having been made public, I resolved to drive from my mind every remembrance of that fatal night, that I might not relapse into doubt whether they were justly or unjustly put to death.”

“ Wincellaus seemed to have changed his way of life, and to conduct himself better than he had heretofore done. He remained for days together free from intoxication. His bottle companion, the prince of Ratibor, who was detested by the people, remained at Conradsbourg; neither Susanna nor any other of his mistresses appeared; and a marriage was talked of with Sophia, daughter of the duke of Bavaria.

“The whole country was rejoiced at the
“latter resolution of the emperor, every
“person fancying, that a virtuous spouse
“would complete the reformation that was
“begun. For my part, I felt myself like
“others elated with hope, and was attached
“anew towards my master. I saw him live
“in a manner so different from what had
“formerly displeased me, that I swore ne-
“ver to quit him; an oath, which I may
“break without offending my conscience,
“since my hopes are completely destroyed.

“Sophia, the charming, the virtuous
“Sophia is indeed become our empress; but
“how slight are the traces of reformation
“she was expected to work! On the very
“day of the wedding, the prince of Ratibor
“again made his appearance; and with him
“all the ancient habits of debauchery. He
“was soon followed by the worthless Susan-
“na. Winceslaus had the matchless effron-
“tery to present her himself to his wife—
“O Munster! I could tell you of scenes—
“Hapless, unfortunate Sophia!

“ But of what am I thinking? my business
“ is to relate my own, not her adventures.
“ But I am not arrived at the close of my
“ recital, at the most important events of
“ my life. The appearance of Ida, the love
“ I conceived for her, my consequent un-
“ happiness, the necessity I am under of quit-
“ ting her: O my father! all this you are
“ acquainted with, and I have nothing more
“ to inform you.”

“ You have forgotten to mention the re-
“ ward, which your master owed you for the
“ important service you rendered him, and
“ for which your friend the Hungarian ad-
“ vised you to wait at Prague.”

“ The manner in which you speak
“ proves sufficiently what you think. I re-
“ member, indeed, that once, in a fit of
“ drunkenness and gratitude, I was promised
“ the first vacant grand fief of the empire, a
“ promise in which I could place no great
“ confidence, as the gift was much too con-
“ siderable for me. I therefore modestly
“ declined it, and contented myself with
“ asking an honorable employment in the

“ army. Instead of that I obtained the pal-
“ try place of a chamberlain, which, as it was
“ the first favour I received, will in all pro-
“ bability be the last. But no: the title of
“ knight, and the permission to go and seek
“ my fortune wherever I please, are surely
“ to be reckoned as something.”

This conversation was followed by a long silence. Munster and his young friend seemed totally absorbed in thought. At length Herman first shook off his melancholy, and imparted to the good citizen his intention of entering into the service of king Sigismond, to whom he was known, and at whose court was his friend, the Hungarian general, whom Herman did not know to be one of the chiefs of the empire.

Munster approved of this design, and promised to give him for esquire, an old and faithful domestic, who had formerly served in the army of Sigismond; and thus they separated for the evening.

CHAPTER XI.

THE day of Herman's departure arrived. He had paid all those tedious visits of ceremony, which are requisite on such an occasion. One only remained for him to make, but that of all others the most distressing, the visit he owed to the family of Munster. He had to take leave of the good old citizen and his wife; he was once more to see Ida, for her father had promised it, and to imprint upon her cheek his first, perhaps his last salute.

Half intoxicated with pleasure, he repaired to the habitation of his mistress. Munster received him at the door, and led him to the parlour, intreating him to recollect himself, and to spare the feelings of his daughter. Ida was the first object he perceived. He trembled as he approached her. Her paleness, her eyes brimful of tears, almost tempted him to believe that the idea of separation was as painful to her as to himself. For a time they were both

silent. Her eyes were cast on the ground: his seemed as if they would devour a beloved object, the longer to retain its remembrance.

“My children,” cried Munster; “do not thus rend my heart, and augment your own sufferings; embrace quickly, and bid each other adieu.”

Herman drew near to kiss the cheek of Ida, who received his salute with all the modesty customary in those days with young women. He took the courage to pass his arm round the neck of his mistress: her's involuntarily opened; she pressed him to her heart, and an adieu, tender as ever lover received, escaped from her lips. Her father made a sign: Ida disengaged herself from the young man's embrace, gave him a last, a lingering look, and withdrew, her cheeks burning with blushes, to her apartment.

Herman, perfectly beside himself when his mistress had disappeared, paid no attention to what Munster addressed to him. The old man was silent; but presently

Herman, recovering himself, asked if he were not to see the mother of Ida, and take leave also of her. Munster acquiesced; and she immediately entered. She had purposely waited, in the hope of being able, at last, to execute part at least, of a design she had long resolved upon. Her countenance expressed more anxiousness than sorrow, and she appeared attentively to observe her husband, in order to seize the first opportunity of speaking a few words, unperceived, to Herman. At length Munster having turned for a moment towards the window, she whispered to our hero.—“How “unlucky,” said she,” “that you have “never attempted to speak to me in private! I had so many things to tell you!”

Munster turned round to make some trifling remark, and the conversation broke off. Herman was in no hurry to take leave, hoping to learn some of the secrets of Ida's mother. The old gentleman being asked for, probably by his wife's orders, was obliged to go out of the room; and, the moment he shut the door, she exclaimed:

“ O sir! one day, one single day more, I
“ intreat you! I have paid a visit to the
“ emperor in behalf of Ida: you must
“ second us, you must remind him that he
“ owes me a favour, which he has promised
“ not to refuse.”

She would have said more, but her husband returned; and though Herman staid yet three tedious hours, Munster stirred not from him for an instant, and his curiosity remained unsatisfied.

“ You promised me, my dear Munster;” said the young knight, as he rose to take leave, “ a faithful attendant. In that
“ expectation I have dismissed all my do-
“ mestics, and I am anxious to see my future
“ esquire.”

Munster went out to call old Andrew. This was a golden opportunity which the wife failed not to embrace. — “ Ida is not
“ our daughter,” said she in a low voice. — “ I am only her nurse. Offended love,
“ and the dread of leaving her in the hands
“ of a wicked stepmother, induced me —.” The return of the old gentleman prevented

her from finishing her discovery, and soon after appeared the domestic, who swore fidelity to his young master, and obtained from him, in return, the promise of never being abandoned by him; but on the contrary, if fortune proved favourable to Herman, that he would make his old age comfortable to him: a promise which the young knight would assuredly have made with still greater cordiality, had he been capable of noticing the ingenuous and trusty countenance of his new valet, and the warmth with which he entered into his engagement; but, in truth, his mind was at that time otherwise occupied. He thought of nothing but the extraordinary intelligence he had heard from Mrs. Munster, and his only concern was to know more on the subject, or to learn, at least, the name of Ida's parents.

All his hopes depended on the embrace he was to receive from Mrs. Munster. In fact, she held him a long time in her arms, and had even whispered in his ear: "she is the daughter of the count of ——." when Munster interfered.

“What are you doing?” cried he, with a smile, as he parted them. “Do you think, young man, that embraces like these are not enough to make me jealous?”

Herman was vexed: and answered the old gentleman with a degree of ill humour, perceiving, at the same time, traces of a similar sentiment in the eyes of his friend. It was, indeed, highly improbable, that a man of so much penetration should not have perceived something of what was endeavoured to be concealed from him.

They parted then: and the various sentiments that occupied their minds, as surprise, discontent, and disappointed hope, scarcely left room for the entrance of sorrow; so that at the moment of taking leave, a moment so much dreaded, there was not a single tear shed.

CHAPTER XII.

HERMAN mounted his horse, and galloped full speed out of the city. So many different thoughts distracted his attention, that he perceived neither the length of his journey, nor the approach of night. He did not even answer the question of old Andrew, who asked where he meant to take up his lodging. The kiss he had received from Ida, which could leave him no doubt of her love; the news of her noble birth, so delightfully flattering to his vanity; the uncertainty of her name; were ample subjects for his profoundest meditation. He thus entirely forgot the business he had undertaken for Mrs. Munster, the visit the honest city dame had paid to the emperor, the promise of which he was to remind him, and on account of which he had been so urgently pressed to remain at least one day longer at Prague.

It is impossible for us to say, how the thought recurred to him; but it is certain,

that on a sudden he began to consider where he was, and, seeing night coming on, and Prague at a great distance, he was enraged at his forgetfulness.

“ Let us instantly go back,” said he to his servant, turning about his horse at the same time.--“ I have a commission to the emperor, the execution of which is indispensable. I have ——.”

Andrew had already more than once suspected, that Herman was not perfectly in his senses; and his suspicions were confirmed, when he perceived the warmth with which he spoke, the want of connexion in what he said, and his eager and perturbed looks.

Our knight, however, returned by the way he had come, with such expedition, that Andrew lost sight of him, before he had time to consider what measures were to be taken for the cure of his unhappy master.

To follow and overtake him, was the most necessary step for the present. And this he accordingly effected, resolving not

to lose him again from his sight, that he might always have an eye on his actions.

Our historian does not inform us of the hour at which Herman arrived at Prague, nor of the time when his trusty esquire discarded the false opinion he had conceived of him. Be that as it may, every thing conspired to prolong and increase our hero's impatience. To go to court that evening, or rather that night, was impossible. In the morning he learnt, that the emperor had set off the night before for Conradsbourg. Immediately he repaired thither, and was given to understand that he was gone to Kramlau. There Herman was not more fortunate. He was told of several other places, to which he repaired with similar success. At last, after travelling three or four days to no purpose, he returned to Conradsbourg, which Wincelau had never quitted. But all his attempts were vain to gain admittance to those, to whom he had formerly so easy access. Every door was shut against him. Obligated to relinquish his purpose of executing him-

self, the commission that brought him back, he entrusted it to one of his ancient friends at court, who at length deigned to see him. The courtier promised to execute it with punctuality, and forgot it the next moment.

Herman again took his way to Hungary. The extraordinary circumstances, that had at first excited such strong emotions, became familiar to him, and he began to turn his attention to other objects. Andrew, on his part, discovered, that his master had in reality, as much sense as other men; and that his heart was as pure as that of an angel. His gentleness and affability gained him so completely the affection of his old esquire, that he would have sacrificed his life for him, and consequently Herman had just reason to believe, that he would not refuse him a less important service.

Our young knight was not ignorant that Andrew had resided for many years in the family of Munster. It was possible, that he might be acquainted with Ida's birth; and, accordingly, Herman sought to draw from him what he knew of the matter. But

either he had nothing to communicate to him, or Munster had been too prudent to give him a servant, capable of disclosing to his new master, the secrets of him whose service he had quitted.

The same depression of spirits, which Herman experienced from his disappointed hopes, prevailed at Prague in the house of Munster. The old gentleman was displeased with his wife, and regretted the absence of his young friend, though he still retained a little anger against him. Ida wept for her dear Herman, but dared not let her tears be perceived by any eye, but her's whom she called her mother. And Mrs. Munster daily expected to be sent for to court, to be asked what she wanted: but expected it in vain. — “He
“ must have forgotten me,” said she to herself, a little out of humour: “he must
“ surely have departed without executing
“ my commission. Yet he was seen at
“ Prague the day after his taking leave of
“ us. He was seen also at Conradsbourg,
“ where the emperor resides. Let us have

“ a little patience: when Winceslaus returns, all will go well.”

Winceslaus returned: but the honest citizen's wife was still not sent for. Days, weeks, months passed away: at length she resolved to take a step, which she was sure would not only gain her access, but be pleasing to the emperor, and obtain for her what she desired.

One day, in Munster's absence, having put on her Sunday attire, she took from their private treasure, which she had helped her husband to bury, two hundred crowns of gold, which were at least half what they possessed. Then reflecting for a moment, whether it would not be an affront to the emperor to offer him such a trifle, and whether she had not better give him the whole, that she might be certain of success, she at last added to the sum fifty crowns more, which she had herself hoarded up; and thus equipped, she set out for court.

The memoirs before us, relate not the manner in which she delivered her present to the emperor, nor the favour she suppli-

cated. With respect to the latter, however, something may be inferred from the result of her visit: and as to the former, it is sufficiently known, that it required no great skill to avoid wounding the delicacy of Winceslatus, and prevail on him to receive the price of a favour solicited.

Ida saw her mother go out and return. Her holiday cloaths, her anxious and embarrassed countenance at her departure, and her air of triumph when she came back, struck her: but she enquired not the reason. The remembrance of Herman too powerfully engaged her mind, for her to take concern in any thing else.

“Will you never have done weeping?” said her mother to her one afternoon, as they were at work together. “My daughter, my dear daughter, solitude nourishes your sorrow, and I must devise some means of drawing you from it, if I would not resolve to lose you for ever.”

“Oh! permit me still to live in solitude:” cried Ida, at the same time wiping her eyes with one hand, whilst the other pressed that of her mother to her heart. “What society can I prefer to the tranquil

“ repose I enjoy with the most indulgent of
“ mothers, to whom I am permitted to un-
“ bosom my griefs?”

“ Not the company of the young wo-
“ men, who are so ready to style them-
“ selves your acquaintance, I grant: but
“ if I could place you in a sphere, where
“ you would be surrounded by all that is
“ handsome and accomplished, and where
“ you would, notwithstanding, bear away
“ the palm; would you not be pleased
“ with it, Ida? There you would not
“ think so often of your Herman; or if you
“ did, your thoughts would be enlivened
“ by hope, and the remembrance of him
“ would cost you fewer tears.”

“ I desire not, my dear mother, what is
“ impossible: all my wishes are confined
“ to being the ornament of your house,
“ since you are pleased so to think me.”

“ But suppose you were destined to live
“ at court?”

“ Thank heaven, I am not.”

“ If the empress, for example, were to
“ admit you as one of her maids of honour,
“ would that be such a misfortune?”

“ O that incomparable woman !” said Ida, kissing the lock of Sophia’s hair, which she always wore about her neck, in a purse of gold net-work. “ Yes, to serve her, to see her every day, to be beloved by her, would indeed be a thing ——.”

“ Which you would ardently desire ?”
“ Well, then ! congratulate yourself ; your wishes are accomplished. To-morrow, perhaps, you will quit this life of obscurity, which suits you less than you are aware. ‘ You will be sent for to court : you will associate with the daughters of the noblest families in the country : and you have nothing to do, but to consider yourself as their equal, and forget that you have hitherto been regarded as our daughter.”

“ What ! my dear mother,” exclaimed Ida, rising hastily from her seat : “ forget you ! forget my birth ! enter into a rank that does not belong to me !—Surely you wish to try me. No : your Ida is not so vain ; she is not so unmindful of her duty. Do not draw such inferences

“ from the words that escaped me. The
“ empress is far less dear to me than you,
“ nor would I exchange your company for
“ her’s.” Thus saying, the lovely Ida affectionately threw her arms round the neck of the person whom she supposed to be her mother; while the latter melted into tears, pressed her to her bosom, and, sobbing, declared herself unworthy of such tenderness; an expression which afflicted the young maiden, for she did not comprehend it so fully as the reader.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE day subsequent to this conversation, Munster came home about noon, quite out of breath. Pale, and almost distracted he flung himself into a chair, and for a while paid no attention to the questions of his wife, who repeatedly asked him what was the matter.

“ O Maria!” cried he, at last: “ such
“ news, such melancholy news! you will
“ indeed be astonished; but will you be
“ reasonable enough to hear it, with as
“ much composure as I did? I am just come
“ from court. The emperor sent for me
“ about Ida; he wishes to take her from us;
“ he wishes her to be one of the maids of
“ honour to the empress.”

“ Is that the melancholy news?”

“ God knows the reason of this favour,
“ as it is termed? But much was said of
“ Ida’s beauty, and the reputation she en-
“ joys: for my part I have never had any

“ opinion of your reputable maidens. Can
“ it be on account of her good qualities,
“ that she is sought after?—Ah, wife,
“ wife! of what irreparable folly wert thou
“ guilty, in exhibiting her to public view
“ the Day of All Saints!”

“ And what, I pray, would you propose
“ to yourself by keeping her always in this
“ obscurity. Is she your daughter? Do
“ you mean to make her the wife of some
“ homely citizen like ourselves? Or
“ must a youth of her own rank come and
“ force our locks and bolts to take her away?
“ You have sent away the worthy Herman,
“ and is it likely you should give a better
“ reception to another? Are we never to
“ to think of restoring to her that of which
“ we have deprived her?”

“ *We, Maria; we?* You well know who
“ it was that did it. You yourself perpe-
“ trated the deed. I would have dissuaded
“ you, and I consented to your wishes at
“ last, only because I must otherwise have
“ lost you. You recollect how you snatch-
“ the infant from my arms, when I was going

“ to carry her back to the count. ‘ Deliver
“ us up both,’ you said, ‘ or deliver up
“ neither of us: where she is, I will be: I
“ cannot leave her alone in the hands of the
“ new countess.’ But Ida had a father: he
“ would have been her protector.—

“ These reproaches however, came too
“ late; and I acknowledge that the only part
“ that remains for us, is to endeavour to
“ compensate to her what she lost in
“ being taken from her parents.—This
“ is a duty we owe not only to Ida for
“ having deprived her of the rank to which
“ she was born, but also to the count, though,
“ probably, he has not once missed her
“ amongst the children of his new spouse.”

“ For my part I have no other desire but
“ that count Everard should some day learn,
“ that the child he supposes to be lost, is
“ still alive: but I own, it would please me,
“ that he should not be informed of this, till
“ we have procured her a fortune equal to
“ her birth, without his assistance, and with-
“ out disclosing her name. And on this
“ account I cannot but regret, that you-

“counteracted all my schemes with regard to sir Herman of Unna.”

“Have you forgotten then the insult count Everard received from this family? Old Bernard of Unna was one of the chief of the knights of St. Martin: never will the count pardon him the affair of Wisbaden.”

“But is the consent of count Everard necessary to Ida’s happiness? Had we, as I advised, placed her in the rank which is her due, every other difficulty would have vanished. Our wealth would have compensated for Herman’s poverty: his bravery would have raised him to distinction, and all my wishes would have been accomplished. But alas! you have destroyed my dearest hopes! Herman is gone, and I must now form new projects.”

“New projects!—Hear mine, Maria. We have long been bewildered in the mazes of error: let us for once follow the direct line of truth: it is the easiest, the most secure. Let us wait till count Everard’s dispute with the imperial cities be

“ terminated. It cannot be long. He will
“ then retire to his country seat, and will
“ have leissure to enjoy, with tranquillity,
“ the pleasing surprise I am preparing for
“ him. I will set off with Ida. I will carry
“ with me all the proofs of her birth. I
“ will present myself before him, and say,
“ ‘ my lord, this is your daughter. Such
“ and such reasons induced us to take her
“ away from you. We have been guilty of
“ a fault: but consider the person we restore
“ to you. That little infant, feeble and
“ sickly, what would have become of her, in
“ the melancholy situation in which you then
“ were? We bring her to you, healthy;
“ beautiful, and accomplished.’——What
“ think you, Maria? will not Ida’s appear-
“ ance ensure our pardon?”

“ Our pardon indeed! for what in rea-
“ lity ought to obtain us thanks. But what
“ signifies disputing about what has, or what
“ might have happened, when we know
“ what will in reality take place. Ida is go-
“ ing to live at court. If Herman, though
“ separated from her, retain his fidelity, he will

“ find her there. If he do not, her beauty
“ will attract other admirers, and place her
“ in a rank suitable to her descent, without
“ our going to humble ourselves before
“ count Everard.”

“ Maria, Maria,” cried Munster, looking
stedfastly in her face: “ from your words,
“ a painful gleam of light flashes on my
“ mind. Is it possible, that you can have
“ had any concern in an event that so much
“ afflicts me? Is it possible, you can have
“ procured, by female artifice, Ida’s remo-
“ val to court.”

“ And supposing I have; what mighty
“ crime would it be?”

These words produced farther interroga-
tions; these interrogations the open avowal
of every step she had taken to procure the
success of her project; and this avowal, such
a quarrel, as had never taken place since
their marriage. It was a long time before
Mrs. Munster could, by her tears, her pray-
ers, and a true or feigned penitence, make
any impression on her irritated husband;
and all she effected at last, was the conver-

sion of his rage into bitter reproaches, and remonstrances on the probable effects of her inconsiderate conduct.

“ I know not,” said he, “ whether you
“ have been imprudent enough to excite any
“ suspicion concerning the birth of this
“ young woman: but this I can tell you, that
“ she never will be regarded as what she is,
“ unless her father publicly acknowledge her
“ for his daughter. On the other hand, if
“ she appear at court, as a simple citizen’s
“ daughter, neither her beauty, nor her vir-
“ tue, will preserve her from hatred and
“ calumny; and even should the empress be
“ desirous of protecting her, she will always
“ be despised; till at last, the jealousy of
“ her companions will drive her from a situ-
“ ation in which you have placed her,
“ without being able to maintain her in it.
“ The corrupt manners of the court of
“ Wincellaus will be injurious both to her
“ innocence, and her reputation. And
“ know, that your folly will receive a speedy
“ and severe punishment: you will not long
“ enjoy the pleasure of seeing your idol, or,

“ at least, you will not be the immediate
“ spectator of what you term her happiness.
“ It is currently reported, that the emperor
“ is about to make a tour into Westphalia;
“ the empress is to accompany him; and
“ Ida will certainly not remain at Prague;
“ unless she shall, before that, have finish-
“ ed her brilliant career, and be returned to
“ us vilified and despised, which is far from
“ improbable.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. MUNSTER shed a torrent of tears. Her husband was in the right: the last part of his remonstrance was what affected her most. To be deprived of the pleasure of seeing Ida, would indeed be a punishment! She wished to be able to undo all she had taken such pains to accomplish, were it only that she might not be separated from her whom she loved more than all the world beside. But her regret was useless; the wish was too late: that very evening the empress sent for Ida, and she was informed, that she must quit her father's house immediately to reside at court.

She had always considered the hints of her mother respecting some future change of situation as a jest. Her surprise, therefore, was extreme, when she received an order so little expected, the motive of which she could not conceive, and which she knew not whether to regard as a matter of

joy or of sorrow. She felt that she was not born for the station in which she had hitherto lived; yet there were things in it which she could not quit without regret. She must renounce the tranquility to which she was so much attached, a tranquility so suitable to her disposition, to encounter the hurry and bustle of the great world: she must abandon the house of her parents, to take up her abode amongst strangers. Munster saw her irresolution, and pitied her. Her supposed mother pressed her to her bosom, as she spoke to her of happiness, of fortune, and a hundred things beside, which Ida could not comprehend, as it was not judged proper to give her the least hint of what concerned her so nearly. Mrs. Munster, perhaps, would willingly have disclosed to her, at this moment, all the secrets of her heart; but her husband had peremptorily forbidden her; and in that, at least, she could not refuse obedience, after the many steps she had taken without his permission.—“The knowledge
“of her birth,” said he, “will be of no

“ service to her; whereas, if she remain
“ ignorant of it, her modesty, her inno-
“ cence, her reserve will be more secure;
“ a point of the utmost importance in the
“ dangerous career she is about to enter.
“ I could wish also, that she may remain
“ persuaded she is sent for to court with-
“ out any solicitation having been made for
“ the favour: it may inspire her with a
“ kind of pride, that will make her anxious
“ not to forfeit the good opinion which she
“ supposes to have been formed of her.
“ It may happen too, my dear Maria,”
said he, softening the asperity of the reflec-
tion by a gentleness of manner, “ that at
“ some future period she may not think
“ herself obliged to you for the imprudence
“ of having purchased her so dangerous a
“ post, and I imagine you have no wish to
“ sink in the esteem of so virtuous a cha-
“ racter.”

Munster spoke like an oracle; and for this time his wife listened to his advice. The young lady departed, after having received a variety of good lessons, the prin-

cipal of which consisted in recommending to her to follow, on all occasions, the native impulse of her own honest and virtuous heart, and in cases of difficulty, to consult her parents: for the good old citizen had some faith in the proverb, which says, "he that goes on straight will never lose his way."

Our history does not describe the manner in which Ida was received at court: it says only, that the empress, for whom she felt so great attachment, gave her by no means so flattering a reception, as when she saw her, for the first time, on the day of All Saints.

Though Sophia's residence at court had not been long, yet it was impossible to perceive in her the slightest trace of that inexperienced young princess, who, when stepping at once from her convent into the great and dazzling world, received impressions the most lively from every new object, and was ignorant of the art of concealing what she felt. Besides, the princess of Ratibor had instilled into her a certain

respect for her own dignity ; which diminished the affability she naturally possessed, and gave her at length a less engaging, though a more stately demeanour. No one, however, was more amiable to those who pleased her. Ida had this good fortune formerly ; but the impression had since been completely effaced ; and the empress beheld nothing in her now, but a statuary's daughter, who affected to be more handsome and more attractive, than befitted her station. Beside, the character of Ida had sunk on another account in the opinion of Sophia. Winceslaus, in his usual manner, had told the empress with an authoritative tone, that it was his desire Ida might be admitted into the number of the ladies of her court. Sophia, as frequently happened, asked the cause of this preferment, and the emperor took special care not to say, because her mother has given me two hundred and fifty crowns of gold ; but coldly assigned for reason his own will and the young woman's beauty. To this declaration Sophia answered only by her

silence; and the governess of the household, by a look of disdain, as she turned her face towards the empress.

“Must I compliment your majesty on the brilliant acquisition you have just made?” said the princess of Ratibor to Sophia, as soon as they were alone.—The empress was silent.—“Really,” continued the princess, “if the daughters of plebeians are to be admitted amongst our young ladies of quality, our court will soon become an admirable pattern for others. However, there is no effect without a cause: they say this Munster’s daughter is handsome, and Susanna grows uglier every day: now, a trifling exchange ought of course to be allowable in the virtuous chief of the German empire.”

It will be presumed, from this speech, that the governess of the household was permitted to talk with great freedom to Sophia: in fact, being the sole confidant of the unfortunate wife of Winceslaus, she had liberty to say whatever she pleased. She continued, therefore, her malicious dis-

course, in terms so adroitly chosen to irritate the empress's mind, that we need not wonder at the reception of Ida.

The daughter of Munster was not long in perceiving, that she must here learn to bear looks to which she had never been accustomed: but she endeavoured to persuade herself, that it was the style of the court; and her modesty led her to ascribe solely to her want of birth the little affronts she received, and from which she found her companions exempt. This did not prevent her from sometimes asking herself, why, if she were not to be treated with greater kindness, she had been drawn from her original obscurity. Yet her native candour always concluded with making her excuse the ill-treatment she experienced, and endeavour to bear it with patience.

Though no one seemed to notice the citizen's daughter, every eye was fixed upon her. The men whispered to one another: "How handsome, how beautiful she is!" while the women sought to find defects in her who had been introduced into their circle, in violation of established usage.

Amongst all the ladies of the court, however, there was not one who observed her with so much attention as the princess of Ratibor. She assiduously watched for some favourable circumstance, that might serve to confirm the opinion she had instilled into Sophia. Fruitless assiduity! The young Munster, as she was called in derision, conducted herself in a manner so irreproachable, that she had no reason to fear having the whole universe to witness her actions. She executed the duties of her office with the strictest propriety, spent her leisure hours in her apartment with her attendant, visited her parents on those days when she was permitted so to do, and behaved with so much prudence when there was a ball or entertainment at the palace, that the most envenomed malignity could find no unguarded place against which to direct its arrows. To this may be added, that the emperor paid not the smallest attention to her, which totally overthrew the disadvantageous ideas, which the princess of Ratibor had wished Sophia to conceive of

her. Wincelous, as we have seen, was no woman-hater: but the line of beauty that captivated him was not of that dignified species that adorned the young Munster. The charms of Susanna, were the model most suited to his taste.

The governess of the household, finding herself baffled in her attempts, to lay hold of the conduct of our young damsel, was compelled to be silent. Sophia, therefore, heard no longer any thing spoken to her prejudice; and, seeing her daily adorned with every grace, she felt her affection for her imperceptibly revive. Ida was infinitely superior to the rest of the maids of honor, whom her modesty would not suffer her to stile her companions; yet, who appeared by her side, in spite of their haughty and contemptuous carriage, no better than her servants. These young ladies took infinite pains to outvie each other, and to catch a passing look or a smile from their princess, a circumstance which contributed not a little to place them in an unfavourable point of view, when compared with the artless simplicity of the charming Munster.

At first it was much for the daughter of a plebeian not to be treated with disdain by her mistress; but on the contrary, to be viewed with some degree of complacency. And now nothing was wanting but some lucky incident to change this disposition into kindness.

One day Sophia's time hung heavily on her hands; a circumstance it may be presumed, which frequently happens to great princesses. We are not informed how she spent those moments in which she experienced not this distressing sensation: but on the day of which we are speaking, all the ordinary subjects of conversation had been exhausted. There was nothing new to say on the subject of Susanna; for the emperor, hoping that his wife would soon make him a father, had consented to remove his mistress for a time, by sending her to Conradsbourg: and no one durst venture to give the empress any fresh cause of discontent, before the tottering throne of Winceslaus was established by an heir.

On the evening of this day, the empress not knowing how to dispel the wearisomeness she felt, bethought herself of assembling all the ladies of the court, and proposing a prize for her who could invent any means of making the time seem less tedious.

Instantly every body was in motion.— All were desirous of giving proof of their ability. Singers, dancers, and story-tellers, presented themselves: but, vain all their efforts! either they performed their parts ill, or the démon of languor, that tormented Sophia, was so stubborn, that he appeared determined not to be vanquished. — “ Ah, cease, cease!” cried Sophia: “ what unmusical sounds! what barbarous steps! what drowsy homilies! how unfortunate I am, to have nothing but such untoward creatures about me!”

“ Let not your majesty despair:” said the malicious princess of Ratibor: “ have we not young Munster? Look where she stands, as idle and unconcerned as if she had nothing to do with the service of the empress: yet, no doubt, she is capable of

“eclipsing, by her talents, all the young
“ladies of the court. Come forward,
“miss:” continued she, in a tone of disdain:
“Speak; what talents have you with which
“to amuse the empress? You are not to
“suppose, that a place like your’s is to be
“filled by a person that is good for nothing.”

Unquestionably the design of the artful
Ratibor was so to abash the innocent Ida,
by this unexpected invitation, delivered too
in such a style, that it would be impossible
for her to display any talents she might pos-
sess. But her expectations were baulked.
—“I play on the harp:” answered Ida,
bowing; “and I would long since have
“gone for my instrument, if I had dared
“to touch its strings before persons so much
“better skilled, or if I could have hoped.”

“O, for Heaven’s sake, fetch it, child,”
exclaimed Sophia, interrupting her: “I doat
“on the harp!” Ida withdrew, and the
princess of Ratibor seized that opportunity
to acquaint the empress, that she was just
going to take her daughter from the convent;
and she had been assured that she played in
a very superior style on the harp.

Ida soon entered with her instrument; placed herself opposite Sophia, played a short prelude, that announced a consummate mistress in the art, and then began—God of harmony, didst thou inspire her with the thought?—That very song, which made so profound an impression on the empress the day of her nuptials.

Sophia scarcely breathed. Her eyes were fixed on the enchanting musician, who, standing before her, seemed to behold nothing but the strings of the harp, unless when occasionally her fine eyes were turned on the empress to give more expression to her words. Young Munster had finished her song, and Sophia yet gazed on her with rapture, as if she still heard the melodious notes, when, approaching her mistress, and dropping on one knee, she took from her head her coronet of flowers, and laid it at the empress's feet, conformably to the words of the song.

“Divine, enchanting girl!” cried Sophia, at the same time throwing her arm round the neck of Ida, and embracing her: “what

“sensations have you awakened in my breast!—Rise my child,” continued she, after a moment’s silence, and perceiving the scrutinizing eyes of the princess of Ratibor fixed on her: “rise, you have played and sung excellently.” The look and voice of the empress in pronouncing these words, did not express the same affection with which she embraced her. Ida, however, took courage to kiss her hand which she held out to her, and then withdrew to a distant part of the room.

Had young Munster possessed the profoundest knowledge of the human heart, she could not have selected any thing better calculated to gain that of the empress, than the piece which she sung. The sensations of Sophia on her wedding-day, when the young women made their appearance, must have been extremely delicious, for the bare remembrance of it to be capable of giving her so much pleasure. But this is by no means extraordinary. Who is there, that has not imagined, when some past event of his life has been recalled to his memory by

certain sounds, or appearances, that he has felt anew what he felt before; and if the sensation be pleasurable, the person who recalls it excites irresistibly our affection.

Sophia had risen from her seat, and was wiping the tears from her eyes at a window. The young ladies examined, with envious looks, the too interesting Ida, who rested tranquilly on her harp. The mistress of the robes then remarked, that it was late; and her majesty having need of repose, that the ladies might withdraw. Sophia gave a nod of approbation, and they retired.

CHAPTER XV.

THE princess of Ratibor would undoubtedly have been pleased if our young musician had been overcome with the honor of playing before an empress, as hath happened to many a musical performer at other courts, and had been obliged to withdraw before she had touched a string of the instrument: but either it was more easy to play on the harp before the empress of Bohemia, than before any other potentate, or Ida was too secure of her abilities, and too much accustomed to the presence of a sovereign, to be in danger of fainting. Thus she left the imperial apartment with her usual tranquillity.

“What a tiresome frigid creature that girl is!” said the princess of Ratibor, when she found herself alone with the empress: “any one else would have been intoxicated with so many marks of kindness; but she.”

“I observed her eyes filled with tears.”

“O yes; she can weep!——”

“ I beg, Ratibor,” said Sophia coldly, and interrupting her, “ that you will not thus strive to embitter every thing that gives me pleasure.”

A declaration like this would have been sufficient of itself to exasperate to the highest pitch the malice of Ida's enemy! but a circumstance happened the next day which was still more provoking.

Ida had been called into Sophia's chamber — “ Dear Munster” said the empress to her, “ you made me yesterday pass a delicious hour. While I listened to you, I forgot every thing else, even the prize I had promised; a prize which you gained with the utmost facility, and which I still owe you. Receive, then, this ribband, which attaches you more particularly to my service;” adding, with a smile, “ for you know, I must not offer you jewels, you have already refused them.”

This present was a blue velvet ribband, which was worn across the body from right to left, fastened on the shoulder with a large silk bow, and only given to young ladies of

the first distinction at court. Ida received it on her knees, and the princess of Ratibor was ordered to decorate her with it.

Young Munster's astonishment was extreme: such excessive kindness rendered her speechless; yet we may venture to affirm that, she was far from seeing all its possible consequences as clearly as the princess of Ratibor. She was of that happy age when the difference does not appear great between a ribband of honor, a simple knot for the hair, or a rose fresh gathered, as they all serve equally for ornament. The present of Sophia, however, bore a superior value in the eyes of Ida, because of the hand that bestowed it; and she expressed the warmest gratitude. The princess of Ratibor looked, on this occasion, much as did the Persian courtier of old, when obliged to attend on the sage Hebrew, and proclaim him the man whom the king delighted to honor: at last, however, her disdainful countenance assumed a certain malicious smile, impossible to have been deciphered by a girl so innocent and unexperienced as Ida. Having

thanked the empress, Ida made a graceful obeisance to the princess of Ratibor, who deigned to honor her with an embrace.

“That Munster,” said the princess of Ratibor to Sophia, the instant Ida departed, “is a charming creature, it must be owned; what a pity that she is the daughter of a plebeian?”

The eyes of all the maids of honor were enviously fixed on Ida’s blue ribband. With regret they saw her wear a badge of honor granted only to three or four of them. But this the young favourite did not perceive: she accosted them with her usual affability, without appearing in the least vain of the distinction she had received; and expected with impatience the evening, when she would have permission to visit her parents. She longed to show herself to them with her new decoration, sure that her mother at least would be delighted.

She conjectured rightly: her mother alone was rejoiced. Munster looked at her with a troubled and pensive countenance, and renewed his exhortations to her to be

always watchful over herself, and faithful to the engagements into which she had entered.

From the day that Ida received this first mark of her sovereign's favour, she appeared to be every moment treated with more esteem. She was called more frequently than her companions into the presence of Sophia, who liked better to be waited on by her than any one else. Not an evening passed without her being obliged to repair with her harp to the empress's closet, and exercise her talents to amuse her mistress. Was she more happy on this account? She endeavoured at least to persuade herself so, because she perceived herself necessary to the happiness of another: but at bottom, in consequence of the continual restraint in which she lived, she regretted those tranquil moments she before enjoyed in her own apartment, the many delightful evenings she spent with her parents, and the time when she had leisure to trace in imagination some past events of her life. These innocent pleasures became daily more rare.

The favour she enjoyed with the empress, whom she now scarcely ever quitted, prevented her not from experiencing a thousand little disagreeable circumstances: Sophia was not always chearful; and did not always, when she spoke to her, call her dear Munster.

Ida perceived herself incessantly the butt of the envenomed shafts of calumny. At one time it was said, that she had been seen in places, in which it became not the empress's maids of honor to appear; at another, that she had laughed at church: now she was accused of having spoken disrespectfully of some lady at court; then, of having talked too freely with some young nobleman at a ball. But the innocence of her, of whom these tales were told to Sophia, so completely destroyed their effect, that she was seldom influenced by them more than a few minutes; and her attachment to young Munster generally increased after these transient clouds of displeasure. During their continuance the governess of the household was seen to smile more graciously on Sophia than ever.

The princess of Ratibor had hoped, that Ida would experience the common fate of those who breathe the air of courts, namely, that her credit would sink as speedily as it had been raised, and by means as simple. Finding herself mistaken, she reckoned on another expedient, which she deemed infallible. This consisted in the introduction of a new person at court. Novelty has so many attractions that it makes us easily forget what we have long had in possession, and Ida had now been the favourite of Sophia for nearly a month.

The young Imago, daughter of the princess of Ratibor was the expected stranger. She had been educated in a convent; wonders were reputed of her; and her too credulous mother let slip no opportunity of sounding her praise, and repeating what was written of her by the nuns. She triumphed beforehand at the idea of shortly seeing this detested Munster eclipsed by her daughter: sometimes, indeed, a victory over a girl of so little importance seemed to her too trifling, and she endeavoured to find some

means of obtaining more signal satisfaction for the affronts she had occasioned her.

Imago appeared ; and, as the impression she made on her mother was not very extraordinary, it is easy to guess what effect she produced on other less interested spectators. She was presented, and very well received. Immediately was given her, on account of her rank, the blue ribband, which Ida obtained only as a recompence for her services ; and though she had expected more particular marks of favour, she was obliged to be contented with what she received, and was left at full liberty to join her new companions, without once being inquired after during the rest of the evening. The next day, however, there was much talk at court of the young princess of Ratibor. She was said to be handsome, and it was added, that she appeared to be of an amiable disposition. Her good qualities were so much insisted on, and her praises repeated with such ostentation, that instead of persuading people of her merit, it only excited doubt ; and of consequence the scheme produced no effect.

10 The princess of Ratibor had thus the mortification to find her projects once more abortive, and she soon lost all desire of continuing Imago in the service of the empress, where she had the terrible misfortune beside of having for a companion the daughter of a citizen. Her mother then thought of marrying her. Imago was not ugly; her parents could give her a considerable fortune, and Ratibor hoped, that, with the assistance of some artful coadjutors, she might effect her marriage with a young Italian prince who was expected at court. Meanwhile, that the time might not be thrown away, she set herself to examine the talents of Imago, in order to judge whether they were superior to her beauty. She found that they might suffice, perhaps to shine in a convent, but that in the world they would be estimated at a very low rate. Of the things she had acquired, some were necessary to be unlearned; others, to be of any value, had great need of improvement; and she wanted many of those agreeable talents which cannot be dispensed with in

good company, so that her education was actually to begin again. Thus, to be able to figure without disgrace, in a circle of any politeness, this poor young creature was obliged to betake her herself anew to her studies, which she imagined she had relinquished for ever. Her gaiety, which perhaps would have rendered her amiable, was destroyed by this constraint: at home she was fretful and passionate; at court she was absent; and in a little time jealousy, uniting with her useless endeavours to acquire perfection, rendered her, who might have been agreeable, had she not attempted to go beyond her sphere, the most insupportable being in the world.

The princess of Ratibor observed this with regret: she trembled when any one looked at, or conversed with her daughter, and sedulously avoided every occasion of recalling to mind the talents of Imago, of which she had formerly boasted. One day, however, shortly after Imago's appearance at court, the conversation turned on music, and particularly on the harp. Sophia then

recollecting, that the skill of Imago on that instrument had once been brought into comparison with the exquisite performance of Ida, desired a specimen of her talents. The young musicians were obliged to play in competition; and the comparison was so much to the disadvantage of Imago, that the mother was vexed at her former gasconade, and could only offer in excuse, that so insignificant an accomplishment was unworthy the study of a princess, and suited only a person who perhaps intended to make it her profession.

Ida was extremely mortified, not only at the suggestion, that she designed to embrace the occupation of a musician, an occupation held in those days in disrepute; but also at having been the unwilling instrument of humbling a young person by whom she had never been offended. On seeing the young Munster with her eyes cast on the ground, one might have supposed that she was the vanquished party; nor was it possible for her to enjoy with cordiality the applauses she received. This incident led

her to seek less than ever to exhibit her talents; and as Imago did not provoke her to it, they lived on good terms together.

After the various artifices which the princess of Ratibor had employed to crush the young Munster, it was reasonable to presume, from her known disposition, that she had conceived against Ida the most inveterate hatred: but the reverse appeared in her conduct. She seemed entirely devoted to her, engaged her daughter in conversation with her, invited her sometimes to dinner at her house, and at length requested her to give Imago some lessons on the harp; a request with which she complied as readily, as she refused with firmness a very handsome present offered her on that account.

Thus Ida spent as much of her time at Ratibor house, as her duty at court would permit. She exerted herself to improve the talents of Imago, endeavoured sometimes to correct her temper, and sought to inspire her with sentiments suitable to her rank. But every block of marble is not

calculated for the statue of a god. Imago remained as she was, and gave Ida to understand, that she had much rather see her as a friend than as instructress.

A close intimacy was soon formed between the two young women. There were moments when the difference of their rank was entirely forgotten: they walked, they played, they bathed together, and it sometimes happened that they slept in the same bed. Mrs. Munster was delighted with a connexion so honourable, when Ida mentioned it in one of her visits to her parents; but her husband shook his head, and recited the fable of the earthen vessel and the brass pot, which he had learned of a monk.—

“Familiarities of this kind,” said he, “have some concealed motive. We are led ingenuously to disclose our thoughts, and have afterwards frequently reason to repent it. I am much mistaken, if the princess have not already made some attempt to learn your little secrets.”

“Secrets, my dear father!” said Ida, laughing; “I have none.”

Munster held up his finger, and named Herman.

“It is true,” replied Ida, with a blush, “Imago has sometimes bantered me on that name; and I must certainly have uttered it in a dream, for awake it has never escaped my lips.”

“I would not have you mention it either sleeping or waking,” said Munster, who could not help smiling at the simplicity of her answer.

“I remember, however:” said Ida: “a trick which the princess played me, and with which I was not at all pleased. You know the present which the empress made me of a lock of her hair. Since I have resided at court, I have avoided wearing it publicly, as such an ornament would have occasioned too much talk: but I esteem that early pledge of my sovereign’s favour a thousand times more than the most costly jewels, and it is never out of my bosom, except when I bathe. On one of these occasions, the princess took it from me secretly: I missed it: a little quarrel arose

“ between us : she would not confess the
“ theft : at last I perceived the gold network
“ hanging from her neck, and I pulled it
“ out of her bosom. Still she would not let
“ it go, but held it in play, till I had related
“ the manner of my obtaining it. She
“ seemed to me to have been already in-
“ formed of this event by her mother, who,
“ as I remembered was present ; and she
“ was particularly pressing to know what I
“ intended to do with such a singular orna-
“ ment. Upon this I laughed, and turned
“ the matter into a jest. I believe, an-
“ swered I, that as long as I shall wear a
“ part of the empress next my heart, she
“ will always continue to love me.”

“ A very extraordinary answer,” replied
Munster, shaking his head. “ Be prudent
“ my child, and avoid too great familiarity
“ with persons who, I have no doubt, mean
“ you ill.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE prince, whom the mother of Imago had in view for her daughter, at length arrived at Prague. He was a wealthy lord, of great expectations, of the house of Visconti. Many steps had already been taken: he had been told of Imago's beauty, with the usual exaggerations; but in all probability he made a deeper impression upon her, than she upon him, for he saw her by the side of Ida. Who indeed, in presence of the latter, could have any hopes of making a conquest? and particularly the princess of Ratibor, who was inferior to the generality of young women who had any pretensions to beauty. Accordingly the eyes of the prince were turned incessantly towards Ida. In vain was he assiduously informed of her want of birth. In spite of this circumstance, his intended could with difficulty obtain from him a few careless glances, while he gazed on young Munster with such rapture, that she was disconcerted, and obliged to retire.

From that moment she was no longer invited to Ratibor house; and Imago seemed not to know her former friend, when she met her at court. The prince repeated his visits, but without finding her whom he sought. At length he saw her at court, and was as little cautious to conceal the impression she had made on him, as the first time he beheld her. To no purpose was he again told, that this extraordinary girl was no other than Ida Munster: the name did not appear to operate on him the effect that was expected. He continued to admire her and sought opportunities of speaking to her. In this however, he succeeded not. Ida carefully avoided him, for she had remarked the passion with which she had inspired him, and was resolved not to listen to the proposals of a prince, to the injury of her friend, and the disparagement of Herman. The young Italian remained no longer at Prague than was necessary to convince him, that he had nothing to hope from her whom he loved. At his departure he neglected even taking leave of the princess of Ratibor; and he

thought not for a moment during his residence at the court of Wincseslaus, of the honor intended him, by marrying him there.

Thus the simple Imago, and her haughty mother, once more saw their hopes disappointed. They had carried matters so far, as already to have received the congratulations of the court on the projected match, which augmented their humiliation on finding it broken off.

All the disgrace of this failure was thrown on the innocent Ida, who was no otherwise to blame, than in possessing more beauty than Imago, and the majority of her companions. Ratibor and her daughter could now scarcely conceal the rage with which they were inflamed; and Ida would have been terrified to death, could suspicion have entered into her heart, pure and exempt as it was from treachery.

They, whom she supposed to be her parents, felt very differently on this subject. Both were persuaded, that it would be imprudent to instill fear into her mind; but her perilous situation was often the subject

of their discourse till midnight, and they each separately took in secret, the steps they conceived most proper to secure the life and honor of her who was so dear to them.

Mrs. Munster was much more alarmed on this occasion than her husband. She had a very bad opinion of the prince of Ratibor, and all his illustrious house; and she related a hundred instances, one more terrible than another, in order to shew, that they who had the misfortune to displease any of the family, frequently disappeared on a sudden, without any person knowing what became of them. Might not the unfortunate Ida experience the same fate? And, in a danger so imminent, what could remove the apprehensions of a nurse, who had for her the sentiments of the tenderest mother?

Probably many of the stories which so much disquieted Mrs. Munster, were of the nature of fairy tales, which were firmly believed in the days of which we are writing. But alas! the terrible phantoms of the imagination, have over weak minds, as much sway as realities; with this advantage on

their side, that the means, commonly chosen to combat them, are calculated rather to augment than diminish the terror they occasion. The anxiety of Munster and his wife, was increased by a report that had prevailed, and which was shortly confirmed from the mouth of Ida, that the emperor's journey into Westphalia, which had been long talked of, was soon to take place, and consequently Ida, if she followed the court, would be exposed incessantly, and without resource, to the malice of her enemy.

The first thought of Munster, when he heard this news, was to take home his supposed daughter. To this his wife heartily consented; and Ida, who had never any other will, than the will of those whom she believed to be her parents, made no opposition.

It was proposed to the empress; but the empress was now so strongly attached to her charming attendant, that it was impossible to think of a separation; and the request of Munster, which he made in person, was flatly refused. . . . "I thank you, good old gentleman, for having left me your daughter

“ so long :” said Sophia, with her wonted affability : “ but if you take her from now, “ I shall scarcely be obliged to you for the “ past ; since the time draws nigh, when her “ affectionate cares and charming vivacity “ will be indispensable ; when I shall doubly “ want her enchanting conversation, and her “ skill on the harp, to drive from me the “ genius of melancholy. Besides, you will “ deprive her of the honour of singing to “ your future prince, the first song he will “ hear in his cradle.”

This was attacking old Munster on his weak side. He found, that it was in vain to think of Ida's return ; and, as nothing could remove his uneasiness, if he did not hear of her every day, he formed a resolution, of which we shall hereafter have occasion to speak, while his wife secretly took another. In fact, she employed the two hundred gold crowns, the remains of their buried treasure, in the execution of a scheme she had formed, and she delayed not taking the necessary steps with her usual precipitancy.

The day fixed for the emperor's departure arrived: but certain events happened, unconnected with our history, that obliged him to remain some time longer at Prague, and to let the empress depart without him.*

The persons who were to accompany the empress, were assembled in the audience chamber to take leave, when a circumstance occurred, that surprised every one, not excepting her whom it immediately concerned. Wincellaus had already spoken to the persons of most importance in the suit of the empress, and those of less consequence were, according to custom, to receive only a general mark of notice, when Ida, who was at that time amongst the crowd, was ordered to be called to him.

“Are you Ida Munster?” asked he.

Being answered in the affirmative, a private secretary, on a motion from the emperor, put into her hands a large parchment patent, from which hung the imperial seal. Ida blushed, and appeared disconcerted.

* The motives of this journey seem to be in general very obscure; nor can we find any satisfactory account of it in contemporary historians.

“ It is impossible, said Winceslaus, that
“ the favour I grant you, should appear
“ more extraordinary to you, than it does
“ to myself: but one of my subjects has
“ thought fit to solicit it, and I love them
“ too well, to refuse to the humblest of
“ them, any thing that is practicable. Go:
“ and be assured of my protection.”

Ida retired with amazement. Every
body crowded round her, eager to know the
contents of this mysterious patent: but she
ran with it to the empress, who gave it to a
chamberlain to read, which he did, to the
whole assembled court. The following
were its contents:

“ We, Winceslaus, &c. take thee, Ida
“ Munster, under our imperial protection;
“ and hereby declare all those responsible
“ for thy life and honor, on whom shall
“ fall the least suspicion of having attempted
“ them. Moreover we grant thee the pri-
“ vilege of not being condemned to death,
“ but by ourself in person, and of not be-
“ ing arraigned for any misdemeanor, ex-
“ cept before our own immediate tribunal,

“ or those deputed to hold our place in the
“ criminal court,” &c.

Who does not perceive, in this proceeding the affectionate precaution of Mrs. Munster? she was desirous of omitting nothing for the security of her *Ida*, and in consequence resolved to purchase her the immediate protection of the emperor. *Wincelaus*, always ready to grant what was asked him in so becoming a manner, had directed, half-drunk perhaps, the immediate execution of this patent, which could not but appear mysterious to all the world, and which proved more detrimental than useful to her, for whom it was obtained.

The persons who were present at its recital, beheld young *Munster* with looks of astonishment and contempt: and it was unanimously agreed, that there must be something extraordinary in her situation, for such precaution to be necessary. In the common course of things, innocence, it was said, needed no protector but itself: nor did it appear that any injurious suspicions had been entertained of *Ida*, or any intention of prosecuting her in any court.

Young Munster was not the last to feel that this singular protection had a very unfavourable appearance. Without regarding therefore, what she heard whispered on all sides, she approached the empress, and asked her permission, humbly to return the monarch the patent he had granted her. "I ask no other security," added she, "than that which every one has a right to expect under an equitable prince: I desire no favours, but what I shall be found to merit from the goodness of my mistress."

"No, no," cried Sophia, who saw the affair in a very different light from the rest of those who were present: "No, my child, I will keep this instrument for you: and, if it serve for nothing else, it will at least prove to your descendants, that you were an object worthy the particular protection of your prince."

This adventure became a general subject of conversation, and arrived at the ears of Munster, before Ida had an opportunity of acquainting him with it. He readily guessed at the author, and had a very serious

conversation with his wife, on the singular means which her attachment for her daughter induced her to employ. Mrs. Munster confessed, that she had solicited the emperor's protection for Ida: but declared at the same time, that she had never thought of asking a written assurance of his promise, and much less a security in the form of a patent. Munster, who had seldom found his wife in a lie, believed her, and supposed the singularity to be of the number of those inconsiderate actions, that the fumes of wine so often caused Wincellaus to commit. For ourselves, we are inclined to consider the circumstance rather as a trick of dame fortune, who meant to produce from it the most extraordinary adventures.

CHAPTER XVII.

IDA went to take leave of her parents. Her mother burst into tears; but her father showed more firmness, and spoke of the pleasure of soon seeing her again.

After affectionately bidding each other adieu, they parted. The reader will pardon me if, in this part of my history, I speak a little obscurely of time and place. The want of sufficient documents must be my excuse.

When the empress arrived at the end of her journey, the time of her delivery approached. Sickness, or some other reason, prevented the emperor from being present at this grant event: but he had taken care, that in his absence every thing should be conducted in a manner suitable to the birth of an heir to his throne. The Bohemians complained that this ill-timed journey would deprive them of the happiness of hearing the first cries of their future monarch. By way of consolation, they were

permitted to send a deputation of the most considerable persons among them, to be present at the delivery of the empress, and assist at the baptism of their young sovereign; for a prince it must be at all events. No person beside was invited to the ceremony, except the duke of Bavaria, father of Sophia, and the count of Wirtemberg, her godfather.

These noblemen, and the loyal Bohemians, arrived at the day appointed; and every thing was ready for celebrating the grand festival, but the principal personage, the heir of Winceslaus, on whose account it was made.

The wished for moment, however, seemed daily to become more distant, the empress was attacked with a severe distemper, that reduced her to the last extremity. All the country put up prayers for her recovery; and at length she was delivered of a dead daughter.

I know not whether in those days it was rare for sanguine expectations to be disappointed, or whether princes at least, were exempt from such a misfortune; but certain

it is, that this sad accident spread such alarm, that one would have supposed nothing similar to it had ever happened on the face of the earth. The persons who interested themselves in the affair, and Sophia was so beloved by the people, that no one was indifferent where she was concerned, were divided chiefly into two parties. One attempted to discover the presages of this event, the other to conjecture what had been its cause, while few thought of the consequences it might produce.

The art of interpreting presages of futurity, was then a prime article of faith; and he would have been in an awkward predicament, who should have ventured to contradict those who attributed to the still born princess, all the comets and extraordinary meteors that had been seen in the firmament for ten years before. They who set themselves to investigate the cause, of what had disappointed the hopes of a whole people, were still less disposed to be jested with; and in her eyes it would have been a crime but to suspect, that the misfortune was

owing to a long journey, undertaken in an advanced state of pregnancy, the unskilfulness of the physicians, or the last fit of rage into which the empress was thrown, when she learnt, by letters from Prague, that Susanna, whom she had been assured by Wincelaus he had finally dismissed, had again made her appearance, publicly filled her place, occupied her apartments, and framed projects on her approaching death, which she trusted would be the consequence of her situation.

Reasons of this sort were too trivial in the opinion of our sages. Their inquiries went much farther. According to them, nothing but sorcery could have operated this event. It was necessary, that the arm of justice should put a speedy stop to the evil, that it might not extend farther, and reach even the sacred person of Sophia, who was still between life and death. All the empress's household were imprisoned, even to the princess of Ratibor, Ida alone excepted. She was left undisturbed in her apartment, and had nothing to complain of,

except that she was not permitted to attend her beloved mistress, who every moment called for her in vain, and declared, that, without her dear Ida, she could neither live nor die.

The examinations were taken with speed and rigour before the duke of Bavaria, and the count of Wirtemberg, who had been too much habituated to the sufferings of others, and were too good christians, to shew any mercy in an affair of witchcraft. Strict, however, as were the examinations, all the ladies who had been taken up, were dismissed on the first interrogatory. Even the princess of Ratibor, received not the slightest reprimand, for having been so negligent of the empress's safety, as to permit the delivery of the letter, of which we have spoken above. It was known that such a letter had been received; it was known, that immediately on reading it, Sophia had fallen into a swoon, which was followed by convulsions; and from that moment to her delivery she had continued in extreme danger: but to this no attention was paid;

they sought only to discover the supernatural means, which must have been employed to deprive Sophia and her infant of life; and of these the ladies of the empress had been found to be perfectly innocent.

Ida sincerely pitied her unfortunate companions, for having incurred the slightest suspicion of a practice so detestable, in which she, like the rest of her contemporaries, had the firmest belief. Such a suspicion she thought she could not herself have survived an instant. She considered herself happy to have been the only one excepted; and hoped, that she should soon be permitted to see her dear mistress, when she learnt, that the princess of Ratibor and the other ladies had been set at liberty, and were at present engaged in their former employments about her person.

One morning as she was dressing, in order to be ready if the empress should send for her, one of her women entered with looks of horror and despair, holding in her

hand a paper, which she seemed desirous of giving her ; but scarcely had she taken two steps in the room, when she tottered and fell senseless on the floor. Ida ran to her assistance, and perceived her name on the paper, which lay on the ground. Curiosity got the better of her compassion, and she read what follows. But no, she read it not, for at the second line she fell by the side of her servant.

Judge, reader, whether she had not reason to despair.

“ TO IDA MUNSTER.

“ Ida Munster ! sorceress ! accused of murder, of high treason ! appear ! We, the secret avengers of the Eternal, cite thee within three days before the tribunal of God ! appear ! appear !”

“ Good Heavens !” exclaimed Ida, when by the assistance of her woman she was brought to herself : “ did I see clearly ? give me that note.” She read it, it fell from her hands : and pale and trembling she sat down on her chair.

The servant then related, that in the morning she had found the parchment nailed to the door that led to Ida's apartment: at first she paid no attention to it, because she could not read; but the people, who were assembled in crowds, informed her of its contents, and ordered her, with threats, to carry it to the person to whom it was addressed.

Ida listened to her tale, half dead with fear, and scarcely knowing what she heard. Had she been more collected she would have perceived, in the looks of those about her, an indignation and contempt, which would have appeared to her extraordinary from persons by whom she had been incessantly flattered.

"O God! what have I done? and what am I now to do?" cried Ida, clasping her hands, and lifting her eyes to Heaven.

"What you have done," said her women, "is best known to yourself: and as to what you have now to do it is not for us to advise. We must instantly leave you, lest the vengeance of Heaven should pursue us also."

“ And will you too abandon me?” said Ida to the young woman who had brought her the billet, and who, affected by her situation, had thrown herself at her feet, and watered them with her tears.

“ Tell me in what I can serve you, and
“ I will stay.”

“ Run to the princess of Ratibor, and
“ tell her —— tell her only —— yet tell
“ her all: describe to her my distressed
“ situation; let her advise me what to do.
“ God only knows what has brought on me
“ this calamity.”

The young woman went, and soon returned, bringing back for answer, that the princess knew no such person.

In like manner Ida sent to several other ladies of the court and equally to no purpose. She then recollected the duke of Bavaria, and the count of Wirtemberg, who had always shewn a regard for her. To them she sent also, and received for answer, that she must have recourse to God, if her conscience were pure; as to advice, they could give her none, except that of not

failing to appear in compliance with the citation, as, at any rate, her life was at stake.

“Appear!” said Ida: where must I appear? Did you ask where the secret tribunal is held?”

The girl was silent.

“My life too at stake!” exclaimed the unfortunate Ida, after a long and gloomy silence. “Heavens! what have I done? Am I not innocent?”

“God send you may be:” answered her woman, sobbing.

“Yes, I call Heaven to witness that I am. I swear it by him who lives for ever.”

Having remained some time on her knees, covering her face with her hands, and seemingly in prayer, she at length arose, and continued thus:—“What said the count of Wirtemberg? Was it not that I must seek consolation from God?” Be it so. “God has already comforted me; he will comfort me still more by the mouth of his ministers. Give me my hood: I will go to church, and confess myself. The reverend father John will tell me what to do.”

“ Oh ! do not run such a risk : the people are excited against you, and may do you some mischief.”

“ Give me my hood : I may risk every thing, for what have I to lose ?”

“ No doubt it will be useless for me to attend you.”

“ Do as you please.”

Ida set off, without once looking round her. She muffled herself up as much as possible in her hood, that she might not be known. At every corner she heard her name coupled with execrations. The people seemed better informed than herself of what she was accused. The appellations of wretch, criminal, sorceress, passed from mouth to mouth without further explanation, at last she gathered from some few expressions that dropped from a company walking before her, that the crime with which she was charged was committed against her dearest friend, her adored Sophia. More than once she was near sinking to the earth, her legs failed her, and she was obliged to lean against the wall.

When she arrived at the church, where she sought counsel and consolation from the only friend she had left, (her confessor,) night was advancing. Silently she passed along the gloomy cloisters of the hallowed fane, and placed herself in an obscure corner, to wait for father John. Whether this father John was the famous confessor of the empress, St. John Nepomucenes, whose name is still so celebrated for his discretion, our memoirs do not inform us: St. Nepomucenes himself however, could not have given more striking proofs of his love of taciturnity, than did our father John, when this afflicted sinner, or saint let us rather call her, laid open to his view the inmost recesses of her heart.

She concealed nothing from him; she wept, she sighed, she asked his counsel—— and still he was silent. She urgently implored him to bestow on her one word, one simple word of consolation. After a long pause, he ventured to say: “Go; clear yourself from the crime of which you are accused, and then I will grant you absolution.”

“But what must I do? I am cited to
“the bar of justice by I know not whom; I
“am to make my appearance I know not
“where.”

“Appear.”

“And who will be my judges?”

“Those terrible unknown mortals, who
“render justice in secret.”

“Where do they assemble?”

“Every where, and no where.”

Ida, bathed in tears, ceased to question
this flinty-hearted priest; and he rose to go
away.

“Have pity on me! have pity on me!”
cried she, holding him by his gown: “it is
“now night: grant me an asylum till the
“morning in this convent, or give me at
“least a guide to conduct me home in
“safety.”

“The holy sisters who dwell here will
“not receive you, nor will any one accom-
“pany you.”

Ida covered her face with her hood, and
wept afresh. A moment after she looked
round, and found herself alone. The great

lamp suspended from the center of the church shed a feeble light. Rising, she walked with trembling steps, through the windings of the sacred vaults, and by the least frequented streets of the city, till she arrived at her own habitation. She no longer wept; a kind of torpid insensibility had seized her faculties. She called to her servant to bring a light; no one answered. She entered the anti-chamber, and the apartments of her women: they were empty.—“ I am “ totally abandoned, then,” said she, as she entered her own chamber. “ Heavens! “ how have I deserved this fate? Is there “ no difference between accusation and con- “ viction? Am I in reality guilty? They “ say, that it is possible to sin without know- “ ing it. Yes, yes, it must be so, and I am “ certainly a guilty wretch, since every one “ considers me as such, and the holy father “ John has refused me absolution.”

Ida was in that terrible situation, from which there is but a step to madness and despair, when she heard an indistinct noise in the anti-chamber. The door opened and some one called her by her name.

“Who is there? and what is thy errand?” said she, in a voice more of alarm and horror, than of anger.

“Ida! my poor unhappy Ida!” continued the stranger, in accents of the most tender affection.

Ida rose from the floor, on which she was lying. The figure, which was then discernible, by means of a lantern it carried, approached nearer.

“Who art thou? Art thou one of those terrible and unknown beings, who render justice in secret?”

“Do you then no longer know me? Do you not know your father?” cried the person who entered; and saying this, he rendered the light of his lantern more vivid, threw off his cloak, and clasped her in his embrace.

“My father! my saviour! angel sent from Heaven!” were the words she had just time to articulate, before she fainted in his arms.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IS there a sensation to which the human heart is susceptible stronger or more delightful than that which it experiences, when, plunged in the abyss of despair, it perceives the approach of a friend? But to enjoy this the mind of Ida was too much oppressed! she was ready to sink under her misfortunes. Let us, indeed, consider what she had suffered in the space of one short day; and then judge how great must have been her surprize, to find herself, at the moment that she thought the whole world had abandoned her, clasped in the embrace of a father!

“Is it possible!” said she at last, when she was able to speak: “Is it possible? or am I in a dream? My father here, and at such a moment!”

“Could Ida then think, that he would leave her for an instant in suspicious hands, without watching over her? No, I set off from Prague at the same time

“ with yourself: I have followed you every
“ where: I have observed your every step:
“ I would not let you know I was near, that
“ I might judge of your conduct when
“ wholly left to yourself. In like manner
“ I had resolved to accompany you on
“ your return, without giving you the least
“ reason to suspect it: and I should have ex-
“ ecuted my resolve, had you not received
“ this unexpected stroke.”

“ O God! a stroke indeed! a stroke
“ that will cost me my life!”

“ That will cost you your life! . . . An
“ excellent mode truly of defending your
“ innocence! . . . No, Ida, you shall live
“ to cover with shame your accusers, who
“ wish to see you die as a malefactor!”

“ And who are my accusers?”

“ I have sought to discover them from
“ the moment I knew that you had been
“ cited before the secret tribunal. The
“ whole day I have been in quest of infor-
“ mation, mixing in the crowd, and wan-
“ dering from place to place, to learn what
“ might be your crime. What I have been

“able to learn is, that, when the ladies
“of the empress were interrogated, the
“princess of Ratibor found no better means
“of proving her innocence, with respect to
“Sophia’s unfortunate labour, than by ac-
“cusing you. Her deposition was rumour-
“ed abroad: it was said, that she had
“answered for all the ladies present under
“the most solemn oath; but that there was
“one absent, who, if appearances could be
“trusted, was certainly the culprit. The
“motives of her suspicion were asked; but
“no one could inform me what they were:
“I only heard, that you were to be brought
“to trial, and that the judges testified much
“surprise and indignation, that you alone,
“of all the ladies of the empress, had not
“been taken up and interrogated.”

Ida listened with looks of anxiety and distress, but made no reply. Münster continued:

“The history of that letter of protec-
“tion granted you by the emperor, at the
“request of my imprudent wife, was at
“length mentioned with such comments as

"you may easily conceive. The judges
 "looked at one another! 'Have we need
 "of any better proof?' cried they. 'Why
 "seek an extraordinary protection if she
 "were innocent? Why wish to prevent her
 "being brought before the customary tri-
 "bunals, if not conscious of some secret
 "crime, that, if known, would expose her
 "to the sword of justice? Ought she, how-
 "ever, on that account, to remain unpun-
 "ished?' My information reaches no far-
 "ther, and I know not what has been since
 "determined: but I have been assured,
 "that the judges did not separate till mid-
 "night, after having pledged themselves
 "by an oath to show you no favor."

Then Ida hid her face in her father's bosom,
 and wept.—"Go on, go on," said she, sob-
 bing: "continue to pierce my heart, with
 "the relation of my dreadful misfortune."

"My child, it is necessary that you
 "should know all. How otherwise will
 "you be able to defend yourself?"

"And why, innocent as I am, must I
 "defend myself at all? Why regardless of

“ my letter of protection am I cited before
 “ a court of justice?”

“ You are not cited before any civil
 “ court, but before the grand tribunal of
 “ God. And fear you, to appear before
 “ the Almighty?”

“ Ah, were he to be my judge!” ex-
 “ claimed Ida, stretching her hands to
 “ Heaven, with a look that spoke the pu-
 “ rity of an angel. “ Were God to be my
 “ judge . . . !”

“ Well then, submit to your fate with
 “ that consoling hope. Those unknown
 “ persons who render justice in his name
 “ will be your judges: they were the only
 “ ones before whom you could be cited.
 “ Have you forgotten the words, contained
 “ in your letter of protection: *‘ We grant
 “ thee the privilege of not being arraigned for any
 “ misdemeanor, except before our immediate tribunal,
 “ or those deputed to hold our place in the criminal
 “ court.’*”

“ Alas! I did not comprehend them:”
 replied Ida, who found few motives of con-
 solation in her father’s discourse.

“Do you think, that men who have
“taken an oath the most solemn to judge
“with impartiality, will not discover your
“innocence?”

“I will think any thing you please:”
replied she, with a faint and dejected voice:
“but of this I am very sure, that I shall
“die, if I must appear alone before those
“terrible judges.”

“You shall not: I will accompany you.”

“But whither? Where do they hold
“their sessions? Father John tells me,
“every where and no where. What does
“he mean?”

“In reality, no one has yet seen the
“place where they assemble: but as you
“must appear, no doubt some means will be
“found of conducting you to your judges;
“and to this purpose I will employ the
“two days we have left.”

“But, to whom will you address your-
“self, since you are uninformed who are
“the members of this society?”

“God knows, I am acquainted with
“none of them: yet this I know, that they

“ exist in the midst of us under a thousand
“ different forms, without our suspecting
“ them: they walk by our sides, eat at our
“ tables, and we are ignorant of it. My en-
“ quiry however will reach the ears of some
“ one or other of them, and he will in-
“ struct me what is to be done.”

In this manner did they converse, Ida sitting by her father's side, till morning. Sometimes an extreme paleness overspread her countenance: then her burning cheek and inflamed eye bespoke the fever with which she was consumed. The old man was alarmed for her life. He at length prevailed on her to drink a small glass of wine, into which he had secretly introduced some narcotic tincture, and she fell asleep. Having placed her gently on a couch, he shut the door, and departed before it was quite day-light, to endeavour to discover what he so much wished to learn.

CHAPTER XIX.

SO powerful was the operation of the soporific, that Ida passed the whole day in sleep, and awoke not till her father arrived, just at the approach of night. He induced her to take some nutriment, which he brought with him; and, sleep, having calmed her perturbation, her strength appeared somewhat recovered. Finding her sufficiently calm to hear the result of his inquiries, he thus began:

We are in a country, which is the chief seat of the secret tribunal. It is not so difficult as I at first imagined, to gain information of what most imports us to know. Citations of the nature of yours, are not extraordinary here: and instances are not wanting of people who have escaped the hands of these dreadful avengers, or been acquitted by them. It is deemed, I am told, a mark of infinite honor, to be proclaimed innocent by them. I have heard a strange adventure

“ of a gentleman of this country, of the
“ name of Conrad von Langen*, who has
“ hitherto been pursued in vain by the se-
“ cret tribunal, which has not been able to
“ lay hold of him.”

“ And is it not equally possible for me
“ to escape?”

“ You cannot, you ought not to attempt
“ it, for you are innocent. As to Conrad,
“ I know not whether he be guilty or not ;
“ nor does the enquiry concern us. I men-
“ tion him only, because, on hearing his
“ story, it came into my head to endeavour
“ to speak to him, or one of his people, in
“ order to learn what we are so anxious to
“ know. By unexpected good luck I found
“ that his maitre-d’hotel was my ancient
“ comrade in the army, the good Walter of
“ whom you have heard me speak, who
“ at the surprize of Bern had the misfor-
“ tune to lose his hand, and was in con-
“ sequence obliged to quit the profession of
“ arms. He has told me a great many cir-

10 * According to other historians, John von Langen.

“ circumstances of the secret tribunal, but his
“ discourse was so obscure, so interlarded
“ with broken expressions, and half formed
“ sentences, that I know not what to think
“ of him. There were, he informed me,
“ persons of various descriptions, knights
“ and their esquires, citizens, as well as
“ nobles, in its service. Perhaps he be-
“ longs to it himself. Be that, however,
“ as it may, he assured me, that its dread-
“ ful summoners were commonly obliged
“ to resort to force to bring before them
“ the persons who were accused; that it was
“ rare for a culprit to appear on the first
“ citation; that they who waited for a se-
“ cond, or a third, were apprehended
“ wherever they were found; but that those
“ who appeared at the first, as you, my
“ dear Ida, will do, had the advantage of
“ inspiring a presumption of their inno-
“ cence, and were treated with greater le-
“ nity. And finally, that the only way of
“ discovering where the secret tribunal as-
“ sembled, was to repair, three quarters of
“ an hour after midnight, to that part of

“ the town where four streets meet, and
“ where was always to be found a person
“ who would lead the accused blind-folded
“ before the judges.”

“ I thanked him for his information,
“ and told him that you would carefully ob-
“ serve his directions, and that I was deter-
“ mined to accompany you. Walter,
“ upon this, looked me stedfastly in the face,
“ and asked if I were one of them. Not
“ knowing what was his drift, I made no
“ answer. He looked at me again with still
“ greater earnestness, uttering some inco-
“ herent words which I did not understand.
“ Still I was silent. “ Well,” resumed he,
“ after a moment’s pause, “ we shall see
“ whether you will be permitted to accom-
“ pany her. At any rate, however, you
“ may be certain she will arrive in safety at
“ the place of destination; the rest depends
“ on her innocence.”

Whence could proceed the sort of tran-
quility, which this mysterious tale of Mun-
ster imparted to Ida? for certain it is that
she felt relieved from the load that oppres-

sed her, spoke of her situation with composure, formed arrangements respecting the manner in which she should conduct herself, and sought to penetrate the obscurity in which she was involved. It seemed no longer impossible to her to support her misfortune, to face her accusers, and yet survive the shock.

Was it that Ida really discovered reasons for hope in what she had heard? Or was it with her, as with a multitude of others, who sink at the first gust of an approaching storm, but gradually lift up their heads, as the object of their terror becomes familiar to them? Or was it, lastly, that there are benevolent Genii ever ready to administer to their favourites, when their sufferings become too poignant, and mingle in the cup of bitterness some drops of heavenly consolation?

Whatever were the cause, Ida suddenly became tranquil; she enjoyed during the night the peaceful slumbers of innocence, while her father sat watching by her pillow, and for the two following days she remained in the same happy state.

At length the night, lately so much dreaded, approached, but brought with it no other terrors, than what a light supper, which the old man had provided, assisted by a glass of wine, were sufficient to dispel. Could their enemies have witnessed the serenity of these two victims of so cruel a fate, it would have inspired them with sensations of envy: their conversation was even gay.

Time passed on. The clock struck twelve, and they scarcely seemed to notice it. "When the moon is over yon steeple, it will be time for us to be gone," said Munster, looking out of the window. Their conversation, however, presently slackened, and at length ceased. The fears of Ida began to return.—"How my heart beats!" said she, laying her hand on her bosom. She walked up and down the room with agitation.—"Where," said she, "is the moon now?"—"It is . . . Take your hood, my child, and let us depart."—"Yet one moment," she replied: and falling on her knees she sighed a short prayer,

while Munster re-echoed her sighs. She then put on her hood and they hurried out of the house.

Silently they walked through the streets in which not a person was to be seen. The knees of Ida trembled with cold, while her cheeks were flushed with the crimson of fever. They arrived at the great steeple of St. Bartholomew's, where met four large streets leading to the extremities of the city.

“Behold, my father, the designated place!” said Ida, with a faltering voice. The moon shone on the spot, while a deep shadow cast its gloom over the distant avenues.

Near them, in one of the streets, they saw a man approaching, with slow and solemn steps, whom the dim light of the moon, and the terrors of Ida transformed into a giant.

He was wrapt in a kind of mail, so as that his eyes only were visible. He accosted them.—“Who are you?” said he.—“Ida Munster and her father.”

“It is the former I seek. The other may withdraw.”

“ No, I will not withdraw : I will follow
 “ her wherever she goes.”

“ You will follow her? that depends on
 “ the manner in which you shall answer the
 “ following questions. What are the names
 “ of these four streets? That which is en-
 “ lightened by the moon I myself call *fire* ;
 “ that in the shade *iron**. What are the
 other two?”

To this unintelligible question Munster
 made no reply.

“ Begone,” said the man in the mask :
 “ thou dost not belong to us.”

“ Must I then quit you, my father ;
 “ must I quit you? exclaimed Ida, sobbing.

The stranger tore her from the arms of
 Munster and pushing him away, somewhat
 rudely “ Go,” said he in a tone of voice
 too gentle to assort with the action that

* The usual words by which the members of the
 secret tribunal recognized each other were *steil, stein, gras,*
grein : in English, *steep, stone, grass. groan*. It is said
 however, that, on various occasions, other words were em-
 ployed. St. Pffeffinger, Vol. IV. p. 400, asserts that the
 first word should be *stock*, (in English *steel*,) not *steil*.

accompanied it: "you may safely trust
 "your daughter to my care."

"Whose is that voice?" said Munster
 to himself as he seated himself under the
 portico of the church. "It is surely fa-
 "miliar to me." Meanwhile Ida was led
 off by her conductor, who turned once
 more towards Munster, made a signal to him
 not to follow, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XX.

COURTEOUS reader, thou wishest, no doubt, to accompany this innocent maiden before her judges: but would it be safe for me to introduce thee to a place which no profane eye has yet explored? Rather let us sit down with honest Munster in the porch of St. Bartholomew's. Look; the moon has disappeared, the dawn begins to peep, we shall soon hear news of the object of our anxiety.

Munster was as firmly persuaded as you and I can be, that she whom he called his daughter was innocent. Walter had assured him, the preceding day, that if she were found guilty he would never see her more, as these avengers of God caused the sentences they pronounced to be executed on the spot: but he had added, that if there were the least prospect of her justifying herself, she would be safely brought back to him in the morning, by the persons into

whose hands he should commit her at night at the junction of the four streets.

Firmly relying on the innocence of Ida, the veracity of Walter, and the justice of the secret tribunal, he waited with tranquillity, and he waited not in vain; for, ere the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses were awake, his daughter was in his arms.

“Thou art restored to me, then!” cried Munster: “thou art restored to me! thou art innocent!”

“I am indeed innocent; I swear it by that God, who is my supreme judge; though no one will as yet declare me so. —Alas! your poor Ida is restored to you but for a short time. The avenging sword, still suspended over her head, hangs but by a thread. It is required that I should justify myself; and how shall I be able to do this, since there is every appearance against me? Oh! my father!——”

Her sobs prevented her saying more; and leaning on the arm of Munster they silently walked towards their home. Ar-

rived there she sat down breathless, and resting her head on her hand, wiped her tears as they flowed under her hood.

“ Tell me, my dear child, what has passed: conceal nothing from me.”

“ Alas! I have not long to remain with you. As a particular favour I am permitted to take up my residence with the Ursulines, for a short time, till my affair is finished and I am again summoned before my judges. Do not grieve, my dear father, you may see me there, I have asked leave to receive your visits.”

Munster pressed her hand with the earnestness of anxious affection, and again conjured her to relate her story.

“ How shall I describe to you what I felt, when torn from your arms by my conductor? I thought I should have expired: yet a certain something, that I cannot describe, presently inspired me with confidence. You must yourself have perceived, that the man in the mask treated me neither with cruelty or even harshness; his voice was gentle: by the

“light of the moon I discovered a tear
“starting from his eye: and I perceived, a
“circumstance on which I could not avoid
“reflecting, that he had lost his left hand.
“Is it possible, that he could be your
“friend, the good, the honest Walter?”

“It was, it was,” exclaimed the old man:
“it certainly was Walter, for I now recol-
“lect the sound of his voice.”

Ida continued:—“That discovery
“calmed my agitation. I found myself
“not delivered entirely into unknown
“hands, and you have always spoken to
“me so highly of Walter, that with him I
“considered myself safe. After having
“walked on for some time, he suddenly
“threw over my head a thick veil, which
“so completely covered my face, that it
“was impossible for me to discern the road
“we took. One while we passed over
“what appeared to me uncultivated ground,
“and then again over ruins: we ascended,
“and descended: sometimes I fancied my-
“self breathing the air of the fields; at
“others the sound of our footsteps appear-

“ ed to be echoed back by surrounding
“ vaults. At length we descended thirty
“ steps, which I counted, I know not why ;
“ and my veil being taken off, I found my-
“ self in a dark dreary place, where at first
“ I could distinguish nothing. Finding
“ myself extremely fatigued, my conductor
“ permitted me to sit down on a stone.—
“ By degrees my eyes became familiarised
“ to the obscurity of the place, and I found
“ myself at the entrance of a large square.
“ Whether I were in the country, or not,
“ I cannot say: but all around me, as far as
“ my view could penetrate, I beheld lofty
“ vaults ; and over my head the starry sky.
“ At a distance I observed by the light of
“ torches, which, though there were many,
“ but feebly illumined the vast space, serv-
“ ing scarcely more than to render darkness
“ visible, human figures dressed in black,
“ some of whom came towards us and join-
“ ed my conductor. They were all mask-
“ ed like him, and conversed only by signs,
“ intermingled with a few abrupt words.
“ Every moment their number increased ;

“ and apparently there were several hun-
“ dred of them. The silence that pre-
“ vailed in this assembly, interrupted only
“ by my tears and sighs, appeared incom-
“ prehensible to me.

“ On a sudden I heard the doleful
“ sound of a bell. Three times was it
“ struck; and as often did my heart quake
“ within me. The place was now more
“ enlightened, and I perceived a circle
“ composed of several persons in black, and
“ masked, who, I was informed by my con-
“ ductor, were my judges.—‘ You will im-
“ mediately be called upon:’ said he to me
“ in a whisper: ‘ if your conscience be clear
“ prepare to answer with courage. Take
“ off your hood, you must appear with your
“ face uncovered.’

“ Scarcely had he done speaking, when
“ a voice more appalling than the sound of
“ the bell, cried out in a tone of authority:

“ *Ida Munster! sorceress! accused of murder,*
“ *of high treason, appear! We, the secret avengers*
“ *of the Invisible, cite thee before the justice of*
“ *God! appear! appear!*

“ Though these terrible expressions
“ were not new to me, I cannot express the
“ oppression I felt at my heart on their
“ being pronounced. It continued indeed
“ but for a moment; for the consciousness
“ of my innocence inspired me with cou-
“ rage almost supernatural. With counte-
“ nance erect I stepped forward, and bold-
“ ly looked round on the whole assembly,
“ without testifying the least fear.—‘ To
“ such a citation I ought not to answer;’
“ cried I with a voice strengthened by
“ indignation. ‘ My name is Ida Munster,
“ but I am no criminal.’

“ At this, he who appeared to be the
“ chief of the tribunal, said :—‘ Come near
“ and listen to the complaints that are ad-
“ duced against you, and the witnesses who
“ attest their truth.’

“ I advanced, and falling on my knees,
“ ‘ I swear’ cried I, ‘ by him who lives for
“ ever, that I am not a sorceress, that I
“ have assassinated no one, that I have ne-
“ ver committed the crime of high treason,
“ and that all which the witnesses have de-
“ posed against me is false.’

“ The examination began : but, O my
“ father ! how shall I relate to you the sub-
“ stance of my accusation ! Is it possible,
“ that the merest trifles can be construed
“ into crimes, or regarded at least as a pre-
“ sumption of crimes ?

“ The first thing adduced against me,
“ was the lock of the empress’s hair. Alas !
“ I was obliged to give it up, and the braid
“ of gold net-work to which it was fastened,
“ is now a useless ornament about my neck.
“ That precious remembrance which I wore
“ in my bosom, became one of the strongest
“ proofs against me.—You remember, that
“ yesterday in the dark, I scratched my
“ cheek, and spotted my veil with blood :
“ my judges presumed, that it was the same
“ veil with which I had wiped the blood
“ from the neck of the empress on her wed-
“ ding day, when she gave herself the slight
“ wound you have heard me mention, and
“ I was asked for what purpose I carried
“ such things about me. They asked, too,
“ whether I had not said to one of my
“ friends, that the empress would be forced

“ to love me, as long as that lock of her
“ hair remained next my heart: and ac-
“ cused me of having so fascinated her,
“ that she could not be happy without me
“ and my harp for a single day; as a proof
“ of which they alledged, that lately, dur-
“ ing her illness, she had confessed it was
“ impossible for her to live, or even to die
“ without me.

“ ‘ Did she say so?’ cried I, with rap-
“ ture. ‘ Matchless woman! why cannot
“ I see her once more? Why, if I must
“ die, cannot I die at her feet?’ Si-
“ lence was imposed on me, and the inter-
“ rogations continued.

“ I was asked, whence came the riches
“ of my father and mother, after they had
“ lost by fire, all they possessed; by what
“ supernatural means I had been warned
“ that the conflagration would happen:
“ why I had not the humanity to acquaint
“ the people of the city, and my parents
“ with the circumstance, but had carried
“ my wickedness so far, as to abandon them
“ to their fate, and save only myself: and

“ what was become of the chevalier Her-
“ man of Unna, on whom I had cast a spell,
“ to make him in love with me, whom I
“ had so deprived of the use of his reason,
“ that he had wandered about the country
“ for three days together, without knowing
“ what he did, and whom in all probability
“ I had afterwards caused to be assassinated.

“ At the mention of Herman assassinat-
“ ed, I fell senseless on the ground. After
“ they had brought me to myself, I began
“ loudly to lament his death. O heavens!
“ if it should be true, that he is dead !”

Tears now choaked the voice of Ida, and she ceased not to weep, till Munster soothed her by the assurance, that he had lately received a letter from Herman, and that he was well. She then continued her narration.

“ The complaints exhibited against me,
“ became every moment more afflicting.
“ The Italian prince, who had abandoned
“ the princess of Ratibor, and whom of
“ course I had also enchanted by some se-
“ cret spell, was not forgotten; but the last

“ and most cruel reproach was, the unfor-
“ tunate labour of the empress, which was
“ in like manner imputed to me, as well
“ as the dangerous state in which she yet
“ continues.

“ God knows what answer I made to
“ these different accusations. This only I
“ remember, that I, who fancied myself so
“ weak, so timid, felt myself animated with
“ supernatural strength, and was silent to
“ none of the charges. I spoke little and with
“ reserve; but what I said must have been
“ of weight, for more than once, I put my
“ accusers to silence. The sky now began
“ to grow less obscure, the distant crowing
“ of the cocks announced the approach of
“ dawn; when instantly all the assembly
“ arose.

“ He who had presided, then addressed
“ me in these words: ‘ Ida, the sword still
“ hangs over your head: one and twenty
“ days are granted you to produce incon-
“ testible proofs of your innocence. Your
“ readiness to appear at the first citation,

“ induces us for the present to permit you
“ to depart in peace; but think not of
“ taking flight, our eyes and arms are every
“ where, like the presence of the Eternal.’

“ I prostrated myself at the foot of the
“ judgment seat, and solicited permission to
“ retire to a convent. My request was
“ granted, and I was moreover promised,
“ in consideration of my youth and sex,
“ some extraordinary favor; but what that
“ favour was, I was not informed.

“ Again I was veiled, and then led away.
“ On the road, I begged my conductor to
“ use his interest for me to be placed in the
“ convent of Ursulines, whither I had been
“ accustomed to go, and to obtain permis-
“ sion to see you there. This he assured
“ me he could grant on his own authority,
“ such things being left entirely to him. I
“ would have said more to him, but he
“ assumed the same reserve as when he con-
“ ducted me to the tribunal. At the corner
“ of the street he left me, probably that he
“ might not be known by you, whom he

“ pointed out waiting for me at the church
“ of St. Bartholomew.”

“ My dear Ida,” cried Munster, when she had finished her recital: “ be of good
“ heart. I am persuaded your affair will
“ terminate happily. I shall this day take
“ a step, which the absence of the person on
“ whom I found my hopes, has hitherto
“ prevented. The day on which you were
“ cited, and before I saw you, I went to the
“ count of Wirtemberg’s, to acquaint him
“ with something of the utmost importance,
“ and which would have been of great help
“ to you, had he known it. I was told,
“ however, that he was gone from home,
“ and would not return for three days.
“ Those three days are expired, and I will
“ go to him the moment I have conducted
“ you to your convent.”

“ Alas! it will be lost labour. I ad-
“ dressed myself to him, the instant I was
“ summoned before the secret tribunal, as
“ he had always appeared well disposed to-
“ ward me; but he too abandoned me.
“ Besides, it is probable he was not from

“ home, but refused to admit you, because,
“ knowing you to be my father, he was ap-
“ prehensive you might wish to solicit him
“ in my behalf.”

“ He has always, you say, appeared well-
“ disposed towards you,” replied Munster,
after a short silence: “ what proofs has he
“ given you of it?”

“ You know, my dear father, we are
“ naturally led to consider the slightest
“ marks of attention from the great, as a
“ proof of their being interested in our
“ favour. And at the time that every thing
“ smiled around me, he seemed to regard
“ me, I thought, with kindness. I remem-
“ ber particularly the moment of his first
“ seeing me in the empress’s closet. He
“ distinguished me from all my compa-
“ nions, and paid me attentions that were
“ extremely embarrassing to me: and when
“ the empress, as was her custom, told him
“ my name, that dear name which I shall
“ ever deem an honour to me, in order to
“ let him know, that I was not of noble
“ birth, his attention to me was increased.

“ ‘ Munster!’ replied he: ‘ Ida Mun-
“ ster! The name of Ida is pleasing
“ to my ear: it brings to my remembrance
“ a beloved wife, whom, alas! I long have
“ lost.’ The princess of Ratibor remarked,
“ that it was a proof of the pride of my
“ parents to give me the name of a princess.
“ But the count did not appear to heed the
“ reflection: he came up to me, embraced
“ me affectionately, and said with a smile:
“ ‘ I am happy to learn that you are a ci-
“ tizen’s daughter, for had you been a lady
“ of quality, I durst not so freely express
“ the friendship with which you inspire
“ me.’ The princess of Ratibor, who was
“ by my side, eyed me with a look of con-
“ tempt, and her eyes seemed to say, that
“ the last observation of the count, was
“ humiliating to her to whom it was addres-
“ sed; but too simple, too little vain, to be
“ of her opinion, I kissed the hand of the
“ respectable old peer, and received from
“ him in return, not without blushing, a
“ salute on my forehead. From that mo-
“ ment, he always asked for me, called me

“ his Ida, inquired after my parents, and
“ told me, that he had formerly a person
“ of the name of Munster in his service, a
“ very brave and worthy man, with many
“ other things equally flattering, which
“ people of humble birth so highly prize
“ from the great. For a time I thought
“ that I had found in him a protector : but
“ now, that I have enemies seeking to op-
“ press me, I have discovered my mistake.”

To this Munster made no reply : nor indeed had he time, for scarcely had she finished, when somebody entered to conduct her to the convent. They accordingly separated, after tenderly taking leave, and promising shortly to see each other again.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next day Munster made his appearance at the parlour of the Ursulines.—“ I have strange things to tell you,” said he to Ida: “ read this paper; a great number of copies of it are stuck up against all the public buildings.” Ida read:

“ *We, the secret judges of crimes, and protectors of innocence, turn to the four quarters of the globe, and proclaim: If any one dare undertake the defence of Ida Munster, who is in a state of accusation, let him appear!*”

“ Oh God!” cried Ida, lifting the paper towards heaven, “ I feel that thou hast not wholly forsaken me; that thou wilt yet save me!”

Munster continued: “ I went to my friend Walter, and shewed him this paper. He smiled, and assured me, that such a proclamation was an extraordinary favour of which you might be proud, as there was scarcely another instance of a defender being allowed to a person accus-

“ ed of witchcraft, still less that all the
“ world should be called upon to plead his
“ cause. I told him the resolution I had
“ taken, to appear myself in defence of your
“ innocence. He shook his head, and
“ added: ‘ If you were a member of the se-
“ cret tribunal, and could say: ‘ I swear by
“ our dreadful oath, that my daughter is in-
“ nocent;’ it would be of weight, and
“ equivalent to a complete justification: but
“ without this, your oath would be reckoned
“ as nothing. Neither father, nor mother,
“ nor brother, nor any other relation, if not
“ of the society, can be admitted to defend
“ a person accused before the secret tribu-
“ nal. In the few instances in which this
“ liberty is allowed to the profane, it must
“ be a stranger who takes upon him the task;
“ and then, in order that there may be time
“ for such an one to appear, an interval of
“ one and twenty days is appointed, be-
“ tween the first and second meeting of the
“ tribunal.’

“ ‘ You astonish me:’ replied I, ‘ you
“ speak of the affair as if you had been pre-

“ sent. Am I right? Are you really!”——
“ Walter interrupted me, with an air of dis-
“ satisfaction, without answering my ques-
“ tion; but desired me to leave him, and
“ never to visit him again, if I would not
“ desist from such interrogations.

“ On quitting him, I repaired to the
“ house of count Wirtemberg. There, what
“ you predicted, came to pass. I was refus-
“ ed admittance: yet see him I must. To
“ effect this, an expedient has occurred to
“ me, by means of which I have no doubt
“ of obtaining access to him. You know
“ the gold chain I gave you, when you en-
“ tered the tenth year of your age: if I
“ could convey that chain to the count of
“ Wirtemberg, and recall to his memory
“ certain circumstances, I should not be sent
“ from his door. Give it me, it is at pre-
“ sent of no use to you. It shall be return-
“ ed to you in a manner more flattering
“ than you can imagine. You seem
“ confused! have you lost it my child? Was
“ it destroyed in the fire? But no;
“ your mother told me, when I mentioned
“ it, that it was saved, and that you had it

“ on when you went to the church. . . Speak
“ Ida? what am I to think? . . . Believe me,
“ the loss of it would be of more conse-
“ quence than you are aware.”

“ Oh! my father!” exclaimed Ida, agi-
tated: “ I My mother Indeed
“ I have it not I gave it to Herman,
“ when”

“ Imprudent girl! You have been the
“ instrument of destroying your own hap-
“ piness. . . . And my wife! How
“ could she permit it? Herman then is in
“ possession of that jewel! Oh! where shall
“ I find him! How shall I recover it from him!
“ It might at this juncture save your life.”

Munster gave way to his despair, while
Ida endeavoured in vain to appease him,
and implored his forgiveness. She offered
him a ring, which she had received at the
same time with the chain; but he refused it,
saying, that without the one, the other was
useless. Ida, bathed in tears, begged him to
explain to her this mysterious affair. He
tore himself from her arms, and for the first
time in his life, quitted her with every mark
of displeasure.

As it was impossible for Ida to conceive the importance of such a trifle, she soon thought no more of it, and regretted nothing but having incurred the anger of her father, which she hoped at his next visit to remove. She well knew how much he loved her, and the power her prayers and tears had over him. In vain, however, did she that day expect him; in vain the two succeeding ones. She then became impatient, and obtained permission from the superior of the convent, who was her friend, to send to the house at which he had taken up his abode, and inquire after him. His apartment was shut, and no one could give any information respecting him. She sent to Walter: his answer was, that the last time Munster called on him, he had dismissed him a little uncivilly, at which he was probably offended, as he had not seen him since.

What alarming news for Ida! And surely she needed no fresh subjects of inquietude! Of the three weeks respite which she had obtained, four days were now spent, and the rest passed away in like manner, in

the midst of apprehension and dread, till the last only remained, and in this single day was she to procure, what in all the others she had been unable to find, incontestible proofs of her innocence, or undergo the sad alternative of being irremediably condemned to death. Judge of the dreadful situation of this poor girl! It seemed as if every thing from which she might hope for comfort was annihilated for ever. She had heard, that the empress was recovering her health: she would fain have persuaded herself, that she knew nothing of her misfortune, or knew it but imperfectly: she hoped, that, if she could acquaint her with her story, she should receive from her all the succour she wanted. But every attempt made by the nuns to obtain access to Sophia proved ineffectual. At length, when the last evening came, Ida was obliged to confess, that she had nothing to rely on but her innocence; and she was even at a loss in what way she should present herself before her judges. Not to appear would have been to act contrary to her principles, and inju-

rious to her honour: to repair unaccompanied to the destined spot would have been dangerous, and little compatible with female modesty. What then was to be done? A council was held on the occasion, and the worthy superior of the convent permitted Ida to send for old Walter, and request him to act, on this occasion, as a father to the daughter of his friend.

The old man appeared greatly disturbed at this proposal. His colour changed, he would have spoken, he stammered, and at length, striking the ground with his foot, with marks of considerable displeasure, begged that they would not teaze him for an impossibility. With this he departed, and left Ida, as well as the nuns, in the greatest consternation.

They wept, they prayed, and midnight was fast approaching. Ida was left alone, while the rest of the community retired to the superior's apartment, in order to come to some determination. "It is impossible," said the good old lady: "to abandon this poor girl in her present circum-

“stances. I would swear by this image of
“the blessed Virgin, that she is innocent,
“and will be found so. And shall we be
“so cruel as to leave her exposed to dangers
“of another kind? She is handsome, as
“you and I were in our youth. If the
“world be still as it was in my time, she is
“unsafe, however short may be the way:
“she will fall into the hands of some young
“libertine, and will be totally lost to our
“convent. What is to be done, sisters?
“Do you think it would be any violation
“of our holy rules to conduct her ourselves
“to the place appointed? I and the four
“elder nuns will take on ourselves the
“charge, and”

It was impossible for the superior to finish, a general acclamation interrupted her in the midst of her speech. The attachment these nuns had conceived for the lovely Ida, whom they considered, I know not why, as one of their future sisters; or perhaps the desire of once more setting a foot out of the convent, made them dispute the preference which the superior wished

on this occasion to give to age: and, to preserve peace, she was obliged to let all the staid matrons, who formed the council, without a single exception, accompany her. Instantly a general joy took place, and a deputation was sent to Ida, to inform her of the resolution taken by the community.

This mark of friendship transported Ida, and inspired her with so lively a gratitude, that her lips seemed ready to pronounce a vow which the nuns would have heard with pleasure. Indeed they fully reckoned upon it, and thought, that nothing but some unforeseen accident could prevent it.

The clock struck twelve; the church of St. Bartholomew's was at a distance; there was no time to be lost; it was even necessary to forego the solemn benediction, that had been proposed to be received in the chapel of the convent, before embarking on this important enterprize; a benediction fortunately foregone, as it might have led the pious Ida into some indiscreet promise of which she might have repented. In haste they took their veils: in haste they

inspected the cells of the younger nuns, that none of them might take it into their heads to trench on the privileges of their seniors: they traversed the long galleries of the convent: the gate was opened, and with palpitating hearts they launched from the confines of those sacred walls into a sinful world.

The heart of Ida equally palpitated. Guided by the light of the stars, and accompanied by those holy maidens, she repaired to the spot to which she had before been conducted by her father. The superior, by whose side she walked, dinned her ears with pious exhortations, and arguments of comfort; but the silence observed by Munster, on her former sorrowful journey, was much better adapted to her situation; and there was nothing she would not willingly have given at this moment, to have wept in quiet, and without interruption.

At length they arrived at the appointed place. Her masked conductor, who was already there, was somewhat embarrassed at

sight of her numerous attendants; yet the presence of the nuns seemed to make on him a favourable impression. He saluted them with a profound bow, gave Ida time to take leave of them, obligingly offered her his right arm, and then retired with her slowly, while the eyes of the nuns followed them with no small curiosity. When they arrived at the corner of the street, and her conductor, as before, covered her head with a veil, she again perceived, that his left hand was wanting. "Ah!" said Ida: "Why do you wish to conceal from me, that you are Walter? It would be so consolatory to be assured, that I am in the hands of a brave and worthy man, and not in those of a stranger!" A murmur of dissatisfaction was the sole answer she received. They were both silent, and they arrived much sooner than before at the place of their destination.

The spot to which she was this time conducted seemed different from the former. Its canopy was the same, the starry heavens: but it did not appear to be encircled with

lofty walls; on the contrary, the eye was unobstructed on every side, for the little way it could penetrate, except that on that by which they arrived were thick bushes, which probably surrounded the whole place, but were imperceptible on account of their distance. Ida perceived, that the ground on which she walked was turf; and from various circumstances she conjectured herself to be in a wood, with which she was not wholly unacquainted. Possibly she was not mistaken; for *there is no place, as a writer of these times informs us, in which the sessions of the secret tribunal might not be held, provided it were private and secure from surprise.*

This second assembly was full as numerous as the first, but it was less distinguishable, and perhaps even more silent. The bell gave the accustomed signal, and the voice which Ida had already heard, thus proclaimed:

“ We, the servants of the invisible God,
“ who judge in secret, turn to the four

“quarters of the globe, and call on the
 “defender of the accused: Ida: appear!
 “appear!”

This summons was three times repeated. The scene became more luminous, and Ida was stepping forward without being called, when her conductor said to her in a low voice: “remain where you are; you
 “have to day nothing to answer.”

Ida then viewed with more tranquillity these terrible unknown personages; a mingled sentiment of hope and joy filled her heart, and presently was elevated to transport, when, after the third summons, a figure stepped forward, masked like the others, but of so noble a port, that the young prisoner could not help preferring him to all the assembly.

The champion of innocence slowly advanced, and placing himself before the seat of the chief of the tribunal: “Behold,” said he, “the defender of innocence: put
 “me to death, if Ida be guilty.”

The cause was opened. The questions already put to Ida were one by one re-

peated; but she heard them not with the same terror as at first; for the stranger appeared competent to answer them, and she believed herself perfectly justified. But her judges were not so easy to be convinced. The adventure of the lock of hair, which, in those days of ignorance, appeared so suspicious a circumstance, was still undenied; the words she had uttered on the subject, to the young princess of Ratibor, were equally disproved, and testified strongly against her. The empress beside was still not wholly recovered, and Herman of Unna, whom Ida was accused of having assassinated, it was asserted, was nowhere to be found.

The champion of Ida demanded that they should wait the recovery of Sophia, before they proceeded to pass sentence, since if the prisoner were guilty, the princess could give much more direct information on the subject, than had hitherto been offered; but this demand was rejected. As to the complaint respecting the murder of Herman, he offered instantly to produce

proofs of its falshood. But on this head silence was imposed on him, and he was ordered to confine himself to the principal charge, that of sorcery. Conscious of the difficulty, not to say impossibility of completely refuting such an accusation, he kept a melancholy silence, which filled the mind of Munster's daughter with alarm and terror.

Recovering himself, however, he at length said: "I am aware of the danger of my situation; I am aware, that no one can engage in the defence of a person arraigned before this tribunal, without exposing himself to the same punishment as the culprit, if he be found guilty. Be it so! here I am: put me to death if there be no safety for Ida: but I call Heaven and earth to witness, that she is innocent. Tremble, ye judges! her blood will find avengers: she is not the daughter of an obscure citizen; she is the daughter of a prince."

Instantly a murmur pervaded the whole assembly. The greater part charged him

with having invented this fable in order to protract the trial. In consequence it was determined, that he should be confined till he proved his assertion, and he was immediately seized.—“ Oh! they will kill, they will murder him!” exclaimed Ida: and, as she uttered these words, the whole assembly appeared to swim before her eyes in a thick mist, the lights disappeared, her ears rung with fearful noises, and she sunk senseless on the ground.

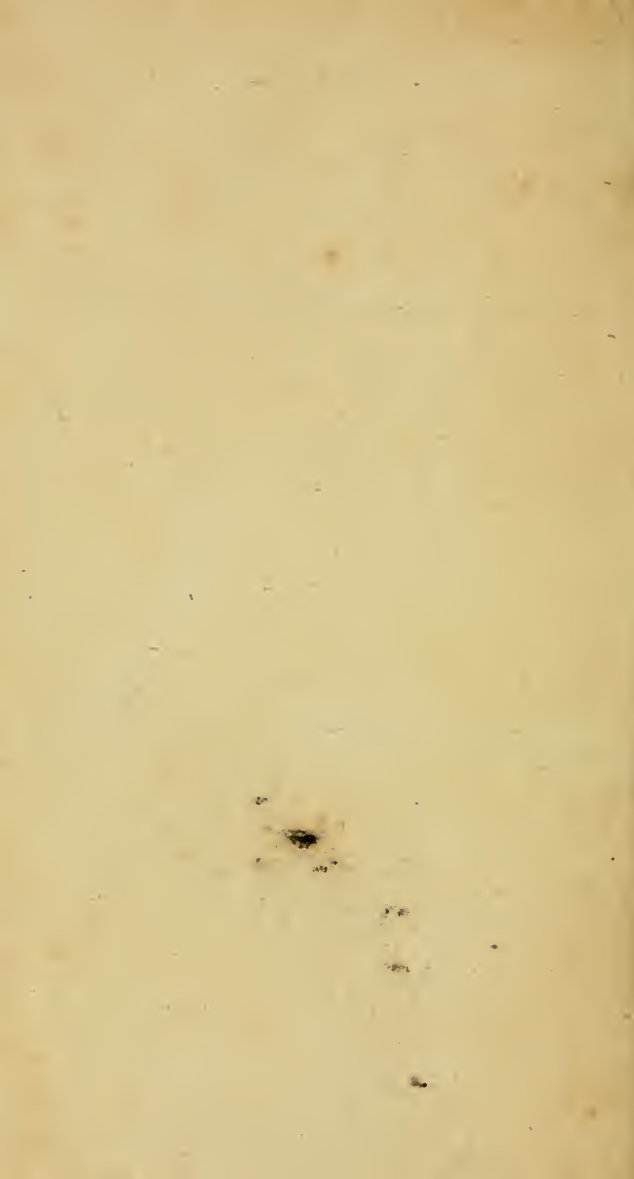
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