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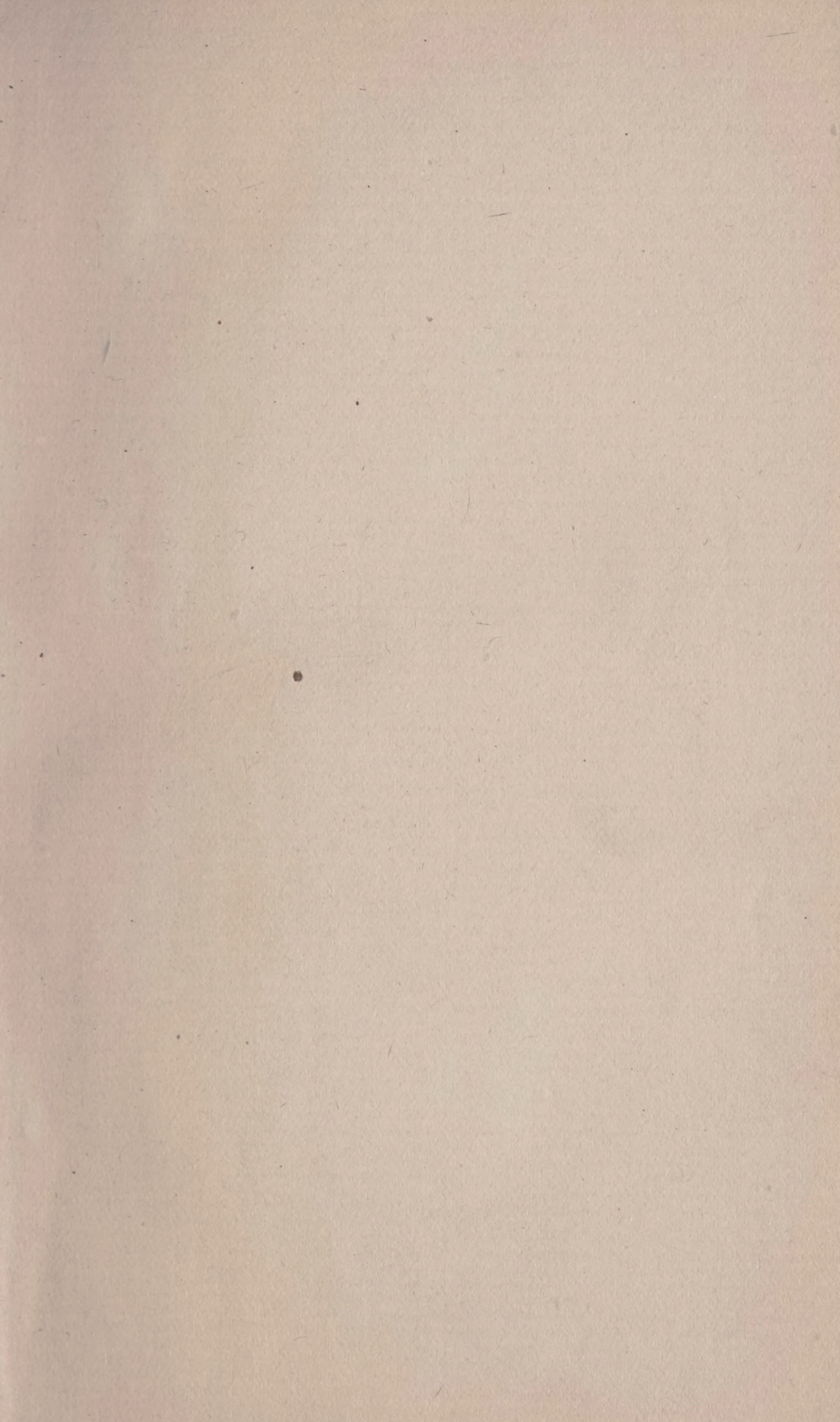
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THE LOST CLOVE

HERBERT SPENCER

Illustrated by the Author

BALTIMORE
JOHN LEITCH & CO

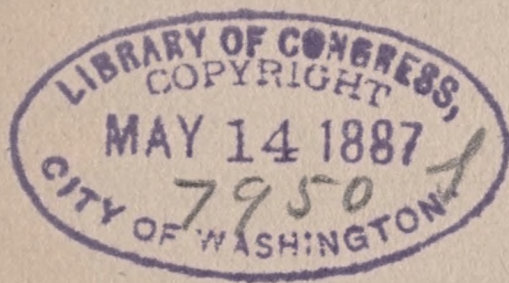
THE LOST GLOVE.

BY

HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

25
Translated from the Original Flemish.

Handwritten note: The young maiden's sequel



BALTIMORE:
JOHN MURPHY & CO.

1887.

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THE LOST GLOVE

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE passion is this that has suddenly possessed all the inhabitants of Europe. Everywhere, both in towns and villages, valises and trunks are made ready, maps examined, and plans of travel discussed. All hearts sigh for space, all eyes sparkle with impatient desire, hands are clapped at each new name, which, like a beacon, marks the projected route of travel. Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, the Rhine, Italy, all are invoked in turn as offering inducements for unutterable pleasure. But the name which of all others excites the greatest enthusiasm is thine, oh, masterpiece of the Divine Artist!—thine, Switzerland, beauteous and favored land!

Hark to these prayers, breathed on the shores of the Scheldt. It is the voice of an old man who exclaims, with tears in his eyes:

“I thank thee, my God! I shall at least see Switzerland before I die!”

From whence proceeds this sudden, mad desire to travel? Who thus gives wings to our souls?

It is that a year of work, of anxiety and struggle

is just gone. The judges have passed sentence, lawyers have pleaded, students have worked, those with incomes have economized, merchants have made their calculations, weighed them and trembled—to-day, hurrah! to-day, begins the month of September!

Dear, delightful month! how clear are thy days, how pleasant thy sunlight, and thy air how crisp and life-giving! Thou spreadest so beautiful a tint over vegetation, it would almost seem every leaf was turned to a flower. Over thy mountains and valleys the changing purple which is reflected on all around, softening nature for every eye, as if bathed in a golden mist, is thy gift.

Yes, September is the saving guardian of the year's riches. Its predecessors scatter them broadcast, but this month diffuses what is left, that men, before the coming of winter, may live again in the midst of a second and gorgeous springtime.

September, too, is the month of rest and freedom. Those who have worked all the year counting and calculating, it solaces, smiling upon the heavy burdens of their daily lives, and calls to them: "Lift up your hearts, lucky ones of the earth! Forward, forward! across the world; enjoy more and better during my short life than all the rest of the year, and, perhaps, even than during the remainder of your lives. Forward, forward! You are free from duty, from work and from care."

The trains of steam-cars and the steamboats are already filled with English, Russians, French and

Germans. Some are going east, others to the north, the greater number to the south. Seaside resorts and hotels resound with every idiom, as if the world were once more threatened with a confusion of tongues.

Among the many who had awaited the month of September with feverish impatience, there were none happier than Herman Van Borgstal, and Max Rapelings. Neighbors and friends from childhood, they had been to school together, had followed the course at the university and gone through their first examination at the same time, though Herman was studying law and Max was destined for the profession of medicine.

This close friendship had been their safeguard against the disorders of student life, and permitted them to keep their young illusions untarnished, all the more that their parents resided in the university town, and they had not been prematurely sent forth far from family life. On the contrary, they had been stimulated by it, for their greatest desire was to walk side by side in the paths of progress and science.

During their studies at the university, they had spent a portion of the holidays now at Ostend, now at Blankenberg, then again at Spa. They had also visited almost all the picturesque Ardennes. Their parents, who were in easy circumstances and possessed a capital medium-class fortune—more particularly Herman's mother—rewarded their zeal and improvement in giving them the means to re-

new their courage and strength in the pleasures of travel, and thereby be enabled to continue their difficult studies.

Max Rapelings had an uncle who the preceding autumn had visited Switzerland, and recounted so many marvels of this beautiful Alpine nature, that by dint of talking with his friend Herman, Max had pricked him with an ardent desire to visit the land of William Tell. They were both to go through their final examinations during the course of the year, if Max, by redoubling his ardor, were able to stand two difficult examinations. The task seemed a heavy one, and they hesitated the more in running the risk of failure, inasmuch as they were not impelled to it by necessity, and were about to continue the course for another year, when their parents to encourage them let fall these simple words:

“If Herman becomes a lawyer this year, and Max a physician, they can take the trip into Switzerland.”

“Into Switzerland! Into Switzerland!” exclaimed the young men, transported with joy.

They went steadily to work, encouraging one another not to fail in the desired end, worked night and day, and finally passed their examinations with credit.

But the month of September, of all the most favorable for a trip to Switzerland, was still far off. While awaiting it they undertook the study of German, which they already knew something of,

bought charts and guide books, never ceasing to question the uncle who had seen the Alps, and finally entertained each other with such enthusiasm on the question of gigantic mountains, blue lakes, and enormous fields of ice, that when the month of September approached they were half mad with longing and joy.

Finally came the ardently-wished-for day. In the Ghent Station, in the midst of the crowd of travelers and spectators who occupy the platforms, was a train composed of many carriages, and both families were there to bid farewell to the two youths—one of whom, Herman, was to be remarked for his handsome face, his black curling hair, bright cheeks, and sparkling eyes. Everything about him gave token of great simplicity of character and deep sensibility. His look beamed with pleasure, but he speaks to his mother in a low tone as if afraid to betray to strangers the feelings agitating him.

The other young man is not handsome—far from it. His features are wanting in regularity, and one shoulder is higher than the other, in consequence of a fall in his childhood. Poor Max! his fellow students at the University to tease him, often called him *the Hunchback*; but he seemed altogether consoled as to his deformity, and even to have forgotten it.

While Herman is listening to his mother's counsels and last farewells, Max cries out in a loud voice, "*Au revoir*," comes, goes, is agitated and

moving about as if the ground upon which he stood burnt his feet.

Several friends came up and advised him to take the Luxemburg railway and cross the beautiful Moselle Valley to the town of Trèves, where one may see besides the colossal *Porta Nigra*, a Roman causeway, Roman baths and monuments which transport the astonished traveler into the very midst of pagan civilization. Then following this route, two hours might be spent in the enchanting town of Nancy, stopping at Strasburg to visit the Cathedral celebrated all over the world. But the young doctor replies they are going immediately to Switzerland by the way of Paris, and on their return will visit all worth seeing on their way.

The station-master's voice announces the departure of the train, Herman embraces his mother, whose eyes are wet with tears, as if she feared never to see her beloved son again. She speaks of danger, of perpendicular rocks and endless precipices, but he stops her with a tender farewell kiss.

Max Rapelings warmly clasps the hands of his relatives and friends, listens for a moment to Madame Van Borgstal's warnings, who knows that Max, though apparently the more thoughtless of the two, is really the most prudent, and moreover is two years older than Herman, and has more experience of the world, so that the mother begs that in Switzerland he will avoid the perils of the way, and confides her son to his tender care—but the whistle of the locomotive resounds, the

train is in motion, and Max jumping into the carriage calls out:

“Hurrah, for Switzerland!”

As long as the train is in sight they exchange salutations, while waving handkerchiefs, but soon nothing is seen on the track but a small volume of black smoke. They are gone.

CHAPTER II.

THE train stopping at Berne on the afternoon of the 5th of September, carried an unusual number of tourists. The platform where they alighted was at once thronged with a multitude of people of all countries. Men wearing felt hats, the travelling pouch and cudgel at their sides, and in their hands, or covering their shoulders, the motley blanket giving them the appearance of people about to undertake the tour of the world. Some had already possessed themselves of *alpenstocks* seven feet high to climb the mountains. As to the ladies, young and old, to show that in free Switzerland they understood how to get rid of the yoke of fashion, they had chosen the most singular and fantastic costumes. It was especially in their head-coverings this was to be observed. They wore straw hats, silk, felt, velvet ones, turned up at the sides, flattened down over the ears, elongated, twisted with ribbons, flowers, pearls, beads, shells, full skirts and scanty skirts, delicate shoes and heavy mountain boots, coats of every shape. There were many pretty faces, few ugly ones, blondes, brunettes, and even black ones.

It seems as though a pleasure trip made even the most formal lose something of their stiffness, for they talked aloud, called to one another, and

laughed gayly without observing their neighbors. In every eye could be read this cry of the soul:

“Here we are in Switzerland!”

The crowd went rapidly toward the end of the station, where those most in haste elbowed each other to obtain their luggage.

A little apart from the movement of the crowd a young man, leaning against a wall, contemplated with happy astonishment all this animation. Before him stood some Swiss, who had probably come from the adjoining villages. He saw women with head-dresses of black lace, which stood up straight and stiff like the wings of a gigantic butterfly; young girls wearing straw hats with flowers, like shepherdesses, from beneath which escaped braids that reached to the waist; men dressed entirely in cloth of rust color; little children bedizened precisely like their grandparents; bloated faces, linen of exquisite whiteness, parti-colored clothes. For a moment he seemed to be attending a representation of peasants at the Royal Theatre at Ghent.

Another young man with one shoulder higher than the other, and who had just made a way for himself across the crowd, as if seeking some one, struck the dreamer on the shoulder, and cried out to him in Flemish:

“Well, Herman, is this the way you begin? You will see nothing worth while until we reach the mountains. Be more saving of your enthusiasm until we come upon what is really grand. Let us go. I have at last found your trunk.”

“But have you no eyes, Max? See these beautiful Swiss women; what charming and picturesque costumes!”

“Yes, yes; they are fresh and pretty, these Alpine flowers, but it is not here that we must admire them. We will see thousands with more beautiful and stranger costumes; you know what my uncle said. But make haste, or the trunks will be lost again.”

Herman laughingly took his companion's arm, and they both went out of the station, placed their trunks on a porter's hand-cart, and walked into the town.

They turned their eyes in every direction, and were not a little astonished to find the architecture of the houses was the same as in Ghent and Paris. According to their opinion, of all the towns in Switzerland Berne must be the most medieval, or had at least retained a proper and characteristic appearance. They were already beginning to murmur against the uncle who had deceived them.

What disappointed them was that near the station they only saw modern buildings, which there as elsewhere had no other style than that of the cold, monotonous and insupportable straight line. Herman opened conversation with the porter and asked him in German if all the houses in the town resembled these, and if there were not streets that recalled ancient Berne.

“Do the gentlemen wish to see an old street?” he replied. “They need not go far for this. I was

told to bring this trunk to the *Aarberg Gasse*—a few steps more, and we are there. It is a beautiful street, at least for those who love old Switzerland.”

A little further on, they turned the corner of a street.

“We are entering the *Aarberg Gasse*, gentlemen,” said the porter.

“Heavens! What is this?” exclaimed Herman, lifting up his hands. “If any one told me I was in Spain or Constantinople, I would believe it, on my word.”

“Admirable! truly picturesque! One could imagine one’s self transported, as if by enchantment, into an unknown land,” muttered Max.

For Flemings, the young men’s surprise was quite natural, for some of the streets of Berne have so odd and strange an appearance that nothing like it is seen elsewhere, even in Switzerland itself.

Most of these streets are very broad. In the middle of them, not far from each other, are public fountains, the water falling on all sides into a large basin, from the midst of which rises a high column. On these columns are placed the statues of celebrated people, both in the history of the country or the Old Testament. All is carved in stone. There are also bas-reliefs representing animals or flowers, some of which are colored. On many of these columns float painted banners. The houses are high and large, with salient roofs; each window is a balcony adorned with an iron balustrade, more or less of artistic form. Back of the balustrade is a cushion,

either brown, red, or green, and this place of rest is protected against the rain and sun by a little awning of striped linen.

What most astonishes strangers, is the coming and going of foot passengers under the arcades, which form a second street. Beneath the houses, on either side, the ground floor retreats, the stories are supported by massive columns forming these arcades, in the interior of which are the shops. The dwellings of the burghers are in the upper stories.

As the inhabitants generally walk under the arcades even in fine weather, scarcely any one is seen in the streets, except those who go to the fountains for water, but beneath the galleries circulate the moving multitude of active and laborious people.

Herman and Max, disposed as they were to admiration and enthusiasm, stopped with astonishment before all the strange beauties which were spread before them in the Aarberg Gasse.

On the balconies, in the midst of the flowers, a young girl was now and then to be seen, half seated, half reclining, breathing the air—for the weather was warm—then there were men, and finally on the upper stories workmen, who leaning against their cushions smoked a cigar or a pipe. One could have imagined one's self in the Orient. But what most attracted their attention was the coming and going about the fountains. Young girls with bare arms, singular costumes and charming movements,

recalled something Biblical, and made one remember the history of Isaac and Rebecca.

After expressing their surprise with joyful exclamations, the young people followed their guide into the street they were in search of. Going along they stopped beside the fountains to examine more closely the sculptured basins, and the graceful young Swiss women.

The porter stopped his cart on the left hand side of the street, pointed out a very small door under the half-darkened arcade, and informed the travelers that this was the abode of the person whose name they had given him.

He took the trunk, carried it before the little door, and was about to ring, when it was opened. An aged woman stood before them, who said in pretty good French with a smile of great cordiality.

“This is Mr. Van Heuvel’s nephew, with his friend I have the honor to salute? You are welcome, gentlemen, and be so good as to follow me. I hope you will be as well satisfied as that good Mr. Van Heuvel.” She walked to the extreme end of the vestibule, and stopped at the foot of a narrow stone staircase in the form of a corkscrew. This stairway was of white stone, very much worn away and cracked in many places. There was a very doubtful light that fell upon it, from a long narrow window resembling a loophole.

As they ascended the friends exchanged a furtive glance. The uncle had recommended a strange stopping place to them, they thought. On the out-

side all was beautiful, and picturesque, and full of color as Paradise; while within, they with difficulty ascended the rickety steps of a stone staircase, which would, no doubt, conduct them to some sombre and dilapidated building—some hall of the middle ages, or an old prison.

Max Rapelings smiled sardonically at their disillusion. Herman Van Borgstal sighed heavily, but they continued to follow the old woman in silence, who conducted them across a long corridor on the first story, and finally opened the door of a large room.

The young men gave an exclamation of delight. "Ah!" they cried.

The old woman said to them, "I knew it, gentlemen! the same thing happened to your uncle; he also went to crying *ah!* the thing is you do not understand the customs at Berne. In this house there are several families. What goes on below does not concern him who is above."

Max paid the porter; Herman made the circuit of the room, and admired the luxury and elegance of the furniture. He found himself in a large apartment, the floor of which was covered with a heavy carpet; all along the walls were chairs and sofas covered with velvet; there were bureaus, dressing tables, and a bed, all of mahogany and most elegant in shape. Everything was extremely neat, and promised the occupants all imaginable comfort.

After Herman had, with a quick glance, made the inspection of this charming apartment, he lifted the curtain of one of the windows and cried out gayly.

“Ah! how nice it is here. Max! my dear Max, we are living in the beautiful street, we have balconies and cushions, and beneath our eyes a fountain with four jets of water.”

“Gentlemen, here is the room, too, your uncle had the use of; his sleeping room was there, but as the room is somewhat small, we have placed a second bed for one of you in a corner of the larger apartment. You can choose.”

“That shall be mine; I take the bed in the parlor,” cried Herman.

“Make yourself comfortable,” replied the old woman; “here is the key of your apartment and the key of the hosedoor. Now, go and come with the same freedom as if the house was yours. If you need anything, you have but to ring.”

The young men, touched by so cordial a welcome, thanked their hostess warmly.

“Your uncle, in his letter, begged that my husband would take you to see the curiosities of the town,” she said, “but unfortunately he has gone to Lausanne, where urgent business called him, and will only return at a late hour to-night. The walk will then have to be deferred until to-morrow.”

When about leaving she turned around and said: “I forget; how is good Mr. Van Heuvel’s health.”

“Perfect, Madam; and he begged us to give you his compliments,” replied Max. “When he speaks of the Aarberg Gasse and your hospitable house, tears fill his eyes.”

“I believe it,” she said, smiling; “Mr. Van Heuvel had not remained here more than two weeks before he conceived so lively a friendship for my husband that they spent days together walking about Berne and its environs. My husband even accompanied him across the Alps from Lauterbrunnen to the Grindelwald. Your uncle is a fine-spirited and amiable man.”

“Madam, forgive my curiosity, but how did you make Mr. Van Heuvel’s acquaintance?” asked Herman.

“The thing was simple enough; we lived a long while in Geneva, where we followed the trade of clockmakers. A clockmaker from Ghent often came to see us. In Switzerland friendship lasts a long while. This friend had given Mr. Van Heuvel a letter in which he begged us to welcome him kindly. At all events, gentlemen, we always rent this room to stranger tourists when well recommended. And, now, until bye and bye, when you may need something.”

Saying this, she left the apartment.

Hardly had she gone out, when Max Rapelings gave a joyful bound, exclaiming, “Long live Switzerland! Our lines are fallen in pleasant places—lodged like princes, with people who have the hearts of angels.”

“Yes, yes,” said Herman; “see, we are on the street and have a balcony.”

He opened the window and lay all his length on the cushions.

“I am a Turk, a Sultan,” he said, listlessly.

“Admit that my uncle is not a fool,” said Max.

“Oh! he is a man of genius! I bless him from the bottom of my soul; had it not been for him we would be lodged in some hotel full of vulgar tourists, such as one meets everywhere. Hurrah for your uncle! I am going to light a fine Manilla, and try if you can to drag me from this cushion before the last puff of smoke has vanished into air.”

“Come now, my good Herman, no nonsense; this long journey in the railway has covered us with dust up to our eyes. We must first cleanse ourselves, take clothes out of the trunk, and set ourselves to rights. Your hair looks like a nest of serpents. When this is done we can then arrange our plans.”

“You are right Max; happiness bewilders me. I cannot tell why, perhaps it may be the mountain air which begins to work upon me, but it seems to me my heart is bathed in joy.”

With these words he approached the washstand, which was placed near the bed, and began to make his toilet. His friend did the like in the neighboring room, and as the door was open, they could talk and jest at their ease.

“Tell me, Herman, what made you in such a hurry to take the bed in the parlor?”

“Because there are no curtains—I prefer a bed without curtains.”

“Hypocrite, it is because it was nearer the balcony.”

“ You may be right, Max; it appears to me that I could remain seated there entire days, with eyes fastened on the bubbling waters of the fountain.”

“ I think, sly one, you would gaze much seldomer on the fountain than on the Alpine flowers that bloom beside it; that is your business, though. But what is the balcony to you, when you are in bed? Do you desire by chance to spend the night star-gazing on that red cushion?”

“ I might, if it were moonlight. The moon in Switzerland must be something beautiful. All is beauty and charm in Switzerland.”

“ It is finished,” exclaimed Max, “ here am I as fresh and well disposed as a fish in water. A promise is binding: I engaged to write to my father and uncle on our arrival at Berne. To-day is my turn, and to-morrow will be yours. A letter each day—such is the law, and I am to see it executed. I will therefore acquit myself of the task at once, that I may be entirely free. As to you, Herman, loll upon your balcony and smoke your cigar; without it you could not hold your tongue.”

He seated himself at the table, where were all the appliances for writing, and began his letter.

Herman lighted a cigar, and half reclined on the balcony. He began by watching the fountain for a long while, then allowed his eyes to wander the length of the balcony, and after taking in every object that struck him the most, he set himself to analyzing the details and examining with more minuteness the thousand and one objects of various

colors that made this street resemble a town in Flanders in the season of the Kermes, or when some high dignitary made a joyful entry therein.

Finally, half worn out, he turned upon his back, blew with an indescribable air the smoke from his cigar, and remained in this position with eyes uplifted. His face expressed a sort of beatitude and ecstasy, caused by a feeling of perfect content. But he could not keep still long, and again turned in the direction of the street. Suddenly he gave a little cry of surprise. On the other side of the street, almost facing him, a young girl had just appeared upon the balcony amid the flowers and fresh verdure, and when Herman turned around, his gaze had encountered that of the young girl. There was something strange in the look in her eyes—a deep look which made the blood curdle in the young lawyer's veins.

Each regarded the other for some moments with astonishment; but almost immediately the young girl turned away and began reading a book, which she held in her hand. She was dressed entirely in black; her hair was very black and fell in heavy curls over her shoulders; her eyes, also black, glistened like beads of jet; but her face was pale, and stood out in relief from all this black like the face of a marble statue. Yet, in spite of this pallor, she was really charming; at least, this was the impression produced upon Herman.

Therefore the young man kept his eyes fastened on her like one stupefied. He could scarcely take

breath, so much had he been struck with this strange and wonderful beauty.

The young girl, probably thinking that he no longer observed her, lifted up her eyes and placed them, as if through pure curiosity, on the young man, whose face betrayed profound admiration. She looked up to heaven, then once more bent her head over her book.

Herman knew not what to think. It seemed to him as if from those beautiful black eyes a plaint both painful and despairing had gone forth to God. His heart shuddered with pity at the thought that the poor girl might be the victim of some cruel disease or other misfortune. To be so young, so beautiful, and suffer like a martyr, had dulled his joy.

“Herman,” cried Max, “come here. I want to read you what I have written about Aarberg Gasse. He is not listening, the dreamer! The fountain must have bewitched him. Herman, Herman, Herman! Has he gone to sleep again?”

As he said these words in a loud voice, he approached the balcony.

“What! you are awake? You must then have become as deaf as a beetle.”

Herman placed his finger over his lips to conjure his friend to silence.

“Well, what is it? You seem to be playing a part in a drama. What is happening?”

“Come and sit down, Max, and speak low. Do you see over there among the flowers on the other side of the street that young lady?”

“Poor girl! she is ill,” muttered Max.

“May be so; but what a face! Would Raphael even have dreamed of a sweeter and nobler creature?”

“I know nothing about it, my dear Herman; but what I do know is, that she did not come too late when pretty faces were given away. That pure white in contrast with the dead black produces a singular effect; on my word as a doctor, she is ill: do not doubt it.”

The young girl once more raised her eyes, and fixed them straight on Herman, and at the same moment perceived his friend.

“She regards you with strange attention,” said Max, astonished.

“Do you think so?”

“Her eyes sought you, this is certain.”

“She looked at you too.”

“Yes, afterwards. Is any one as ugly as I worth looking at?”

“See, Max, she lifts her sorrowful eyes again to heaven, and heaves a deep sigh—it is a sigh of pain, a prayer to God to obtain aid and pity. Ah! it breaks my heart, she is so young!”

“Yes, it is a terrible scourge, this fatal disease which gathers in its harvests among the most beautiful and tender flowers, even before they have fully blown. Poor child, perhaps a year, or only a few months maybe!”

“No, Max, you are mistaken: she is suffering from some heart trouble.”

“Do you then know her?”

At this moment there appeared on the balcony, back of the pale young girl, a tall man with gray hair, white whiskers, and forbidding face.

As soon as he saw the young men he darted towards them a glance of defiance, which expressed everything but good-will; then leaning down, whispered in the girl's ear some order that must have been severe, for she rose once more, looked up to heaven while sighing, and disappeared from the balcony.

The old man closed the window with some force, at least so thought the indignant young men.

“Well, do you think I am mistaken?” asked Herman. “Are you not convinced as well as I that this poor creature is succumbing to cruel tyranny? Ah! what wicked people there are in the world! How is it possible Divine Justice permits that implacable old man to make this tender flower die of sorrow?”

“But for the love of Heaven, my dreamer poet, whither are your thoughts carrying you? Here you are developing an entire drama in imagination. A young girl oppressed, an enchanter, a giant, a dragon with seven heads, and I know not what! The only thing wanting is a knight, the paladin who is to deliver the captive virgin. Would you, perhaps, like to play this part?”

“What I say is true, Max; all your jokes cannot convince me I am mistaken.”

“But, I ask you again, do you know her?”

“How should I know her? She is a Swiss.”

“You cannot tell any more about that than I. At Berne the good burghers wear the same costume as people who are well off all over the world.”

“Yes, Max; but her hair, as black as a crow’s, and her eyes, too, so black and brilliant?”

“Those are found everywhere. They appear as rare in Switzerland as with us. If you said she was an Italian, a Spaniard, or a Provençale, I should be more apt to think you had guessed rightly.”

“So be it, Max; whether Italian or English, it is sad to think that this poor child is condemned to die so young—for she will die, I seem to see the mark of death in her eyes.”

“She is not the only one, Herman; there are many who die of this fatal malady all over the world.”

“These doctors, these doctors!” cried Herman, with a shade of feeling; “by dint of sounding human suffering, they are entirely without compassion. Can you behold that unfortunate young girl without your heart shuddering with pity and indignation?”

“But what has happened to you, my dear Herman?” asked the young doctor, dumfounded. “I pity all the unhappy, as well as this pale young girl, though I do not know who she is or what makes her ill. But, in Heaven’s name, how can we help it? The people opposite are strangers to us, and their business does not concern us. Come, come, all this is childishness; we did not journey

into Switzerland to weep over unhappy strangers. I shall go and seal my letter quickly, that it may be taken to the post."

Herman, who had become excited by his own words and his sad forebodings, could not take his eyes off the balcony adorned with flowers. It seemed to him that the curtains moved, and some one watched furtively to be certain that he still kept his post of observation. Was it the young girl, or the crabbed old man, who thus spied upon him?

While he endeavored to penetrate the mystery by observing more closely through the window-glass, the bell resounded with great noise in the apartment.

"Why, Max, have you lost your senses?" he cried. "What are you doing?"

"I am ringing that some one may come and take my letter to the post. If that bell is a clock, it isn't my fault."

Scarcely had he finished his sentence when the mistress of the house entered.

"Excuse me, madam," said Max, "if I troubled you involuntarily. My intention was to call a servant, that I might send him to post my letter."

"Give it to me, give it to me," said the good woman, smiling. "There is no servant here. I have no children. Swiss women, even of the upper classes, do not hesitate to do their own work."

She was going out with the letter, but Herman left the balcony and went up to her, saying:

"Madam, I beg you will allow me to ask you some questions."

“I am entirely at your service, sir. A moment will suffice for me to give this letter to a porter, when I will return.”

“What are you going to ask her? Questions about the pale-faced girl over the way?” growled Max.

“Are you not, like myself, anxious to know something about her?”

“Certainly. But what good will it do us? If you are a lover of mysteries, do not raise the veil. Our hostess' relation will cause to vanish all your magnificent castle, with winged dragon and captive princess, and nothing will remain but an unhappy girl, who is suffering with a lingering disease.”

“We will see. Here comes our hostess. Maybe you are right; but no matter, the mystery unsettles my mind.”

“You want to ask me questions about visiting the town?” she said. “I beg, gentlemen, you will wait until to-morrow, or my husband will be sorely disappointed.”

“It is not for this, madam, that I was about to trespass upon your kindness,” said Herman, “I saw there on the opposite balcony a young girl who appeared suffering and ill—does she belong to the country?”

“No, sir; the gentleman and lady of whom you speak are strangers, travelers like yourselves,” replied the hostess, with a certain air of mystery.

“From what country are they?”

“I do not positively know, sir; they rented the

opposite apartment for a month, and they have already been two weeks in Berne. Occasionally they are absent for several days, but where they go is what I cannot tell you."

"Pardon me, madam," remarked Max, smiling, "it seems to me very simple. They make excursions in the environs or in the mountains."

"This is probable, sir; but at any rate they never mention the matter to their hostess. It must be supposed they have some reason for being reserved and mysterious."

"And have you no suspicion of the cause, madam?" asked Herman, with great seriousness.

"Yes, and no; but it does not concern me—but my opposite neighbor once spoke to me of the old gentleman and the pale young lady in such terms as to awaken my pity."

"Your pity, madam."

"Yes sir—the young girl appears very unhappy; her movements are slow, her look plaintive and languishing; she often sighs, and my neighbor one day discovered her weeping bitterly."

Max, who in the meantime had approached the balcony, turned round exclaiming:

"See, see! the tyrant is there in the street; he is walking with his victim on his arm."

They all went to the window and looked into the street. Herman fancied the young girl inclined her head upon her breast as though disheartened, and allowed herself to be carried along, stumbling at every step.

“Then, madam, you do not know who they are, or from what country they come?”

“My neighbor tried to find out, but the old gentleman gave her to understand that these questions were disagreeable to him. They speak French very well, but when they converse with each other they mutter in unintelligible terms, words in a strange tongue. According to the neighbor, the old gentleman is a Russian.”

“Ah! the devil—a Russian!” exclaimed the young doctor, pressing his lips together in a mocking way.

“I beg, Max, you will not make jest of serious matters,” muttered Herman.

And turning towards the hostess, he asked:

“And have you no reason for thinking the old gentleman ill-treats the young girl?”

“No: on the contrary, whenever he speaks to her, it is with the greatest mildness and gentleness; it is this that inspires my friend with bad thoughts; but it is true, she is something of a pessimist.”

“But what are these thoughts, madam?”

“What she thinks has probably no foundation. She fancies the old man wishes to marry the young girl.”

“How infamous!” exclaimed Herman.

“Yes sir, but it is only a mere supposition.”

“Has your neighbor then never spoken to the young woman?”

“She is never alone, not a moment even; the old man is ever at her side. She sleeps in a room which,

like yours, opens into the one where the old man's bed is placed. No one, therefore, can approach her."

"On pain of being snapped at by the dragon with seven heads!" muttered Max.

"What a frightful story!" sighed Herman.

"There may not be a word of truth in all this," continued the hostess. "It may be only an unhappy father traveling with his daughter in Switzerland, in hopes that the pure mountain air will restore her."

"Please God it may be so!"

"Yes, my dear Herman; but enough of these bugbear stories," added Max. "As to me, I am hungry, I want to take a bite of something. We would be very much obliged to madame if she would recommend a restaurant, as well as some spot where we may enjoy the Alps to-night, if the sky be clear."

"Nothing easier, gentlemen. At the end of the street there is a road leading to the Aar; there you will find a bridge, and on the other side of it a path which leads up to the *Schänzli*. You may there obtain all you desire, and take supper, having the Alps and all the city before you. There are many other places of the same sort, but my husband would not be satisfied if you were to go about town without him."

"We are obliged to you, madame, and will visit the *Schänzli*."

A few moments later they came down stairs.

At the door the hostess called a neighbor, who seemed quite willing to show the young strangers the way. They followed their guide to the end of the street, across the square of the orphanage. He then pointed out a road leading to the river, and beyond this a path which ascended to the top of the mountain, finally reaching a pretty building, which was the *Schänzli*.

Hardly had the guide turned his back, when Max burst out laughing, and said with an air of ironical pity.

“Poor Herman! poor poet! all his castle of cards has tumbled over.”

“What do you mean?”

“Come now, has anything ever been seen like it? A mediæval drama concluding with a Russian! It is most material, most vulgar—it is death to poetry!”

“Russian or not, the poor child is much to be pitied; and if the Russian were only a Fleming from eastern Flanders, I do not say I would not do something to thwart his barbarous plans.”

They continued to talk upon the same subject until they reached the bridge. Then Max struck with his foot, feigning anger, and exclaimed:

“What envious demon permitted this languishing creature to cross our path and poison our pleasure, or, at least, mar it? We no longer have eyes with which to contemplate nature. Here we have come down a hundred feet, we have before us a charming landscape, and have noticed nothing. If I had not called your attention, we would have

crossed the Aar without your deigning to cast your eyes upon its blue waters with tints of opal. If you are going to remain so absorbed and inattentive as this during all the journey, you will be an agreeable traveling companion! How well you will be able to recount what you saw in Switzerland! Now, pray don't let there be any more clouds in our sky! It will be time enough when we go back to weep over people's misfortunes."

"You are right, my good Max," said the young lawyer. "My imagination has had its flight impelled by a feeling of commiseration; but you know how quickly I become excited. It is a passing emotion; to-morrow, it will all be over. What say I? In a quarter of an hour, you will see me gay and happy as before. Hurrah for Switzerland! Switzerland, only!"

"Bravo! this is as it should be," said Max. "During this month of September we have only eyes to admire the beauties of nature, and hearts but to enjoy God's masterpieces. This path is somewhat rough; it does not lend itself easily to conversation."

"You are already beginning to pant like a seal; what will it be when we climb the—the Faulhorn? According to your uncle, this mountain is eight hundred feet high. Is the Schänzli really three hundred feet above—above the Aar? I know nothing about it."

"You are blowing yourself like a locomotive," replied Max, as he continued to mount. "We are

not accustomed yet; blowing is nothing, provided we advance. Tell me, Herman, did you observe, in looking at the names on the map, what soft endings the Swiss use for their diminutives?"

"Yes; the word *Schänzli* only means little *Schänz*, that is, little fort. There must once have been a fortification there—a rampart; maybe there is one still. So the Swiss say *manli*, *frauli*, *kindli*, *blumli*, as the Flemish might say *manlyn*, *vroulyn*, *kindlyn*, *bloemlyn*, *maagdelyn*—little man, little woman, little child, little flower, little maiden.—Oh! let us hold our tongues."

"Yes; until we reach the top."

"Why in the world, Max, do you climb so rapidly? One would suppose you were taking some fort by assault."

"I don't know why, but it seems a great pleasure to me to tire myself out in this way for a little while."

"I am perspiring from it."

Thus engaged in desultory conversation, they found themselves at the foot of a pair of stone steps, and having mounted them, reached the terrace on which rose the *Schänzli*.

It was a large building surrounded by trees, beneath which were spread long rows of chairs and tables. On the side of the terrace adjoining the mountain a hand-rail in iron had been constructed. The two Flemings saw about fifty men and women—travelers like themselves, probably—who, assembled in little groups, were scattered about the tables

under the trees with their eyes directed towards the Alps. Max, who wished to select a favorable spot, walked a few steps in advance of his friend; he suddenly stopped, turned and put his finger on his lips, smiling, with a look of mystery and roguishness.

"Hush! be silent!" he muttered, taking the young lawyer by the arm, as if to make him turn around. "Fly, unhappy one; the devil is spreading another snare for us."

"I beg you will not make us appear ridiculous," said Herman, who approached the table.

"But she is over there against the building, with her tyrant."

"I know it Max. Behave yourself."

"Oh! you had already seen her then? Observe, she is looking at you, too. What secret warning of your presence did she receive? It seems like magnetism. In truth this pale young girl must be an excellent *subject*. If one could only make experiments with her on the power of second sight."

"You are talking nonsense," said Herman, provoked. "Keep quiet, the poor girl will think we are laughing at her."

"Very well. At all events, I am as hungry as a wolf, and need to comfort the inner man with something more substantial than languishing looks. I am going to look after the supper."

Saying which, he walked towards the house. Herman kept his eyes fastened on the young girl. She also looked at him very fixedly, and seemed to wish to ask him why he observed her so. Yet her face

remained immovable and expressed only curiosity and astonishment.

The young lawyer seemed to observe just then that the old man whom he regarded as a tyrant was bending in his turn under the weight of some heavy grief, for he was seated near the young girl, his head in his hands, looking fixedly on the ground. Did he by chance weep that he was not able to break his victim's will otherwise than by making her die of grief?

"Hurrah! here I am with bag and baggage," cried Max, in a voice sufficiently loud to be heard by the young girl, as followed by three attendants, he hurried towards his friend.

But this noise had awakened the old man from his sad reverie. He rose and cast a look of reproach on Herman, whose appearance at the *Schänzli* annoyed and disconcerted him.

The young people observed he said something in a low voice to his companion, who also left her seat; and they both went away, no doubt to return to town by the opposite direction.

On leaving, the young girl had cast a last look towards Herman, and the latter fancied that in the look there was a sorrowful complaint or an appeal to his compassion.

"Soulless old man! executioner!" he muttered between his teeth.

"God be thanked, they have left," said Max; "otherwise their presence would have spoiled our supper, at least yours. As to myself, I do not

know the effect of mountain air, but feel as if I could devour an ox."

During this time they were being waited upon.

"To sup in this way out of doors, on a mountain, with the town at one's feet, and the snowy Alps before one's eyes, is a pleasure for a king," said Max. "It is certainly much more poetical than all the pale faces, and all the tyrants on earth! I have commanded a real Balshazzar's feast. I had ordered some chamois, but unluckily chamois is wanting to the bill of fare of the *Schänzli*.

"I do not know its name in Flemish. The French call it chamois, and the Germans *gemes*. It is the Alpine deer. I want to taste it before leaving Switzerland, even if its flesh is worth a hundred francs a pound. And you Herman, are you not interested also in natural history, when it may be studied with the teeth?"

"We will find chamois meat in the mountains," replied Herman, pensively.

"Come! do you again behold the pale maiden?" asked the young doctor laughing. "You are as dreamy and pensive as a student in chambers, when he finds examination day approaching, and the prospect of failure staring him in the face. Let us sit down, to begin with; here is a fillet of beef with mushrooms, which makes my mouth water."

"Yes, let us eat," said Herman. "I had forgotten about it, but I too feel as hungry as a wolf."

"Hurrah! The magic bondage is removed—the stomach carries the day."

They began eating their supper with zest, a "menu" prepared most artistically, and drank some glasses of good wine.

They only exchanged the following words:

"It seems to me" said Max, "that for a paladin or knight-errant, you play a pretty good knife and fork. I am obliged to be in a hurry, else you will only leave me the bones."

"She must have reached home by this time," muttered Herman.

"What! Are you going to begin again to talk it all over?"

"It is you who make me think of it; with your paladin. Let us speak of it no more: I ask nothing better."

"Is that truly so?"

"Of course—I pity her, and this pity is deep. It is a sentiment that troubles my mind. I would therefore much prefer not thinking about it at all."

"Well let us enter into a treaty—the first who speaks of her will have to pay for a bottle of wine."

"Agreed."

They heard talking behind them. It was a French family, who had approached the hand-rail, and were viewing the Alps; a gentleman, probably a citizen of Berne, was explaining to them, in a loud voice, their surroundings.

Our friends turned round, each lighted a cigar, and listened to the explanations of the obliging cicerone.

"The weather is not very favorable," he said,

“but now that night is coming on, the vapors will sink lower down; at present we only see a portion of the Alps and of the Bernese Oberland.”

“But those are clouds, sir,” interrupted a little girl—“transparent clouds—it seems to me I can see across them.”

“Your eyes deceive you, my child,” replied the burgher; “all the mountains you see over there towards the horizon, rising out of the gloomy fog, have been, since the world began, covered with eternal snow. The sun throws down its rays on this white surface, which sends them back again, and penetrating into the depths and crevices, produces the illusion which makes you think the crest of snow is transparent.”

“One would suppose, sir, these mountains were not very far from the town,” said another little girl, “and papa tells me they are several leagues off.”

“Fifteen or twenty leagues, and even more.”

“This is extraordinary,” exclaimed a youth; “it seems to me, if my arm was long enough, I could place my hand on the highest mountain.”

“Fi! Alberic,” said an old lady, “what you are talking about now is extremely stupid.”

“See,” said the citizen, “there towards the left is the Wetterhorn; it is further than the Grindelwald, and its height is eleven thousand four hundred feet; then there is the *Schreckhorn*, whose height is twelve thousand feet; then the *Eiger*, and the *Monck* (the monk), and the *Jungfrau*. This last is the whitest of all the mountains, and highest.”

"Which is the highest, sir?" asked a young girl.

"Don't you see over there, a little to the left, that white peak, very pointed, and almost imperceptible? That is the *Finster aarhorn*, the highest of the glaciers that intercepts the horizon. It measures thirteen thousand one hundred and sixty feet above the level of the sea."

"But it seems, on the contrary, the smallest," said the youth.

"That is because of the great distance, my child," replied the other.

Max Rapelings nudged his companion, and pointed downward, very far beneath them.

"Well, what is the matter," asked Herman. "I see nothing."

"Beyond the Aar, near the bridge—"

"What?"

"The pale maiden, with her tyrant."

"Ah! you owe me a bottle of wine. How can you recognize people so far away?—daylight is declining."

"I was only joking."

"No matter, you will have to pay for the wine."

"Very well; but I shall have my revenge, which won't be long coming."

"Mamma, let us go over there and sit at that table," said one of the young girls, "shall we? The sun is going to set. We can see it as well sitting as standing."

The French family, seeing the child was right, went off and took their places at a table not far away.

The two friends, while drinking a cup of coffee and smoking their cigars, contemplated the summit of the Alps and mutually exchanged opinions suggested by this magnificent spectacle.

During the day these summits had appeared to them like crests of vivid white, colored here and there with tints of pale green and blue. Now, as the sun sunk lower and lower towards the west, it bathed them with lights of yellow and red, which increased in depth of color and brightness in proportion, as darkness fell upon the valleys below. It is a spectacle no pen can describe. The snow mountains seem to lift themselves up to Heaven, and to be quickened with living and changing color, penetrating to their very centre. These antediluvian giants have neither bodies nor weight. They seem to have become all vapor, something magical, shifting and uncertain, like the dream of a poet. For more than an hour the young men had followed this phenomenon of nature, until it faded away by degrees, and then was utterly lost to sight.

Yet they still remained seated, having read in their Bædeker that even then all was not over, and the strange appearance which the Swiss call *Alp-glüken* (the Alpine fire) was still to be expected.

“See Herman, how dark it is down there! The lanterns on the bridge look like little glow-worms, creeping on the margin of the Aar. Are you asleep? I know well what you are thinking about?”

“That is impossible.”

“You are thinking of the pale maiden.”

“The second bottle of wine!” cried Herman, triumphantly.

“I am caught, that is true; but do you dare say you were not thinking of her?”

“Well done!—there go three; keep on.”

“What then were you thinking of, to be dreaming away in this manner, with your eyes fixed on space?”

“You must know, Max, that when I was still quite a child, I once saw a large picture representing Olympus, the pagan heavens, with Jupiter, Apollo, Bacchus, Juno, Diana, Ceres and all the remainder of the gods and goddesses, seated on light clouds of golden yellow, which were receiving light from themselves. That part of the picture astonishingly resembles the glaciers under the setting sun. Well, I was about to assign a place on the Alps to Jupiter and to each one of his fellow gods and goddesses, and was re-designing on a much larger canvas the picture that had so struck me in my youth.”

“Pay attention, the Alpine fire is beginning.” And it was truly so. At the foot of the Alps, one could perceive a feeble red light; by degrees this light ascended and became stronger, then was transformed into a glow of living coals, as if the world were on fire. This phenomenon causes each glacier to resemble a volcano in eruption, which has become transparent through fire, in the interior of which one seems to see the lava boiling, for the fire is not only without, but sparkles and shines down to the very foot of the old rocks.

No painter, no poet, can place upon the canvas or produce upon paper the splendor of this prodigy of nature. It overwhelms and confounds the spectator, making him acknowledge the power of God and the greatness of His works. He feels so small, so mean, that this sentiment of the powerlessness of his being mingles something of pain, something of humiliation, with the happiness of having been able to contemplate such a spectacle, at least once in a lifetime.

The friends remained a long while silent, as also did the rest who were viewing the Alps from the *Schänzli*; they stood motionless, occasionally only allowing a stifled cry of admiration to escape them, as if this touching spectacle had caused each one to breathe a prayer of thankfulness.

Finally, the fire-light on the Alps was extinguished by degrees, and tourists and strollers went down from the *Schänzli*, that they might obtain from sleep new forces for climbing and new faculties for admiration.

Herman Van Borgstal and Max Rapelings did the same. They followed the crowd, who were making their descent by the shortest cut towards the Aar, and a little while after they reached the Aarberg Gasse.

There, it was quite dark, and the friends gazed around the sombre gallery—in vain; they were unable to distinguish beneath which arcade they were to look for the little door of their lodging.

“At last! I have found it!” said Max, “here is

the pale maiden's balcony, and drawing a somewhat oblique line"—

"Ahem! there goes the fourth bottle," cried Herman.

"Yes; but the treaty is at an end for the future," said Max; "otherwise I should pay for the wine during the entire trip. You may talk of the maiden pale as much as you please; I don't care."

"She sleeps, poor child!" sighed Herman.

"That's a good joke. What else would you have her do; I wish I could do the same. Oh! the jolting in the railway and the long hours spent in stretching open my eyes to see have completely exhausted me—I am ground down; what about yourself, Herman?"

"I haven't the slightest wish to sleep. Olympus, with its gods and goddesses, is always staring me out of countenance."

"Here is our door; let me have the key."

They entered the vestibule, and found the lighted lamp on the stairs, as their hostess had said they should.

Having reached his room, Herman opened the window and stretched himself out on the balcony, as if with the intention of spending the night there.

"Will you be good enough to close the window at once," called out Max to him.

"Oh! it is so cool and pleasant here!" replied his friend.

"Cool! yes, entirely too cool. I felt up on the *Schänzli* that the mountain air becomes at night

cold enough to freeze one. Your mother charged me to watch over your health. I am a physician; you shall not give yourself the pleurisy. Quick, to bed; if you do not feel sleepy, at least, for the love of Heaven, have pity upon me."

Herman left the balcony and closed the window.

"You sometimes become troublesome," he muttered; "but I do not wish you to sacrifice your peace of mind to your fears for my health. At any rate, the air is cold. Good-night, Max."

"Until to-morrow, then, and do not let your dreams be of the pale maiden."

"Good, that makes five bottles."

"The treaty was broken—sleep well."

The lamp was put out, and some few minutes after our two Flemings were sleeping as if never more to awaken.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day at a very early hour, Herman had already seated himself on the balcony, while his friend was still snoring manfully.

The young lawyer, whose slumbers had no doubt been disturbed after the first nap by somewhat sad dreams, had risen noiselessly, and placed himself upon the balcony in spite of the coolness of the atmosphere.

He had been there about a couple of hours thinking, and smoking, noting the coming and going around the fountain, and casting a glance from time to time towards the flower-decked balcony.

Behind that closed window, behind those heavy curtains was being enacted, he thought, a frightful drama; a drama surrounded by the darkest mystery and the silence of death which was destined to consign the poor victim to her grave, without any one here below knowing or deploring her sufferings. How many terrible things are thus accomplished in the bosom of families, and remain hidden forever in impenetrable secrecy.

Herman's heart was young and tender. His good sense sometimes whispered that all this existed in his own imagination. The old man might be the young girl's father as their hostess had said, but Herman was a poet, at least in temperament,

and since he had begun to be so filled with commiseration he could no longer banish the young girl from his mind, and was almost ready to shed tears about her sorrowful fate.

It was during one of these moments of tenderness, that he saw the window slowly open. The young girl appeared upon the balcony, and at once turned her eyes upon him. She expected him it seemed, or else had seen him through the curtain.

However, her face remained calm and impassive, and she seated herself on the cushion, her eyes fastened upon her book, which she had been reading or feigned to read the day before.

Herman contemplated her, while his heart beat violently and tried to penetrate to the bottom of her soul with his searching look, that he might fathom her pain and hear her moan.

She appeared more beautiful than the day before, her pallor did not seem so entire, a rose tint which resembled the tenderest of blush roses hovered about her cheeks.

She remained seated in an almost motionless attitude. At long intervals she raised her eyes to Heaven, and cast a furtive glance towards Herman, no doubt only to see if he were still there.

He also maintained the indifferent pose of a new spectator that chance alone had brought to the window. He felt deep respect for the poor invalid, and feared to be guilty towards her of indiscretion or want of politeness.

In truth all these surmises about the oppression

under which she languished, might be without foundation. And what right had he to meddle with the destiny of this young stranger girl, who had perhaps come from the very heart of Russia, with the sole idea of seeking under warmer skies some relief from her cruel malady.

While thus dreaming and reflecting he remained seated on the balcony a long while, casting now and again a furtive glance in the direction of the young stranger.

It might have been about eight or nine o'clock in the morning.

The sleeping-room door opened cautiously, and Max Rapelings all dressed entered as stealthily as a cat, thinking to find his friend still in bed, but gave a cry of disappointment on finding the bed empty and Herman also dressed, seated on the balcony.

"Ah traitor," he cried, "you would have allowed me to sleep all the morning. She is there, perhaps?"

"Herman made an affirmative sign. The young physician incited by curiosity approached the balcony, and seated himself on the cushion beside his friend."

"Come now, tell me what is happening?" he said. "How long have you been seated here?"

"I don't know; about two hours."

"Did she send you a message to let you know she would appear at so early an hour as this at the window?"

"No, Max; but since the first light of day pene-

trated into this apartment I have not been able to close my eyes, and therefore rose."

"My experience was the reverse. I slept like a top, and, even now, am obliged to rub my eyes to keep them open. A grave and sad thought terrifies me."

"Nonsense! and it is—?"

"I wondered, if last night on the *Schänzli* you did not put some drops of opium or other narcotic into my glass, that you might develop your frightful drama at ease without being disturbed."

"Come, my friend, put aside for a little while these insipid jokes," said Herman, "and don't laugh so loud. There, she has heard you and is going; now she thinks we are laughing at her. She is gone! what will she think of us? It is well to be gay and joke among ourselves, but, at least, we may be polite, as behooves people of education."

"But, my dear Herman, are you blind, or has the young girl completely addled your brain? Did you not remark that she turned her head suddenly, as if to listen to some noise within the apartment? It was her tyrant whom she heard coming, or who no doubt spoke to her. What now? Some one is knocking at the door of the apartment. She is, perhaps, come to return the visit. All is possible in Switzerland, since you, who are a hardened sleeper—"

Herman had rushed to the door, and opened it. He who entered the room with a bright smile was the master of the house, a man no longer young, though well-preserved.

“Young gentlemen,” he said, in German, “permit me to shake you by the hand. You are the nephew and friend of good Mr. Van Heuvel. I cannot tell you how happy I am to be able to fulfil his wishes. I should have presented myself earlier, but the people of the flat countries are more easily fatigued than the Swiss. If you are ready, gentlemen, you will do me the honor to breakfast with me immediately at the *Schweizer-hof*—after which I will do my best to show you what is worth seeing in our town of Berne.”

The young men thanked their host warmly for his kindness, and said they were quite ready to follow him.

He conducted them, to the vicinity of the railway station, to a magnificent hotel, where he ordered a delicious breakfast.

The man seemed well-informed, and a passionate lover of his country. He began at once his mission of guide and cicerone, and the two young Flemings listened to him with lively interest. As they walked along they met soldiers with their arms, who appeared to be coming from the station, and were astonished to see some of these soldiers accompanied by young girls, and even quite refined-looking girls, who appeared to be their sisters.

The citizen gave them the following explanation :

‘Properly speaking, there are no soldiers in Switzerland, as this is understood in most of the countries of Europe, and yet every one is a soldier. Those young men you saw pass in the street with

their arms, belong to the upper class, and are from twenty to thirty-four years of age. They are called together every year for some weeks to perfect themselves in the military services, and are now just returning from these exercises. The second class are the reserves, from thirty-four to forty years; then comes the *landwehr*, to which all the Swiss belong until the age of forty-four years. Our country is but half the size of Belgium with regard to population, and yet with the first cry of alarm we could furnish nearly two hundred thousand men. Such an army, entirely composed of sharpshooters, is not to be disdained. God formed the Alps, gentlemen, to be the eternal bulwark of liberty in Europe. Powerful nations have often seemed to menace the independence of our noffensive republic. Let them come! The Swiss Lion will show them that brute force is nothing against the right; and then our old Mutz will make the assailants of Switzerland feel his heroic claws, as he has already done more than once."

"Old Mutz?—what do you mean by that, sir?" asked Herman, who had listened with interest to the words of the proud citizen.

"You will soon find it out yourself," he replied. "All about in Berne—on the fountains, on the monuments—you will see the figure of a bear in every position. This bear, which forms the arms of Berne, is for us the symbol of liberty; the people have personified this symbol, and call the Bear of Berne old Mutz."

“And we, too—we Belgians—would not allow our independence to be wrested from us without a struggle,” said Herman. “Unhappily, God has not given us the Alps as a rampart against violence and force.”

“Oh! I know this well, gentlemen. Belgium, with its popular king, its industrious people, and great and liberal institutions, is an object of admiration to all Europe. I may say so without doing my country any harm: Switzerland is the Belgium of the south.”

“A mistake—this is exaggerated politeness,” cried Max Rapelings, “say rather that Belgium is the Switzerland of the north.”

“Very well, gentlemen, we will no longer quibble about words. It suffices to say, that if any people have the right to call themselves brothers, they are on the one side the Belgians and Hollanders, and on the other the Swiss. Now, come; we have no more time to lose; for if you wish to leave to-morrow for the Oberland, I shall not have, at least on this occasion, the pleasure of spending more than one day in your society.”

“Oh dear,” replied Herman, “nothing obliges us to go away exactly to-morrow.”

“How, nothing obliges us?” interrupted his friend; “our plans should be carried out. Are you already beginning? At any rate, we will return here on our way from Geneva.”

“Well then, we will leave to-morrow; yet—”

Up to this time they had spoken in German.

The young doctor nudged Herman with his elbow, and muttered in Flemish, as they were leaving the *Schweizer-hof*:

“I won't have any nonsense, do you hear? You wish to remain at Berne on account of that balcony, and the pale maiden; but it was not for this we came to Switzerland. As to myself, I want to behold mountains.”

“You will do so, only be silent; our host might become vexed at your asides.”

Their guide carried them across the Neuen-Gasse, pointed out the Kafig-Thurm, an old tower which serves as a prison, and took them to the Murks-Gasse (Market street).

They were able to contemplate old Berne in all its picturesqueness better still than in the street where they lived.

Fountains with the most marvelous statues, and water springing forth to the middle of the street, and sombre arcades beneath the houses with parti-colored gables, made our Flemings look around them with astonishment, hardly listening to the short explanations that the citizen of Berne was giving them about all they saw.

He looked at his watch evidently, with a specific object, and said to them:

“Come, gentlemen, let us make haste. You will see what the people of Berne, no doubt through an exaggerated love for their country, would wish to be considered as the eighth wonder of the world. It wants a few minutes of ten—this is the very time.

Here is the *Zeitglocken Thurm*, which is called the *Clock Tower* — pay attention, the performance begins.”

They saw on the gable of the old tower, not very high above the street, a great number of strange figures. A cock beat its wings and crowed as naturally as if it had life. Then a cavalcade of bears walked around a sort of king, who, when the hour struck, turned over an hour-glass, and counted with his sceptre the strokes made by another personage on the clock with a hammer; the cock crew again, and the performance was over, to begin once more at the end of another hour.

Many strangers, citizens and children, had stopped to see this strange sight; then each one went his way.

“Let us take this street,” said the citizen, “I want to show you as a novelty the great Berne cellar. And observe, as you pass by, that fountain with its fancy statue—it is called the *Kindlifresser Brunnen*.”

“Here is the diminutive again,” muttered Max Rapelings low to his friend. “In Flemish we would say, *Kindlynvreter's-bron* (the spring of the ogre.)”

What they saw was the ludicrous figure of a man occupied in devouring little children, while other children were strung to his waist, or crammed into his pouch like provender. A band of armed bears stood proudly at his feet. It was all gilded and silvered, and painted in gay colors.

“Let us now enter the cellar under the grain

market," said the citizen, "and there taste, if you feel so inclined, our Berne beer or wine. Your uncle, Mr. Van Heuvel, has assured me that the Belgians, and especially those from Ghent, were lovers of good wine and beer."

They entered a wide and sombre vault, supported on either side by massive pillars. They knew from the sounds that a large crowd was assembled, but as they had just left the sunlight of the street, they could not at first distinguish a single object, though there were lighted candles on many of the tables.

Their guide pointed out to them the gigantic tuns piled one on the other, and which according to their inscriptions did not contain less than twenty to twenty-five thousand pints.

At the end of some moments, the friends became accustomed to the light of the candles, and looked with interest around the place.

Then they saw the national costume of the town, in all its original picturesqueness, and besides these the costumes of the Canton of Berne; for there were at the tables several hundred people, who had evidently come from the country, either to bring produce to market, or else to visit some of the temporary soldier-citizens.

They saw straw hats, strange head-dresses, and even bare heads, but the most usual costume was a black velvet bodice with linen or cotton sleeves of dazzling whiteness, and skirts with different colored stripes. Among many of them the sombre color of this velvet was relieved by a dou-

ble silver chain, which was fastened beneath the shoulder blade by a hook with a lion's head passed under the arm, meeting behind and again reaching the shoulder, where the same fastening was used.

What most astonished Herman, was to see that some of the young Swiss girls wore their hair in two long braids, that reached to the ground.

After tasting the beer, and spending a pleasant quarter of an hour in watching this strange crowd our two friends were disposed to leave, when a society began singing not far from them.

As soon as they heard the first sounds, their attention was riveted, and they begged their guide to remain some moments longer. The song they heard, without being remarkable, was quite pretty, and very harmonious. The voices were disposed according to their strength, and chords were produced the more striking as it was evident there was no knowledge of art, and they only depended upon a delicate ear and the musical instinct of singers.

The Flemings had never heard a song of this kind. It bore some resemblance to what is called a Tyrolean song, made intricate by being divided into parts for high and low voices.

When the last notes resounded through the enormous cellar, our friends involuntarily clapped their hands to give expression to their pleasure.

A young man in the dress of a soldier rose and approached the citizen, who was evidently the guide of the two strangers. He doubtless knew him, for he grasped his hand warmly, and said :

“These gentlemen probably speak German? Ah! they do?—that is pleasant. They seem to enjoy our Swiss *lieds*. Why sit so far from us? For their benefit we will sing what we best know, at least in our opinion.”

“Come, gentlemen; let us accept this friendly offer,” said the citizen to his guests.

And as he rose he whispered:

“This astonishes you? Such are our customs, at least among the people. Fear nothing; I know these jolly singers, they are from Munsingen, good and excellent souls.”

By accident, or the irony of fate, it happened that Max Rapelings was placed between two of the youngest, and most charming girls, whilst Herman was compelled to seat himself between his host and the young soldier.

On all sides they now began to question the two strangers, asking them whence they came and what they thought of the town of Berne. Glasses were touched, and healths drunk to the free countries of Belgium and Switzerland. It required but a few minutes for our friends to feel perfectly at home, as if among brothers and sisters.

Max Rapelings, especially, appeared happy and proud, or at least pretended to be so to tease his friend. At the same time he conversed with his two charming neighbors as well as his imperfect knowledge of German would permit, endeavoring to be witty and amusing. He moved about on his chair like a fish on a hook, rubbed his hands, and

showed so plainly that he wanted to say "I am in the seventh heaven," that all laughed as they observed him.

At a signal given by one of the singers, a beautiful song broke forth. It was a collection of strophes with solos, the burden and choruses repeated *bocca chiusa*.

When this was over, they gave them two or three others; between each one opinions were exchanged, and Max Rapelings did not neglect, as was natural to suppose, to renew his conversation with the two pretty Swiss girls.

The Flemings were enjoying themselves so much, especially the young physician, that he would never have thought of rising, if their guide had not reminded them they must continue their explorations of the city.

Friendly thanks and farewells were exchanged. Max even received, to his great surprise, a cordial grasp of the hand from each of his neighbors, and they left the cellar-vault, in spite of Max beseeching to remain longer.

"With respect to bears and ogres," he growled, in Flemish, "I much prefer these amiable little Swiss girls."

"Now, no nonsense," muttered Herman, with pretended displeasure. "Our plans must be carried out to the letter. We must see all of Berne to-day."

"Oh! oh! he is jealous, he envies me. My one shoulder is higher than the other. An ugly man is never feared."

“You well know what the proverb says.”

“Yes, indeed; ‘Beware of those that have any mark’—isn’t that it? You are taking your revenge because I laughed at your reveries over the pale maiden. This is quite another thing. These amiable Swiss girls deserve a somewhat longer remembrance; but long live liberty! Out of sight, out of mind.”

As they walked along their guide called their attention to the town hall, took them through the beautiful large thoroughfare known as Justice street (*Gerechtigheit Gasse*), and finally said:

“We are now coming to the bridge Nydecko. It is one hundred and eighty feet long, and is more than a hundred feet high, and is supported by three arches, the middle one being not less than one hundred and seventy feet in width.”

A little further on he pointed out a balustrade of hewn stone, near which many people were hastening to look over.

“This is the celebrated bear-pit of Berne,” he said. “Pass here when you choose, you will always find people of all ages, who are amusing themselves throwing bread and fruit to these ferocious beasts. Here is a good place. See the tricks of these bears, and how they lift up their arms like real beggars.”

“They seem to be possessed of human intelligence—as if wishing to make themselves agreeable,” said Herman, laughing.

“Yes, sir; but in 1861 a terrible proof was given

of the little confidence that may be placed in these marks of good will:—an English captain fell into the pit, and the bears killed him and tore him to pieces.”

While Max Rapelings was entirely absorbed in contemplating the amusing antics of the bears, Herman, while glancing around, noticed a lady wrapped in a red shawl, who had dropped a yellow glove, and who would probably have lost it, as she continued walking on. He picked up the glove, ran after the lady, and said to her in French :

“You have lost something, madam.”

The lady turned. Herman seemed transfixed. This lady was no other than the pale maiden of the Aarberg-Gasse, whom he had not recognized at first, owing to her wearing a colored shawl.

She made a step towards him; took her glove with a smile of thanks, and said in a voice whose sweetness was great—

“I thank you infinitely, sir.”

But at once appeared beside her the old gentleman with the crabbed face, who fixed upon the young man a look both piercing and interrogative.

Just at this moment Max turned towards his friend, and cried out :

“Here, Herman; come quick; there are some bears fighting furiously.”

This cry produced upon the young girl and old gentleman an extraordinary effect—it seemed to strike them with terror and affright. They turned away and walked off rapidly, as if in the young doctor they had recognized a dreaded enemy.

Max Rapelings had observed this inopportune meeting; he left the Swiss, who was still amusing himself by looking into the bear-pit, ran towards his friend, looked at his face, attentively, and cried with astonishment:

“You are pale! What did she say to you? Did her tyrant insult you? You do not answer. Alas! there is the end of all our pleasure for to-day! I would give the poor five francs were you never more to meet the pale maiden and her dragon.”

“Hush! hush! Max; I have heard her voice; it is marvellously sweet and fascinating—it still resounds in my ear like a cry of distress.”

“How, a cry of distress? Did she complain to you? What did she say?”

“Nothing else than: ‘I thank you infinitely, sir.’”

“And you call that a cry of distress? If you are not about losing your wits!”

“Yes, but her voice was so plaintive, and her smile—”

“Oh! she smiled upon you, did she? The devil! things begin to look serious.”

“Her smile is so soft, so sad and plaintive.”

“It is well: you are beginning to talk in verse now? This does not appear to be the exact spot, just beside the bear-pit. Come, behave yourself, Herman; here is our host coming. For the love of Heaven, do not mention the pale maiden before him, for he might think you had lost your wits.”

“One might remain hours watching those villain-

ous tricksters," said the citizen, "but we should turn our time to account. Follow me, gentlemen, we are going to cross the bridge once more."

After traversing two or three streets, they reached the front of the Cathedral, a magnificent Gothic monument which is distinguished for its beautifully carved ornaments. The willing guide pointed out to the young men, to the west of the church, the equestrian statue of Rudolph Von Erlach, a patriot hero, and on the south side, the statue of Berthold Van Zahringen, another valiant chief of the Swiss people.

"This place, planted with trees and provided with benches, is the ancient cemetery," added the peasant. "It is more than a hundred feet above the level of the Aar. Walk to the end over there, and your eye will fall plumb on the river bank. The inscription you see on that stone attests that in 1854 a student, Therbald Weingah, fell into the abyss without being injured."

As he pronounced these last words, the young men were measuring with their eye this giddy depth.

"B-r-r! it makes me giddy," cried Max. "You say, sir, that a student fell from this height without being utterly crushed?"

"Without being in the least hurt. Read the inscription."

"So it says, indeed. There are things however, one must see to believe, unless it be a miracle."

"But every one is not so fortunate," replied the

narrator, in a tone of reproof. "About eight years ago two people from Neufchatel also fell down there, but you may imagine in what condition they were picked up."

"That is a beautiful waterfall over there!" said Herman, "I hear the roaring of the foaming river from here. Don't I see some people quite near there engaged in fishing? And some sitting at tables eating?"

"It is the Schwell (swell), where the Aar banked up falls a few feet in distance."

"What kind of fish do they catch there?" asked Max.

"They are trout."

"Ah! trout! salmon trout?"

"Yes, and other kinds too."

"We must eat some trout before leaving Switzerland. It is the best fish in the world."

"Are you lovers of fish, gentlemen?"

"Yes, especially trout."

"Would it please you to dine down below, over yonder? You can indulge in as many trout as you like, and what is more to the point, see them caught while at the table."

The two friends applauded the proposal.

"Come, we will go down to the *Pre de la Schwelle*," said the citizen, taking our young men towards a stone staircase which led to the banks of the Aar.

There they stepped on a boat which carried them across the river, and two minutes after were seated

under wide spreading trees in front of a large restaurant, called the *Schwellenwath*. A few steps off, the Aar fell transversely from a certain height, thus forming a cascade several hundred feet in width, whose white and foaming waves bounded as if over some impediment, then fell into a sort of natural basin, and there roaring and angry were driven back with giddy speed, whirling about to find a new bed for their interrupted flow.

At a considerable distance from the cascade there had been placed woodwork, which formed several outlets where the fish were, so to speak, obliged to enter; but in the outlets, nets in the form of weirs were introduced, wherein were constantly caught a large number of fine fish.

When the man had finished ordering the dinner, he invited his guests to follow the boy beyond the waterfall, where they saw him lift the nets and select the fish they had ordered.

Their Amphitryon said to them:

“That large fine fish is a salmon trout, the other smaller ones are common trout, and the others smaller still are fit for frying. They are all still alive, and in a half hour will be served to us cooked, either fried or “au gratin.” Taken fresh from the water, fish becomes a delicious morsel, and you may well see, gentlemen, by those consuming it around the table, that fresh fish is very much liked at Berne. Let us go and place ourselves at a table quite near the cascade and while awaiting our dinner we will drink a bottle of the wine of the country. It is

not exquisite in taste, but as you are desirous of making acquaintance with everything you would possibly like to taste the wine produced in our mountains."

Seated near a table, with their eyes on the flashing torrent, the two friends enjoyed in silence the picturesque situation of the *Schwellenwath*.

They beheld a striking spectacle. At their feet, the waves whirled around angrily, bounded and broke, and seethed as if animated with a furious rage. Further on, at the other side of the Aar, they saw the ground on which the town is built rise abruptly to a height of over a hundred feet, giving the houses the appearance of being suspended in mid-air.

"I should like to live in such a house," said Herman.

"Not I," said Max.

"One must see at a great distance from there, and probably may always enjoy a view of the sunny Alps."

"Yes, Herman, but reflect, suppose there were an earthquake, a violent shock, would it not suffice to shake all the town of Berne into the Aar?"

"Happily, my young gentleman, our town is built upon the solid rock—a sure foundation, be assured of it. Ah! here comes the first part of our dinner. You will tell me, sirs, whether we understand cooking fish in Berne."

Different sorts of fish were successively served them, and they finished off with shrimps. Most

probably the walk across the city, aided by the pure mountain air, had given an edge to his guests' appetite, for they found everything so good and well-cooked, that they declared they had never dined so well before—the salmon trout above all being the subject of their especial praise.

After the repast, Max ventured the following remark, showing he had dined with exuberance:

“Oh dear! I believe really there is a large hole in my stomach since I came to Switzerland. Herman, my boy, I should like to cast a glance into our interior; it must somewhat resemble an aquarium, where all kinds of fish are disporting themselves.”

“If they saw us eat in this way at Ghent, they would not think we could survive it,” muttered Herman. “And a strange thing about it is, that I feel so well-disposed and my head is so clear, I believe I have the capacity to begin all over again.”

“It is the mountain air, gentlemen,” said the good man, “the long walks, the tension of the mind, and, above all, the excellence of the Swiss fish.”

“Herman, I have found a good way to make you forget the pale maiden,” exclaimed Max, in Flemish, while the Swiss had gone to order coffee.

“Indeed! have you perchance a wish to push me into this yawning gulf?”

“No, my dear friend, I do not hate you sufficiently for that.”

“And what is this marvelous means?”

“Only to make you eat. You may laugh: what I say is serious. Your wild imagination is ordinarily occupied in dreaming without giving you any rest, but when you have eaten well, were it only a half dozen trout, then you become human and reasonable. Yes, yes, Herman, since we have been in Switzerland, you are only sensible when you are well replenished.”

“One would say I had eaten alone,” laughed the young lawyer, “and that you looked at me doing it, with your arms crossed. Our host could not keep his eyes off you, when you were handling your knife and fork, like a weaver his shuttle, insatiate glutton that you are!”

They might have continued their friendly discussion in this exaggerated style, if their companion had not returned with a boy bringing the coffee and a choice collection of assorted liquors.

The cigars were lighted, they placed themselves at their ease, looking at the cascade and talking of Switzerland and its honest, strong, and industrious population. They resolved to remain there about two hours, it felt so cool and pleasant, and moreover they had a right to rest after so long a walk. The Swiss consented to do so, not only that he enjoyed himself very much in the society of the young men, but more especially because he had the intention of taking them a half league out of the town, and the repose after dinner would renew their strength for the additional exercise. Max Rapelings observed that his companion became more and

more silent, and was disposed to reproach him with it, when their guide rose, evidently with the intention of paying for their dinner. A lively discussion took place on the subject between the young doctor and the honest Bernese, but it was in vain for Max to protest, he was compelled as a stranger and an invited guest to accept his Amphitryon's hospitality.

The latter directed his steps towards the house.

Max looked, smiling at his companion who seemed to be buried anew in reflection.

"Herman, do you wish to re-dine?"

"How re-dine? I do not understand you."

"There you are again, plunged in thought, and the image of the poor unfortunate maiden pale rising up before your eyes."

"That is true Max—what can be done about it? I feel too keenly. You cannot imagine with what pity her sorrowful fate inspires me. I should like to banish these thoughts, but as you say, my imagination gets the better of me."

"Employ my method—eat another half dozen of trout."

"Fie! Max, you are a pitiless joker, and have no heart; for a poor sick girl you have found, up to this time, no other words of commiseration than foolish pleasantry and ridiculous witticism."

"Come, gentlemen," said their guide, returning; "we will now review rapidly some of the other curiosities of our town; then take a last walk to the *Enge* (the Gorge), this may fatigue you some-

what, but you will only sleep the better—yes, we must go to the Enge. You cannot leave Berne without seeing it.”

They recrossed the Aar in a small boat, mounted the stone staircase towards the high city, and soon came to a fine large monument built of grey stone.

“This is the house of the Council of the *Bund*,” said the Bernese, “or as would be said in Brussels, the Palace of the Nation, or of Representatives. You see, gentlemen, Switzerland is not wanting in clever architects, or in taste. The Palace of the Swiss *Bund* was executed in the Florentine school, by Studer. Admire, in front of the palace, that beautiful fountain, with its statue of a woman in copper. That woman is called *Berna*, and is the poetic personification of my dear native city.”

As they left the square and were crossing in front of the tower of St. Christopher, to direct their steps towards the Aarberg gate, the citizen replied to a question of Herman’s:

“Switzerland is composed of twenty-two cantons, and that of Berne is the largest. Each canton is an independent State as to all that does not concern the general business of the confederacy. This general business is the defence of the country, the customs, the postal service, the currency, the manufacture and sale of gunpowder. At the head of the *Bund* is the Federal Assembly, composed of the National Councils and Councils of State. These legislative bodies are chosen by the people. Every Swiss is an elector as soon as he attains the age of

twenty years. In the Federal Assembly is chosen a Federal Council, which administers public affairs absolutely like a ministry. I could speak to you longer, gentlemen, about the beautiful and liberal institutions of Switzerland; but this would be superfluous with Belgians, whose fine Constitution is almost the same as ours, setting aside a few details."

He was interrupted in his explanations by Max Rapelings, who said to him:

"Look there! if I am not mistaken, there is the madam coming towards us."

"It is, indeed, my wife," replied the Bernese. "She probably came out to attend to some commissions in the town."

The woman met them, and an animated conversation ensued about all that the young men had seen and admired. Herman and Max expressed the lively gratitude they felt for the generous hospitality which had been accorded them, and especially for the frank friendship shown them, which they would never forget.

When about to leave the old lady said to them:

"By the way, gentlemen, I had forgotten to tell you some news. You know the young sick girl, who lived at the opposite balcony from us? She is gone."

"Gone!" cried Herman, as if he had been knocked down.

"Yes, gone to Geneva and from there on to Italy—the old gentleman having become somewhat

more communicative, told it to his hostess. She was very much astonished at it, for the Russian was to have remained two weeks longer. About midday he took a carriage with two horses, had his luggage put upon it, paid my neighbor liberally, the horses were whipped up, and off they went as if flying from some pursuit that annoyed them."

"To Italy!" sighed the young lawyer, as if he could not believe it.

"Italy is a good distance off—a pleasant journey!" cried Max merrily.

The astonished Bernese asked them if they knew the sick stranger, but his wife explained that they had seen her on her balcony, and felt as every one else did, pity for the poor suffering child. She crossed the square in front of the station, then her husband and our two friends continued their walk.

Suddenly Max Rapelings drew from his pocket a five-franc piece, and showed it to his friend.

"What do you mean to do?" he asked him.

"You will see," replied Max.

And going a little to one side he placed the piece in the hand of a little urchin, who gazed at him stupefied with open mouth, as if he considered him a madman, but who did not take long to decamp with his unexpected treasure.

"What are you about, sir?" asked the Bernese, "that boy is not a beggar—there are no beggars in Berne."

"One must have received a knock on the head with a hammer, to be possessed of such crotchets," growled Herman.

"It is a vow," replied Max, with an ironical smile. "I promised to give five francs to the poor, if a certain thing occurred. One's word is one's word."

A moment after he triumphantly whispered in his friend's ear :

"My vow taken at the bear-pit. She is gone to Italy and from there returns to Russia. It is to be hoped that now, you will become a little more lively."

"Nonsense, you have no need to triumph over me, for I am happier than you. She is gone."

"Yes it seems so—when you count every stone in the street."

"Hush ; what will our host think of these impolite asides !"

They spoke no more of the young stranger, and at the end of a short half hour reached the *Enge*.

The *Enge* is a peninsula formed by one of the windings of the Aar, above which it rises over a hundred feet. There are numerous avenues, woods, hills, and valleys, and the town of Berne has built a sumptuous café there, where a fine view of the overland Alps is enjoyed. There are benches and chairs in every direction, and it is so pleasant and delightful, one may walk without fatigue for hours, or remain seated enjoying the picturesque borders of the Aar, or the distant summits of the snow mountains. This our friends did, and after supping in the *Enge* café they directed their steps towards home as the sun was beginning to decline.

They would have wished a second time to enjoy the grandiose spectacle they so much admired on the *Schänzli*, but were at last so fatigued, their legs could scarcely carry them. They agreed with their host, that early the next day they would breakfast with him at his own table and at about ten or eleven o'clock would leave by railway for Thun, that their trip into the Oberland might begin. They were to spend the night at Interlaken, and drive the next day to the Lauterbrunnen, and from there, proceed on foot to the Grindelwald, traversing the *Vengern-Alp*. They would then ascend the Faulhorn, which is nine thousand feet high, and descend near Brienz. Then they were to cross the Brienz and the lake of the Four Cantons, and go to Lucerne, making the ascent of the Righi. Finally by way of Fluellen and the St. Gothard, they would reach the valley of the Rhone, returning to Berne by way of Geneva, Lausanne, and Fribourg. Such was the itinerary followed by Mr. Van Heuvel, and which they proposed to follow in their turn.

Their trunk was to remain at Berne, and they would take with them only what was absolutely indispensable for their trip. To this end, they determined the next day, to purchase for themselves a sort of leather wallet, as well as a cudgel to wear at the side.

While discussing their departure the next morning, and the trip they were about to make, they reached the Aarberg Gasse and at once went to their rooms, fatigued, worn out, and almost breath-

less. They seated themselves on a sofa, and there remained without exchanging a word, until Herman, under the influence of his secret reflections, began suddenly to laugh.

“What is the matter, now?” growled Max Rapelings. “Are you laughing at me?”

“Not at all,” replied the young lawyer. “I am laughing at my own simplicity. Would you believe it, Max, I still have the pale maiden before my eyes? Since her plaintive look first struck me, her image pursues me unceasingly. I was asking myself an explanation of the strange influence that this unknown stranger exercises over me.”

“Pah? the only explanation is that it belongs to your nature, which is extremely sensitive. Is it not ever the same with you? As soon as you see anything that seems to you beautiful, wonderful, or interesting, your imagination breaks loose, and you begin to dream like an inspired poet. Happily, the next day there remains no trace of this fire of straw, otherwise, you would become a very tiresome companion. The pale maiden has been an agreeable incident of our travels. If later on we still think of her, it will be, as you say, to laugh at your simplicity.”

“No; this time you are mistaken,” replied Herman, shaking his head. “The thing was more serious than you think. I scarcely dare acknowledge it, but yet in the foaming waves of the cascade, in the woods of the *Enge*, in the air, in the clouds, upon the snowy Alps, everywhere, I saw but that gentle

face, which gazed at me with a plaintive air. My imagination, which is easily touched, is not the only cause. I explain the strange power of her look upon me by the peculiar position in which I happened to be when I saw her for the first time. There, on the balcony, under the pure sky, moved and excited by a deep sense of well-being, touched by the appearance of that singular and beautiful street, I was so happy with the mere act of living, and so disposed to admire everything, that all my impressions were necessarily vivid and exaggerated in proportion even to my very enthusiasm. Now, that I know she is gone and we will see her no more, this strange enchantment is vanishing."

"Poor Herman," muttered the young doctor, already half-asleep. "A charm! Can the pale maiden, by chance, have carried your heart off to Geneva? This is impossible! A young Russian whom we do not know—perhaps the daughter of a Cossack!"

"You are still joking, Max. It is not that; I questioned myself about it, but found within me nothing but pity—an inordinate pity—unnatural, something like a sickly dream of my impressionable mind. And, believe me, now that I am calm and able to face things, I feel no other sentiment than a natural interest in the sufferings of an unhappy young girl."

"You close your eyes, Max! You are tired; is it so?"

"Indeed, I can stand no more."

“Well, then, go to bed.”

“And you, Herman?”

“I wish first to write a letter to my mother—it is my turn to-day. I shall not only recount to her all the splendid things we have seen at Berne, but I wish to speak to her of the pale maiden. Now that the illusion is vanished, I feel sufficient freedom of mind to entertain my mother with this strange agitation of my heart.”

He took up his pen and began to write, while Max Rapelings disappeared within his chamber, muttering a scarcely articulated “good-night.” Herman wrote during an entire hour, and finally finished his long letter.

Instead of going to bed, he placed himself on the balcony, with his eyes fastened on the opposite window. What did he dream of there, and in what course ran his thoughts, it would be indeed difficult to guess, but at the end of a half hour he closed the window, took the lamp, entered his friend's room, and asked:

“Max, Max; are you asleep?”

“Why, awaken me? What do you want?” growled Max, displeased.

“A thought has struck me; we had intended terminating our trip by the way of Geneva; suppose we begin it that way?”

“What infernal dream is this?” sneered Max. “Now he intends us to run after the pale maiden. Go to bed, and let me sleep.”

Ashamed of his own folly, Herman left the room and went to bed muttering.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG the many travelers who alighted from the train at Scherzlingen to take their places on the steamboat for the Lake of Thun, were Herman Van Borgstal and Max Rapelings.

They appeared very happy and animated. The weather indeed was the most perfect in the world. The sun shone so vividly in the deep blue sky, that the eye could scarcely bear its rays.

The other travelers, men and women of every country, scattered on the deck of the boat, or seated about on chairs and benches, did not appear to be in less good humor. Their eyes wandered about with happy enthusiasm, laughing in advance at the pleasure they promised themselves. They were still on the river Aar, but would soon reach the Lake of Thun, and sail on one of these blue Alpine seas around which nature has heaped her treasures with blind prodigality.

Who has not felt touched in public exhibitions at those enchanting pictures, where the German artist has painted with a loving hand the mountain lakes of his country.

The blue and tranquil mirror of the waters, the brown rocks rising out of the bosom of the waves, the green hillocks in the adjacent valley, the silver stream which comes murmuring along to mingle its

waters with the great lake, the play of light and color, the purple fogs and transparent shadows, all this awakens in the hearts of those who dwell in flat countries a sentiment of admiration and a sigh of envy.

“How beautiful it is! How picturesque! God grant that once in my life I may see these mountain lakes.”

Most of the passengers were visiting Switzerland, as were our young Flemings, for the first time. Their wish was about to be accomplished; the boat had got under way, and was just about to leave the bed of the Aar to navigate a sea nearly four leagues in length.

Hardly had they taken in the picturesque situation of the town of Thun, with its castles and pleasure gardens, which ornament the borders of the Aar.

The Castle of Shadan alone had diverted their attention from the beauties of nature. It rises on the right bank of the Aar in the midst of a delightful park. It is very large, and may be distinguished by a great number of towers, balconies, and galleries; and though its architectural style is nothing remarkable, it commands attention by its position and Gothic appearance.

Now comes a joyous cry of surprise from every breast. Max Rapelings lifts up his arms to Heaven, Herman Van Borgstal takes his hand and presses it in silence, a tear of enthusiasm glistens in every eye. The steamboat has left the Aar and is wafted

over a blue surface more than a league in width. Under their first emotions the tourists do not speak—all their faculties seem concentrated in their eyes—their breasts are heaving and hearts palpitating.

For a man who, like our Flemings, is born in a flat country, where the smallest elevation takes the name of a mountain, the first view of one of these Alpine seas is a spectacle which moves all his being, and incites him to an admiration which is somewhat painful, as being above his power of endurance.

Yet this feeling gradually becomes weakened, to give way to one of lively enjoyment—to a sort of pride in the consciousness of his humanity; for if the world is so magnificent and marvelously beautiful, is he not the greater also?—he whom God has made king of creation?

“Goodness of Heaven!” cried Max, enthusiastically, “how unhappy are those who are compelled to die without contemplating such sights! They study in the books, they gather up knowledge, they speak of nature, and alas! know not the land which they inhabit! Under the impressions produced upon me by God’s handiwork, my heart is so touched that a mere nothing would cause me to weep through tenderness and pity for our friends in Ghent who will perhaps never see Switzerland.”

“I can scarcely breathe,” murmured Herman. “It is incredible, and I am still not sure I do not dream. What are the marvels of the Thousand and One Nights as compared with the grandeur of this enchanting nature!”

“May God be praised in His works! my heart overflows with gratitude,” cried Max, beside himself.

“Contain yourself, my friend; we are observed on all sides. Ah! now at least you are serious, my good Max. Is it not beautiful here? See there over to the left the shore, which rises from the water almost perpendicularly to the height of three thousand feet, the lower part of it carpeted with vines, above, thick woods, pretty chalets, old castles, sombre rocks, and foaming waterfalls, and all this in gradual stages, as if we were contemplating the back scenes of an immense theater, painted by man himself.”

“Yes, Herman, this is all astonishing and admirable. But what absorbs and overwhelms me is the sight of these gigantic mountains, of these rocks, of these fields of glittering ice which bound the horizon over yonder. Their feet are bathed in the blue lake, and their heads touch the sky. They must certainly be over ten thousand feet high.”

“It would seem, Max, as if the air and the light were animated with a life of their own. See against the side of the mountains in the valleys, that play of color running through the gamut of a thousand scarcely discernible tints, that soft and enchanting purple which is diffused over the crevasses and which appears to us as if bathed in a dream!”

“What almost gives me the vertigo, is that I lose the sense of proportion and of distance,” said the young physician. “The Lake of Thun is a league

in width, and it appears to me as if I could hurl a stone from one side to the other."

"It produces the same effect upon me," replied Herman. "I shudder as I contemplate, in the distance, those mountains of ice, as if I feared they would bury us beneath them, and yet I know they are six leagues off, or even more."

"This is a singular illusion of the senses. Do you observe over there against the sombre chain of the mountains, that delicate green which breaks here and there the monotonous bareness of its sides? Well! those green lines are woods—woods with great trees where one might be lost for several hours. The crevasses between the mountains look like very narrow gorges, and I am satisfied the whole city of Paris could dance easily within them. Like yourself, I feel that my eyes have lost the power of judging of the dimension of objects. No doubt this confusion of the mind will be dispelled as we become more accustomed to the sight of all this grandeur in nature."

A traveler, who had been some little time in their vicinity, and heard their conversation, said to them in German:

"If I be not mistaken, the gentlemen are from the Netherlands."

"We are Belgians, sir," replied Max Rapelings—"Netherlanders, if it pleases you to say so."

"Is this your first visit to Switzerland? So I gleaned, as I understand Flemish a little. Are the gentlemen from Brussels?"

“No; from Ghent.”

“A fine city, where the industries flourish. I have already visited it three times. You admired the Jungfrau. A fine mountain, is it not?”

“Oh! this is the Jungfrau that we already have seen at the *Schänzli* at Berne. How white it is, dazzling, and majestic with its gigantic summit, which I suppose is all ice and snow?”

“Eternal snow, sir; winter or summer the Jungfrau is always dressed in its clear and dazzling garb. It is called the Jungfrau (the Maiden) not only on account of this pure, white covering; but also because, until 1863, no one had ever mounted its snowy summit. For some years past this may no longer be said: in 1863 a lady made the attempt, with the aid of courageous guides be it understood, to climb to the highest point of the Jungfrau. Beside it you see the Monch (the Monk) and the Eiger, on this side the Stockhorn, standing out like the keel of a boat; the three summits of the Blümis Alp, the Freundhorn, the Balmhorn, the Doldenhorn, and other giants of the Oberland. I know them well; for every year I make a little trip through Switzerland. The village we have just sailed by is Gonten. Now the boat is obliquely directed towards Spiez, a little old town, very picturesque, situated in a plain near the border of the lake.”

“But what do I see over there?” muttered Herman, pointing with his finger into space.

“You see the old chateau of Erlach,” replied the traveler.

“No, it is not that I mean,” replied the young lawyer, “over there in the water—an animal, a monster swimming, and men in little boats giving it chase. It cannot be a fish, for it looks as large as an elephant.”

While the boat took them rapidly nearer the object which caused their astonishment, they stretched their eyes to make out what the animal could be, swimming like a marine monster, and every now and then appearing to jump half out of the water.

“Now, I can make out what it is,” said the traveler, laughing. “It is a bull that has run away, and, being pursued, has jumped into the water. The people in the skiff are endeavoring to push him towards the bank, lest the furious beast should drown; but I think that a bull, and especially this one, could swim a long while before reaching the opposite bank of the lake.”

While he was thus speaking, the Flemings were entirely absorbed with the sight of the trouble the people in the boat were taking to bar up the passage of the bull to the middle of the lake, and thereby push him towards the shore. But the strong animal, as soon as they approached him, half lifted himself out of the water, and jumped aside like a real fish beyond the reach of the boats.

Most of the passengers followed this singular chase with their eyes. Max Rapelings had even run towards the stern to get a better sight of the bull.

But the boat stopped at Spiez to put down some

people and take up others. The traveler who had been talking with our two friends saw some one he knew and he left Herman Van Borgstal alone.

The steamboat resumed its course. Herman was about going to rejoin his friend, when suddenly he stopped and paled with surprise. Did his eyes deceive him? Was it really she whom he beheld?—the young girl dressed in black, over there on a bench near the quarter-deck? Who else could it be, since the old Russian was seated at her side with his head bent down?

There could no longer be any doubt; she raises her head, she sees and recognizes him, as astonished as himself. Each seems to ask how it is they so constantly meet.

But the young girl, as if intimidated by the young man's piercing look, allowed her head to fall upon her breast, and lowered her eyes.

For a moment, a century for his heart, Herman had contemplated her to the exclusion of the entire world, when Max Rapelings returned towards him and said in a loud voice,

“Finally they have landed the bull, but not without trouble; they did not however get him for their pains. See over there, Herman; they are running after him, but he jumps over the hedges and trunks of trees, and seems as if he were defying them.”

Herman, completely absorbed in the contemplation of the girl, remained immovable and scarcely heard what his friend was saying.

“How is this?—are you deaf?” cried Max, “or

are you trying to vex me? If the pale maiden were not now in Geneva, I would think the devil had made her appear to you."

"Hold your tongue, for God's sake, hold your tongue!" said the young lawyer in a beseeching voice. "Do not say more, it might wound her."

"Mercy of Heaven! it is really she! For the second time there goes our comfort," sighed Max, as surprised as his friend at this unexpected apparition."

"Where does she come from?" muttered he, after a moment's silence. "Did she emerge from the blue lake like a siren? It begins to alarm me."

At this moment the aged companion of the pale maiden, perceived the young men. A visible shudder ran through his frame, and he also opened his eyes with surprise at the meeting; but this impression was only momentary. A black cloud darkened his face, and an expression of anger and impatience caused his lips to contract. He spoke some words in a low tone to his companion, when they both rose and disappeared into the cabin of the steamer.

"I really begin to think there is some sorcery in this thing. Come, tell me now, where did she come from? She did not fall into the boat from the skies, did she?"

"Why no, Max, she came on board at Spiez, while we were looking at the bull."

"But Spiez is not on the way to Geneva. What could this mean? Who knows but the pale maiden and her Russian are following us without our

knowing it? But to be serious, I understand it. He gave out that he was going to Geneva and Italy to put us off the scent, if we really had the intention of following him, and with this idea endeavored to find out the direction he meant to take. This is what comes of having gazed so indiscreetly on the young girl in the Aarberg-Gasse."

"Alas! that is true, Max," replied the young lawyer, with a mixture of sorrow and anger. "The poor girl's cruel oppressor noticed that her fate inspired me with pity. He fears we will undertake something to annoy him in the accomplishment of his wicked intention, and essays to elude us. Who knows whether God Himself has not—"

"There my friend, now you are beginning to dream again," said Max laughing. "Let me alone with your unhappy story of a young girl, oppressed by a tyrant without pity. What can you know about it? This enigma begins to bother me too; it acts upon my nerves. Believe me, I would willingly give just now a hundred francs, to see the Russian and his young traveling companion on the snowy summit of the Jungfrau! How gay we were this morning, and happy, and disposed to push our admiration to the verge of enthusiasm! Now again, it is all over. Nature has lost all her beauty, our cup of pleasure is poisoned."

"Now certainly you exaggerate, Max."

"I do not exaggerate. I cannot enjoy alone: when I see you so pensive and melancholy, my good spirits take flight."

“Suppose we go down into the cabin,” said Herman, sputtering out his words as if not knowing what he was saying.

“Better still! Do you think I want to get into a quarrel with the Russian? What right have we to pursue him indiscreetly? He is probably a good man, and a gentleman; he may perhaps be unfortunate. Why should we harass him? I will not permit you to provoke a duel in Switzerland, particularly with a Russian. Think of your mother, Herman!”

“You are right,” replied the young lawyer, with a stifled sigh. “Let us forget that the pale young maiden is on board the steamer.”

The traveler who had already talked with them now again came forward, and pointing over the lake with his hand, said:

“Did you observe that salient rock, before which we passed just now? It is called the Nose. A little further on you have Mount Béat, upon which, at a height of three thousand feet, there is a cave, the hermitage of St. Béat. It is said this Saint was the first apostle to this country, and dwelt in that cave. Do you perceive that thread of clear water coming down from the mountains by that hole? When it has rained hard, this rivulet swells suddenly at times to such a size that it fills all the opening, and falls again with a sound like thunder. There are still other mountains, among which are the Roth, Rothhorn de Sigriswel, seven thousand feet high. We are reaching Neuhaus, where the boat

stops ; it is a short league from Interlaken. There are crowds of carriages there ; but as there are many passengers on board the boat, I advise you, gentlemen, if you do not wish to walk to Interlaken, to make haste when we reach the landing. You, perhaps, know Interlaken means 'between lakes.' If this alluvium ground were not here, the Sea of Thun would form but a single lake with that of Brienz, which is nearly as large. Now the two lakes have a communication by means of the Aar ; but this boat cannot enter the lake of Brienz, on account of the windmills on the Aar."

Herman was absorbed in his own thoughts ; in vain he tried to lend an attentive ear to what the kind traveler was saying : he could not do it ; his mind had flown down stairs to the cabin, with the pale young maiden.

Max Rapelings saw it, perfectly ; and had nudged him several times with his elbow to rouse his attention.

The steamboat drew up to the quay at Neuhaus—an empty space, where only one house is to be seen.

All the travelers alighted as soon as possible, and ran towards the carriages to secure one. Max Rapelings and Herman Van Borgstal did the same, but the former stopped his friend near one of the carriages and said :

"No, let the Russian get out of the boat first to see what comes of it, otherwise we would be liable to go to the same hotel at Interlaken. And the

paladin and the dragon might take it into their heads, to tear each other to pieces. I am responsible to your mother. We will follow the Russian's carriage, not for the pleasure of doing so, but to watch him and choose a hotel at some distance from his."

Herman was no longer listening; he saw the pale stranger alight from the steamer on the quay, and direct her steps towards the carriages. As Max and himself were partly hidden behind the corner of the house amid the throng of travelers, they could observe the young girl and her companion, without themselves being noticed. Therefore he devoured with his eyes her who since his arrival at Berne, had taken complete possession of his mind in so inexplicable a manner.

"Is she not beautiful, poor languishing flower!" he said in a stifled voice. "See Max, she bows her head upon her breast; what a slim figure, what dignity in her walk! She must belong to the higher classes of society."

"Yes, yes, probably a Russian princess," said Max, laughing.

"Who knows?"

"The Princess Bolgaradrutski von Tchezisgot, perhaps?"

"Do not jest, I beg of you."

"You tire me, Herman; if I didn't know you so well I should believe on my word that the pale maiden had stolen your heart away, and for this reason, without knowing why, you are drawn towards

her by an incomprehensible force. No more nonsense, I beg of you. There, get into the carriage—crack your whip, coachman, and we will be off after them.”

But with all the effort they made to procure a carriage as they went the rounds, the only reply they received was “engaged.”

They were forced therefore to take places in the great mail coach, and when their vehicle finally got under way, the Russian’s carriage had long disappeared.

They were seated in the omnibus, among all sorts of people, who in four or five different languages expressed their dissatisfaction at the insufficiency of means for transportation at Neuhaus. Each affirmed that in his country things were better managed, and there was even a Spaniard who did not blush to indulge in this absurd talk.

The Flemings, being separated from each other by two Englishmen, and their backs turned to the window, could not see much of the country; they noticed, however, that the road was flat and planted with large, thick trees; if the view had not been limited on either side by a chain of mountains, they might have thought themselves in the fertile plains of Flanders.

After a full quarter of an hour’s drive the omnibus reached the little town of Unterseen, which is only divided from Interlaken by the Aar. There were along the road a number of handsome houses both of frame and stone, and on each one might be

read, *Gasthof*, *Hotel*, or *Pension*. It is there, indeed, much more than at Interlaken, many people prefer to stay, that they may escape the continual coming and going of travelers. There were, too, a goodly number of carriages that had come from Neuhaus standing before the hotels, where they had deposited their burdens.

"Look! before that hotel is the carriage of the pale maiden," said Herman to his friend, in Flemish.

"I think you are losing your sight; their carriage was green, and the one you show me is yellow."

"No; it is green, be assured of it."

"A yellow-green, perhaps; but what does this prove? There were at Neuhaus more than twenty carriages of the same color."

"This is true; I am becoming idiotic," muttered Herman, smiling sadly. "Where are my thoughts traveling?"

"If you see her twice more, you will lose your mind entirely, my poor friend."

"That is possible, Max."

During this time the omnibus had traversed a double row of houses, crossed the two bridges over the Aar, and come out on the great square or promenade of Interlaken.

"*Schweizer-hof*, Swiss Hotel," cried the driver.

As it was precisely the hotel recommended to them by the uncle of Max, our two friends alighted from the omnibus and entered the hotel, where they asked for a double room. They were told

there was a table d' hôte at one o'clock and one at two.

"Let us wash our hands," said Max, when they reached their room, "it refreshes one."

When these ablutions were over, Max, who was the first to finish, went to the window and lifted his hands to heaven in token of admiration. This window looked out on the beautiful glaciers of the Jungfrau, which the sun striking obliquely, seemed to render entirely transparent, as if only formed of a congelation of aerial vapors.

Max remained some moments absorbed in the contemplation of this magnificent spectacle. He was going to call his friend to the window when he saw him standing in the middle of the room his arms crossed on his breast and eyes fastened on the ceiling.

He shook his head with a mixture of anger and impatience, and said:

"Herman, for the love of heaven, let the pale maiden go the devil, if it pleases her to do so. Come here to the window—look, the Jungfrau smiles in the distance upon us. It is a spectacle both exciting and splendid."

The young lawyer went to the window, cast a glance upon the horizon, but did not utter a word that seemed to convey any expression of admiration for this magnificent nature.

Max shook him roughly by the shoulder, saying:

"Do you know, Herman, this is becoming insupportable? If you go on in this way, I shall be

compelled to indulge in monologues during the remainder of our trip. I have just now kept silent to see whether you would speak. The fact is, my companion is both deaf and dumb. Truly a most amusing condition of things!"

"Now, do be a little indulgent to me; it will pass away," sighed Herman.

"No, no; were I indulgent, your folly would increase. One must show one's hand. As the Russian is at Interlaken we will probably meet him to-day more than once. Suppose we leave instantly?"

"Where to? The day is pretty well advanced."

"It would indeed be embarrassing, and upset all our plan of travel."

"Yet, my dear Max, you are right to leave, and that at once would be the wisest thing. The pale maiden fills me with alarm."

"You alarm me still more, Herman; your voice is gloomy, your eyes haggard. Are you, perchance, playing a part to amuse yourself at my expense?"

"No, I have no wish to joke, believe it."

"Well then be frank, what is happening to you?"

"I do not know."

"You don't know?"

"I am under the influence, irresistibly so, of a strange power. My reason, my will, my entire being, is utterly absorbed by one thought alone—of her! I am bewitched!"

"Possessed by the pale maiden! Heavens! the thing becomes terrible. I feel inclined to run away to Flanders with you."

But seeing his friend's eyes glisten with tears, gave suddenly another turn to his humor. He closed the window, took a chair, and said in a tone of compassion :

“ Sit down, Herman, and let us talk seriously ; I do not feel inclined to laugh ; be sincere with me ; what is the nature of the agitation you feel at the unexpected sight of the young stranger ? ”

“ I do not really know. ”

“ Then you are no longer my friend ? ”

“ Ah ! Max, more than ever. ”

“ Then why dissemble with me ? Why not acknowledge you are in love ? ”

“ In love—I ? repeated Herman, with an ironical smile, which attested his profound incredulity, “ in love with the pale young maiden ? I thought, Max, you no longer intended to joke ? ”

“ But great goodness ! extricate me yourself from this cruel uncertainty, if you do not also wish to imperil the peace of my mind. ”

“ What shall I say to you ? It is fruitless for me to examine and seriously to question myself. I find no love there—only pity. How this sentiment has assumed such immense proportions is what I cannot explain other than by the super-excitement, the enthusiasm, and the nervous sensibility, that have never left me for a moment in the midst of this exciting and wonderful nature. ”

“ What you now tell me, my dear Herman, is somewhat incomprehensible ; but since you are able to discuss your condition, you might justly be

supposed capable of getting the better of it. So you think it is not any particular sympathy, or—to express myself more clearly—that it is not love that so agitates you?”

“Very certain.”

“Well, then let matters take their course, and be joyful! In Switzerland, as you say, man feels all his faculties doubled, and everything within him grows, even to his very weaknesses. It is the effect of an enchanting nature—of the gigantic dimensions of things, of the air, the mountains so full of life, which are endowed with an electricity of their own.”

“Yes,” muttered Herman, sadly, “it is all this; at the same time—and furthermore, it is the attraction of a mystery, which absorbs my mind and feverishly excites my nerves. Max, I gazed into her eyes a long time, when on the boat; those plaintive eyes seemed to speak to me; but I did not understand what they meant to convey. Was she asking for protection against the tyrant? I seemed to understand that she conveyed: ‘Take pity on me; otherwise, you see, I will soon die.’ I sometimes think God himself permitted me to cross this poor suffering creature’s path to save her from a frightful death. These are dreams—wild dreams—I know; but let me repeat it, the mystery around her excites my imagination and irritates my nerves.”

Max Rapelings contemplated him, smiling for a moment, took his hand, and said:

“I am a physician. It belongs to me to seek a

remedy, and I think I have found it in homœopathy—*Simile similia curat*. Answer me; if you knew for a certainty that the pale maiden is the daughter of the Russian, and he had only brought her to Switzerland, here to seek the cure or relief of her indisposition, would you then put aside your sickly anxiety?"

"How can you doubt it, Max? Assuredly I should still feel within me a sentiment of pity for her; I should often think of the poor girl who has made upon me so deep an impression—but why should she absorb my mind entirely if I were satisfied she did not need my assistance? When I ascertain she is not the victim of a terrible oppression, my imagination will no longer need to conjure up phantoms, and I shall become calm and joyful, and be able to enjoy with you the beauties of Alpine nature."

"Very well, this is settled," cried Max, as he rose. "We will order a beefsteak here; then at five o'clock we will dine and sup together, so that there will still remain for us some hours of leisure."

"What do you intend to do?" asked Herman, astonished.

"We are going to seek the Russian. I wish, if possible, to bring about to-day some twenty encounters with his companion. In this way the lively impression she has made upon you will be blunted by force of repetition. Moreover, if we knew where they were lodging, then I would try—I, not you—to find out what relation they bear to each other. If it came to the point, I would en-

quire of the Russian himself—be it understood with all imaginable politeness—the explanation of his strange conduct with regard to us. In a word, I wish to solve the mystery that is tormenting you.”

“Could you succeed, you would be rendering a service both to yourself and me.”

“Yes, Herman, but there is a condition attached. I know you, you appear as gentle as a lamb, but you lack necessary calmness. You might, in a moment of irritation, threaten or insult the Russian. I am responsible for us both; you must promise me that in any case you will keep quiet, and will do nothing, either by word or look, that may wound these people in the least, who are strangers to us.”

“I promise you.”

“Follow me, then, and leave all to me,”

They went down stairs and ordered two beef-steaks.

While waiting, Max Rapelings opened Bædeker's guide-book and began looking for the names of Hotels at Unterseen and Interlaken, as well as the situation of the walks and places where he could hope to meet the Russian and the pale maiden; for he did not doubt they would go, like other travelers, to visit what was most remarkable in these valleys.

As soon as they were served, they made haste to satisfy their appetites, then left the hotel.

“Now let us first go to Unterseen,” said Max Rapelings, as they walked along. “Maybe, it really was their carriage you saw stop. When the mind

and nerves are excited up to such a point, one arrives intuitively at remarkable conclusions, which are not unlike those known in magnetism as second sight. But though we may now be pursuing a particular intention, there is no reason why we should remain insensible or blind to the beauties of nature. As we are walking about, we will utilize it to see Interlaken in its every detail. What an admirable and enchanting situation, isn't it? Surrounded on every side by mountains, which reach to the skies, bare rocks and green slopes, and placed in a basin, where the soil develops a power of vegetation very uncommon; and this Paradise, bathed by two of the most beautiful lakes in Switzerland, seems to touch the feet of the gigantic and sparkling Jungfrau."

"Happy the man who can end his days here!" said Herman.

"No, no; on the contrary," said Max, "death can but be bitter here. What sorrow must be felt at having to separate oneself forever from all these beautiful things? The more death robs us of, the sadder is his coming. But why, by all that's good, should we be speaking of death now in the midst of a nature overflowing with life and strength? Be then a little gayer, Herman, out of friendship for me."

"But I am gay, my good Max. When I speak with you a short time about the wild ideas that agitate me, I feel that I become stronger. It is like a balm which spreads over my breast, and refreshes my mind. See! there is the Aar; from the top of that bridge we can see ourselves in its blue waters."

“It looks as if soap had been melted in it. Blue without being blue—a color like those pearls made of milky glass. That water comes from the lake of Brienz, and empties into the lake of Thun. Come Herman, let us not lose too much time; and moreover, to watch running water is not good for dreamy people.”

They crossed the second bridge, and came to Unterseen. There they walked for a long time before the hotels and boarding-houses, trying to see through the walls, but discovered nothing to make them imagine those they were searching for were within.

Max even questioned some peasants as to whether they had seen at Unterseen an old gentleman in company with a pale young girl; but the only reply was a shrug of the shoulders and unsatisfactory replies.

“Come! let us go back,” said Herman, “they are not here.”

“I believe it, indeed,” replied Max; “but before leaving Unterseen, at least pay attention to what is around you. See, Herman, those Swiss houses all built of wood, showing so much taste with their lively colors, so gay that they look like summer houses. The balconies and galleries are so delicate and aerial, that it seems doubtful they could bear the weight of a man. And those flowers—what variety of colors; and ornaments carved on each piece of wood. Oh! how free and happy must the hearts of the Swiss be, to enable them to vie with

the allurements of this Alpine nature, not only in grandeur, but also in elegance!"

"Charming, charming!" ejaculated Herman, "yet I prefer those old houses over there; they are also artistically built, but time has covered them with deep brown tints, and they seem to one to harmonize better with the surrounding nature than the newer ones, dainty and ornamented, which have been built here for the use of strangers."

"What you now say, Herman, proves conclusively that objects are not seen with the eye, but with the soul. You are melancholy, therefore find beauty in what is black and sombre. I have a lighter heart, so admire what is light and gay, like my temper. Let us go now; we may meet the pale stranger during our walk under the great chestnuts."

"A thought has come to me that has often made me reflect," said Herman. "There are eminent sculptors and painters in this world, their works sometimes astonish by their character of grandeur—and they certainly deserve our admiration. But have you never found that an old work of art, or even a more modern sketch, however imperfect it may be, fastens itself upon our minds and fixes our attention, for the very reason that it is defective or seems defective? Why is this? I cannot tell. We saw at Ghent, Brussels, and Paris, magnificent buildings entirely complete from an artistic point of view, but was the impression produced upon us as deep and as pleasant as that of the frame houses at Unterseen?"

“Heaven be praised! you are becoming sensible,” cried Max, with real joy; “keep on, and we shall still have some pleasure in our trip.”

“You know perfectly, Max, that when talking one becomes exercised in controlling the thoughts that assail one. I already feel stronger.”

“Suppose you meet the pale maiden?”

“Ah! that would probably agitate me anew; but if I could see her for a long while—if you could discover who they may be, and the mysterious veil is lifted”—

“Well, let us walk a little faster then; I see a red shawl over there under the chestnuts. Who knows but it may be she?”

“No, no! you are mistaken, Max. This person is old, and is playing with a child.”

“The devil, Herman! you see far. You are right; it is not she. No matter, we will know how to find her. Interlaken is not larger than the smallest village in Flanders, and it is impossible one should not meet twenty times a day.”

They walked up and down before the hotels for a long time, and looked about in every direction; met hundreds of tourists, and every known language in the world resounded in their ears, but saw no one that resembled the Russian and his pale companion.

Max Rapelings became silent for some moments, and kept his eyes fixed upon the ground as if he had given up all idea of renewing his search.

“How is this, my good Max?—are you in your

turn going to dream? In that case there must be mutual recrimination. Let us return to the hotel, and may God dispose according to His will as to the young girl's destiny."

"You are a strange fancy-monger," replied Max, in a tone of raillery. "I have never felt in a better humor, and if I am to keep up the gayety for both, I feel quite equal to the task. That is not it; but the question you proposed to me just now, which is running through my mind."

"What question?"

"Why does a simple work of art, though defective, produce upon us sometimes a deeper impression, and one that is more agreeable, than the best work of a master? Your problem is a difficult one to solve, but I believe I have done so. What we seek in a work of art is the language of another man's soul. When we contemplate it, what do we see there? We know so great a height cannot be reached by force of will alone, we know the artist's talent is due in a great measure to assiduous study—in a word, the academy, the school, the dominant style, are not strangers to the result obtained. We therefore comprehend we do not owe it to one man alone, but to a portion of all humanity. But a simple work of art, were its author a carpenter or a blacksmith, when it bears a certain stamp, is the expression of a single individual—it is the outpouring, the expression of a single soul—and this is why we recognize a great personality, and feel our innermost and most hidden chords touched; for each man

comes into the world in the rough,—education, science, the—but, dear me, I am becoming confused with my own pedantry, as if it were a tangled skein of thread. What nonsense I have just been talking! it makes my head spin. Are these reflections to be made in Switzerland, with one's eyes fastened on the queen of mountains—the incomparable Jungfrau?"

"Let us speak of something else."

"Yes, yes, I descend from my vaporous sky. But there, I don't know how many times we have walked up and down this place without meeting the Russian and his companion. We must conclude something from it."

"That they are not at Interlaken?"

"Not exactly, Herman, but I conclude that since we do not meet them on the promenade, we should seek them elsewhere. Come, let us go into this shop, and buy some alpenstocks."

"Alpenstocks? Why?"

"The Russian must be upon the Jungfrau; let us follow him there. Don't look at me so stupidly, but listen. I have read in Bædeker that there is somewhere on the top a hotel 'Vue de la Jungfrau,' and there also are found fine and extensive promenades. You may observe this from here. They are perhaps at the Hotel Ober, where we will stop as we go along. At any rate, I see that nearly all the tourists, men as well as women, and even the children, walk with alpenstocks. This lends firmness, and moreover, makes it appear one has already climbed all the mountains in Switzerland."

Some moments later they left the shop, each one carrying a stick seven feet long, as thick as a broom-handle, with a steel spike at the end. This stick is not only useful for ascending and descending the mountains, but may be used as a weapon of defence.

Max Rapelings took it in at once, for no sooner was he in the street than he began fencing at a tree, imitating what he had seen the lancers do in Belgium. Herman seized his friend's stick to prevent his continuing.

"Be done, Max, we will be mistaken for boys or collegians."

The young doctor, marching in advance, said gravely:

"Boys or collegians? Why, are we not so yet? Sweet spring-time of life, which is about to depart from us! We came to Switzerland, Herman, to leave our youth here; therefore, let us enjoy it for the last time in all its innocent guilelessness. On our return to Flanders, cares await us: the slavery of fashion, the being bound to all the requirements of a conventional world."

"That is true, Max; until then let us enjoy our youth, careless, credulous, and free in body and mind. But, to do this it is not necessary to enact a farce in the middle of the street, and give people a laugh at our expense."

"You fear, perhaps, *she* may see you? But don't you observe, Herman, all the world become children here? Englishmen, Russians, Frenchmen,

young and old, all laugh jubilantly and amuse themselves as if they had forgotten their age. I understand it perfectly. In the presence of this primitive nature the false varnish of conventionality and ceremony leaves us without our being aware of it. Man regains his natural simplicity and his enjoyment of life. But great heavens! am I in my turn bewitched? I am beginning to repeat myself like an old pedant. A plague upon such foolish stuff! Forward to the mountain! The Russian has but to behave well, or I will nail him with my stick against a rock, where he will dry up into eternity like a butterfly pinned to a cork by some naturalist. No nonsense, do you hear, Herman? What I say of the Russian is but a simple joke to make us laugh a little."

They climbed the green hill and wandered through all the walks around the hotel of the "Vue de la Jungfrau," and even asked a hotel-boy some questions about the pale maiden, but could not obtain the slightest intelligence.

Then they returned to Interlaken, and again began their walk, finally directing their steps towards a large ornamented cottage, which was built in the middle of a garden and seemed to lean against some very steep rocks.

Max had seen in his guide book that it was an establishment for the milk cure—where they cured, or tried to cure, invalids by making them drink enormous quantities of whipped milk.

"You doctors are queer creatures," said Herman,

who seemed to be in a more playful mood. "Each one of you knows some especial means for curing the most serious malady. One insists upon a great amount of food; another orders a strict diet; then cold water outwardly and inwardly applied is prescribed; still another buries his patient in the mud, or insists upon his swallowing hundreds of pounds of grapes; then a vapor-bath is considered life-giving, while another stakes everything on powders, friction, or a hundred different prescriptions. Tell me, will you not also invent some mode of curing every one with pure water; or with but one little bottle of some kind?"

"Suppose I were to find that happy bottle?"

"Then, Max, you think there are some remedies that are universal?"

"Yes, certainly, Herman."

"And you don't laugh while saying this?"

"I am not laughing at all; but the great difficulty yet is to find this unknown remedy. It may perhaps be discovered in magnetism."

"Ah! Max, for the love of heaven do not let us touch on magnetism, for the subject is without end. Do you know I am beginning to tire of running so long after the Russian?"

"He must be a sorcerer, Herman, and has become invisible. Much good may it do him! I am no longer afraid of this bugaboo."

"Well! Max let us try our alpenstocks and climb up that mountain."

"What are you going to do on those bare rocks

without a guide? Do you desire to break your neck?"

"There is a beaten path. If you are afraid of so little, I pity you."

"Well, let us risk the adventure; but be prudent, Herman, the place is unfamiliar to us; don't go and fall into the Aar."

He had climbed up on to a wooden bridge behind the Kurhaus, and come to the foot of an acclivity which was composed of bare rocks. A narrow path ran obliquely towards the top, and here and there in the dangerous places some wooden cross-bars had been built to serve as hand-rails.

It was this acclivity that our Flemings undertook to climb. They puffed, and panted, cried out with terror, either real or affected, and looked with wide open eyes to the bottom, no doubt thinking to give a proof of their intrepidity. Later on as they continued their journey through Switzerland, they were to see and do many other things; but so it is with travelers when they first set off, what at first makes them pale with terror is accomplished the next day while laughing at their timidity of the day before.

Yet, Max and Herman climbed higher and higher, coming upon little patches of grass from time to time, where they seated themselves to rest and recover breath, having Interlaken beneath their feet and the Jungfrau before their eyes. They had strolled in this manner during an entire hour on the side of the mountain, when they stopped at about

a thousand feet above Interlaken, which appeared to them placed at the bottom of a deep abyss.

Suddenly the young lawyer asked, "Max, don't you hear a strange grumbling under our feet? It is as if chariots were rolling within the mountain."

"I have been hearing it for some time," replied Max, "it may be the echo of distant avalanches; you know the fall of the snows of which my uncle has told us so often. Hark! that last sound is the loudest of all. Our mountain seems to shake in consequence. It may be thunder."

"Thunder, Max?—the sky is blue and transparent."

"Yes, but who knows whether in Switzerland it does not thunder when the sky is clear? I think I have read this somewhere." A still louder noise resounded in the distance.

"It is indeed thunder," said Herman.

"Come, let us make haste down; thunder on the mountain-top may become dangerous."

"Oh! oh! what is the matter with you," said Herman, laughing. "Is it the influence of this beautiful nature that alarms you so? The storm, if it be a storm, must be below—behind the mountain. It may still be twenty leagues away from us. Your uncle has told us of storms that burst in the depths of the valley while the spectator on the mountain has a blue sky over his head, and sees the lightning fork beneath his feet. I wish we could enjoy this spectacle."

"It would suffice to make you forget all the Russians and all the pale maidens in the world."

“I think so, Max; it must be grand and thrilling. Will you go a little higher? We may, perhaps, reach the summit of the mountain.”

“I consent; let us make haste.”

They seize their alpenstocks and begin climbing with redoubled energy.

Insensibly, the claps of thunder become more distinct. Another broke with so much noise, the young men stopped in indecision.

“The storm appears to be coming nearer,” said Max; “it would not be very pleasant to have it come down upon one’s head.”

“Nonsense—the atmosphere is still as blue and pure as the lake of Thun,” said Herman. “Are you afraid?”

“No; but I am responsible for both of us. See there! those gray horses in the sky running like locomotives above the summit of the mountain! Let us get down quickly. We have had enough of such a scene. Heaven knows whether we will not roll down into the Aar, like sticks or stones.”

They retraced their steps in the same path, and began running towards the bottom with all the haste in their power. In the beginning the descent was not dangerous, because the road was bordered on both sides by pines and shrubs; but about four or five hundred feet above the Aar the mountain became bare and the path very steep.

“How lucky that you thought of buying alpenstocks, for without them we would have been fine fellows,” said Herman.

“Yes; God himself must have inspired me with the prudence. But hush, Herman, and pay great attention to your feet. Listen! how it thunders behind us. The mountain seems shaken to its base. Good, now it begins to rain drops as large as a crown-piece. What sudden darkness!”

Though pursued by thunder and lightning, they nevertheless reached the foot of the mountain without damage; but in the interval the storm had developed and extended its frowning face over the valley, and as if all the cataracts in the heavens had opened to create another deluge, the rain fell so heavily that the entire valley soon bore the appearance of a large pond.

Herman and Max ran across the bridge, passing before the Kurhaus. They were obliged to call to each other every instant, for night had come on, and heaven and earth were mingled together. Frightful claps of thunder resounded on all sides; the lightning broke through the clouds and illuminated the horizon with its dazzling brightness, when again the valley would once more be shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

The poor Flemings sought refuge in their hotel, as wet as if they had come out of the Aar. Water fell in torrents from their clothes, and they did not even dare enter the reception-room, for fear of spoiling the carpets and chairs.

“B-r-r-r! Jonah must have been like this when ejected by the whale upon the shore,” cried Max, rubbing his eyes. “All is on a grand scale in

Switzerland, even the rain. It rains rivers here. Herman, Herman, my friend, where are you? Are you still alive?"

"I am floating in my clothes," replied the young lawyer. "What a bath! I thought it only snowed in Switzerland!"

"Do you suppose the Russian, like ourselves, has swallowed this cup of tea?"

"Hold your tongue about your Russian! My memory is drowned. I seem to be half melted."

While they were thus talking, the servants were occupied in divesting them of their wet garments.

They were advised to go up without delay. There was a stove in their room—a fire would be kindled, and what they required would be brought to them; they had only to hang their clothes beside their door, and they would be carefully dried in the kitchen until the next day.

They were scarcely five minutes in their room, when the stove, stuffed with dry wood, was already red hot and threw out great warmth.

Max ordered a chicken and some tea for their supper.

They were not hungry, and thought only of warming themselves at the stove.

They at first laughed continually over the beautiful result of their first ascent, asking each other what they could possibly expect after such a beginning. But fatigue, and especially the heat of the stove, made them so sleepy that Max rose and said:

"Come, I have no intention of playing the part

of a clothes-peg, and drying my clothes on my back; moreover, it is unwholesome, and I am a physician. I shall take off everything, and slip between the sheets."

"Hear, how it rains!" said Herman.

"Well, it gives me no concern: the sound of a pouring rain soothes one to sleep peacefully."

"That is true—good night."

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning by nine the two young Flemings were seated in an open carriage on the road between Interlaken and Grindelwald.

The weather was gray and hazy, and promised nothing good for that day. Objects were easily seen below, but at a certain distance and a certain height everything was lost in an impenetrable cloud of fog. As to the high mountains, their sides could be distinguished, and the objects upon them to a height of a thousand feet, but their tops were lost in the clouds.

Therefore, Herman and Max had no subject upon which to expend their enthusiasm. They gazed silently upon the torrent-like course of the Lutchine, as their road lay along its borders. This river, very much swollen by the rain of the day before, was but an uninterrupted succession of seething and roaring cascades. Not that its flow was precipitated by the sudden declivity of the ground, but because its bed was covered with masses of rock that had become detached from the neighboring mountains. Some of these rocks were as large as a house. The waters of the Lutchine in their impetuous course rebounded against these obstacles and dashed their flakes of spray as far as the shore; its waves boiled, bub-

bled and thundered, forming giddy vortexes, as if they were endowed with human life, struggling with rage against the forces that endeavored to arrest them.

“What are you thinking of, Herman?” asked the young doctor, noticing that his companion no longer observed the torrent, and contemplated with fixed attention the curtain of the carriage.

“Of what was I thinking? in truth I do not know myself:—however, yes, I was saying to myself that it is evident the Lutchine had hollowed its own bed and probably even, all this valley, and I was wondering if all torrents and all streams had not likewise traced the beds in which they flow.”

“Now, this is strange,” exclaimed Max: “could there be possibly between the minds of two good friends like ourselves a secret link something like magnetism?”

“You only think of magnetism! Do you expect to discover in it the universal panacea?”

“Who knows? I look upon it, at any rate, as a powerful remedy against the ills of the mind and of the nerves.”

“Do you really give credence to the miracles attributed to magnetism? You believe then, that a *subject* may, under certain circumstances, see through a wall with his eyes shut, or hear what is said fifty leagues away, or predict what may happen in a hundred years?”

“No, no; I do not make to myself such illusions, but what cannot be denied is the secret sympathy

which exists between human beings and the influence and power they may exercise upon each other by look or will. This power may some day be exercised with astonishing results in curing nervous diseases, if they are successful in discovering the laws that govern it. But let us speak no more of this. I only wished to say that, like yourself, at that moment I was asking myself if all rivulets and rivers did not hollow out their own beds and valleys."

"There is only one thing against it," objected Herman. "If the terrestrial globe is supposed to have been entirely round at the period of the creation, there could not then have been rivulets or rivers, since the water would not have found in the form of the earth any determining cause to take its course on one side more than the other."

"That is true; but you forget the attraction of the sun and moon."

"What has this attraction to do with our problem? The action of the great celestial bodies upon our globe can only have the effect of attracting the waters, and not making them flow here and there, in torrents or in streams. But let us put aside this cosmological discussion—it dulls my brain."

"One must talk about something, Herman. Conclude your argument. You suppose since the creation there existed inequalities on the surface of the terrestrial globe!"

"Yes."

“You are mistaken. It sufficed that there should exist on the terrestrial globe a power capable of producing these inequalities, and in fact it is so. The interior of the earth is nothing but a mass of metals in fusion—by the force of expansion this centre has been producing in all time, and still produces, rises and falls which first gave their direction to the flow of the waters; then came the constant erosion of the shore by the streams and rivers, and especially the perturbative action of the water when after violent tempests it is precipitated roaring and broken from the mountain heights. I fancy the Lutchine once had a bed which was very narrow some thousand feet above its present one, and that in the course of centuries it hollowed out the valley where it now flows.”

The coachman, seated in front of us, who up to this time had driven his horses in silence, turned his head around.

He was a man well on in years, whose hair was becoming grey; he had evidently listened with profound attention to our two Flemings, for he said in German:

“Excuse my presumption; the gentlemen have forgotten the work of the glaciers or seas of ice.”

“You understand our language?” cried Max, with astonishment.

“The gentlemen were speaking Danish or Hanoverian,” replied the coachman. “I was a guide in my youth, and for several months traveled over Switzerland with two Danish professors who were

making a collection of simples and minerals from the Alps. Their language was not exactly like yours, but resembled it greatly. In your conversation I distinguished German words, and others that belonged to the Swiss dialect."

"We are speaking Flemish, the language of Flanders, my good man."

"Indeed! Are the Flemings perhaps, a branch of the great German Fatherland?"

"Judging by language, most assuredly so; but we are an independent people like the Swiss, and, like them, wish to remain so. Why, my friend, did you say we had forgotten the glaciers and mountains of ice? You then understood us?"

"Not altogether, sir; but I at least understood the subject of the conversation. You have probably not yet seen the glaciers or ice-seas. Visit but one, and you will be convinced that their work alone has sufficed to hollow out all the valleys, however deep they may be. This was the idea of the Danish professors. They think that formerly all Switzerland was but one immense glacier, and I have heard them discuss the question long and seriously."

They were now approaching the spot where the furious torrent was to divide into two arms.

The coachman explained to the travelers that the arm they were about to take as far as Lauterbrunnen was called the White Lutchine, while the other, which had its source at first in the glaciers of the Grindelwald, bore the name of the Black Lutchine,

which was due to the fact that its waters by dint of carrying along broken slate become in their course dusky and slimy.

“Gentlemen,” he continued, “it is to be regretted you have not had better weather; the fog limits the view and makes everything look gray, otherwise you might here have admired some of the finest views in Switzerland—at least, this is what has been told me by painters twenty times when I accompanied them to this spot, or when I have driven in my carriage to the Lauterbrunnen and the Grindelwald; but in this misty weather there is little to see.”

“What is that deep black opening between two formidable elevations?” asked Max.

“It is a gorge or crevasse between two mountains, thousands and thousands of feet high. The White Lutchine flows at the bottom.”

“Are we to pass that way?”

“Yes, sir, as far the Lauterbrunnen; but don't be uneasy, it is a good and beautiful road.”

Hardly had they entered the gloomy gorge of the mountain when Herman, who was very pensive until now, was awakened from his reverie by strange sounds, which seemed to resound among the clouds like aerial music. There was something so plaintive in these mysterious accents that the young lawyer seemed agitated, and looked fixedly at his friend, who began laughing at him with an air of irony.

“Well, then, what? Are you going to begin

again?" said he. "You think, perhaps, the pale maiden is languishing above our heads. Good! She is at Interlaken, seated in front of an excellent breakfast; and unless the Russian be really running after us, there is no danger of our ever meeting that heretical sorcerer. The sounds you hear are only the echoes of the famous Alpine horns. Did not my uncle mention them often enough?"

"What strange, sad music!" sighed Herman, "it sounds like the last agonizing cry of the dying."

"This again proves it is not only our ears, but our minds that perceive sounds, and each mind perceives them according to its own interpretation. These strains sound to me like a celestial song, as if the choir of angels were exchanging mutual salutations, above the gray clouds and the fog. Hark! the sounds are becoming more distinct, and I fancy I see the youth who is blowing the Alpine horn. But what strange creature is there standing, seated, or lying beside him? A young bear's cub or a gnome? This is the land of gnomes; my book calls them *bergmanlein*."

"I think it is a man without legs they are exhibiting for money," said Herman.

"Heavens! what a happy accident!" exclaimed the young doctor.

"A happy accident! what do you mean?"

"It is a malady much dwelt upon in our studies; but one has to come to Switzerland to see exceptionally good cases; this gnome is an idiot with a goitre—a beautiful one, be assured of that."

“Is it perchance your mind, which through sympathy finds this monster admirable and beautiful? For in that case you must be somewhat ugly interiorly.”

“Ah! you are beginning to jest, my dear Herman. Hurrah! the weather will become fine, perhaps; but now I cannot wait. I would not give up my goitred man for a hundred francs. He—coachman, stop that I may alight.”

Beside the poor idiot stood a young boy, who was blowing his Alpine horn so violently that his face swelled out like a leather bottle, and his eyes looked as if ready to jump out of their sockets. The plaintive tones which he drew from his instrument reverberated from mountain to mountain until lost in the distance, so far over head as if seeming to come from heaven itself.

Herman, who had also left the carriage, took the Alpine horn from the little boy's hand to examine the rough instrument nearer. It was a curved horn five or six feet long, made of wood or the bark of a tree.

During this time Max Rapelings was occupied in passing the goitred man under inspection. The poor wretch was about fifty years of age, for his hair was quite gray. He had a broad, thick head, a large mouth, and swollen lips; his hands also were puffed, and of a bluish color; his legs were very short—so much so that when seated he appeared standing; his eyes rolled about without a sparkle of intelligence as to whether he had a consciousness of his own life.

Herman shuddered with disgust and pity. As for Max Rapelings, he did nothing but walk round the idiot, examining him before and behind, taking his hands in his, and feeling his terrible goitre. He spoke to him several times, and endeavored to obtain from him some articulate sound; but all he could get, after long effort, was a dull kind of growl like some wild beast one torments.

"Come, come, Max, you disgust me," muttered the young lawyer, drawing his friend towards the carriage: "I have given the youth a gratuity—let us hasten away from this sad spectacle of human misery."

When once again seated in the vehicle, and it had begun to move, Herman said with a sigh,

"We are not happy this morning. Switzerland, too, has its dark as well as its bright days."

"But the sight of this idiot is worth a whole day's travel for me," replied Max.

"These doctors! these doctors!—they feel and pinch a horrible piece of flesh like a butcher who goes to market to buy an ox. I hope you will wash your hands in the first water we come to. I scarcely like to sit beside you."

"It becomes you to speak sir lawyer! What we do materially you do morally. When you visit an assassin in prison, and concert with him as to the best means to induce a jury to regard him as white as snow, what do you call that? It is the business of one's profession, an exceptional duty that belongs to it."

“You are right, Max; I hold my tongue. My good man tell me, are there many idiots in the country?” asked the young doctor of the coachman.

“No sir, thanks be to God! these unfortunates are becoming rare in Switzerland—formerly it was otherwise. In the Canton of the Valais there could be found one cretin for every twenty-five of the inhabitants; in the other cantons there never were many, and their number is diminishing all over Switzerland. This wretched trouble is engendered in the dark, deep, damp, valleys; for the children born and brought up on the mountains are never subject to it.”

“We are approaching the Lauterbrunnen, gentlemen. Are you still in the same mind to go to the Grindelwald, by the Wengern Alp?”

“It is our plan.”

“You may regret it, gentlemen. If the weather were clear I would not dissuade you; on the contrary, it is from the top of the little Scheideck and the Wengern Alp better than elsewhere, one may see at this advanced season avalanches of snow; but the weather makes the pleasure impossible. Besides the woods, the valleys, the summit of the mountains will remain covered with snow, and you yourselves gentlemen will feel you are enveloped by a cloud on every side. Therefore you would see nothing, or very little, and you will have become uselessly fatigued on a road over which the journey would require no less than eight hours.”

“What then do you advise my friend?”

“The simplest and wisest thing, gentlemen, is to dine at the Lauterbrunnen, to visit the Staubbach and then drive to the Grindelwald in the carriage. If you have resolved upon it, you might make the ascent of the Wengern Alp to-morrow on the side of the Grindelwald.”

“But we would then have to remain all day in the carriage,” said Herman; “this is annoying, I should like to walk.”

“Well, sir, there is one way of satisfying you. I will take you back to the bridge of the two Lutchines, and from there you can go to the Grindelwald on foot, by way of a walk. It would occupy about three hours, and be quite sufficient to satisfy your desire for walking.”

The Flemings determined to follow their coachman's advice. The prospect of taking an eight hours' climb in the fog, of seeing nothing, and perhaps being drenched as they were the day before, did not entice them, and made them give it up.

“Will the gentlemen visit the Staubbach before or after dinner?” asked the coachman.

“Before dinner, if we still have time,” replied Max.

“There will, I think, be time enough, gentlemen. The Staubbach is only about ten minutes from the hotel. Will you allow me to be your guide?”

“Certainly; it will give us pleasure.”

“Have the goodness then to go into the hotel while I change my horses. They sell excellent *Kirschwasser* and good wine there. I will come and notify you.”

The carriage stopped before the hotel of the *Steinbock* (Wild Goat). The Flemings entered and ordered a glass of kirsch (cherry water). The Swiss give this name to their brandy, because it is distilled with fermented cherries.

The coachman now came to say he was at their orders to go and view the Staubbach.

They walked for some time between the huts of peasants, on the border of a narrow valley, which, in clear weather, must have been very picturesque; but just now, was in a great part hidden beneath a gray fog—for sunlight, the life, and soul of nature, was wanting.

Suddenly and unexpectedly they came upon the Staubbach, of which their Bædeker spoke as being one of the marvels of Switzerland. It did not, however, make much impression upon them, and they looked at each other as if asking:

“Is this all?”

The coachman, who saw disappointment in their faces, gave them the following explanation:

“Yes, gentleman, the day is most unfavorable for the Staubbach. Observe that the rock rises perpendicularly, and even hangs over. The rivulet that flows from there has a fall of nine hundred and fifty feet, and you may say you are probably contemplating the highest cascade in the world. But without the sun, nothing is beautiful. Come here on a fine morning, and you will see every color of the rainbow reflected in the silver surface of the river. If it blows, the rivulet floats here and

there over the rock like an immense silken ribbon, or else winds like a serpent, or waves through the air and is resolved into mist before touching the ground, watering its surroundings with a rain of sparkling drops."

The friends remained some time before this waterfall of nearly a thousand feet. If they did not find it broad and torrent-like, they fancied the point of view which they enjoyed here was sufficiently magnificent and extraordinary to repay them for their little excursion to the Lauterbrunnen.

On returning to the hotel a little boy came to meet them with a small cannon mounted upon a piece of wood; he placed the cannon on the ground and set it off about ten feet away from the travelers.

The report rebounded against the wall of rocks and from there to the mountains on the opposite side; every irregularity, every crevice and abyss, returned a distant echo. It seemed as if a hundred discharges of cannon followed each other without stopping, until the last echo faded away.

"Give a few *batz* to the boy gentlemen; it is his only way of earning his bread."

Hardly had they left the little cannoneer behind when another child came out of a hut with a marmot in his arms.

They examined the little animal for awhile, which in shape resembled a hare somewhat foreshortened, with paws which are used as hands. "They are found," said the driver, "on the heights of snowy mountains."

This again cost them some pence. Their hands were still in their pockets when a little girl came and offered them a little white flower, which, according to the guide grows upon the most inaccessible summits, so that it is looked upon as very rare, for one must risk breaking one's neck to gather it.

"I was told, my good man, there were no beggars in Switzerland," observed Max.

"They are not actual beggars," replied the coachman; "on the route of travel everywhere you will find little boys and girls, and even men, who blow the Alpine horn, while offering you fruits and flowers, exhibiting marmots or chamois; but if you go along without giving them anything, it is certain you will not be importuned; and indeed, what matters it to travelers' that they should give a few *batz* (cents) to poor people?"

They reached the hotel and went in. The meal was served, and as on that day owing to the unfavorable weather there were only five or six visitors at the Lauterbrunnen, they had awaited our two friends before seating themselves at the table.

A full hour later, Max Rapelings and Herman Van Borgstal were again seated in their carriage to return to Zweilutzchinen, where begins the road leading to the Grindelwald.

The weather had begun to clear, the narrow valley was much lighter, and the fog had lifted along the mountains.

What now called their attention was something

very astonishing for those who inhabit a flat country. They beheld at intervals, against the high ridge of mountains, in the crevasses, and even between the trees, a small volume of smoke, rising like a feather—so thin and light—that when Max noticed it for the first time he exclaimed:

“One would say, upon my word, that that peak over there was smoking its pipe.”

But the little volume of smoke extended by degrees, becoming a dense heavy vapor; then, as if instinct with a mysterious life, it began rolling towards the declivities, rising and falling, transforming itself in a hundred ways, and finally like a real cloud mounting upward to the skies, where, scattered by some invisible force, it vanished into air, without leaving behind a trace of its existence.

They soon observed the same phenomena in twenty different places, and as this strange spectacle drew from them exclamations of surprise, the coachman said:

“What you see, gentlemen, is the effect of sun and heat on the fog. Things are brightening, perhaps it may be clear to-morrow.”

“Not to-day?” asked Herman.

“To-day you may now and then see the sun through a break in the clouds, at any rate for a couple of hours; but later in the evening, when the air grows cooler, you will see the same mantle of fog descend.”

The coachman turned towards his horses.

“A lesson in meteorology, such as we received

here," said Max to his companion, "no professor of physics could give us. Clouds are formed and dispelled under our eyes, as if we had paid them to discover to us the history of their formation."

"That is true," said Herman; "see the one over there turning and twisting, like a snake. Now, it has disappeared altogether. Where did it go?"

"I understand it perfectly. Yonder, in the sky, we see the clouds. What are these clouds? Humidity—watery vapor; is not that it? Here, in the valley, it is naturally very damp in consequence of yesterday's rain; we feel this. But the fogs are invisible to us, because the warmth of the soil disintegrates them, and makes them lose their density. The play of clouds, which astonishes us, is only an effect of heat and cold. If a cold current of air crosses the suspended fogs, they draw closer together, and become visible to our eyes under the form of clouds; then, if a warmer current arises, which comes in contact with them, they become once again invisible by melting away. I think the sun must be shining behind the mountains which surround us, if only at intervals. Its heat produces the fog in the atmosphere, which moves without our perceiving it. See, see! What did I say? Over there, at the end of that narrow chain of mountains, the valley is suffused with a ray of brilliant light—off with your hat, salute its sweet light. The great painter is before us."

"This does the heart good," said Herman. "In this gray light and cloudy sky one would become homesick."

“Driver, be good enough to stop,” cried Max, a little further on. “You may return to Interlaken; we will get out here and walk about. The scenery is magnificent.”

“Did I not say so, gentlemen? In the matter of landscape and scenes for the painters, nothing can probably be found finer in Switzerland. Don't forget you are to go over there across the wooden bridge. You cannot lose your way, it leads to the Grindelwald. Farewell, gentlemen; I thank you, and wish you a pleasant journey.”

The Flemings were now on foot, alpenstock in one hand and a small bundle grasped in the other.

It seemed to Max Rapelings as if only now his journey in Switzerland had fairly begun, and indeed he was not mistaken. In the steam-cars, steamboat, and carriage, one does not travel; but alone, free, without a guide, far away from inquisitive interference—walking in the midst of this genial nature—stopping, picking up stones, gathering flowers—sitting down, getting up again, and discussing what one sees, laughing and talking—this is traveling: this is living.

Hardly had they walked ten minutes, with long pauses, gazing around in every direction, than they reached a spot so picturesque that simultaneously they lifted their arms up to heaven in a transport of admiration.

They were not far from a rock, which their eye could not measure the height of without causing a vertigo. In a narrow cleft of this mountain fell a

cascade, which shone under the sun's rays as if a spring of liquid silver were escaping from the bosom of the earth.

The water course, before reaching the foot of the mountain, flowed with a soft murmur between blocks of veined marble, among which were many time had adorned with moss. A little beyond this picturesque source the mountain was covered with all kinds of vegetation growing amphitheatrically—trees, flowers, shrubs, which rising one above the other to an immense height, had the appearance of being painted on the rock, for it seemed incomprehensible that roots could have struck there.

Yet this was not the spectacle that had so filled our travelers with admiration. The waterfall as it descended spread around, according to the direction of the wind, a spray of water which, assisted by the rays of the sun, developed in this spot a wonderful degree of vegetation. In the neighborhood of the murmuring rivulet, and at some distance around all was green, and of a green so delicate, so fresh and pure, one could not satiate one's eyes with the sight of this charming coloring; here and there on a carpet of finer turf lay blocks of granite detached from the sides of the mountain, but the vitality of this nature was so powerful that even upon these rocks, the plants and trees of the most diverse kinds displayed their brilliant leafage as if this moist air alone sufficed to feed them.

“What a Paradise,” exclaimed Herman. “In our childhood we were told about enchanted gardens.

The imagination of the poets however did not reach what we see here. Come Max, let us sit down awhile near this babbling water.'

"I was just about making the same proposal," said the young doctor, "let us engrave this beautiful nature on our minds in a way that is ineffaceable."

They walked across the grass and seated themselves by the border of the stream, on a large stone, which the moss had turned into a soft green cushion. They both watched for a little while the seething water in the diminutive gulfs, but Max could not keep silent.

"Well! Herman," he said, "let us talk a little; emotion communicated to another becomes stronger and is imprinted more deeply on the memory."

"No Max, I beg of you do not disturb the tranquil pleasure, with which my soul is overflowing. It seems to me I could sit here for an entire year. Life in such a spot can only be a long, sweet, dream."

"Very well! stay where you are, as to myself when I am excited I cannot keep quiet. I shall walk about this celestial garden."

As he said this Max went slowly away step by step, now scraping the rock with the point of his knife, now gathering a flower from its stalk, further along collecting some colored stones. As he was returning to the rivulet he descried from afar a yellow object which seemed to stand out as if detached from the turf. Thinking to have come upon a rare stone, he walked in that direction and picked it up.

While examining it as he turned it over in his hands, a strange smile broke over his lips. He returned to his friend and cried out to him from afar.

“Herman, it seems we are not the first that this enchanting spot has attracted. There are ladies who come to meditate here, ladies young and old—no doubt English ladies, for see, what long and slender fingers! and yet the hand of a child! unless the nymphs of the mountain hold their nocturnal rambles here—but it is scarcely credible the fashion of yellow gloves has reached the spirit land.”

Herman, struck with a secret presentiment, jumped up and took the yellow glove from the hands of his friend.

“Heavens!” he cried, “it is her glove.”

“What is taking possession of you? Her glove! Whose glove?”

“Hers—the pale maiden!”

“You are mad. Do you suppose the pale maiden spends all her time losing her gloves?”

“You may say what you please, Max, it is the same glove I picked up at Berne near the bear-pit. Oh! I am not mistaken.”

Max Rapelings laughed aloud.

“At a glove factory, don’t all yellow gloves look alike? Think you, in the entire world, the pale maiden is the only one with tapering fingers? Your imagination carries you too far. I think this time you must be laughing at me.”

“No, no, Max; this is one of her gloves, do not doubt it.”

“And she is at Interlaken! Has the Russian, perchance, made a compact with the devil, and sent this glove here by magic to cause our overthrow? The thing begins to look serious.”

“Whether it be sorcery or not, it is her glove.”

“Come now, this is childishness. At all costs, let us put behind us the Russians of hell and the temptations of the devil.”

As he said this, he hurled from him the glove as far as possible into the river.

Herman uttered a cry of anger, and ran stumbling over the stones with his feet in the water to seize it. He succeeded in doing so, brought it back with slow steps, put it in his pocket-book, and placed it in the inside pocket of his overcoat above his heart.

He was no doubt somewhat ashamed of the strange emotion he had shown, for he said to his friend, who was laughing aloud in a mocking tone:

“Why attach such importance to so simple a thing? We will probably never meet the pale maiden again. The glove will serve me as a souvenir. It seems to me worth it. Up to this time the pale maiden has influenced all our journey.”

“Have a care, Herman; are you not tempting the malice of the devil? With that bewitched glove over your heart, you will not have a moment's peace. Who knows but what it is the pale stranger herself you have shut up in your pocket-book.”

“Joke at my expense, Max—this will not prevent

my keeping this memento with care. What I have experienced in the last few days only happens once in a lifetime."

"And when our home friends ask you what you have brought back from Switzerland, you will show them an old yellow glove that you found journeying along. I feel inclined to buy at the first town we reach a dozen yellow gloves with tapering fingers, and say they belonged to the Empress of the French."

"Let us continue our walk, Max, and cease your nonsense. You pick up stones enough along the borders of the rivulets to load a donkey with. Each one to his taste."

"Nothing could be better than this, my friend, if your head was not full of fancies," replied Max, taking up his alpenstock. "I am very willing to hold my tongue about that infernal glove, but on condition you keep in a good humor; if it be otherwise, I will take your relic away from you by main strength, if I have to come to blows with you to get it."

"You shall see Max, the glove will not make me more melancholy; yet I understand that yesterday's rain and this morning's gloomy weather have somewhat dulled my spirits."

"Well, let us speak no more of the glove, but rather what we see on the way, and let us try to be gay."

They had entered the road leading to the Grindelwald, and were walking quite fast.

For some hours they looked around them and talked of the beauty of the landscape unfolding before their eyes. The road they walked on was a gravelled one, running along the borders of the black Lutchine, which descended into the valley roaring and seething over a bed of crumbling rock.

On the other border of the Lutchine, and from the very bed itself, rose mountains as high as the skies, which impeded the view like a gigantic wall. On the side where our travelers were, it was otherwise; occasionally they came upon verdant fields and orchards planted in fruit trees. The walnut predominated. But at a short distance away from this arable land, the mountain also rose high towards the sky, sometimes bare, sometimes covered with pine trees growing amphitheatrically; and from its rocky bed escaped here and there a stream of water which a short distance off appeared immovable, and resembled a skein of white thread, hanging to the branches of a tree.

As the coachman had predicted, the mist rose by degrees over the valley, and the summits of the mountains became invisible.

At long intervals along the road our Flemings came upon peasant's houses, whose strange shape attracted their attention, they crossed too, pretty villages, and saw men, women and children working in the fields, and it was with as much curiosity as pleasure, that they observed all these ways of life in Switzerland.

Some time had now gone by without their ex-

changing any ideas. The road had become very rough, and the long ascent tired them.

They sat upon the ground not far from a pointed rock which might have been a thousand feet high, and overhung so that its appearance made one shiver! At its base were enormous blocks of stone which had become detached from the summit, making one think that some day or other the whole mountain might crumble into the narrow valley, crushing all beneath it.

The sight of this threatening mountain doubtless vividly struck Herman's imagination, for he measured it with a fixed and obstinate gaze, and even paled under the dominion of some terrible thought.

"You see, Herman," said the young doctor, "that nature works forever and ceaselessly at annihilating the mountains, and levelling the surface of the earth. When this end is attained, will not all existence upon our globe become impossible? Happily the volcanoes are there to"—

"My God, it is frightful!" muttered Herman.

"What is frightful?" asked Max. "Is the glove beginning to work? What are you thinking about?"

"How one's imagination in the presence of this thriving nature may be carried away by fantastic images!" replied the young lawyer, with a somewhat forced smile. "I was saying to myself, if there were two people up there, and one of them gave the other a push—but a little push—what would become of the poor creature? Nothing below would be found but unrecognizable remains, don't you think so?"

“That is evident, Herman, since one would not fall here upon a mattress.”

“This thought makes me shudder with horror.”

“Yes, yes! you are beginning to turn to the dark. Get up and let us go on with our walk; it is not good for you to be here.”

They resumed their way, stopping quite often, and even entering an ale-house in the village of *Berg-lauenen* to obtain a glass of wine. As the host proved himself quite communicative, and replied very obligingly to all their questions, they remained a long while talking with him about the marvels of nature of the country and the customs of Switzerland.

They were so pleased with their reception at the ale-house, and the information received there, that they stopped at two other houses like it; the time therefore seemed very short to them, and they saw with surprise that day was coming to a close.

This decided them to make the last league in great haste, so that they arrived at the Grindelwald harassed, fatigued, and out of breath, just as night had set in.

They entered the first hotel they came to, and fell into their seats before a table, where about a dozen guests were occupied eating their suppers.

In spite of the fatigue they felt, they were delighted at being able to satisfy without delay an appetite sharpened by their long walk and the brisk mountain air.

They therefore ate abundantly of every dish,

drank still another glass of good wine, after which they asked to be conducted to their room.

The hotel was entirely constructed of the wood of the fir, and must have been quite new, for the walls of the chambers were bare. The floor cracked and gave way under the feet of the two friends, and when they found themselves in a room with two beds, and the servant had left them, Max raised the light, laughing, and exclaimed:

“Planks overhead and planks under one’s feet; planks everywhere. We are living in a large cigar box. If this bird’s nest were to catch fire it would burn like straw, and we be roasted in less time than it takes to tell it.”

Herman opened the window and exclaimed:

“Heavens! I see a glacier—a sea of ice nearly in front of our door; what a strange thing is this phosphorescent light which colors the glaciers with a thousand different tints; but is it a glacier?”

“Do you doubt it, Herman? Don’t you feel the air is frozen within? B-r-r-r! how cold it is—shut the window, I beg, otherwise we will have some terrible illness. There will be all day to-morrow to look at the glacier. Tell me, shall we be obliged to climb up there?”

“Most probably your uncle did it. The air is cold, it is true—it makes me shudder. Max, is there no way of having a fire lighted here?”

“A fire in a match-box? You must be jesting!”

“Then we will have to go to bed; under the covers at least one may get warm.”

In less than two minutes the young lawyer was nestling under the covers, over which he had taken the precaution to spread all his clothes.

“Well, why do you remain seated at that table?” he asked of his friend.

“I am going to begin by writing a letter home,” replied Max.

“Nonsense, your fingers will be frozen.”

“Yes, Herman; but yesterday evening, after our enforced bath at Interlaken, we neglected to write. To fail once in our promise is excusable; but two days hand-running, what would they think of us?”

“There is no post from the Grindelwald.”

“Sleep away, and let me alone; I shall soon have finished.”

Max Rapelings began to write; it took him longer than he thought. Nothing astonishing in this, for he wished to describe with as much brevity as possible all that had struck them—the lake of Thun, the storm on the mountains, the Staubbach, and the Paradise in the valley of the Lutchine. Description after description lengthened his letter unconscionably.

When he was nearing the end, he wished to read a paragraph to his friend, relating to the yellow glove; but he gave it up when he heard Herman's heavy breathing.

“Happy fellow!” he muttered; “scarcely is he in bed than he is already asleep. So much the better; this proves the pale maiden no longer is running in his mind. I must finish up my letter; he

makes me jealous, and sleep is taking possession of my eyelids."

He sat down again, and began writing; but suddenly heard a violent cracking of the floor, and his friend's voice in accents of despair.

"Max, Max! save me, help! quick! the idiot, the Russian! Oh, God! too late—she is dead."

The young doctor hurried towards his friend, shook him roughly, and called him by name.

Herman awakened, his brow covered with a cold sweat; he looked around the room with an anxious air, and muttered:

"Heavens! Max, such frightful dreams as these would turn my hair white in a single night."

"Be quiet," said the young doctor. "Take a mouthful of cold water, it will refresh you."

"Heaven be praised, Max! it was only a dream; it is over—a sort of nightmare."

"I understand what troubled your rest, my friend; we probably supped too late and too abundantly."

"If you knew, Max, what I dreamed—but no, you would only laugh at me."

"So much the better, Herman. I would give fifty francs to be able to take a good laugh just now."

"Fancy it, Max; I was walking on the crest of the rock, that overhanging rock, the very sight of which made me shudder during the whole of our walk. Suddenly I perceive near the extreme edge a man trying to drag a young girl towards the abyss. But the poor victim struggled and cried

pitifully for help. Oh, horrors! it was the Russian who was going to precipitate the pale maiden from the summit of the rock. She recognizes me and cries out God has sent me to succor her. I dash forward—but the young girl's strength gives way, the Russian holds her over the border of the precipice—there, by an effort, a superhuman effort, she resists for a moment longer. I am about to reach the murderer; I have already raised my alpenstock to strike him, when suddenly I feel something like a wild beast crawl between my legs; it lifts itself against my body and crushes my breast under the irresistible pressure of its arms as red as fire, shivering and roaring with rage, I behold the monster that paralyzes my efforts. It is the idiot, the man with the goitre, who has come forth from a crevice in the rock. During this time the young girl gives a last cry of distress, and my eyes behold the infamous Russian cast the wretched creature into the gulf. Ah! the scene was so terrible that merely relating it, I still feel the sweat of horror trickling down my forehead."

"Pah! pah! think of it no more, Herman; it was nothing but a nightmare caused by our late supper. Try to go to sleep again, but don't lie on your back, for it would return."

"The nightmare was the idiot, that unformed and disgusting monster who was crushing in my breast."

"Where is the glove?" asked Max Rapelings, with an air of real or affected seriousness.

"Why do you ask me this so strangely?"

"Heaven knows, Herman, if it was not the glove that caused your nightmare."

"Are you going to continue this foolish joke? It seems to me it has lasted long enough."

"Answer me, where is the glove?"

"In my pocket-book, you know that perfectly well."

"And the pocket-book?"

"In my overcoat on the bed."

Max felt about on the coverlet, found the pocket-book and cried out:

"See the glove lay directly upon your breast; this was the nightmare that suffocated you."

"For the love of Heaven, Max, are you jesting or are you talking seriously?"

"Whether seriously or not, I do not wish to sleep in the same room with that bewitched object. I will throw the accursed glove out of the window."

"Max, no nonsense!"

The young doctor opened the window, and threw the glove out into the darkness.

"I no longer understand anything," said the lawyer, astonished, "and wonder which is the crazier of the two."

Max burst out laughing.

"So the proverb is again verified," he said. "To convince a madman of his folly, we must seem to be madder than he. Come, come, the charm is broken. Close your eyes, Herman, and sleep well; I am going to put out the candle."

THE END.

THE
PALE YOUNG MAIDEN:

SEQUEL TO
"THE LOST GLOVE."

BY
HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

35

Translated from the Original Flemish.

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THE PALE YOUNG MAIDEN.

CHAPTER I.

“It is not far from nine o'clock,” said Max, who was breakfasting alone with his friend in the dining room of the hotel. “We have slept like marmots; I, at least, for if you went on dreaming of the yellow glove, your rest was not as complete as mine.”

“I did not dream any more,” replied Herman, “and I feel as fresh and in as good condition as on our first arrival at Berne. The day is splendid, the sun is shining outside.”

“Provided you find no other pretext for falling into your rhapsodies. Luckily, we run no risk of meeting the pale young maiden on the mer de glace, and you no longer wear on your heart the bewitching glove, as you did yesterday.”

“Max, you bore me with that glove! What could have been more natural than to wish to keep such a souvenir? If this object were really to make any impression on me, it would be in consequence of your unfriendly conduct.”

“How? What does this mean?”

“It means that with your eternal jokes you have acted the part of a saw all day, and set my nerves on edge, and have finally been the cause of my becoming excited.”

“What? What? Herman do you take the matter so seriously as that? Henceforward I will speak no more of the glove than of its pale proprietress—if it be her glove, of which I have strong doubts.”

“You may talk of it as much as you please, Max. Yesterday’s indisposition was a crisis, and my sickly sensibility is entirely calmed down. You would have done much better to leave the glove in my overcoat. We would probably never have thought of it again.”

“Do you think so?” asked Max, shaking his head. “Ah! you do not understand the laws of this terrible magnetism. Who can affirm that an object charged with the fluid from one individual does not exercise a certain influence over another? Have you never read anything of Mesmer’s magnetism?”

“Stuff! You are so little in the habit of being serious that even now you are yourself becoming ridiculous without knowing it.”

“How is that?”

“What are you talking about magnetism, when you are convinced it was not the girl’s glove?”

“No, it was not her glove.”

“Yes, it was most assuredly her glove.”

“Well, Herman, believe what you please; I am glad to have rid you of it, as you yourself say the glove has become a terrible bore.”

“I should wish to have kept it, if only to prevent my always being a slave to your caprices.”

A boy came up to the young men; he held out

something to them, and said with a strange smile, "The gentlemen have, I think, dropped this glove out of the window. I may make a mistake, for it looks more like a child's glove or a"—

Herman cried aloud joyfully, and tried to take the glove; but Max prevented it, and placed it in his pocket, saying to the boy:

"You are not mistaken; thank you, my friend."

The boy went away.

"Confound it! things are becoming uncomfortable," growled the young physician, "that accursed glove sticks to us like a scourge; I will throw it into the fire before we go out."

"Come, come! enough of foolishness. Give me the glove, and say no more about it."

"I shall burn it, I tell you!"

"And I say you shall not burn it," cried Herman, impatiently. "I took it from the water; it belongs to me. I consider it very strange you should always be privileged to do as you please. Am I subordinate to you, or your servant?"

Max cast upon his companion a serious look, then began laughing.

"Would you still dare to think," he said, "that the glove is not bewitched or enchanted? Here it is about causing a rupture between Herman Van Borgstal and Max Rapelings. It only needed this."

"You shall not burn the glove, however."

"Well, no—but I will be the one to keep it."

A man entered the room. He was dressed in a complete costume of rust-color, a common felt hat,

a large very white linen collar, and held in his hand a knotty stick.

He took off his hat, saying:

“The gentlemen desire a guide, or conductor, to go and visit the glaciers?”

“Ah! you are our guide?” replied Max. “Very well, my friend; we will be ready in a few moments.”

“Will the gentlemen tell me whether they mean to make an expedition, or take a long walk upon the *mer de glace*?”

“Oh! as long as possible,” cried Herman.

“That is,” added Max, “if there be no danger.”

“No, sirs, with a good guide there is not the slightest danger; we, who have traversed the glaciers since childhood, know all the crevasses, all the narrow places, all the abysses, and what are the spots to be avoided. Be good enough to wait a few moments; I shall run home for some ropes.”

“Say, my good friend,” cried Max, “you are going for ropes? What are they for? Is it to hoist us on to the rocks?—because I am not a lover of this sort of exercise.”

“No sir; it is by way of precaution. I do not know where you wish to go on the glacier. There are places one walks on narrow steps cut in the ice, and on waves of snow; it is for this purpose we use ropes to tie ourselves at short distances apart—if by accident one falls into a hollow, he remains suspended to the two others, and in that way they pull him up.”

“B-r-r-r! I do not wish to hear ropes spoken of.”

“Are you then afraid of so little?” asked Herman; “and can it possibly be the impression made by my horrible dream that still disturbs you?”

“This may have something to do with it, Herman; but I have been made responsible for anything that may happen to us.”

“A walk over a mer de glace must leave a splendid memory. That man says there is no danger; he only takes the ropes by way of precaution.”

“Be entirely easy, gentlemen,” said the guide, “once upon the glacier you may go where you please, and if you prefer not being tied, you can arrange the walk you choose with reference to that.”

At the end of a few moments the guide returned with a bundle of rope on his shoulder, carrying in his hand a sort of pick or axe to cut steps in the ice in case of need.

Max eyed him with misgivings mingled with anxiety. Herman on the contrary rubbed his hands, and seemed quite satisfied.

They filled their gourds with water mixed with a little kirschwasser, and left their hotel, alpenstock in hand. The idea that they were going to climb the glacier had so impressed them that neither of them thought any more about the glove, and probably the memory of the young girl would on this day remain effaced from their minds by the stronger impression of the spectacle of wild nature.

After walking for a quarter of an hour, they came to the banks of the black Lutchine, at the foot of the glacier.

While they were gazing with surprise at the imposing mountain of ice, the guide said to them :

“What you see here, sirs, is only the end of the sea of ice—the narrow pass by which it escapes from the mountains, disappearing gradually. Happily here the greater warmth causes the ice to melt as it advances, otherwise the Grindelwald and all the Lutchine valley would be swallowed up by a glacier several thousand feet high.”

“I do not understand,” said Herman; “do you mean to say that that enormous mountain of snow moves and advances really?”

“Yes, that is it, sir; the glacier is always moving, though we cannot always mark its slow progress. There, at its foot, is a large quantity of stones of all sizes; these stones have become detached higher up, perhaps from a summit several leagues off, by the rubbing of the glacier, and have in this manner fallen upon the ice. All that falls on the surface of the *mer de glace* finally comes down into the valley, where the melting ice deposits the stones.”

“But where does all this ice come from?” asked Herman.

“Observe, gentlemen,” said the guide, “that on the highest mountains it never rains, but snows abundantly. The wind blows the snow to the bottom, which of itself falls at any rate by its own weight, under the form of avalanches; lower down the sun has some strength, and it occasionally rains; that causes the snow to melt, then at night it freezes again, especially in winter. You, there-

fore, see that a portion of the ice must melt; the waters of the black Lutchine flowing from under the glacier are nothing but melted ice."

"Doubtless the mer de glace is very extended?" said Max.

"One may walk upon it for long hours, so to speak, without coming to the end."

"And how do you get on it? Must one climb upon the ice? This seems to me impossible, and at any rate I have no desire to undertake it."

"No, sirs; a good path has been worn on the side of the Meltenberg. It is somewhat steep, and would fatigue a little, but in a two-hour-and-a-half walk we would reach the border of the mer de glace. Here below there is nothing to see but the ice grotto; we will visit it in passing. It is worth the trouble, and will only require a few minutes to see it. Come, sirs, that red flag you observe over there floats over the grotto."

At the foot of the snow mountain they entered a sort of hole which proved a vaulted corridor under the ice. They thus penetrated into the body of the glacier, with the thought, by no means reassuring, that some hundreds of feet of ice were suspended over their heads.

On entering the grotto, there was sufficient daylight from the outside, and its walls appeared as transparent as crystal, but further in there were lighted candles, whose vacillating and smoky light illumined here and there phosphorescent sparkles in the ice.

While the Flemings, astonished and silent, were filled with ecstasy at this fantastic play of light, strange and mysterious sounds suddenly struck their ear. Herman was so surprised he gave a stifled cry.

“Heavens! what is this?” he cried. “I fancied some disaster.”

They saw in a corner two old women, dressed in the Swiss costume, holding on their knees a stringed instrument called a timbrel. The plaintive sound of the metallic chords had impressed Herman, who, moreover, was very sensitive to all sounds which by their peculiar nature react on a nervous organization. The old women had intoned a song which could be no other than a *lied* of past centuries. This slow melopœia, which might be even called a drawl, received from the accompaniment of the timbrel and the broken voices of the singers so sad a tone that it shadowed Herman’s mind, and Max, on his side, could not help laughing.

They gave a piece of money to the two old women, and left the grotto.

Max Rapelings rubbed his eyes to accustom himself once more to the light of the sun, and cried out in Flemish, while they followed their guide:

“It was lucky we did not encounter those two cronos yesterday, I should myself have thought them emissaries of our Russian. They must be possessed of the devil, to terrify travellers in that sombre glacier with that horrible cats’ concert.”

“Why do you speak of the Russian now?” asked Herman. “Are you going to begin again?”

“Why, I thought you had become indifferent about it?”

“Very well, say what you please; I do not care at all. You call that music a cats’ concert?”

“Most assuredly; and worse than that.”

“You are wrong, Max; it does indeed resemble wild mewling, but in the song there is something strange and mysterious, that has affected me greatly.”

“Say rather, a something infernal; and now that I think about it, the music seems quite in keeping with this subterranean gallery. What can one hope for better inside a mountain of ice, than these mewling strangers.”

“This song will long remain in my memory,” said Herman, pensively, “it still resounds in my ears.”

“I know why, but do not wish to mention it.”

“What childishness!”

“I saw you pale at the first sound of the timbrel. You thought you heard some one crying for succor. Who was that some one?”

“It was the continuation of my wretched dream.”

“Allow me, my dear Herman, to congratulate the pale maiden on the good opinion you entertain of her talent. She would not be much flattered to know you had recognized her voice in a charivari of tom-cats.”

“Gentlemen, we are beginning to get very high,” said their guide. “Follow me, and if you feel tired, we will rest on the way; it makes one pant somewhat, but a moment’s rest suffices to restore one.”

They began their ascent courageously, scarcely speaking, but at the end of a half hour they dropped down on the side of the path, exclaiming that it would be impossible to endure such fatigue in a walk of three hours. The guide smiled at their annoyance, and said to them:

“ You are not yet accustomed to mount, sirs ; this will come—rest awhile. The ascent of the *mer de glace* cannot be anything very difficult, since women and children make it.”

Whether they were ashamed of their weakness, or whether the short rest had restored their strength, the Flemings rose, laughing, and again resumed their walk.

Up to this time they had walked in a beaten track across pastures, and fir trees suspended on the side of the mountain, which did not seem to them dangerous, though it was very steep ; but they were soon compelled to walk on the edge of the rocks, having beneath them abysses a thousand feet in depth, while on the opposite side of the path the rock went up perpendicularly like a wall, and at times even hung over their heads.

All that surrounded them was so incommensurably great, so confused, so broken up and tossed about, that it seemed to them as if some frightful earthquake must have brought about these ravages in this Alpine nature.

As there were thousands of stones fallen at the foot of the rocks, why should not one of these stones have become detached just as they were passing along?

In one place where the path ran along the sharp edge of a yawning and sombre gulf, Max Rapelings stopped and said, very seriously :

“ It makes me shudder ! I have had enough of the ‘ mer de glace ; ’ let us go back, Herman ; my head spins like a weather-cock.”

“ What height have we reached now ? ” asked Herman of his guide.

“ About four thousand feet,” replied the other.

“ Joking apart, Herman,” stammered the young doctor, “ we would do better to redescend. It begins to be horrible, and heaven knows what follows. Yes, laugh at me in your turn ! Your brother confided your safety to me : if one of us fell from that height—four thousand feet !—nothing would be left of him except perhaps his shoes—added to which, abysses have an attraction for man by a kind of magnetism.”

“ Pah ! Nonsense, Max ! It is because we are looking on these things for the first time. You heard that even children were not afraid to walk along the edge of this rock. Your uncle, a man both aged and prudent, came himself. How we would be laughed at, if they learned that we, who are young and strong, had turned our backs upon it through fear ! ”

“ Do not be uneasy, sir, on account of the narrowness of the road,” said the guide, “ horses pass readily over it.”

“ Horses ? ” exclaimed Max.

“ Yes, sir, horses.”

“Pray, what are horses doing here?”

“They transport travelers up the mountain, especially ladies. At this point the road is still wide, gentlemen; but in a few moments we will reach the spot where the horses stop, because they can go no further; from there we will have nothing before us but a little path cut in the rock by a hatchet, and winding along the side of it. For many travelers the road then becomes more frightful; but it is an idea without foundation, for there is absolutely nothing to fear.”

Max allowed himself to be over-persuaded, and continued to mount.

A quarter of an hour after, they reached a spot where an enclosure of stone had been built to allow the horses to feed and rest.

There were no horses just now, but two sedan chairs with their attendants were visible.

“There are ladies on the glacier,” said the guide. “They are carried in those arm-chairs by two men, one behind and one before. It takes four strong men to carry those chairs; they are relieved from time to time, otherwise the work would be impossible.”

The Flemings had seated themselves upon stones against the mountain to rest awhile.

Max Rapelings kept his eyes fixed with secret distrust upon the narrow path which mounted from here up the bare side of the rock, and ran along the border of a frightful abyss.

“I am led to reflect, Herman,” said he, shaking

his head. "Phrenologists say that man has different bumps on his head, and that under each of these protuberances is found the motive for one of our good or bad qualities. I have thought until now this might be more or less true, but am now convinced of the contrary."

"Is it the sight of this imposing mountain that has suggested this idea," asked Herman, with an ironical smile, "what relation does your mind discover between these protuberances on our skull and the gigantic humps that rise on the body of the earth?"

"There is only the difference of the great and the small, Herman; but that is not it. According to this system it seems to me there ought not to be one bump but fifty that should develop on our heads for each vice, or each virtue. Let us take for example courage or the want of it; there are warlike men who do not tremble in the midst of fire and blood, yet who start back affrighted when they encounter a flock of sheep; other heroes take pleasure in conquering a raging horse, and shudder at the sight of a spider; others laugh at the supernatural, and fear to retire to rest without a light. In a word, we may be courageous, very courageous on great occasions, and at the same time be afraid of certain insignificant objects—such as cats, mice, frogs, something white in the darkness, or a death's head, etc. There are therefore different sorts of courage and fear, and all cannot spring from the same bump!"

"For the love of heaven, Max, why are these thoughts suggested here?"

“Because I am like the heroes of whom I have just spoken. Did you ever know me as a coward? Have you not said a hundred times that Max Rapelings was afraid of nothing?”

“Most assuredly.”

“Well, you were mistaken, my friend; since I was a child I have never dared mount a ladder with ten rungs; to look down, were it only from the second story into the street, makes me shiver all over.”

“But, my dear Max,” cried the young lawyer, astonished, “are you speaking seriously! Would you hesitate to do what women and children accomplish without fear? Truly you astonish me; I no longer recognize you.”

“And I, Herman, do not recognize myself; my resolve convinces me there is no danger, yet the sight of that path makes me shudder. My sense and will are unable to triumph over this inexplicable weakness—it is probably because I have not the bump for making ascents. God knows whether I be not bewitched, as you were yesterday.”

“It is a case of nerves, Max; there is no remedy against that. Let us return; it is a small sacrifice for me to make;—but what will your uncle say when he hears this?”

“Yes, I know very well,” he said, rising resolutely, “you and your friends would laugh at me all my life—am I not right? No, no, I will climb to the top, even were I to encounter your idiot—your Russian—to bar the way to me. Forward, forward, and follow me if you can!”

For some ten minutes they had walked in a complete and solemn silence, in a path where two persons could only cross each other under great stress—that is, if one stood flat against the rock to let the other one go by. Max did not dare turn his eyes towards the precipice; he looked straight before him. Suddenly he stopped.

“Well, go on,” said Herman, who walked behind him.

“Great heavens!” cried Max, in a stifled voice; “my eyes no doubt deceive me—it is impossible!”

“What is impossible, Max?”

“It is he, it is he!”

“But who?”

“See there, up above, in our path! Don’t you recognize him?”

“Oh! the Russian!”

“And the pale young maiden! When you speak of the devil, you see his horns. They are coming down towards us. How shall we get out of the way?”

“Very easily: we will stand against the rock and let them pass.”

“Yes, Herman, but the fellow looks like a cruel, bad man; he fancies he has reason to complain of us—suppose he took this opportunity to revenge himself. One little push, and we go *ad patres*.”

“Heavens! Max, you are running terribly off the track! Are we children? We two together need scarcely fear the Russian, were he twice as strong. At all events, there is not a question of tergiversa-

tion. To fly like cowards is impossible; therefore we are obliged to meet them, whether we will or no. I shall at any rate take a good look at the pale young maiden at close quarters."

"Herman, I beg you will not say a word to wound the Russian, but at all hazards keep your alpenstock ready. If any one here must take the perilous leap, better he than us."

"How, Max, my boy, are you now about to enact a play?"

"Hold your tongue, hold your tongue; he has seen and recognized us."

And indeed, the old gentleman, followed by a young lady seated in a Sedan chair, had suddenly stopped, hesitating, his eyes fastened on the Flemings; he seemed to consult with his companion as to what was best to be done, but under compulsion had decided it was best to continue his way, for he was descending the mountain precipitately.

Max Rapelings had made himself as small as possible to give place to the man he dreaded. As to Herman, he was absorbed by one thought alone—to get a close and perfect view of the pale maiden.

She was probably instigated by the same thought, for she partly turned her head round, as if to see the young man chance so often permitted to cross her path, even on the *mer de glace*.

Yet, as soon as she recognized him, she lowered her head and gazed straight before her, as if unconscious of his presence. She gave Herman only one furtive glance which seemed to express to our

young Fleming a plaintive cry, as if asking for succor and deliverance.

When the Russian was near the young man, he looked at them fixedly with a fierce and angry air.

Herman took off his hat, and saluted at the same time the stranger and his companion, but the Russian growled out some words through his closed teeth, and passed on without noticing the young man's salute.

"The underbred dolt," muttered Herman, "I feel like calling him to account."

"For heaven's sake hush, rash man," said Max, placing his hand over his mouth, "do you want to make him come back? A pretty place truly, to fight a duel with a Russian."

"He is already far away," replied Herman, "let us no longer speak of that rough personage. If I meet him again I shall ask him for the reasons he has for treating me in this rude manner; for you must acknowledge, Max, his conduct towards us is becoming intolerable. Poor, unhappy girl! Be assured he is causing her to die slowly, so young and so beautiful! If one could read into that man's heart, there would be found nothing but rudeness, egotism, cruelty, and many other wretched passions, perhaps."

"Yes, begin your romance all over again, then we will both be under a spell," said Max, sighing. "This is a mad journey we are now making. Come, come, let us hasten; the sooner we get to the top, the sooner we shall be on a firm footing. Since the

pale young maiden dares travel on this path, I hesitate no longer. But the weather will be something unusual when you catch me again ascending the side of a glacier."

When they reached the summit of the mountain, after climbing a long while in silence, quite worn out, their strength having forsaken them, the first thing that struck their eyes was a little frame house.

"It is a Swiss cottage, gentlemen," said the guide, "where one may procure bread and milk; but I advise you rather to take a bowl of hot coffee and eat a good piece of bread and butter, before going on the mer de glace."

They entered the cottage, the interior of which was passably clean, and took their places on a bench before a great table. A woman, quite advanced in years answered the guide's call, and told them the coffee would soon be ready, as it was boiling.

And she soon after served them with butter, cheese, and very white bread.

"You live quite high up, my good woman," said Herman, "how cold it must be here in winter!"

"In the winter I live down below in the village, sir," she replied. "As soon as the snow begins to fall, and indeed a few days before, I leave this spot, not to return until the month of June. I am a poor widow, and it is in this way I make my daily bread."

"Surely you do not live alone on this high and lonely mountain?"

“Yes I do, sir, all alone.”

“And you do not fear that robbers or malefactors should come here during the night?”

“We know nothing of this on the Alps, sir.”

“Yes, but storms and tempests? They must be frightful at an elevation of six or seven thousand feet!”

“We are accustomed to them from our infancy,” replied the old woman.

“You are saying nothing, my good Max,” said Herman, in Flemish. “You have a most sombre appearance. What is the matter?”

“I do not know, Herman; it probably is fatigue, no doubt.”

“But such fatigue passes quickly, and this hot coffee clears the mind and comforts the heart.”

“Then it must be that I am bewitched, Herman. The devil knows what makes my heart so heavy; I wish to laugh, but cannot.”

“Now that you have had a close view of the young lady, have you read nothing in her eyes?”

“She must have sorrow, and is suffering from troubles of mind, Herman. There is nothing the matter with her chest. I could on this score give you a long lesson in symptomatology, but do not feel inclined. Her body is strong enough, and she is not by far, on a nearer view, so pale as we fancied; and, moreover, the coloring of her face, though so delicate, shows vigor, and is not transparent; her eyes, too, do not present that glassy brightness, watery”—

“If the gentlemen wish to see the mer de glace,” interrupted the guide, “they must not lose the best hours of the day.”

They followed him back of the cottage, then suddenly perceived the mer de glace, which looked like an agitated sea, whose waves had been frozen suddenly while in their fury. Now the waves were as white as whitest snow, then again dirty or gray, further on transparent, and blue, and green, like the color of green glass, but of so strange a shade of blue and green, that no other thing in nature could give one an idea of it. Elsewhere the ice was cut by the heat of the sun in rugged ridges, sharp edges and points, or split into crevasses and endless precipices, which alarmed the imagination through the idea alone that an unfortunate or imprudent tourist might here find a frightful death.

There were also large tracts that seemed smoother, offering at least sufficient surface to permit of walking upon them with some facility.

On all sides high mountains rose out of the mer de glace, which itself ascended along its sides, or rather descended from them like an enormous torrent of frozen snow.

All along the edges of the glacier and almost over its entire surface, there were stones and portions of rock, sometimes apart, sometimes heaped up, that the mer de glace in its gradual and insensible giving way had detached from the mountains.

The aspect of this grand and magnificent spectacle had so impressed the Flemings that they scarcely lent an ear to their guide's explanations.

What astonished them most was the scene of utter confusion, abandonment, solitude and tranquillity before them. Mountains wholly crushed and fallen into ruin, an immense sea of ice, whose half-melted waves had lost all appearance of shape; not a blade of grass, not a bird, not a living creature in this desert. It was like a savage creation, homogeneous, inert and dead, born of chance alone, or from the unconscious forces of nature.

The Flemings following their guide descended to the surface of the glacier.

Max Rapelings hesitated to place his foot on this uneven ice, which was very moist under the influence of the sun; yet, owing to the jokes of Herman, he essayed to show a little more courage, all the while cursing between his teeth with bated breath.

“Yes, yes; perhaps you think I came to Switzerland to seek some catastrophe! What the proverb says is very true; when an ass leads too happy a life, he undertakes to dance upon the ice and breaks a leg.”

“Go on at all events, Max; there is no danger. You are not very flattering with your proverb of an ass.”

“If ever that golden proverb was applicable to any one—but let us hold our tongues. One would need at least a half-dozen eyes here. Behold this crevasse! it must be surely a hundred feet in depth. A false step, and poor Max Rapelings would be swallowed up in the ice and frozen until about two thousand years hence, when he is brought out like

a petrified mammoth. Yes, yes, laugh away!—I say this seriously. Bang! there, I am down—help me to rise Herman, for by myself I shall never be able to recover my footing.”

Max Rapelings had slipped and allowed himself to fall.

“You do this to joke,” grumbled his companion. “Come, get up. What will our guide think of you? Happily you have not injured yourself, for you laugh.”

“I laugh at the wrong side of my mouth,” replied Max, who began walking again with comical prudence. “If I were not accustomed to skate, I should certainly have broken an arm or a leg; but the good skater, when he finds he is going to fall, bends his knees and lets himself go. When a limb is broken it is generally that there has been resistance. Oh! oh! here is a still deeper crevasse, Herman, don’t go so near the edge—you make my flesh creep, and you know I am responsible for you. You won’t heed me? well, then let us go back.

“Here, my good man,” he cried in German, “stop a moment for God’s sake! I wish to speak with you.”

“What does the gentleman wish?” asked the guide.

“Tell me, I beg, when we will have run for two hours around the *mer de glace*, supposing these perpetual jumps and stumbles can be called an excursion, what will we then see?”

“You will see the *mer de glace*, sir.”

“You talk like a book, my friend; but it appears

to me the *mer de glace* consists first of ice, secondly of snow, thirdly of ridges and holes, fourthly of crevasses, cracks and waves, fifth of cracks, waves and crevasses, and so on, always the same thing. Am I mistaken?"

"So it is indeed, for any one who is afraid," replied the guide in a jeering tone, which wounded the young doctor's pride, all the more that Herman clapped his hands and laughed aloud.

"One who is afraid," repeated Max, with assumed displeasure. "How, Herman, do you wish me to prove to you that you are both mistaken, and I have courage to spare."

"What will you do to prove it?"

"I will bid you farewell, and spring into that large crevasse—neither more nor less."

The young lawyer did not know what to think. At all risks, he placed himself between his friend and the crevasse.

Max in his turn laughed aloud and said:

"You must indeed think me a simpleton, to risk stumbling into that abyss! But let us return to our sheep, as the French say; be candid, my young man, is there nothing else to see? Will it not be ice, stones, cracks and crevasses?"

"As you say, sir—but the shapes change at every few steps."

"Shapes! There is no shape about anything here. I am of the opinion we have walked, or rather danced, about enough on this *mer de glace*. We may easily fancy what there is to see over

there; I only move my feet to slip backward—and to think of having to go down by this terrible footpath six or seven thousand feet in descent on the edge of the abyss! The thought alone makes my hair stand on end.”

Herman again tried to convince his friend there was no danger, but became satisfied that Max was perfectly determined to leave the mer de glace.

“Very well,” he said, “I will insist no more; I have not the heart to laugh any longer at your strange prudence. Let us go.”

“Will the gentlemen allow me to make one remark?” asked the guide. “There are many persons who only dare make a short trip on the mer de glace. It is not for want of courage, it is because of the impression produced by so novel a spectacle; an impression depending more or less on the excitability of the nerves. Yet no one comes to the mer de glace, not even children, without at least going to see the funnel, which is at a cross-bow’s range from here. I advise you, gentlemen, to follow me as far as that: the road is very good.”

“Oh, you call that a road,” growled Max, “a path above the waves of the ocean.”

“I mean to say, gentlemen, that in the direction of the funnel the walk is easy. Moreover, sirs, as a guide, I answer for your safety, so long as you follow the advice I give you. I, too, like to return home early to my wife and children; but as you pay me to conduct you, I wish you to see something worth while.”

“Come my good Max, even women attempt it.”

“May we be guided by God’s grace,” said Max. “At all events it is not far, and if I refused you would never let me forget it.”

To reach the designated funnel, it was necessary to pass at the same time over a sharp ridge of ice, or a small crevasse; Max grumbled and muttered he had been deceived, yet he followed his friend. They soon heard almost immediately under their feet a dull rumbling, like the roar of a torrent.

Max stopped, alarmed.

“Heavens, what is there beneath us?” he asked; “are we over water which has no bottom, upon a thin crust of ice?”

“On a crust of ice some hundreds of feet thick,” replied the guide.

And approaching Herman, he said to him,

“If the gentleman wishes to draw near with me, he can look down into the funnel.”

The young lawyer went forward to the edge of the abyss, and looked down.

The funnel was a round hole scooped out by the water of the glacier. On the upper part shining walls of ice could be seen, which descended abruptly, sparkling here and there under the reflection of the feeble light, and finally becoming invisible and disappearing in the depth of the whirling gulf. It was easy to understand that a river flowed beneath. The noisy chopping of the water made it even seem as though several streams met and struggled against each other to obtain the right of way.

Herman found this spectacle so strange and wonderful, that he ran towards his friend and took him by the hand, crying,

“Come along, Max; you must see this whether you wish to or no. There is the greatest noise within!—it would seem as though all the devils in hell were fighting a battle. And it is deep, deep!”

The young physician allowed himself to be dragged to within three or four feet of the abyss; he then resisted, and flatly refused to go any further.

“But there is not the slightest danger, Max; the edge of the funnel is as hard and solid as a wall.”

“I know it well,” stammered the young doctor.

“If you do, why refuse to draw near?”

“This is what I ask myself.”

“My dear Max, do you know that since this morning I do not recognize you?—you who are generally so courageous! Can you too be under a spell, as you supposed me to be yesterday, under the magical influence of that glove?”

“Under the charm of the glove?” cried Max, striking his forehead with the palm of his hand. “Of the glove? Who knows? There is something in my condition which is not natural.”

Saying this, he rummaged in his overcoat pocket, jumped aside and picked up a small piece of ice, which he wrapped in something he had hidden in his hand, came nearer to the funnel, and threw it all into the abyss.

“Let the Russian now try to fish up the fatal glove!” he cried, triumphantly.

“What vagary is this? Max, you are mad! Do you really yourself believe in the foolishness you invented for the sake of laughing at me?”

“No; but never mind—that beastly glove sets me on edge.”

“Now, perhaps you will be willing to approach the funnel?”

“Perhaps, Herman. I shall try.” He took two steps, hesitated and stopped.

“You see the glove had nothing to do with it,” said Herman; “you are still afraid.”

“Yes, I dare not look into the abyss. The depth allures and troubles me—but come, to please you, I will try. Merciful heavens! it is the mouth of hell.”

The guide had gone towards a pile of stones, and brought a heavy piece of rock to the edge of the funnel.

“Pay attention and listen carefully, gentlemen,” he said; “I shall push this stone into the abyss. You will hear it bound and rebound against the two walls, and the time it takes to fall will give you an idea of the thickness of the ice on which we are walking.”

With the aid of his stick, he pushed the stone forward, making it roll into the gulf. A resounding noise arose, which resembled a succession of thunder-bolts, becoming duller and duller, finally dying away altogether—a proof that the funnel was so deep that the noise of the fall had become imperceptible even before the stone touched the bottom of the frightful chasm.

“What a wild and savage nature!” ejaculated Max.

“But grand and majestic, is it not?” said Herman. “What a spectacle is this mer de glace!”

“Yes, much too grand. It is beyond the comparative faculties of the human species; it sins through excess.”

“Has any one ever fallen in there?” asked Herman of the guide.

“Not in this funnel; but you may read on a stone in the cemetery of the Grindelwald, that in the year 1821, the pastor Mousson stepped into a crevasse of the glacier, and came to a terrible end.”

“There, my friend, I have satisfied you, spite of the cold sweat that has inundated me,” exclaimed Max Rapelings; “but I declare to you now, that if you wish to remain longer on the mer de glace, I shall return alone to *terra firma*. If I break my neck on the way for want of a guide, it will be your fault.”

“No, we are going down again into the valley,” said the guide; “it is much easier than mounting. You will see by five o’clock, or perhaps earlier, that you are back at your hotel.”

They left the mer de glace, passed once more before the chalet, and found themselves at the top of the frightful path they had followed to reach the glacier.

Max again stopped irresolutely and muttered, with his eyes fastened on the depth which gave him the vertigo,

“No, no, it was not the glove. There is no need of sorcery to freeze the blood in the veins of the most courageous man. If the ascent was difficult—what then must be the descent, with this frightful abyss always under one’s eyes?”

“Have you perhaps the fancy to establish yourself in perpetuity on the deserted summit of the Meltenberg?” asked Herman.

“I am here between two stools; there is no choice. Hush, Herman, it is dangerous to talk—let us descend, trusting to God’s mercy.”

He at first followed his friend with some show of timidity, but soon plucked up courage; he even admitted they were getting along better than he had hoped, and thought the descent might become a matter of habit, and if necessary they might become accustomed without much trouble to walking on the *mer de glace*.

On approaching the rock where the Russian had crossed their path, Herman turned his head around and said as he walked along,

“See Max, I was just here when she cast a glance upon me as if wishing to penetrate my innermost thoughts! Did you observe on this occasion what a look of inexplicable sorrow, deep pain, and soul-stirring anguish were expressed in her beautiful black eyes?”

“No—nonsense! let us get on,” replied the young physician. “I had something else to do just then, than to think of eyes, either blue or black.”

They reached the spot where the horses were in

the habit of halting, and seated themselves to rest.

“May I inquire,” said the guide, “whether the gentlemen mean still to remain to-morrow at the Grindelwald?”

“To-morrow we mean to ascend the Faulhorn,” replied Herman.

“One moment,” interrupted Max, “the ascent of the Faulhorn? This is not certain; it depends upon circumstances. Tell me, my good man, is there a *mer de glace* on the Faulhorn?”

“No sir.”

“And are there pretty little paths like this one, where at any moment one may break one’s neck?”

“Nor that either, sir! the road is easy, and there is no part of it where one walks as here, against the bare rock or naked spur of the mountain. Were a person anxious to fall he would find it difficult—that is, if he followed the beaten track.”

“Then we will risk the ascent.”

“The Faulhorn is higher than the Meltenberg, is it not?” asked Herman.

“Yes sir, very much higher; it measures over eight thousand feet.”

“How long does it take to reach the summit?”

“Travelers, novices like yourselves, gentlemen, who rest often, are six hours on the way. But when accustomed to climb, it takes less time. Have you your guide yet, gentlemen?”

“No: will you fill the place?”

“To-morrow, this will be impossible—I am engaged by an English family to accompany them to

Rosenlauri by way of the great Scheideck. Don't the gentlemen think their baggage is too heavy?"

"We have only our overcoats, a couple of shirts, and some minor articles."

"Then sirs, I will recommend to you the son of my sister, a poor widow who is obliged to work for her living. The son is only fourteen years of age, but he is strong and active as a grown man, and as good a guide as any in the Grindelwald. At all events, you will only pay him half price."

"But we will pass the night on the Faulhorn, and wish to go down the next day towards Giesbach and Brienz; can the boy accompany us as far as that?"

"He has made that trip more than once, gentlemen, and he can return by way of Interlaken to the Grindelwald."

The Flemings evinced willingness to listen to the guide's proposal, and even assured him that if the poor widow's son did them the same good service as a man, he should receive the pay of one.

They rose, and began to descend. At this spot the inclination became more gradual, and they went along grassy slopes, and, hastening their steps, finally reached the valley of the Grindelwald without accident.

Here Max Rapelings suddenly began to stamp his feet, and laugh so loudly that the other two looked at him surprised; he held his sides and threw himself about. His peals of laughter were only interrupted to give expression to the following words—

“Ha, ha, ha! poor Herman! Ha, ha! my simple, ingenuous and credulous friend! How one may make him believe that chalk is cheese!”

“Come now, matters are going too far,” said Herman. “You will have to be bound shortly; you are losing your senses, or have been bitten by a tarantula.”

“Ha, ha, ha! you thought I was afraid up there on the mer de glace, and on the way, my dear, I was acting a part, my dear, to amuse myself at your expense.”

“Ah, indeed!” replied the young lawyer, laughing; “you are ashamed of your late cowardice? You fear I will tell it to your friends in Ghent, and are endeavoring to wipe away the stain! So, you were not afraid? Tell this to some one else! try to make people more simple than we are believe it.”

“I tell you I was only counterfeiting.”

“Very well then, console yourself with the thought that I was taken in, and let us return to the hotel, for I am as hungry as a hawk. Will you remain here and laugh at yourself until to-morrow morning? You are free to do so. Each one to his taste.”

The young doctor saw that his ruse would not work this time; he rose, took his friend's arm and muttered in his ear:

“Well, Herman, I may as well admit it. I *did* feel slightly unnerved on the mer de glace, but it is not necessary to proclaim this fact from the belfry at Ghent.”

As they entered the hotel, the guests were about to place themselves at the table, some even were already seated.

Max pressed his friend's arm, holding him back, and whispered:

"Our Russian! Let us leave the room."

"No, Max; I wish to show I am not afraid of him; be quiet, the pale maiden is looking at us."

The old gentleman, however, as soon as he saw the young people come in, rose, cast upon them his calm, but severe glance, and cried out in French to the master of the house:

"Dinner for two and a bottle of St. Julian in apartment No. 8."

After having given this order, he took the young girl's arm, who had risen, and left with her by a door at the extreme end of the room.

The Flemings well understood that he went away, not to be obliged to sit with them at the same table, yet they dared say nothing; but when the Russian, on leaving, turned his head to give Herman a look of disdain, the latter could contain himself no longer.

"Underbred creature that you are," he exclaimed. "What induced you without a motive to insult me thus? Have a care, you shall account to me for your impertinent conduct."

And he was about to follow the old gentleman, when Max seized him by the shoulders, kept him back forcibly, and endeavored at the same time to calm him. He spoke to him of his mother, told

him all the guests were gazing at him, and besought him not to spoil all the pleasure of their beautiful trip by any imprudent action.

Herman was pale with anger; he cried out in a loud voice that no one had the right to insult another without provocation; he demanded, he exacted honorable reparation.

Good Max Rapelings was alarmed at what might ensue as a result of this anger. Herman was in truth goodness itself, but he had his moments of passion, when he was capable of anything. So Max, holding back his exasperated friend with all his might, said he would not allow him to leave the dining-room, even if it came to a quarrel between themselves.

There was a double cause for Herman's irritation; he had not only to revenge a gratuitous insult, but—what did not please him less—was the thought of punishing, at the same time a cruel tyrant, for all the trouble he made the young girl endure.

When Max had succeeded in making him perceive the impropriety of causing a public scandal, and had promised to aid him in procuring after dinner an honorable reparation, which should be sufficient, Herman seated himself, muttering, and still quite agitated, placed himself at table.

The storm being thus stilled for the moment, the two friends determined, after a long deliberation carried on in an under tone, that on leaving the table Max Rapelings should go to apartment No. 8 to speak with the Russian and ask an explanation of

him, and an apology for his rude proceedings against them. Should he not be properly received, Herman would then be at liberty to act as best befitted his offended dignity.

The young doctor was not particularly pleased with this mission, which he had only undertaken to appease his angry friend's wrath; he therefore made the dinner last as long as possible, and spite of Herman's entreaties, would not miss a mouthful, nor at dessert allow an apple or a piece of cheese to pass him by.

Nevertheless it had to come to an end. Max rose and said,

"Herman, you remain seated and be perfectly natural; it is not necessary the guests should know there is anything to settle between the Russian and ourselves. I am going now, and will return to give you an account of the result of my undertaking."

"No cowardly compliance at least, I beg," muttered Herman.

"No, but politeness always. One may be very much in earnest and stern, without being rude."

He left the room, and asked a servant he encountered in the vestibule to direct him to apartment No. 8.

"Are you looking for the old gentleman with the young lady?" asked the servant.

"Yes."

"They are gone, sir."

"Gone! Where to?"

“To Interlaken, no doubt; there is no other road from here. See, there they are in their carriage; they stopped to converse with another traveler.”

And indeed Max observed from the door, on the sill of which he was standing, the Russian and his pale companion seated in a carriage, exchanging civilities with an individual whom by his alpenstock they knew to be a traveler.

After less than a minute's stop the carriage resumed its course.

Max hastened to rejoin his friend, and said to him:

“If there be no sorcery in all this, it resembles it strangely. The Russian, no doubt, has departed through fear; and there is something else—I saw a traveler talking and exchanging salutations with him. Take your hat quickly, this traveler must still be in the street; I should recognize him and shall ask him something about the Russian. We will then know who he is, at least. Come, make haste!”

They left the hotel and looked around everywhere, but the traveler they sought was no longer visible.

As Max thought he had taken the hilly street that led to the extremity of the village, where there were more hotels, they followed the same road, and promenaded, in every sense of the word, for more than an hour in vain.

During this interval Herman had entirely calmed down, and finally admitted frankly he had been

wrong to expose himself to such danger merely for a questionable look. He did not fear the danger for himself, but should not forget he had a mother who would die of grief if anything happened to him in Switzerland. Now, it was not probable he would ever see the Russian again; their frequent encounters up to the Grindelwald could be explained by the circumstance that the Russian, like themselves, had gone to the Bernese Oberland by way of the lake of Thun. There is but one road, so to speak, which is followed by every traveler. It was therefore nothing astonishing that people who found themselves at the same time on the road, should meet more than once. Now the Russian had returned to Interlaken, doubtless to begin at Berne his travels toward Geneva and Italy, which he had announced to his landlady; he had therefore taken quite an opposite direction to that followed by the two young men, and from this time it was impossible to meet elsewhere.

After reasoning thus, Herman added, gayly,

“My good Max, let us look upon this affair as a mere incident of travel, which is over; and thank God who protected me from the consequences of my imprudent anger, and think of it no more. May to-morrow’s sun illumine the excursions of two joyous and enthusiastic lovers of nature!”

“Yes, yes,” warmly exclaimed the doctor; “may our hearts be forever lightened of this weight! The adventure of the pale young maiden ends here. I still feel my flesh creeping when I think that it

might have terminated in a duel between a young advocate from Ghent, and an abominable Cossack."

"But Herman, do you never get tired? Night is falling, and my legs are giving way under me."

"It is the morning's excitement up there on the mer de glace, which has gone down into your legs," said Herman, in a tone of raillery.

"It gives me pleasure to see you laugh, even at my expense. I should like to take advantage of your good nature to make a joking assault upon you, but breath is wanting; as to-morrow morning we are to climb for the period of six hours, it would be more prudent to go to bed without further delay."

"You are right; moreover, we need make no further inquiries about the Russian. Come, let us go to bed."

They went down the street and entered their hotel.

"It is your turn to write home," said Max; "but after the excitement of the day, you no doubt feel little disposed to fulfill the duty?"

"I will write to-morrow, let us sleep now with all our might and main, and take our ease. At any rate, since we have the intention of spending to-morrow night on the Faulhorn, I cannot see why we should abridge this one as if we were being lashed to our work."

"Very well, Herman, it will give us strength to endure our long ascent."

"Then, good night!"

"Good night!"

CHAPTER II.

THE young Flemings walked leisurely in a path which reached almost to the summit, along the green sides of the Faulhorn; sweat fell from their brows, and their breathing was short and troubled. Now and again they complained of the steepness of the road, but were unable to keep up any conversation. Twenty times at least they had already sought rest, and hardly had they gone ten steps than they again felt the desire of resting themselves; but their guide's presence gave them the courage necessary not to give way to their fatigue.

The guide was a young boy about fourteen years of age, with bright eyes and an intelligent countenance. He carried the baggage of the two travelers on his back, surmounted the difficult path with as much ease as if he were going over a board walk, and followed those whom he called "his gentlemen," whistling and singing under his breath.

Though he was very discreet, and did not talk at all, except when necessary to point out the road, or answer any question put to him, yet he smiled each time he saw the gentlemen seat themselves on the side of the road, exhausted with fatigue.

It might have been about ten o'clock in the morning; the sun shone almost directly down along the sides of the mountains, and under the warmth

of its fiery rays, rather than because of the fatigue of climbing, the travelers felt their limbs give way as though a weight of two hundred pounds had been fastened to their shoulders.

One more quarter of an hour, and they would reach a thick wood. The guide had told them the path crossed the woods, and they would find shade and refreshment. This promise stimulated them to renewed exertion; they gathered up their strength, and though their breath was burning, and their hearts beat violently, they struggled energetically against fatigue to attain the desired end.

The first trees of the forest towered only fifty feet before them, and seemed to hold out their green branches towards them like the arms of friends, inviting them to enjoy a long rest under their fresh shade.

But Max Rapelings could hold out no longer. When he heard the guide say, "Gentlemen, from this point one can see the whole of the Grindelwald," he seized the opportunity to fall down on the side of the path.

"Ouf!" muttered he; "the Russian—can he have—without our knowledge—transformed us by some enchantment—into horses or mules?"

"It does seem so, indeed," replied Herman, seating himself beside him. "It would be a singular revenge. Let us blow awhile. Hold your tongue now, Max."

At the end of a few moments, the young doctor resumed, in a less exhausted voice:

“It is a strange thing, Herman. While climbing mountains, only legs do not seem to tire. The chest alone appears to work and suffer; for scarcely does one take breath but for a few moments, than one recovers altogether. On the other hand, while descending, the legs alone are fatigued, while the chest is not involved, as if it took no part in the exercise of the body. And to think we have still five hours of climbing! Have you not recovered breath, Herman, that you are so silent?”

“The boy is right in calling our attention to the view one enjoys here,” replied the young lawyer. “In the midst of these numberless marvels we are beholding, we become blunted by degrees and in a measure insensible to that which is no longer greater and more extraordinary than what we contemplated the day before. How picturesque and charming, however, are the houses of the Grindelwald, dotted through the deep valley or suspended on the side of the mountains! It seems to me that I see more of them up there, several thousand feet higher up.”

“I notice here, more than anywhere else,” said Max, “what makes me doubt my powers of comparison. Before us, the three giants of the Grindelwald, the Wetterhorn, the Miltenberg and the Eiser, elevate their snowy summits almost to the skies. Their broad sides are covered by the two mers de glace. This background is so enormous, so grandiose, that in the foreground all seems astonishingly dwarfed, and probably fails to appear to our eyes in its true dimensions.”

“I do not believe it to be an illusion, Max, but a reality.”

“But look at those hundreds of small houses, Herman, each one in the midst of a meadow surrounded with gardens; they seem no larger than birds’ nests, and the meadows than pocket handkerchiefs.”

“Yes, Max, but what dimensions do you expect man’s work to attain in our eyes, when we must compare it with these mountains ten thousand feet in height.”

“Those little green fields down there, below those small trees which are almost invisible, and those little houses, all resemble the villages and gardens we constructed in our infancy with the boxes of toys made in Nuremberg.”

“Here, primitive nature reigns in its entire majesty. It crushes the work of man by the immense grandeur of its forms. Suppose we enter the woods, Max.”

“No, that would not be prudent; we are very much heated; it must be too cool under that thick foliage. We are very comfortable here, and can rest as long as we like. We need take no note of time.”

He turned towards the boy, who was seated a few steps off, and asked him in German:

“Tell me, my friend—I observe that those little houses down below are in twos; one of them is probably the stable?”

“The gentlemen is mistaken,” replied the young

guide. "In those huts where the windows are painted white, the people dwell; the others are barns for storing the hay."

"The German you speak so well, my boy, is yet not the language of the inhabitants of the Grindelwald?"

"No sir, we have also our Swiss dialect, but we learn high German at school."

"You then know how to read and write?"

"Yes sir, and cipher too," replied the young lad, with some pride. "In Switzerland all the children know how to read, write and cipher. No one is dispensed from going to school, not even those who live on the high *Almen*."

"What do you call the *Almen*?"

"The prairies on the declivities of the mountains, sir, like those we are upon now."

"Education then is obligatory in Switzerland?"

"Yes sir; especially in the Canton of Berne."

"But you, my friend, you no longer go to school, since you are a guide."

"I must tell you, sir, that the guides of the Grindelwald, like those elsewhere, form a guild or corporation, and no one can become a guide without a permit; but I am the son of a guide who is dead, and it is for this I may, though still young, exercise my father's occupation, on condition that I prove by an examination I have learned all at school there is to teach. I passed this examination last year successfully, and have obtained a certificate. But for this I could not have left school, nor, in consequence, have become a guide."

“A people with heads, these Swiss!” exclaimed Herman. “They realize without noise or pride a progress that greater nations regard as desirable, but as impossible to realize.”

“Suppose we carry our burden a little further up on the mountain,” said Max to his companion.

“Our burden? What burden?”

“Our bodies, I mean. I do not know, Herman, whether you are like me, but I really dreamed just now I was a horse and was carrying my own body.”

“What nonsense is this?”

“Ah! if we only did not have to drag up there our *corpus iners*, how quickly we should reach the summit of the Faulhorn!”

“What would you do up there, then, if you had no eyes to see?”

“We should see much better with the eyes of the soul.”

“There! be done with such nonsense as this. Again is the deviltry of magnetism settling itself upon your shoulders. Come, come, forward, and keep silent if you can, for talking fatigues more than walking.”

They rose and walked into the woods. The path was not less steep than below, and not much time was needed for the travelers to become as breathless as before.

Once only, Max remained behind to fill his pockets with a certain kind of green moss which hung on all the branches like long threads or cobwebs; and to make up for lost time, he was obliged to has-

ten so that, quite out of breath, he asked Herman to take pity on him, who to punish him pretended not to hear.

They thus continued their way across the woods, and then passed over great pastures and by sombre pine forests, resting often and talking little, until, when finally, after a three hours' fatiguing ascent, they found they were attaining the height known as Rosalp, where according to their guide they would enjoy a perspective which would produce upon them a vivid impression.

Seated on the edge of the path, and turning in the direction from whence they came, they now saw beneath their feet the valley of the Grindelwald, like a mere rent, deep and fathomless. The bare sides of the Meltenberg and the Wetterhorn rose almost perpendicularly from this depth, like the rocky walls of a gigantic burg. Their summits were covered with eternal snow, that the sun's rays colored with every imaginable hue, from the most vivid white to azure blue. Here and there the sunlight and the snow appeared to mingle, the boundary between them being so uncertain as to give the appearance of a mountain whose summit reached the sky or pierced the firmament.

The valley of the Grindelwald, whose depths they could not discover, appeared sombre in spite of the dazzling light of the sun. All was gray and obscure, probably from the immense shadow cast by invisible mountains. At immense heights, however, could be observed woods and prairies, cabins and

waterfalls, placed one above the other, as if upon steps inlaid in the steep side of the mountain.

Not only did the hearts of the two friends beat each time they looked down into these depths, which gave them the vertigo, but the complete and soul-stirring silence that reigned in the abyss made them shudder.

“And there, there in the bosom of this gulf, is the habitation of man!” muttered Max. “There is the theatre of his activity, of his joys, his sorrows, and his hopes! It is there she lives and dies! Ants, ants!”

“Hold your tongue, for the love of God!” said Herman. “What grave-digger’s thoughts are these? My heart beats, too, but it is for joy! How beautiful it all is—how magnificent! Switzerland is the spoiled child of the Creator—one of its marvels alone, did it exist in Belgium, would attract the entire country, and here, here, there are these beauties by the thousand. What do I hear though? bells in this desert?”

“You well know,” said Max, “they must be cows. We have already frequently heard the noise. Here every cow and each goat has a small bell suspended to its neck, that it may be recovered when lost in the mountains. It is strange, but the multiplicity of sounds also troubles the ear. Does the tinkling come from right or left: from above or below? I cannot place the sound.”

“Hi! my friend, where are the cows, whose tinkling bells we heard?” he asked of the young guide,

who stood about ten paces off from them, and was looking into the valley below.

“They are pasturing on the mountain, over yonder,” he replied. “From the spot where I am standing they may be seen.”

The Flemings approached their guide; the latter pointed with his finger across the narrow rent of a valley of rocks, and said:

“There, on the other side, gentlemen. The shepherd has seen us, and is blowing his Alpine horn as a salute. Hark! how the sounds of the horn are repeated by the mountains.”

“But how can it be,” exclaimed Herman, “do my eyes deceive me? The cows are on the border of a frightful precipice, where there does not appear to be sufficient footing for a man. What are those poor beasts doing there?”

“They seek the grass that grows in spots upon the Alps. Notice carefully, gentlemen, small paths have been cut, that the cows might find a footing.”

“Oh!—Ah! I see something still more astonishing,” cried Max.

“What do you see?”

“A chamois—a *gems*.”

“Where?”

“Over yonder well above the cows; a black beast standing on a point of rocks, its four feet gathered together as if about to spring.”

“That is not a chamois, sir,” said the youth, smiling; “the chamois abide much higher up; the animal you see over there above the crevasse on

the extreme point of a rock is a goat. Oh! goats are more venturesome than cows; but where a goat walks prudently, a chamois bounds and leaps from one rock to the other above the abysses, as if endowed with wings."

"What do I see there underneath?" asked Herman; "are they not men?"

"Yes, sir; they are persons of both sexes, who are making hay on an Alp."

"They look no larger than rabbits," observed Herman. "One must have Swiss eyes to distinguish them at such a distance. How is it possible for them to make hay on a mountain which is almost perpendicular?"

"Habit, sir," replied the guide; "a clear eye and firm foot."

"Let us proceed," said the young doctor. "The air is very cold here, spite of the heat of the sun, I feel a shiver running through my frame; it is very dangerous."

They picked up their alpenstocks, and renewed their ascent with all the more courage, in that their guide announced to them that before a half hour they would reach the *Sennhütte*, or dairy of Bachalp, where they could procure wine, milk, bread and cheese, and tourists were in the habit of eating something here, and obtaining a little rest.

The Flemings were again very tired, and advanced, puffing and panting without speaking, when they reached a little hillock of slate-stones broken into fragments, where they seated themselves to breathe awhile.

Amid the stones the boy had perceived a white flower, to which he gave a Swiss name; to gather it he tried to climb the hillock, but as he could not succeed for want of a support he lost his footing and fell against the stones.

A cry of horror and pity escaped from our two friends when they saw the poor boy fall and roll down the hillock. They flew towards him, but he was already on his feet, and cried out, laughing:

“There is no support to be had from these rolling stones. It is nothing, gentlemen; do not pay any attention to it, I did not hurt myself.”

“But your hand is bleeding, my friend—your left hand—come, let me staunch the wound,” said Max.

And he drew from his coat a pocket of green leather, ornamented with shining little knives and other instruments; he took from it a small roll of linen bandages and bound up the young guide's wound, which consisted only of a cut on the middle finger of the left hand.

“It is done now,” said Max. “The evil was not so great as the fear of it; only be careful not to bruise that finger.”

“Yes, sir; I thank you,” he replied. “I have something in my pocket that may help me to do this.”

Saying which, he drew from his pocket something that resembled a small piece of grey kid.

Herman opened his eyes with astonishment, took the object from the boy's hands, and muttered:

“Heavens! what does this mean? It is the pale maiden's glove.”

"Ah, good! the pale maiden's glove," repeated Max, laughing until he had to hold his sides, "ha! ha! ha! The pale maiden's glove is in the funnel of the mer de glace."

"The thing itself, I tell you," reiterated Herman, looking gravely and almost like one stupefied at the piece of kid. "How did that glove manage to get out of the abyss to follow us to the Faulhorn?"

"This is not astonishing; it is enchanted, Herman."

"No; do not laugh, I beg of you; it is very decidedly her glove; the same we picked up on the road to the Lauterbrunnen."

"There, Herman, cease these foolish jokes," replied the young physician. "I fancied we were entirely cured of these hollow reveries and sentimental follies, and here you begin again worse than ever. So you are going to the end of your life to behold the pale maiden's glove in every piece of kid?"

"It is her glove, Max."

"But this one is either white or grey."

"It has been yellow, and still has a yellow tinge—and look at those delicate fingers."

"But for the love of heaven, how can you be so silly as to suppose a glove can reappear from the bosom of the mer de glace, from which nothing has returned since the creation? Do you really suppose there is witchcraft in it, or that God would bring about a miracle merely to turn us from our way?"

"I do not know, Max; it is beyond my powers of comprehension; but be assured it is her glove."

"The simplest thing is to ask the boy where he found it; you will see it has been at least six months in his possession."

"Tell me my friend," he asked of the little guide, "where did you get this glove, and how long have you had it?"

"I found it this morning on the borders of the Lutchine," he replied. "As the gentlemen did not wish to leave early, not knowing what to do, I walked along the banks of the river; there, half in the water, among the stones, I found the glove, just in front of your hotel. I picked it up, for the kid might do to repair the keys of my little harmonium. I was going to bind my finger with it, but if it belongs to the gentlemen, they are welcome to it."

The two friends exchanged strange glances of surprise and doubt. The young doctor shook his head, and again asked:

"Do you know the funnel of the mountain of ice, my boy?"

"The funnell on the *unterem Gletscher* (the nether glacier), sir?"

"Yes!"

"I have been twenty times on its borders casting down stones."

"Do you know, my friend, if anything thrown into it ever reappears?"

"No, never, sir."

"Could it be possible that a glove thrown into

the funnel should get out underneath the mer de glace, and reappear on the borders of the Lutchine?"

The boy cast down his eyes reflectively, and after a moment, answered:

"I never heard any thing like that told; but in fact, it might be possible, since a man who fell into a crevasse on the *oberen-gletscher* (upper glacier), got out underneath."

"A man who came out from under the mer de glace?" repeated Herman, incredulously. "A tale, no doubt?"

"No, sir; it is the truth; there are many of this man's descendants who inhabit the Grindelwald. It is a story we always tell travelers when we conduct them to the upper glacier."

"Tell us, then, the story," said Max.

"It happened in the year 1787, gentlemen. The father of a family, whose name was Christian Bohren, fell into a wide and deep crevasse on the surface of the mer de glace; he was not mortally wounded, but remained a long while in a swoon. When he came to himself he felt water trickling beneath him abundantly, as if he were lying on the bed of a river. In his terrible position this afforded him a feeble hope; he began crawling on his hands and feet, working and struggling to find an outlet, until he reached the bed of a wider water-course, where he could stand upright. The wider current was the Lutchine. He followed its course, and thus was enabled to come out beneath the ice mountain. Fortunately two guides and two travel-

ers saw him emerge, as otherwise no one in the whole valley of the Grindelwald would have believed such a thing. This story is a true one, gentlemen; my father has told it to me a hundred times, and made me learn it by heart; moreover, the eldest son of Christian Bohren was one of my father's good friends."

"Do you really believe, my good boy, that this glove might have been carried from the funnel to the borders of the Lutchine?"

"I dare not affirm that it is so, sirs; but I know no other explanation."

"That boy argues very well for his age," said Herman. "What he says proves it is her glove."

"What a pity!" said Max, with a sneer; "all the marvelous has disappeared, and the thing becomes no more remarkable than to see a wisp of straw carried by the rain down the stream. Let us get on Herman, it is not worth stopping about any longer."

They went on silently, but the path was becoming less steep and easier; Max drew near his friend and asked:

"Herman, of what are you thinking?—of the glove? Where is it?"

"In my pocket-book."

"Take care, for though the glove may not be itself bewitched, it may bewitch you."

"Walk a little faster, Max; I will not listen to such nonsense."

"A thought strikes me; let us cut the glove in small pieces, and drop them along the road as Hop

o' my Thumb did the crumbs of bread. Heaven knows whether we would not find the miraculous glove at Brienz, entire and immaculate as it came out of the shop. Then there would be, indeed, cause to believe in a miracle!"

"Cut it in pieces? you will never see the glove again as long as you live. It is worth a thousand francs to me. There is no question here of sorcery or a miracle; the pale maiden has no part in it. Do you not know, mocker, that this glove will remain one of the most exquisite souvenirs of our trip to Switzerland! It is an entire romance. All is brought about by chance alone, but you will see on our return home no one will want to believe in the story of that glove, which has followed us so wonderfully, even after you had consigned it to the bottomless gulf of the mer de glace, never to see it again."

"Sirs," said the guide, "this cascade is the waterfall of Mahlebach."

Our two travelers were so absorbed in their reflections about the glove that was found that they had not noticed a little cascade, which springing forth beside them, came down the mountain foaming and roaring. They had already seen so many beautiful things that it needed finer ones still, or perfectly new ones, to awaken their enthusiasm; moreover, they again felt very much fatigued, so that when the guide pointed out to them the halt of Bachalp they gave a cry of joy. It was the spot where they were to rest and recruit.

This hut, like all shepherd's huts on the Alps,

was constructed of branches of pines intertwined. The roof, not very high, was formed of boards disposed like slate, and heavy stones, which it was weighted with, preserved it from the violence of the storms.

When the Flemings entered it, they saw nothing but buckets, kettles and jugs. A simple wooden bench and a rough table were there for the use of tourists; on the hearth was suspended a large pot over a smoking fire, a man standing in front to keep up the fire and watch the pot.

This shepherd approached the travelers, who had seated themselves on the bench, and asked very politely what the gentlemen wished to take.

According to their orders he brought them a bottle of wine, some bread, butter and cheese.

As frugal as this repast seemed, the Flemings, famished from their ascent, partook of it with great appetite, at the same time looking around them with some curiosity, and following the man with their eyes to see what he was doing.

He had lifted the pot from the fire, and taken it to another room. Now he probably had a moment of leisure, for he approached the travelers, and said to them, smiling:

“This is, I see, to the gentlemen’s taste. The air of these mountains affects the stomach strangely; yet it is not prudent to eat too much cheese when not in the habit of doing so. Our cheese is justly celebrated over the entire world, but it is heavy food.”

“Will you drink a glass of wine with us, my good man?” asked Max.

“The gentlemen are very good—I will not refuse a glass of wine.”

When the man had drunk, Max resumed:

“This is a strange life of yours, my friend; all alone, far away from every human being—six thousand feet above the level of the sea! In summer it may be endured, but in winter!”

The Swiss who have the habit of meeting strangers, know they may be agreeable to them by satisfying their curiosity as to all that attracts their attention. The shepherd seeing, by the questions asked him, that the young men were entire strangers to Alpine life, seated himself on a corner of the bench, ready to give them all the information they desired.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “in winter I do not live here, and under all circumstances I am not entirely alone. I am a shepherd, and follow the sheep; as the autumn approaches they descend into the valley, finally seeking the village, where they spend the winter in warm stables. Then this *Sennhütte* is abandoned, and oftentimes even buried under the snow. When the spring returns, and the snow melts in the valley, the cattle are carried to the lower pastures; when summer comes they climb the mountains to obtain the best grass that may be found on the highest Alps. Such is our life—to fall back before the snow, and take possession of the ground again when the snow leaves it.”

“Have you many cows, and where are they?” asked Herman.

“I have the care of twenty-four, sir. They are now scattered about the Alps on the hills and mountains; a youth who assists me keeps and watches over them that they may not wander too far away.”

“But how can you milk twenty-four animals who wander over the inaccessible rocks?”

“It is hard work, indeed, sir; but not so difficult as you think. The cows assemble twice a day, upon a given signal from the Alpine horn, or of themselves, at the *Sennhütte* to be milked.”

“Grass must be very poor on these cold heights; the cows cannot yield much milk here,” observed the young physician.

“Excuse me, sir,” said the young shepherd, “this is a mistake. The Alpine grass is very soft and rich. Our good cows yield each day, when upon the mountains, fifteen to twenty litres of milk, and one of these cows of itself can produce a hundred francs’ worth of cheese in a single summer. You see, sir, these poor beasts return in full measure the care that is given them; without cattle Switzerland would be a desert; with its cattle, and because of it, it is a land blessed of Heaven.”

Herman had taken in his hand a piece of cheese, and asked while looking at it:

“You made this cheese here yourself?”

“Yes, sir.”

“It is that cheese so much appreciated over the

entire world, and known in France under the name of Gruyere cheese?"

"That's so, sir—*Greyerzer Kase, Schweizer Kase.*"

"Will it be trespassing on your kindness to ask you how this excellent cheese is made?"

The shepherd rose and said:

"The gentlemen are desirous of obtaining information; well, if they will follow me, I will show them how we make the cheese; it is very simple; but the other nations cannot learn it of us; it is the Alpine grass which gives it the good taste, and causes the superiority of our cheese."

He conducted them to another room, which he called the cheese-dairy, and said to them:

"We first scald the milk, then we cause it to curdle by means of rennet; then we draw off the whey; we then work and knead the white cheese to express as much of the moisture as possible; then we shape the fresh cheeses as we wish, and cover them with cloths dipped in brine, and range them on shelves to be cured. Every day the cheeses are turned and cloths moistened. Finally the cheeses are transported into the valley, where they are kept until they have reached their full maturity. In this consists all the art of making cheese upon the Alps, gentlemen."

The Flemings thanked him for his kindness, still asked for a few further details, and returned to place themselves at the table.

The shepherd had remained in the cheese-dairy to arrange something; he came and went with a

basket in his hand, continuing his daily work until the moment when the travelers rose, and called him to pay their scot.

They did not ask for his account, but placed in his hand a small gold piece, saying if it was too much he could keep the change as remuneration for his politeness.

The man thanked them, and when on the sill of the cabin door, he said:

“Two hours more, sirs, and you will reach the hotel on the Faulhorn.”

“Still two hours,” sighed Max Rapelings. “We have already been six hours under way.”

“It is probably because the gentlemen have rested often, and for a long time. On leaving this the road becomes easier, and follows for a long while an almost even surface. A pleasant journey, gentlemen.”

“B-r-r! it freezes here,” growled Max; “it makes me shudder; suppose we put on our overcoats?”

“No, no; let’s walk a little faster; in three minutes we will be in a perspiration. You see now the road is not so smooth as the honest shepherd imagined.”

“You are right; heat obtained by action is the most wholesome. Let us make haste.”

They walked on for a long while with light steps, talking gayly upon various subjects, as well as the little glove. This time Max consented to look upon the singular incident less lightly, and admitted there was something astonishing and even

wonderful in the fact of the glove being so often found. Herman insisted it was the same glove the young girl had dropped near the bear-pit at Berne; Max denied it; but, however this was, he had thrown the glove into a torrent near the *Zweiluschenin*, he had pitched it out of the window in the darkness at the Grindelwald, he had sent it into a frightfully deep abyss on the mer de glace, and the glove had each time been recovered—it had even followed them to the Faulhorn. If this was only the natural course of events, they were obliged to admit that chance had made an almost complete romance.

Finally, returning again to his passion for jesting, Max resumed:

“Yes, it is a romance, and disturbs me not a little. For if chance has pushed this adventure so far, chance will possibly accord it a denouement. Who can affirm that the end may not be a tragic one?”

“You cannot be serious ten minutes,” muttered Herman; “if my mind were enfeebled, your ridiculous talk would fill my head with nonsense. The Russian is now probably twenty or thirty leagues from here, and all intercourse between him and ourselves is forever at an end. You shake your head; do you doubt it?”

“I am almost entirely convinced to the contrary.”

“What reason have you?”

“Listen, Herman, listen, for now I am going to speak seriously. You remember that this morning,

after resting and gazing at the open valley, we crossed a thick woods?"

"Certainly; it was then you remained behind to detach some moss from the trees."

"And you remember, too, that for more than an hour I was silent, and did not reply to what you were saying, any more than if I were as deaf as a beetle?"

"What does this mean, for heaven's sake!" cried Herman; "if you were deaf, it was from fatigue."

"No, Herman; I did not dare tell you my thoughts, lest this confidence might alarm you."

"Then why do you do it now?"

"I have had an hallucination, a vision, fruit of my troubled brain. It is so frightful to see one's best friend in a most horrible position!"

"Ha! ha!" said the young lawyer, laughing, "here you are about finding a tragical denouement to our romance. Let me see if you have a fruitful imagination."

"Think of it as you please, Herman; here is the thing without exaggeration, in all its simplicity. While I advanced across the sombre woods, thinking and dreaming, I suddenly saw, through my soul's eyes, a country entirely formed of rocky mountains and frightful abysses; we, with our alpenstocks in hand, walked short of breath and sweating, until such time as we reached the borders of a valley whose steep sides and the immeasurable depth gave us the vertigo. Then something astonishing, something inexplicable attracted my sight.

On the other side of the ravine was the Russian, with the pale maiden beside him. Whilst I directed my looks towards them, I saw with astonishment that the young girl was engaged disentangling a skein of thread. This thread, which seemed spread over the valley, was of the color of blood. Following it with my eyes, I saw that the young girl held one of the ends, and was drawing it towards her, while the other end was attached to your heart, or rather, to the glove you carry in your pocket-book, which lies upon your breast. You doubtless felt the secret attraction, for you called me to your assistance, exclaiming that the abyss exercised upon you a magnetic power, and you would infallibly precipitate yourself into it, if I did not hold you back. I seized you by the middle of your body, and we both struggled, uniting our strength; my blood curdled in my veins, a mortal chill ran down my spinal column, for I felt convinced all efforts were useless, and the pale maiden would draw us into the gulf, whose deepest depths opened wide before us like a horrible tomb, and indeed nothing could be done; the thread gave way more and more; we staggered on the edge of the gulf, our feet lost their last support, I fastened myself to your body, and we rolled into the frightful abyss."

"Does the romance conclude thus?" said Herman, in a stifled voice.

"No, the vision did not come to an end in this way; but yet a moment. We did not fall into the

abyss, but we flew, attracted by the magical power of the thread, to the other side; there the pale young girl received you in her arms with a joyful cry of triumph, which resounded upon the mountains. As to myself, I flew to the arms of the Russian, who held me against him, almost breaking my sides; then the Russian raised his hand over his head and cried: 'Blessed be the betrothed of the nymph of the abyss! May he become the king of the land of darkness, and take possession of his kingdom.' Saying this, he shook you violently, and you and your betrothed were precipitated at least ten thousand feet into the gulf. I had extricated one of my hands, and seized the Russian by the throat; but he, without being in the least moved, said to me:

"Your betrothed's father must be present at your nuptials; the friend of the lover must conduct the affianced to the altar. Come, my fine fellow, it needs but a single leap!"

"We followed you into the bottomless abyss, and I only reached it reduced to bits and fragments. Thus finished the romance, just as combats do, for the want of combatants. There, you have an artistic conclusion. Of all the personages, nothing remains but legs and arms, and again, in what a state!"

Herman, who had not listened without being impressed, finally broke out into a noisy fit of laughter; the young doctor did the same; he was very proud of his story, which, according to him, could be compared favorably with the romances of our

day, where things much more wonderful still are treated as possible and probable.

Herman admitted that the narrative was artistically conceived; but it needed, as he said, to be called "Max Rapelings," to hang together so monstrous an assortment of serious buffoonery.

While talking in this way they still advanced, stopping for a moment on the borders of Lake Bachalp. It was a large extent of water in a rocky basin between mountains. They exclaimed at the sight; it seemed strange to them to find again at a height of seven thousand feet a lake which was navigable for boats.

A short time after, they saw snow hanging to the sides of the mountain, and even passed very near to it. They felt at the same time that the air became very cold, and began shuddering each time they seated themselves for only two or three minutes to obtain rest, on the side of the road.

"It is astonishing I am not half so tired as I was this morning," said Herman. "I think at the end of a few days one would become entirely accustomed to these ascents."

"It is the effect of the harsh, cold air," said Max, "the heat we generate in ourselves by dint of walking seems to make us wrestle with exterior cold; and since the walk and the heat have become for us a source of comfort, you should not be surprised we are not tired."

They had climbed up some steps cut in the side of the rock.

“See, above there, gentlemen, is the Faulhorn hotel; an hour more, and we will be there,” said the young guide.

“Still another hour?” reiterated Max, “and we have already been three! Come, take courage, Herman, otherwise we will not reach there to-day.”

“What are you talking about courage?” said Herman, laughing; “does any one of us linger behind, if not you, who have had time enough to unravel the bloody thread of your vision?”

“Tell me, my friend, at what hour do they dine at the Faulhorn?” asked Max of the little guide.

“At two o’clock, I think, sir; but they prepare a dinner at once for those travelers who desire it.”

“Probably one cannot obtain much?”

“Oh, yes, sir.”

“Meat also?”

“Yes, fresh meat, and all that the gentlemen had at their hotel of the Grindelwald. On the Faulhorn dwells an excellent innkeeper, very obliging, and who understands cooking as well as the best French cook. I have heard travelers say so often.”

“Ah! this is good,” exclaimed Max, “I am going to enjoy myself well, and I advise you, Herman, on this occasion not to watch the motion of my hands; you would become dizzy. Forwards, forwards—I fancy I smell the scent of the cooking.”

“I should really like to know,” said Herman, “which of us two is the hungrier—a peculiar hunger—a hunger after warm food.”

“Yes; hot soup, hot meat, a leg of mutton, were it only a leg of goat.”

“Do not mention these appetizing viands; I feel that my stomach is dancing for joy.”

“From where does this food, do these provisions, reach the Faulhorn?”

“It is all brought up the mountain on the backs of men, gentlemen.”

Finally, after walking nimbly during a good half hour, the Flemings reached a frame house situated at the foot of a mountain shaped like a keel.

“That is the inn of the Faulhorn,” said the young boy; “but to enjoy the view which attracts tourists hither, you must be up there on the most elevated point. It is a fifteen minutes’ climb.”

“Yes, yes,” growled Max, “we have time enough. I must just go in, however, and see how the kitchen is behaving.”

They entered the hotel, where five or six travelers were about taking some tea or coffee.

A round, fat man came to meet them, with a smiling face, saluted them with some friendly words, and inquired in very good French whether they would spend the night on the Faulhorn.

“Yes, sir,” replied Max; “but the long ascent, you understand—we are famished, and would gladly eat something.”

“A dinner?”

“Yes, yes; a complete dinner.”

“I regret that just now I have nothing very great: a roast, and a shoulder of chamois.”

Max gave a bound as though he wished to embrace his host.

“Herman, my dear Herman—some chamois, some chamois flesh,” he cried, “how good it must be, on a mountain more than eight thousand feet high.”

“Are the gentlemen in a hurry?”

“A hurry?—we are dying of hunger.”

“I shall need a good half hour to prepare the dinner; the gentlemen must be patient until then.”

“Give us a glass of kirsch, while waiting!”

The young guide approached and gave the two friends their overcoats.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “it is very cold here.”

“This is true,” replied Herman; “it is like mid-winter with us; the sharp air affects me; let us hasten to put on our coats. Is there no fire here?”

“If the gentlemen want fire they have but to ask for it; but wood is as dear up here as bread; it is also brought up on men’s shoulders to the top of the mountain.”

The host poured out for the travelers the kirsch that had been asked for, and said to them:

“Yet a half hour more—a good half hour—I will do my best to prepare you a suitable meal.”

“And there will be chamois flesh?”

“Chamois flesh for ten people. Should the gentlemen while waiting like to climb to the top of the Faulhorn, they can procure blankets here for one franc.”

“Blankets!—what are they for?”

“It is very cold on the summit of the Faulhorn, sirs; one wraps a blanket around one like a cloak; without it one suffers up there.”

“ Well, your idea is good, sir ; we are going to climb to the Faulhorn—it will help to pass the time.”

Two white woolen blankets were brought, like those which are used to put upon beds, and they were thrown over their shoulders.

Max Rapelings nearly burst out laughing when he saw his friend walking before him thus accoutred. He talked of ghosts and the three magi ; but Herman, who laughed equally loud at the appearance cut by the young doctor, did not hear what he said.

As the road led up almost perpendicularly, they needed all their strength, and did not speak until after a quarter of an hour's ascent. They reached the summit of the mountain, where they halted in ecstasy with their arms extended heavenward.

“ Well, Herman, what do you say about it ? ” asked Max, after some moments' silence.

“ I know not what to say or think,” replied his friend, plunged in profound admiration ; “ it seems to me we are here above the earth—an entire world is extended there beneath our eyes. Now I no longer feel small in nature : I am great, great like a giant—I who can thus embrace with one glance of the eye an entire creation.”

“ Here are glaciers,” cried Max ; “ there are thousands, one might say. It is an immense ocean, with restless waves, and every wave is a mountain more than ten thousand feet high.”

“ Hush, Max, hush for a moment. Let us enjoy this majestic spectacle in silence.”

They looked around everywhere with surprise ;

so bewildered by all these things - of such immeasurable size, which surrounded them on all sides that they rubbed their foreheads to clear their thoughts.

Their guide approached, and pointing with his finger into space, said to them:

“From here, sirs, one may see forty miles away, and even further. There is the Schreckhorn, 12,500 feet high; further on, the Finsteraarhorn, 13,230 feet high; and yet further to the right, the Jungfrau, the Breithorn, the Blumlisalp, the Wildstrubel, and numberless other mountains whose names I could tell you, but they would not interest the gentlemen much. The distant points which our eye may distinguish from here are, on this side, the Jura mountains, on the frontiers of France; on the other side, Pilatus, the Righi, near the town of Lucerne, and over there, on the southern side, the Devil’s Peak, a mountain situated in the valley of the Rhone.”

“But what is that surface of light green there, down that frightful depth?” asked Herman.

“It is a portion of the lake of Thun, sir.”

“The lake of Thun!” cried Max; “that blue sea, where there is a steamboat?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But how is it possible? Herman, when we mounted the belfry at Ghent, we scarcely dared look down into the street, and here our eye takes in with one look alone abysses several thousand feet in depth.”

The young lawyer did not hear what his friend

said; he was entirely absorbed in the contemplation of those thousands of mountains, whose white or blue summits seemed to melt into one incommensurable *mer de glace*.

“Naturalists,” he said, dreamily, “teach that because of the absence of water, lava is nothing but a desert and lifeless world; it is thus the moon’s orb must be—silent and inanimate chaos.”

“The snow we see is eternal,” said Max; “under such a shroud no spark of life can shine. Will this world of ice remain dead until the end of time? The thought appals me.”

They again relapsed into silence and looked around them. The abysses above all captivated their attention, and they frequently remained some moments mute with surprise, gazing down into the frightful depths which opened like so many yawning and sombre crevasses between the nearest mountains.

“Does this perspective produce the same impression on you it does on me, Herman?” finally asked the young doctor. “It appears to me one would soon have enough of a spectacle where all appears like a uniform and inactive lump; at all events, the details are valueless. These majestic giants cry out to us, ‘You should look upon us, us alone, and no others;’ but each time our eyes are turned towards them, they are ever shrouded in snow, sleeping since the beginning of the world in their shapeless majesty. Why remain longer here? Ice and snow, snow and ice—it is grandiose, but monoton-

ous. Hunger is speaking, isn't it? You would like to go down to the kitchen?"

"I admit it, my dear Herman, it is so terribly cold here, even under my phantom-like covering, that I have cramps in my stomach."

"Cold, Max! with these thick covers? I am perspiring."

"Yes, doubtless with admiration and enthusiasm. I am so worn out I would give all the mountains in the world for a chamois cutlet."

"Let us remain awhile longer, Max. Such a spectacle is not enjoyed twice in a lifetime."

"We will return here after dinner. What I particularly wish to see from this point is the setting sun; that must be magnificent."

"Gentlemen," said the youth, "they are calling out to us the meal is served."

"Who calls?"

"The Alpine horn, sirs. I understand the signal."

"Hurrah!" cried Max, who went running down the mountain at the risk of breaking his neck, "Chamois, chamois—I smell it!"

On reaching the door the boy guide said, "Sirs, now I shall go to the office: if you need me, the host will have me called."

As they entered the hotel, our two Flemings found the meal was served. They were not to dine alone, for three other travelers had taken their places, and already held their spoons in their hands.

Max Rapelings and his friend also seated them-

selves, and ate their soup, and of the first dishes in silence; but when at last the shoulder of chamois was brought on the table, the young physician's tongue was loosed, and he engaged in an animated conversation with the other guests upon the taste of chamois meat. He said nothing more savory could be imagined; Herman, on the contrary, insisted the meat was dry, and only tasted well because of the highly spiced and seasoned sauce. Opinions were equally divided among the guests.

Thus the Flemings made the acquaintance of the three other travelers. They were three young Parisians, a painter, a notary's clerk, and a traveling salesman. They had come from Meyringen by the grand Sheideck, and were to descend the next morning before sunrise towards the Grindelwald. Their gay spirits and bright wit so pleased our friends that they were again about to take another glass of Burgundy in their company, when daylight had already sensibly diminished.

"Are we not going to reascend the Faulhorn to see the sun set?" asked Herman of his friend.

"You make me think of it," said Max. "Would the gentlemen not like also to enjoy the spectacle?—it must be magnificent up there."

The Parisians accepted the proposal, and they all were soon climbing the Faulhorn together, wrapped up in white blankets, neck and ears bound round with pocket-handkerchiefs and scarfs, as if they were going in search of the north pole.

On reaching the summit the joyful troupe became for a moment silent.

The splendid spectacle the Flemings had beheld on the Schanzli at Berne, with such enthusiastic admiration, opened out before them ; but on a scale a hundred times vaster. All the western slopes of the glaciers appeared on fire ; this fire was filled with thousands of different-colored tints ; it floated and waved in the sky, and rendered the icy summits transparent, as if they had become immaterial ; beside these summits all ablaze, the valleys were detached like black and bottomless abysses, adding still more to the illusion, which made one believe the snow mountains did not belong to the earth, but floated free and imponderous in the ocean of space.

The silence did not last long. The Parisians soon began to express loudly and with a torrent of words their impressions of this phenomenal majesty of nature ; insensibly their gayety returned entirely, and not to be wearied, while awaiting the *Alpengluhen*, they took to making jokes and witticisms.

When, finally, all the glaciers had become incandescent, as if they were penetrated with a blood-red fire, one of them exclaimed :

“ This is wonderfully grand, and indeed admirable ; but it is already more than a quarter of an hour that we have stood here in an atmosphere of cold only ten degrees above zero. We have seen everything. I am going to do as the sun does—go down. Whoever is wise will follow me ! ”

“ He is right, ” whispered Max in his friend’s ear ; “ we must rise to-morrow very early. I should not

like to be roasted a second time by the sun. If we are not off by six in the morning, it will be a very foolish thing on our part."

"I should still like to remain here for hours," replied Herman, "were it only to enjoy the still calm night, and see nature disappear in the bosom of darkness."

"There! the Parisians are already going down the mountain; it is too cold here—it might become injurious."

"Well let us go to bed then, Max."

They hastened their steps to overtake the Parisians. Having reached the hotel, they each took the candle which was handed them—having, reciprocally, wished each other good-night and a pleasant journey.

CHAPTER III.

SOME one rapped three or four times with vehemence at the sleeping apartment of our two friends.

Max awakened hastily, and cried out:

“What is the matter? What do you want?”

“Gentlemen, it is five o'clock,” replied the young guide's voice outside.

“I sha'n't rise yet,” growled Herman, rubbing his eyes.

“Nor I, either,” asserted Max; “very well, my boy, knock again in about an hour.”

They covered themselves once more in their blankets; but as they heard a great noise in the hotel of coming and going, and as the sound of the voices ascended from the ground floor to their room, they could not go to sleep again.

After tossing about in their beds for more than half an hour, they rose and dressed hastily, for it was bitterly cold; then went down into the dining-room, where the stove was lighted.

While they were breakfasting, their guide entered.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “there is still another traveler who has gone down towards Brienz; it was for this I came to awaken you. It is, perhaps, pleasant for the gentlemen to make the trip in company, the more so, as the weather is very foggy,

and during the greater part of the morning very little of the landscape will be visible."

"It is a pity we did not rise; perhaps, if we hasten we may be able to overtake them."

"Hush!" interrupted Max in Flemish, "do you not perceive there is something hidden under this?"

"What could there be?"

"The Russian who still crosses our path, and the thread that draws you towards him; and this was really my dream last night."

"Do not begin joking so early in the morning, Max."

And turning to the guide, he asked:

"Did we see this traveler here last night?"

"No, sirs; he reached the hotel when you had gone up to the Faulhorn with those Frenchmen; he supped hastily and went at once to bed. His guide told me this gentleman had been more than once on the Faulhorn; it is scarcely a quarter of an hour since he took the road to Brienz."

"What does he look like? Is he young or old? What is his appearance?"

"He is a tall man, who speaks French and wears grey whiskers, which are almost white."

"Well! what did I tell you?" said the young doctor, himself astonished; "no doubt we are again going to meet the Russian in the midst of a desert."

"Is he not accompanied by a young girl, who seems delicate?" asked Herman.

"He is alone with his guide," replied the other.

"Alone, all alone!" muttered the young lawyer,

with horror. "Heavens! if it be he, what has he done with the poor girl?"

"Who knows, Herman, whether her mutilated corpse does not lie at the bottom of this gulf?"

"Say, my boy," enquired Herman, who seemed really uneasy, "is it true that this traveler is a long thin man with pale face and sparkling black eyes?"

"No, sir; quite the reverse. He is rather stout, has heavy cheeks, large blue eyes, and so red a nose that I wondered whether he had not knocked it against something. He said laughingly to his guide that it was the effects of Burgundy wine."

Our two Flemings had not awaited the end of the reply, before they burst out laughing. The Russian with a nose reddened by wine! This idea, which was destructive of every illusion, gave them cause to laugh at their own credulity.

"Sirs," finally said the young boy, "it would be well to commence the journey early; now it is still cold and hazy, but later on in the morning, if the sun makes its way through the clouds, it will become very warm."

"We leave immediately," was the answer. The Flemings called the hotel keeper and paid their bill. A few moments after they were on the sill of the door, alpenstock in hand, ready to get under way.

They looked around them in every direction, astonished to see nothing of what had so struck them the day before.

All nature was overcast with a gray veil. The mountains, valleys and abysses had disappeared,

and were replaced by an impenetrable fog. It seemed as if the earth and skies were confounded in shapeless confusion. Our travellers could distinguish objects perfectly some fifty feet off in every direction, and easily at a shorter distance; but further still, their view was limited by a cloud of vapor suspended over them and around them like a closed curtain. When they got under way, following their guide's footsteps, the young physician asked,

“What is the cause of this strange fog, my boy?”

“We are among the clouds, sir.”

“Among the clouds!” exclaimed Herman; “Ah, we are in the clouds. There are some who say that on the highest mountains one may wash one's hands in the clouds; I do not see how this could be done here.”

“It is only said as a joke,” replied the boy; “yet, gentlemen, there is some truth in it. On going down lower we will probably encounter heavier clouds, and will then see that fog wets one as well as rain.”

“Hurrah!” cried Herman, “this will afford us a new surprise. I was already out of humor when I saw the bad weather, but would now regret that the sun should suddenly dissipate the fog.”

“Well, what is it?” grumbled Max. “Shall we be compelled to go down in this way into this abyss straight in front of us, through the mist, without knowing what awaits us further on? That is frightful!”

When from the summit of the Faulhorn one looks

down on the side of Brienz, all the height seems to be but one piece of rock, almost perpendicular, which has a descent of over six thousand feet, penetrating to the bottom and meeting an immense and terrible abyss.

This immeasurable depth, which had made them shudder the day before, our Flemings were now about to penetrate into. The prospect was not very encouraging, and for tourists who were novices, there was really some cause for fear.

“Fear nothing, gentlemen,” said the guide; “the way is difficult, it is true, but there is not the slightest danger. This is the way to go around the Faulhorn; in an hour we shall reach a better road, that is to say we will not be obliged to keep to the side of the abyss.”

“An hour!” growled Max, who wanted to stop, “an entire hour, to walk as we are doing, with our eyes fixed on that frightful gulf, in a path which must have been trodden by goats and chamois.”

“Come along, Max, you are making us waste precious time,” said the young lawyer.

“Yes, yes; it is all very well, Herman, you at any rate have no responsibility; but if any accident were to happen, it seems to me I should never have the courage to return home.”

“But the boy says there is not the slightest danger.”

“If I could only see before me—but that infernal fog! One might run directly into a precipice without being aware of it.”

“The boy knows the road; it is his business. Would you prefer remaining on the Faulhorn or returning to the Grindelwald?”

“Let us trust to God’s providence then, Herman. Flanders has not mountains as high as the sky, but at least one finds roads there smooth and easy, and one does not run the risk every moment of breaking one’s—. Oh! What the devil kind of a road is this? the stones slip away, rolling beneath our feet.”

“It is why this mountain is called the Faulhorn,” said the guide, “as the gentlemen already know, *Faul* signifies rotten, worm-eaten. The mountain is formed of slate, which splits and breaks easily from dampness. The ground on the slope of the hill, where we are now walking, is entirely composed of heaps of stones, which have fallen for centuries from the summit of the Faulhorn, and which seem still to be slipping daily to the bottom. My father thinks the Faulhorn must once have been several feet higher than it is now, and that as time passes it will subside so as to become a little mountain, because its stone is not sufficiently hard.”

“Yes, yes!” grumbled Max, suddenly stopping, and planting his alpenstock between two stones, “give us lessons in geology, as if we were sitting here on the benches of the university; but if you think I will take another step, you are mistaken. Who in the devil was the first person who thought of conducting people on a road which is as zigzag as a folded piece of ribbon, at the extreme edge of a

frightful precipice? If one could at least observe a firm footing among all these rolling stones; a single false step, and down we go a thousand feet through this terrible fog."

Herman thought his friend was joking; he himself perceived the path was not the easiest or pleasantest, but put his trust in the guide's experience.

After some efforts to induce his companion to continue the journey, he said, in a half-offended tone:

"You speak of prudence, Max? Is not prudence in many cases the cloak of fear? For the most part are we not prudent in default of courage?"

"Courage, courage!" growled Max, "I have already told you that at home I was scarcely able to look out of the second-story window; it is a fear that has pursued me since my childhood."

"We are freezing here; you are a doctor, and will be the cause of our catching a pleurisy."

"Herman! at all events, for the love of Heaven, give me time to become accustomed to the sight of this abyss; and you, my boy, are you quite sure there is no danger of falling down the precipice?"

"Impossible, sir—even if you wished it."

"This is a little too strong; were I to jump from here, would I not roll to the bottom shivered to atoms?"

"No, sir; I will prove it to you at once, for it is too cold and too damp here to remain longer. See—pay attention, gentlemen."

And the youth permitted himself to fall down on the side of the abyss.

“For the love of Heaven, be done with this frightful drama!” cried Max, becoming pale.

The guide was stretched on the ground motionless, a few steps off, with a sardonic grin on his face.

He got up, turned towards the astonished Flemings and said:

“The gentlemen must perfectly see there is no danger. The side of the mountain appears to them much steeper than it really is. This is caused by the depth of the valley and the want of habit.”

“I am a fool,” said Max, sighing; “but no matter, I sha’n’t be caught again on this road. Now let us keep going, for I am half frozen.”

They walked a long while without exchanging a word, when finally they reached a point where the fog appeared to have partially melted away, at least about them; but they saw before them in the distance a mist much thicker and quite white, with a definite shape, the exterior surface of which seemed formed of heights and depths like a chain of mountains.

They stopped before this new spectacle to rest awhile.

“What is that?” asked Herman.

“They are the clouds, sir,” replied the young guide. “The people of Brienz when they now look overhead see above them a cloudy sky. It may be raining in the valley; it has undoubtedly rained some portion of the night.”

“And the clouds the Brienz people see over their heads we see under our feet?”

“ Exactly so, gentlemen ; in a few moments we will traverse one of those clouds ; it is suspended over there against the mountain, and lies entirely in our path. The gentlemen should button up their overcoats, for we will not leave the cloud without being somewhat wet.”

“ And if that white fog in the valley were a storm-cloud, we would see the lightning flash and hear the thunder roar beneath our feet ? ” questioned Max.

“ Certainly, gentlemen ; we see that very often.”

“ I do not know how I can make my mother believe that,” muttered Herman, thoughtfully. “ A thousand feet above the clouds—above the clouds whence the rain falls upon the earth below.”

They continued their journey, their eyes fixed upon the cloud, which seemed to impede their progress. The nearer they advanced the more evident it became to them that this cloud was but a heavier fog, and when they finally penetrated it, they only felt great dampness, which fell upon their heads and on their clothes like a gentle and abundant dew.

At the end of a few moments their overcoats were, outwardly at least, entirely wet.

The young doctor, who walked in advance with his hands extended, suddenly stopped and cried out, joyfully :

“ Now, indeed, I may say I have washed my hands in the clouds ! See, see how wet they are ! I rub them one against the other, and wipe them with my pocket-handkerchief. Let people refuse to believe it, if they will ; yet it still remains the truth.”

The young lawyer imitated him, and they amused themselves a long while with the pains they took to gather the dew upon their hands, that they might truly say at home they had really washed them in the clouds.

Finally the young physician exclaimed :

“ Let us walk a little faster, to get beyond the cloud. How cold it grows—a cold that gets into the marrow of my bones, and goes through and through me. If this were to last some time, one might take a real bath here.”

They began walking rapidly, and were almost in a run when the road made it possible.

For some little time the path carried them away from the edge of the abyss. They had passed before a little lake, their guide pointed out under the name of the *Huttenbodensee*. Further on they entered a thick woods of pine trees, entirely filled and penetrated with a gray fog, where a sad twilight reigned, as if night had come. They exchanged some observations on the sinister silence of these woods the daylight, sombre and obscure, much sadder than the darkness of night, and they ended by feeling themselves encompassed at this point by the melancholy of their solitary surroundings, so that they ceased conversation altogether.

The road went down precipitately towards the bottom, and at times presented difficulties of a nature to intimidate the young doctor. Whether Max was ashamed of his recent cowardice, or whether, as he said, a man accustoms himself to

everything, he skipped bravely out of the beaten track, and took pleasure in walking in advance of his companion as well as his guide.

So that it was in that way he was the first to reach the skirts of the woods, where he stopped suddenly with arms uplifted, and cried out like one asking for help—

“A chamois, a chamois! Quick, quick, Herman, a chamois! Pah! I believe the chamois knows how to fly. Heavens on earth! he is already half a league off.”

“What are you talking about a chamois for? You want to impose upon me.”

“What did you see, sir?” asked the guide, looking around him.

“A chamois, my boy, a chamois.”

“Nothing is impossible, sir; but I think you are mistaken.”

“Mistaken! an animal of a deep brown color, resembling a large goat, with a whitish head and two little horns curved like a hook!”

“Really, sir, it must have been a chamois. Where did you see it?”

“Over there against the rock; he jumped sideways and tossed about—yes, he seemed to have wings; in the twinkling of an eye he was far away, and has disappeared behind the heights, in the fog.”

“This astonishes me, sir; chamois do not generally allow themselves to be approached so near, and avoid every path trodden by the foot of man. This one may have been driven from the neighbor-

ing mountains by huntsmen. Even this I doubt, but yet, according to what the gentleman says it can be no other animal than the chamois."

"These animals must be very difficult to catch here," said Herman.

"Very difficult, sir; it is only the strongest men, and the most venturesome, that dare select the dangerous occupation of chamois-hunters. The animals must be watched and followed to the highest Alps and the most inaccessible summits with great prudence: if one has not a sharp sight and firm foot there is risk in this sort of hunting of ending one's life. In his youth my brother was a chamois hunter, and he has often made me promise not to venture to imitate him."

"Near a wooden bridge thrown across a stream that flowed down below," the guide explained, "was the Giesbach, the source of the torrent which three miles further on, at Brienz, forms the waterfall which many tourists come to visit, and which falls into the lake in several successive cascades."

They had reached some green hills, where they suddenly perceived, unexpectedly, a great number of cows grazing here and there, almost to the very edge of the path.

Max Rapelings stopped, hesitating, and refused to follow his comrade; at any rate he looked around him to find another way.

"Come, now; are you going to be afraid of inoffensive cows?" asked his companion of him.

"Not of the cows," he replied; "but of the

Muni; I think he is down there almost on our path, and looks upon us with a very unfriendly eye."

"See, now, how our young guide laughs at your fears."

"He may laugh as much as he pleases. I know what I read in *Bædeker*; as I am responsible, such warnings do not escape me; read rather at page 131: 'Wherever horned beasts are met, one should keep oneself as far as possible from the bull or muni.' *Bædeker*, who has traveled all over Switzerland, and who is consulted by everybody as an oracle, is, according to my opinion, better to be believed than a youth whose nature is careless and improvident."

The young guide, followed by Herman, passed bravely in the midst of the cows. Max Rapeling, grumbling and angry at his friend's imprudence, on the contrary, went a long way round.

The path being finally crossed, they once more discussed the question, and ended by both laughing over it.

Herman spied a hut, and asked the guide:

"Can we procure cheese there?"

"Bread and cheese, butter and milk, sir," replied the boy.

Hardly had they gone a few steps further than a traveler appeared in the doorway.

"Heavens, the Russian!" cried Max, stopping suddenly.

"Can it be possible?" stammered Herman, surprised.

But, when the stranger, followed by his guide, quitted the hut to come to meet them, the youth said:

“It is the traveler who left the Faulhorn hotel this morning. He also is going to Brienz.”

“No, it is not the Russian,” replied Max; “this one is stout, with a florid face.”

“Are the gentlemen going to Brienz?” asked the stranger, when he came up with them; “for in that case we can travel in company,” he added in French. “You, perhaps, mean to partake of something in the *Sennhütte*? I suffered from cold there, and am going to try to get a little warm; I shall, therefore, precede you, but will walk slowly enough to allow of your soon overtaking me. Good-bye for the present, then, gentlemen.”

As he said this, he walked away with his guide. The Flemings entered the hut, and asked for bread and cheese.

During this short repast, Herman made some remarks on the likeness of this traveler to the Russian, at least as regarded his figure and gray whiskers; but the young doctor ate hastily, and did not reply.

“Have a care, Max, you will choke yourself,” said Herman, laughing. “Well, why do you shake your head with such a serious air? Are you still asking yourself whether this traveler is not the Russian? We have no time here to amuse ourselves with trifles.”

“No, no! you are mistaken quite; another thought occupied my mind.”

“What was it?”

“Well, I think that stranger was the one who conversed with our Russian and the pale maiden at the Grindelwald.”

“Are you sure, Max?”

“Not very, but I risk nothing in asking him. It would be strange that here, lost in the fog, in the midst of a savage nature, we should learn who was the man who has so preoccupied and tormented us since we reached Switzerland.”

“Yes, and we might receive some information as to the unhappy fate of the pale young maiden.”

“Come, let us eat our bread and cheese as we walk along. Settle with these good people. I am impatient to know whether I am mistaken.”

They resumed their walk with great rapidity, and at the end of a quarter of an hour had rejoined the traveler.

“Foggy weather, gentlemen,” said the latter as he walked along, “for you, who probably travel to see Switzerland, this is very much to be deplored. As to me, I do not care, provided I can tire myself. Every one in my family suffers with gout; my father died of it. For the last six or seven years, I traveled through Switzerland on foot, not for the sake of seeing anything, but to protect myself from gout. An old German physician advised me to do so. Up to this time I have been able to keep my enemy off, though on occasions I do not deny myself a bottle of wine.”

“Has not the gentleman just come from the Grindelwald?” asked Max Rapelings.

“From what other spot could I come?”

“Excuse my indiscretion, sir; did you not converse there with a stranger who was in a carriage?”

“I do not remember.”

“With a Russian.”

“A Russian? I know no Russians.”

“A gentlemen, who was accompanied by a young girl, pale and sickly.”

“Ah! now I know what you mean. And you think that gentlemen is a Russian?”

“Yes.”

“A Russian!” exclaimed the gentleman, breaking out into a loud fit of laughter; “a Russian? He is a Fleming, like myself—a Fleming, from Gotteghem, near Ghent.”

Herman and Max exchanged glances of surprise, then were somewhat confused at their simplicity; but, finally, they imitated the hilarity of their interlocutor.

“You are a Fleming from Gotteghem, and we are Flemings from Ghent,” said Max, in his mother-tongue. “Let us then make use of the language of our dear country.”

“Ah, ah! long live the people of Ghent!” cried the traveler.

“How it rejoices our hearts,” resumed Herman, “each time we hear our mother tongue in a strange land; it is as if the town of Ghent appeared through the fog before our eyes. Is it not pleasant, sir, to hear one’s native language spoken unexpectedly in the mountains?”

“It matters little to me,” replied the traveler, “Flemish or French are alike, so that I protect myself from the gout. You seem astonished, gentlemen; but I am a guano merchant, which is equivalent to saying poetry, and I—”

The roughness of the road somewhat distanced our young friends from the traveler, who had not slackened his speed.

“Now,” said Max to Herman, “even I regret our dream is dispelled. Farewell all Russians, pale maidens, and tyrants. This will now subside into a commonplace story of peasants. I give you leave to throw away the glove, Herman.”

“I am almost inclined to follow your advice,” replied his friend; “however, no—I shall keep the glove as a souvenir of our credulous simplicity. Here we seem to have reached a less difficult portion of the road. We may be able to talk more at our ease.”

Herman walked beside the guano merchant, and asked him :

“Sir, would it be permissible for us to know the name of the person we took for a Russian?”

“His name is Jacques Halewyn.”

“It seems to me I have heard that name before. And the daughter’s name, what is it?”

“His daughter? his niece, you mean? her name is Florence Halewyn; she is the daughter of his brother. It seems, gentlemen, as though Mr. Halewyn and his niece inspired you with great interest?”

“Yes, it is a singular thing,” replied Herman, “we have met the gentleman and the delicate young girl some five or six times, and we imagined—why I cannot tell—that he was a bad man, and made the young girl very unhappy.”

“You were not mistaken, gentlemen; he is indeed a bad man, an egotist and heartless.”

“A tyrant?”

“A cruel tyrant.”

“And she, sir?”

“She? is the most miserable creature on earth.”

“Heavens! what do you mean by this, sir!”

“I mean that she is unhappy, utterly unhappy.”

“I pray you, sir, forgive all these questions,” said Herman; “What we dreamed of on the journey might possibly be true? The Russian vanishes, but the unhappy fate of the poor young girl remains a fact?”

“Come now, don’t begin to dream again,” replied Max Rapelings, laughing; “Mr. Halewyn is an uncle who has brought his niece to Switzerland to restore her health.”

“You are mistaken, sir, and your friend is right,” resumed the merchant; “this uncle is a heartless tyrant, a man who understands nothing in the world but his own interest. I know something about it; he has already had two lawsuits with me; to get what belongs to me, he accuses me of having encroached upon his land. You would not believe how avaricious and miserly this man is.”

“A miser!” muttered Max, “and he travels with

his niece into Switzerland, and has her carried up the mountains; yes, up to the glacier of the Grindelwald. That costs money."

"Yes, that costs money; but what is this to a miser who does it merely that he may lay hands on an inheritance of two hundred thousand francs that does not belong to him."

"You spur my curiosity, sir," said Herman, "and if you would be good enough—"

"To give you the facts more in detail? Why should I decline? They are facts known and told in our Commune and the adjacent villages. Try to walk beside me, gentlemen: I will make you acquainted with this hard-hearted man, as he is."

And he gave his young companions the following narrative, interrupted from time to time by the inequalities of the road:

"Jacques Halewyn's father, who lived in Ghent, made a good deal of money during the time of the Dutch, in the sale of cottons. At his death he left both his sons half a million. According to public rumor Jacques Halewyn must now possess six hundred thousand francs; he sees the opportunity for appropriating an additional two hundred thousand francs, and devotes all his life to attaining this end. Florence is his brother's daughter; she is an orphan, and Jacques Halewyn is her guardian. He keeps the unfortunate girl shut up in his chateau—"

"Ah! he has a chateau then?" said Max.

"Yes, an old tumble-down one, so sombre and

dull that merely to pass it by draws one's heart into a knot."

"Alas! the poor girl doubtless leads a very weary life in some dungeon."

"Not so fast, my young gentleman," said the merchant; "don't put the cart before the horse. Jacques is wary enough to keep his odious project within a semblance of law, and give no one a right to meddle with his business."

"His odious project!" but what project?" asked Herman in tones of excited curiosity.

"You do not understand? Jacques is worth more than half a million—young Florence enjoys a fortune of her own of over two hundred thousand francs. Should Jacques die first, then the niece inherits from her uncle; but if he outlives the young girl, then the uncle inherits from the niece. There are no other heirs, and none other can present themselves, unless Florence marries. This is very clear, I think—sufficiently so I fancy to make you guess the miser's project."

The young men expressed their incredulity by a slight shake of the head.

"Don't you understand" continued the former, "that Jacques Halewyn to become possessed of his niece's two hundred thousand francs must reach two ends; prevent the girl's marrying, and make her die prematurely."

"But this thought is horrible!" exclaimed Herman indignantly.

Just then the road became suddenly so narrow

and the descent so abrupt, that they could only walk one after the other with great difficulty.

When it became possible to resume conversation, Max asked :

“ So the poor young girl has remained shut up in this old chateau since her childhood? Has she then not received a suitable education? This does not appear to me less terrible.”

“ You are mistaken, sir, Jacques Halewyn is too cunning and clever to awaken the world’s suspicions without necessity. His niece has been sent to the best educational establishments in the country; and when at times she returned home for a few weeks, he brought from Ghent at great expense the best professors and governesses that could be had. It would appear as if he wished to squander his fortune, in giving to his niece the same education as to the daughter of a king. If he did this, it was to hide his hand. As long as Florence remained a child, things went on in the same way; but when he imagined his projects might be suspected, he had her brought back home and shut up in his chateau. This domicile is for her an actual prison—sombre and dull as a prison. Poor Florence is there surrounded by servants who are old, morose, unfeeling, and are as devoted to Jacques as if they had sold him their souls—cold and cruel taskmasters, who from morning until night torment and distress the unfortunate victim by their cowardly espionage. You may fancy, gentlemen, what a terrible life this is for a young girl who yearns for a little freedom,

who knows she is handsome and rich, and possesses everything to make the happiness of a good man."

"Indeed, it is a horrible life! Poor Florence!" sighed the young lawyer.

"Does Jacques Halewyn never have any visitors?" asked Max.

"He receives company; but what company? Two people who live on their small yearly rents, the notary, two or three of his farmers, a business agent, and the secretary of the Commune, all men of fifty, sixty, and seventy-five years of age."

"Do not these people see what the niece is enduring, and how oppressed she is by this miserly uncle?"

"No doubt they see it, but how does it affect them, since they only go to the chateau to fill their stomachs and imbibe good wine? In a word, whatever the reason, the unhappy Florence by dint of grieving has begun to languish and fade away, so utterly that the miser Halewyn will undoubtedly survive his niece. There will then be another two hundred thousand francs that the insatiate tyrant will lock up in his strong-box, and say, 'They are mine.'"

"No, that is not so certain," growled Herman, his teeth pressed together, indignantly.

"How, not certain! do you suppose by chance Jacques Halewyn will be the first to die? The Halewyns are men who take firm hold as trees, and unless they are overtaken by some accident they live to the age of eighty. Poor Florence, too,

might live a long time, if she were not hurried into the grave by being tormented to death."

"But if what you say is true, sir," remarked Herman, with more composure, "there must be some way of rescuing the innocent victim from her cruel tormentor."

"Yes, I advise you to try. In ten years you will not have succeeded in speaking a single word to the young girl—you more especially, young man, for you are of those whose face alone would cause Jacques Halewyn fear and anger."

"This is true; we have already had a proof of it," replied Max."

"You do not understand me," said Herman. "I am a lawyer; the law must furnish some means by which such misdeeds may be prevented, for it is a crime, a frightful crime, to sap the life of an innocent child through pure cupidity. There should be a family council; if it becomes necessary, I will go and speak with the king's solicitor. Ah! were I sure you are not mistaken, sir, I would move heaven and earth to prevent this wicked man from thus destroying his own brother's child."

"And you would be right, sir; but who speaks of destroying?—making her suffer mentally, tormenting and causing her to die of ennui, yes."

"Excuse any objection I may make, sir, but a doubt arises in my mind whether you may not be mistaken, without being aware of it, through appearances. If the uncle indeed wished to weary his niece to death, how is it he takes her to Switzer-

land? Were one wearied anywhere else, it would most certainly not be in the midst of the marvels of nature, amid the majestic splendors we are now admiring."

"Ah! now thereby hangs another tale," replied the guano merchant. "You perceive, gentlemen, that an heiress with two hundred thousand francs as her fortune, with a prospective half million—such an heiress, I say, attracts a great many young men; and if, to add to it, she is as beautiful as the unhappy Florence, it is very sure a number of foppish youths have dreams of her. And such is the case; we see occasionally appear in our village, young men from town, frizzed and tricked out, who roam around the old chateau as if they had lost something; but the bull-dog watches and keeps the lamb shut up in the stable as soon as he catches a glimpse even of one of these wolves with straw-colored kids. Yet I think for the last month he has taken affright, and is beginning to realize that neither doors, nor locks, nor iron bars, nor vigilance, suffice for the safe-keeping of his ardently-coveted treasure. There is a young lieutenant of Lancers, who for six weeks strolled about our Commune, which he surveyed in more senses than one, telling every one he meant to rescue the young girl whether the miser uncle consented or no. According to the story, he had already suborned one of the servants of the chateau, and Jacques Halewyn had discovered it through a letter of the lieutenant's which the girl was to deliver into Florence's hands. Then fear possessed

him, and he hastened to Switzerland to prevent the lieutenant's reaching his niece; he hopes in the meanwhile the regiment of Lancers to which the handsome lover belongs will leave the garrison at Ghent, or that the lieutenant will tire of his fruitless pursuit, and will let his niece and himself alone. Believe me, whatever happens, the poor child is sentenced. Jacques Halewyn will be her heir, and the silent tomb will not accuse the miser."

The young men still asked a great many questions of their traveling companion, but they gleaned nothing new from his answers.

This conversation had tired them, and they walked along awhile in silence.

Finally they reached a point where the beaten track went down precipitately, with sharp turns and twists, against the steep mountain. The merchant, more accustomed to this sort of exercise, reached the bottom some little time before his companions, and continued walking while they were still high up, which gave the young men, who were a little way behind, an opportunity of exchanging opinions.

"That Jacques Halewyn is no inconsiderable blackguard," said Max, "at least if this man tells the truth."

"An egotistical cheat, an inhuman oppressor, worse than an assassin," cried Herman; "yet I am glad chance threw in my way that cowardly robber of fortunes. I never thought to try a case, but now who knows if even with the little knowledge I possess, I may not extricate that poor, sorrowing

lamb from the voracious wolf's claws. If she were to be beholden to me for a long and happy life, I would indeed thank God for giving me the noble profession of the law, with the power at the same time of turning it to account."

"Your idea is not a bad one," replied Max, "provided you act with entire disinterestedness."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you suppose I do not see, Herman, what you are thinking about? Hardly is the romance of the Russian at an end, than you are about to manufacture another. This begins to make me uneasy. With all these fine illusions in your head, we forget half the time we are in Switzerland. Let us rather open our hearts and minds to the beauties of nature."

"Why do you speak to me of romances, Max? At least be serious once more in your life; the thing is too important to be jested about."

"Say all you choose, Herman; if ever you manufactured a romance, you are doing it now."

"What romance do you mean?"

"Listen, I will tell you in three words. There was once upon a time a beautiful young lady who was oppressed by an inhuman guardian. A young lawyer took up her defense—worked, travelled about, pleaded, and behaved with such devotion and perseverance that he succeeded in rescuing the poor victim from the hands of her cruel persecutor. The young girl in gratitude gave her hand to the courageous advocate; they married, had many children,

and lived happily to a very old age. I have seen this drama represented with a happy ending at the theatre in Ghent when I was still a little boy. Dare to say this is not the romance you are about to manufacture, without perhaps being perfectly conscious of the intention?"

"You are tiresome and insupportable!" cried the young lawyer impatiently; "what you are saying is only ridiculous foolishness. Do you suppose if Jacques Halewyn came and said to me, 'Take my niece as your betrothed' I would accept her? The mystery is now solved, and with this the charm has fled, the power of the unknown. Pity alone remains, and the desire to make a beginning in my career of a lawyer by a great act of humanity. Do not laugh at my wish, do not turn the project into ridicule; for I warn you for the first time in my life, I should feel myself obliged to conceal my feelings from you, and this would make me unhappy."

"I should not be less so, Herman," replied the young Esculapius; "if I am mistaken forgive me, for indeed, could you wrench his victim from that miserable miser, it would be a good and noble deed; and since you seem so resolved to attempt it—"

"Yes, as soon as we return to Ghent."

"Well, then, I will help you. You know that Max Rapelings, though something of a jester, has his heart in the right place. Moreover, while we are friends, I will not allow you to do any good thing without having a share in it."

Herman took his hand and pressed it warmly.

“I thank you, Max,” he said. “Ah! I know indeed you have a noble heart, and would not deny me your assistance to rescue a poor child!”

The guano merchant, thinking that the two young men remained behind because he walked too fast, had stopped to wait for them.

“The fog will probably not scatter all day,” he said. “Switzerland is only beautiful in fine weather; there are frequently these gray and misty days in the mountains. It has even happened to me in one of my former trips to remain a week without seeing the sun. But we must accept the weather as it comes. Still another hour and a half and we will be at Brienz, or, to speak more correctly, at the foot of the Giesbach. If you are tired, gentlemen, I will walk a little slower.”

“We are not very tired,” replied Max, “and I am astonished at it. I have always heard it said it was more fatiguing to descend than ascend a mountain; this idea is most assuredly without foundation.”

“That depends somewhat on the way we understand it,” replied the merchant. “The descent is easier, indeed, but the next day one’s legs are stiff and one’s feet pain, that is, when not accustomed to long walks. This we do not feel on ascending; a short rest restores one immediately.”

When they had still walked some further distance in silence, the merchant asked: “Are the gentlemen going to spend the night at the hotel of the Giesbach, or at Brienz?”

“Neither at one nor the other, sir,” replied Herman.

“You mean to return as I do, perhaps, by the steamer to Interlaken?”

“Nor that either, sir. We intend taking the diligence to reach Lucerne by way of Brienz.”

“It is too late for this to-day, gentlemen. One loses a good deal of time in conversing, while walking along. We will not reach Brienz until mid-day. The last departure of the diligence is at forty-five minutes past eleven.”

“We will then be obliged to remain all night at Brienz,” said Max; “it will be a day lost.”

“Yes, and you will find it pretty stupid. It will probably rain this afternoon. Moreover, except the Giesbach, there is nothing else to see at Brienz.”

“An unfortunate accident!” cried Herman.

“There is one way, however,” resumed the merchant, “but it is costly. In taking a post chaise you would still reach Lucerne before night, the post chaise costs from seventy to eighty francs.”

“What do you think about it?” asked Herman of his friend; “it is expensive, but it would perhaps be better than to waste a whole day uselessly.”

“No, no! eighty francs are too much,” replied Max; “rather let us be somewhat bored. We can better employ the money.”

“Are the gentlemen going to return home by the way of Lucerne?” asked the merchant.

“No, our plan of travel is to reach Fluelen by crossing the lake of the Four Cantons, and to go to Geneva by the St. Gothard.”

“But, before that, we will climb the Righi, tomorrow,” added Max.”

“It is a magnificent mountain,” said the merchant. “From the top of the Righi-Kulm there is a splendid and grand sight to be enjoyed. Now I come to think of it, you will there meet Jacques Halewyn and his niece.”

“Have they also gone to Lucerne, to make the ascent of the Righi?” asked Herman with surprise.

“Yes, Mr. Halewyn told me at the Grindelwald he was going directly to Brienz and Interlaken, towards Lucerne, that he might visit the Righi. If you see him, salute him for me; it will please him, and as he does not wish me well, I prefer to conduct myself toward him as if I had no suspicion of it.”

“Jacques Halewyn on the Righi?” muttered the young doctor; “what think you of this Herman?”

“It is rather serious, Max; I think we should not climb the Righi. If I am ever to see Mr. Halewyn again, I prefer it should be in Flanders, that I may snatch his poor victim away by legal means.”

“Yet there are many hotels on the Righi, and we may possibly find means to avoid him. We cannot pursue our journey without having visited the Righi.”

“Say what you please, Max; I will not ascend the Righi,” replied the young lawyer in decided tones. “Were I again to meet that bad man, and he were once more to gaze at me defiantly, I should be carried away to commit some act of imprudence. It is not in this way I shall attain my end. He wounded me at the Grindelwald in my sense of honor, and I have not forgotten it.”

“Well! we will let the Righi alone, and go directly from Lucerne to Fluelen.”

A little further on the merchant resumed :

“Do you not hear a certain roaring? We are approaching the upper fall of the Giesbach. With this sombre overcast weather it is not fine ; this is a pity. The Giesbach which in seven leaps, that is seven falls, comes down from one rock to another, from a height of some twelve hundred feet, is one of the most remarkable sights of Switzerland, and is visited yearly by thousands of strangers. We are not very far from the upper fall, but to enjoy a more perfect view we must reach the spot known as the Terrace.”

And, indeed, they began descending a hill thickly planted in trees, and soon saw beneath them the first fall of the Giesbach, which comes forth foaming and roaring from a narrow opening in the mountain, whose perpendicular side seems to rise at least four hundred feet.

The hazy weather greatly decreased the pleasure they would have felt in gazing at the cascade, so that they hastened to proceed down a well-worn path as far as the Terrace.

There, they obtained, as far as the fog would permit, a general view of all the Giesbach. Cascades leapt above and below them, but as the sheet of water was not very extensive, the spectacle did not produce upon them the impression they had anticipated.

The merchant said to them, “If the weather is

good this evening, I advise you to take a boat at Brienz and return here. The trip is a pleasant one, and you will see an effect of light that is worth the trouble, though in my opinion they have rather overdone it. There in that hotel a bell is rung to let travelers know the spectacle is going to begin. A few moments after a report like the discharge of cannon takes place, the cascade is illuminated with Bengal lights, alternately white, green, and red. The Giesbach becomes like melted fire; its foam flecked with colored sparks seems transformed into a torrent of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds; but this sight, I confess, has only awakened in me a feeling of repulsion. What is gained by making this gorgeous nature resemble the transformation scene in an opera? Bengal lights to produce dramatic effects through the marvels of Switzerland! And yet, this artifice, this phantasmagoria, draws every year more than twenty thousand tourists to the spot where we now are."

"You are right, sir," said Herman; "but since we do not know how to dispose of our time this evening, we will therefore come to view the illumination of the Giesbach."

"To make the little excursion still more agreeable, you should order your boat in advance, and above all, should hire one manned by young girls."

"Young girls?" repeated Herman; "young Swiss girls?"

"Yes, sir; they row like real sailors, and they look very graceful and pretty in their Swiss cos-

tumes ; they sing while rowing pretty songs, quite charmingly and artistically."

"Yes, yes," cried Herman, with animation, "we must sail in one of these boats."

"This will recall to me my amiable friends in the beer-cellar at Berne," added Max.

"Happy country, where man and nature combine to make earth a paradise!" cried Herman, enthusiastically. "Enchanting scenery, enormous mountains, blue lakes—every marvel in creation. And this is not enough: lovely young girls welcome you with a smile on their lips; they impel the light boat on the glassy surface of the lake, singing *lieds* which transport you away from earth. If life may really be called a dream anywhere, it is in Switzerland. What a beautiful dream this is."

"Ta, ta, ta! there you are again, riding your hobby," said Max, laughing in a mocking tone. "As to myself, since we have begun to walk in this cold, grey fog, my admiration for this paradise has somewhat diminished."

The merchant, going down further, carried them to a spot where they could walk under one of the falls of the Giesbach, and told them that when the weather was fine and the sun shining, the view seen across the sheet of water of the cascade was magnificent. All nature then seems in motion, and colored with every prismatic hue.

Having reached the foot of the Giesbach at the point where it empties into the lake at Brienz, they stopped a few moments more, but as the fog did

not allow them to distinguish anything above them, the beautiful landscape was in a great measure lost.

They left with a feeling of sadness, entered a boat, and were conducted across the lake towards Brienz, where they disembarked a half hour later at the hotel of the Bear (Ours).

As they expressed the wish to have a good dinner, the host told them they would do better to wait for the table d'hôte that was to be served in an hour.

After resting awhile, the guano merchant proposed to them to walk through Brienz to while away the time.

"It is very true," he said, "that there is nothing remarkable to see, particularly when the surrounding landscape is hidden by the fog. But for people who have not been to Meyringen, Brienz offers some pretty specimens of Swiss architecture—that is to say, some of those graceful and singular frame houses, known by the name of chalets, which astonish strangers by their picturesque construction."

Max and Herman really took great pleasure in looking at one of the streets, which was, so to speak, almost entirely covered over by the salient roofs. Each house, however small, had its own balcony, which the carpenter had ornamented with carving, or on which he had endeavored to bestow an artistic shape. The staircase leading to the upper story was suspended to the lateral gables of the houses, and reached to the street.

They had stopped at a fountain, where three or

four young girls were engaged in washing clothes. Max Rapelings had even gone so far as to engage them in conversation; and as they were not at all shy, they answered the questions with so much spirit that the young men might easily have forgotten the dinner hour, if it had not suddenly begun to rain.

They hastened to say farewell to the young Swiss girls, and ran to their hotel, where they arrived just as soup was being served.

Some persons had already taken their places at the table. They talked loud, and were generally complaining of the bad weather; some regretted that, in consequence of it, they had been deprived of many of the pleasures of the trip.

Herman tried to induce his friend to secure a post-chaise, and, in his desire to take advantage of this means of transportation, was grumbling in an undertone at the slowness of the service.

The merchant thought this great haste unreasonable, whatever might be the conclusion they should come to; for, according to his opinion, when one is anywhere comfortably seated, it is not well to be in haste to change one's place, and, at all events, if they left for Lucerne they would reach there before nine o'clock, time enough to have a good night's rest. It was raining very heavily just then, and the sky was extremely lowering; the carriage, therefore, would have to be closed, for they could not expect to see much on the way.

A gentleman, rather advanced in years, who was seated beside Herman and had heard the conversa-

tion, said that he and one of his friends had also had the intention of going to Lucerne in a post-chaise, but had hesitated, owing to the expense. If the young gentlemen would go halves with them, it would only cost each one the fourth of the sum.

The proposal being accepted, they begged the host to engage a postillion.

The coffee had been served but a few minutes when the host entered the room and called out:

“Gentlemen, the post-chaise awaits you at the door.”

The young men shook hands with the guano merchant, and thanked him for his pleasant company.

They entered the carriage with their two new companions, the driver whipped up the horses, and they went off in a quick trot.

It continued still to drizzle, and all nature was wrapped in a fog, which did not allow of any object being visible a short distance off. The young men deeply regretted not being able to enjoy the scenery they were passing through, and were content to exchange a few words every now and then about the bad weather, or things not relating to their trip.

Their new companions were persons advanced in years, who did not talk much; one of them especially seemed to possess a caustic humor, and at intervals complained of his health.

Whether the rain had caused the Brunigberg road to be slippery, or that the horses had not been pushed on, it was nearly six o'clock when they reached the town of Surnem.

There the morose traveler asked permission to alight for a few moments at the best hotel; he felt the need of taking something warm, and wanted them to give him a cup of strong hot tea.

Therefore the carriage stopped at the hotel which had been named, but as there was already another post-chaise in front of the door, they were obliged to place themselves a little to one side.

They entered the hotel.

Herman and Max had no desire to take tea, and seated themselves at a private table, where they were served with a glass of kirsch.

It took a long time for the tea to be brought—the Flemings were becoming impatient. The weather had greatly improved, and spots of blue could be seen in the sky through the clouds; but the rain and fog had dulled the spirits of the young men, who for some moments had relapsed into silence.

Herman mechanically drew forth his pocket-book and began looking through it. Max Rapelling, who surveyed him with a light and mocking smile, inquired of him:

“What are you looking for in your pocket-book?”

“I do not know myself,” replied his friend; “I am being bored here.”

“It is the glove that is working, without your being aware of it.”

“No; I am not thinking of the glove any more.”

“Yet you are gazing at it, Herman? What does it say to you?”

“Oh! I have no idea of joking now. I am thinking of nothing in particular.”

And, closing his pocket-book, he was about to put it away, when an unexpected apparition gave him such a sudden and violent shock, that he rose at once, and leaning his arms upon the table, he allowed the pocket-book to slip from his hands without perceiving it.

Through a door that opened at the extremity of the room, Jacques Halewyn entered, followed by his niece. The old man visibly paled and a shiver ran through his frame when he saw the young people; but he made believe not to have seen them, and precipitately beat a retreat through the front door. The young girl followed him with her head down, more out of health apparently and sadder than ever.

A moment after, Herman heard the first post-chaise drive away. Without exactly knowing what he was about, and still impressed with this sudden meeting, he ran to the door.

Neither he nor any one else had noticed that a sudden jerk of his overcoat had brushed his pocket-book off the table.

He soon returned, threw himself on a chair, and said to Max, who was no less astonished than he—

“Poor child, isn't she? Did you get a good look at her this time, Max? Alas! she will not live very long.”

“She has sorrow, great sorrow indeed,” replied the young physician; “I am surprised beyond

words. Has it been written above we are not to move a step in Switzerland without meeting those who are inimical to our pleasure?"

"Inimical to our pleasure?"

"Why, yes; since we are thus pursued by jealous fate, all our trip has been spoiled. I thought we were going to forget the Russian, the tormentor and his victim, at least until we returned to Flanders—and by all that's good! here they ride up again before our eyes, as if they had come out of the ground. God knows whether at Lucerne we may not fall upon them at the same hotel. This time you behaved well, Herman; but if he had insulted you anew by look or word?"

"Then, indeed, I should not have been master of myself; the very sight of that soulless man makes the blood boil in my veins."

"I am inclined not to go to Lucerne at all."

"There is an infallible way of preventing it; we will go to a second-rate hotel."

"You are right, Herman; but I know not—this means, which under ordinary circumstances I should regard as certain, does not inspire me with great confidence—it really appears as if we were bewitched."

Their two companions had risen and announced themselves as ready to continue the journey.

Max and Herman followed them to the carriage, and muttered in a low voice against the fate which was always crossing their path in the shape of Mr. Halewyn and his niece, and which was probably

preparing for them a new encounter. Their only hope was that the driver, in continuing not to press his horses, prevented their overtaking Mr. Halewyn before reaching Lucerne.

In this way they came to Alpnach-Gestad, where the carriage stopped for a moment. The young men alighted to stretch their legs.

Suddenly, Herman gave a cry of anxiety, as he felt in his pockets.

“What has happened? Have you lost anything?” asked Max.

“Heavens! my pocket-book, my pocket-book!” muttered Herman, growing pale.

“Well! why excite yourself in this way? If your pocket-book is lost, buy another when we get to Lucerne.”

“What a misfortune!”

“Because the glove is in it? You astonish me, Herman.”

“The glove! Who in the devil is thinking of the glove. You forget my money is in the pocket-book.”

“Your money?”

“Yes; eight hundred francs in bills on the Bank of France. You know it very well.”

“The devil!” exclaimed the young doctor, who became interested in his turn. “This is a misfortune, indeed; it would cut off our trip considerably. I have about the same sum, but it is not enough. We could write to your mother and await her answer at Lucerne. But are you not mistaken? make

a better search into your pockets. Wait, I will go to the carriage and see if it is not there."

"No, no, it is useless," replied Herman, who remained immovable, absorbed in thought; "I know now where it is. I left it on the hotel table at Sarnem. The sudden appearance of M. Halewyn and his niece so bewildered me that I forgot my pocket-book. What is now to be done?"

"The matter is very simple, Herman: bid our travelling companions farewell, and return to Sarnem like the wind. Maybe the pocket-book is still on the table where you left it."

"Come, let us hasten; a moment lost might be sufficient to prevent our finding it."

They explained to their travelling companions that it would be impossible for them to continue their journey to Lucerne, hired another carriage, and ordered the driver to take them back to Sarnem without a moment's delay; from there the man was to take them back to Alpnach, and conduct them to Lucerne.

They bowled along for some time without exchanging a word; Max was the first to break the silence.

"I am struggling against myself," he said, shaking his head; "I am inclined to laugh at my own credulity, and am really ashamed of my superstitions. But it avails me nothing: I cannot get rid of the idea that it is that horrid glove which is bringing trouble upon us."

"Don't joke, now, I beg of you, my friend," re-

plied Herman. "Do not mention the glove any more; such things may occur to any one through accident."

"Would you have lost your pocket-book if you had not drawn it forth to look at the glove?"

"What a foolish question! M. Halewyn's sudden appearance is the only cause"—

"But who or what had arranged matters in such a way as to make M. Halewyn appear, just as you had taken out your pocket-book, and thus cause you to forget it?"

"Enough nonsense, Max; the loss of those eight hundred francs, which would have enabled us to prolong our Swiss trip, is an unfortunate circumstance. We not only lose our money, but also the pleasure which we promised ourselves. We cannot go to Geneva. I should not like to write to my mother about it, and who knows whether we would not be obliged to wait a whole week at Lucerne before the money reached us? I am miserable; your perpetual jokes trouble me."

"Why, Herman, I am not less grieved than you."

"Why do you joke, then?"

"On the contrary, I am quite serious; every one has at times his moments of worry. I cannot help matters. Here is a concatenation of odd circumstances—something strange that frightens me. If you have lost your pocket-book, it is, it seems to me, because fate, or some other mysterious power regarded the event as necessary to impel us towards a certain end."

“What has happened since our arrival in Switzerland is incomprehensible, indeed!” replied Herman, sighing. “These last four or five days my head has been stuffed with illusions and reveries, quite as if I had gone back to childhood. Hardly am I delivered from these visions, than you, the cold and caustic Max, begin to dream in your turn, and give credence to things of the other world. The matter that afflicts us, is it not in itself sufficiently grave? And moreover, why do we speak as if the pocket-book were irrevocably lost? Come now, banish these silly ideas. If we recover the pocket-book, with its contents, will not every reason for making this event appear extraordinary or supernatural disappear at the same time?”

“Do you believe this? Well then, you are mistaken; whether you find the pocket-book or no, other complications will arise from this incident, you will see.”

“What are they?”

“Ah! that I can't tell. May be Jacques Halewyn is on his way to Flanders, and destiny wishes to oblige us to follow him.”

“Enough, hold your tongue. We are approaching Sarnem, and will soon know what awaits us.”

A few moments later the carriage stopped before the door of the hotel, and the young men entering went straight to the table near which Herman was seated when the apparition of M. Halewyn and his niece so inopportunately took him by surprise.

They did not find the lost article either on the table or under it.

They called the host and explained how Herman deposited his pocket-book on the table, and had forgotten it on leaving. They were astonished not to find it, and did not doubt some one had taken it—probably to lay it aside until it should be claimed by the owner.

The host gave them a glance indicative of mistrust and displeasure, especially when they told him the pocket-book contained eight hundred francs in bank-bills.

“Be quiet and prudent, gentlemen,” he said to them; “had you forgotten a pocket-book or anything else in my house, you would have found it in the same place, or I would have sent it to you immediately. My hotel is safe, and all my servants are trustworthy ones. Therefore, say nothing that may cast a doubt on their honesty. You have probably lost your pocket-book elsewhere.”

The young men continued to search, moving chairs and benches. While they did so, Herman repeated several times that he knew he was not mistaken, and was perfectly sure he had placed his pocket-book on the table, near the window. This persistence irritated the inn-keeper more and more. He called for his family in a loud voice, as well as for his servants, and said to them:

“These gentlemen insist that they left here on this table a pocket-book, containing a large sum of money in bank-bills. They do not find it, and probably have drawn the conclusion that one of us has taken it.”

They all lifted their shoulders, muttering, and expressed their indignation at such a suspicion.

“We do not actually accuse any one,” said Herman. “Strangers may have come here. Why be angry with me on account of it? I declare and affirm that I forgot my pocket-book on that table—if I do not find it, so much the worse; but were there two hundred of you, you could not make me believe that the pocket-book took unto itself wings and flew away.”

“This is a little too much!” replied the innkeeper—“to wish to cast a slur on the good name of my house! If I did not contain myself”—

He clinched his hands and surveyed the young men with angry eyes.

A person seated in a corner of the room placed himself in front of the innkeeper.

“My friend,” he said; “be calm and reasonable. These gentlemen have lost quite a large sum, which is not pleasant; they think they have lost their pocket-book here; they may be mistaken, but you understand they neither suspect nor accuse any one. If they do not find the pocket-book, they will endure the loss without doubting the honesty of the people in your house.”

“Let them say so, then,” cried the innkeeper; “for if they thought”—

“No, no,” interrupted the former, “there must be no bitterness; the best plan is to seek once more with care, and if it is not found, it will be proof positive it was not lost here.”

The servants followed his advice and sought in every corner of the room, behind the buffets and curtains. The stranger approached the young men, took a chair beside them, and encouraged them in a friendly manner, consoling them as well as he could for the probable loss. Learning they would return that same evening to Lucerne, he told them he also was going there, but would spend the night at Sarnem, to await the arrival of the mail coach.

The Flemings offered him a place in their carriage. He thanked them cordially for their politeness, and accepted it.

During this time the servants had ceased their fruitless search and stood around the inn-keeper, with open mouths, who remained in the middle of the room grumbling to himself, and finally said to the young men, in a surly tone :

“The pocket-book is not here, and never has been. Seek it elsewhere—I have no more time to give to this business. Farewell, gentlemen, and take care not to think any one in a house like mine could lose any article whatever without finding it.”

He left the room, but returned immediately; he was displeased and disquieted. The suspicions of the travelers wounded him deeply.

Herman rose, and said :

“There is nothing more to do—we must resign ourselves, and be consoled for this loss. Come, let us get into the carriage, and say to ourselves that it is better so than to have broken a leg or arm. We will get home a little sooner, that is all.”

“There are indeed greater troubles,” replied Max. “We must make a virtue of necessity, only let us hasten to go; it is not pleasant here for us—the master of the house looks at us as if he would like to gobble us up raw. I understand his indignation—but is it our fault?”

Saying this, they had already made some steps towards the carriage, when suddenly one of the servants appeared at the half-open door of an adjoining room, and called out from there, his face full of smiles, to the innkeeper—

“Sir, sir! come here and see something. How strange this is! How remarkably queer! That good-for-nothing Mops has found the pocket-book.”

All ran towards the adjoining room, where the servant pointed out a little brown dog asleep in a basket, his snout resting on the long looked-for pocket-book.

“I beg your pardon, gentlemen,” stammered forth the confused innkeeper, “but who would have supposed that infernal brute could have dragged your pocket-book into his nest? It is at least a proof that nothing was forgotten on the table, but you had let it fall on the floor.”

Our two Flemings, in their joy at having recovered their money—for the pocket-book had not been opened—replied in a friendly tone to the innkeeper, and generously rewarded the servant. They then got into the carriage, gave their new travelling companion the best place, and charged the driver to take them to Lucerne with all possible speed.

At first, as was most natural, they talked only of the strange incident—to find the sum of eight hundred francs in a dog's nest, just when they had lost all hope, and were about to leave. Why, in the mischief, had the dog picked up the pocket-book and carried it off to his basket? It would naturally lead to a suspicion of the most honest people in the world. For when one is entirely and perfectly assured of having left an object in a certain place, and it cannot be found, is it not sufficient reason for believing some one has taken it?

When they had laughed and talked quite a length of time about the pocket-book that was lost and found, the conversation turned on other subjects. The friends learned from their traveling companion he was a Frenchman, and belonged to a house in the neighborhood of Bordeaux. He had already made a short trip to Switzerland for pleasure, and had then discovered that it would be very easy to introduce French wines. His actual home was Lucerne, and he traveled from that point to all the neighboring cities and towns to make sales. The consumption of French wines augmented every day in proportion as the number of strangers increased; so that he had great hopes of doing a good business.

He in his turn asked the young men for particulars of themselves, that he might know them better and also whether they meant to spend some days at Lucerne.

“We had intended going up the Righi, to-mor-

row," replied Max, "but to our great sorrow, we have been obliged to give it up for a particular reason. At this time there are on the Righi some people we do not wish to meet for anything in the world—so nothing is left us to do but take the steamboat for Fluelen."

"In your place, I would make the ascent of Pilatus," said the Frenchman.

"Is Pilatus a fine mountain, sir?"

"As a mountain, it is far ahead of the Righi, though the latter is becoming more and more the fashion. Some six or seven years ago I was coming directly from Basle to Lucerne, with the sole intention of ascending the Righi, for I had heard wonders of it, but as I found myself on the quay at Lucerne, they pointed out to me on the left a mountain entirely covered with trees and verdant meadows, that was the Righi. On the right side, shooting up, as it were, from the bottom of the lake, towards heaven, was another mountain, steep, rocky, bare, sombre, and of a most striking aspect. I was told this was Pilatus, that a road had been cut on its rugged sides, a road that had cost no less than twenty-five thousand francs, and the summit could be reached in four hours. You may understand, gentlemen, that I did not hesitate a moment in my choice and went up Pilatus. It is still one of the liveliest memories I have of my first trip to Switzerland. There are two good hotels on Pilatus. Ascend that mountain, gentlemen, and you will thank me for the advice."

“Your description is interesting; how beautiful Pilatus must be to see!” exclaimed Herman.

“Beautiful? say rather ugly, bare, rugged, and in that sense one of the most attractive mountains in Switzerland, that is, with respect to the few difficulties there are in making its ascent.”

“The idea is not a bad one,” said Max; “in this way we will be enabled to visit one mountain in the environs of Lucerne. If it be not the Righi, it shall be Pilatus. The gentlemen has awakened my curiosity. What do you say, Herman?”

“Mine also; it is settled, we will ascend Pilatus to-morrow morning.”

“If this be your intention, gentlemen, I must tell you,” said the Frenchman, “that to visit Pilatus you are not obliged to go to Lucerne. On our road, five-fourths of a league from the town, is the village of Hergiswyh; at the very foot of Pilatus, there is a good country inn. I know the host; he is an excellent man, and has delicious wines in his cellar. You might pass the night there, and be ready to climb the mountain the next morning after breakfast. What do you think of it?”

“Thank you for the excellent advice, sir; we will follow it,” said Max Rapelings.

“Then I shall soon have to bid you farewell, gentlemen; look out of the window to your left—that sombre height is the foot of Pilatus—I will pay for the carriage from Hergiswyh to Lucerne.”

The Flemings replied it was paid for to Lucerne. The Frenchman had then nothing more to do than to give a generous gratuity to the driver.

He resumed his talk of Mount Pilatus, of the first hotel on the *Klemsenhorn*, and the second one, which is situated much higher at the foot of the *Ezel*, (The Ass), of the road which is called *Krisiloch*, that ascends like a tunnel across the body of the mountain, and of many other details, until the moment they reached Hergiswyh. There, the Flemings exchanged cordial handshakes with their traveling companion and bade him farewell.

THE END.



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