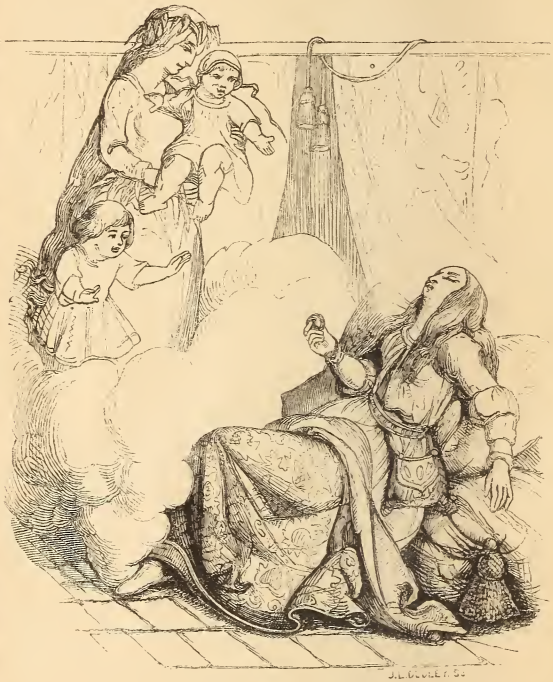


THE NYMPH OF THE FOUNTAIN.

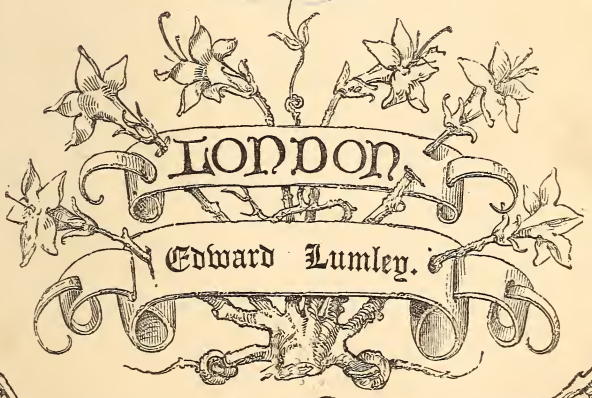
P. 61.

Select Popular Tales

From the German of

Musæus.

With Six Wood Engravings after the German.



Contents.

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Advertisement.

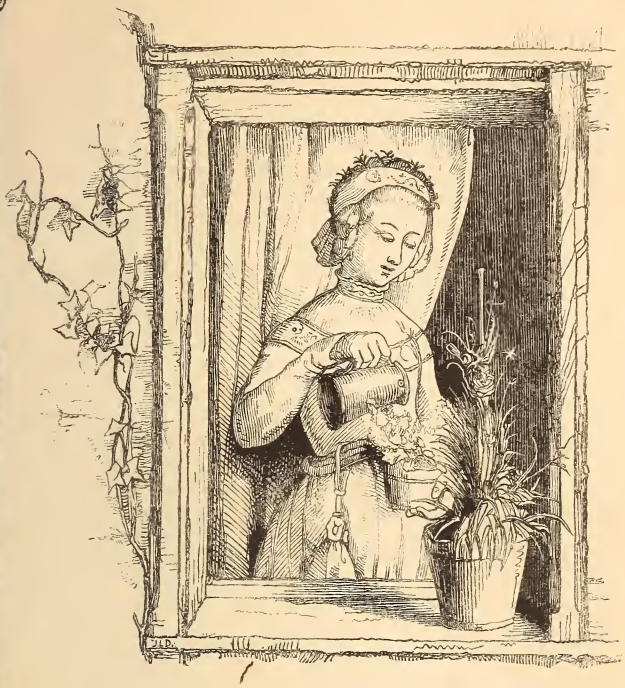
In a Series like the present, intended chiefly for the purposes of recreation, and including a considerable number of translations from foreign writers, we should hardly have been pardoned for passing over the Popular Tales of Musaeus, which have so long been established favourites in their own country. The present Volume contains such a selection from the whole Series as seemed best fitted for the general English reader; and,—in order to adapt the Stories as much as possible to popular use,—in several places, where the original was thought somewhat prolix, the Editor has not scrupled to use his judgment in condensing them.[1] In particular, the first Legend of Rübezahl will be found to be rather a summary of the Story than a translation; the object of inserting it in this collection, indeed, being chiefly to serve as an introduction to the two Tales which follow.

Musaeus must not be looked upon as much more than an amusing writer; nor, indeed, does he profess to write with any high moral purpose; still, to those who are disposed to find it, a moral may, without much difficulty, be deduced from many of his Tales. We may observe, for instance, the hardening effects of vanity and pride in the case of the wicked Richilda; and, again, in the story of the "Nymph

[1] To those who wish to peruse these Tales in their full form, we may mention a handsome English edition, now publishing by Cundall, and the German illustrated edition of 1842, published at Leipzig; from which last the wood-cuts in this selection have been borrowed.

of the Fountain," we see the sad results of an easy credulity on the part of the Count, who listens but too readily to the false accusations against his wife; while invisible powers are watching over her safety, and at last vindicate her innocence at the moment of her extreme peril.

We need hardly remark, that the sources of these stories are to be found in the popular legends with which Germany abounds, and many of which are known in our own country with more or less variation. The author's manner of treating them, however, is so original and ingenious, that we almost forget that we have known them before: an old acquaintance may be said to meet us, in the pages of Musaeus, with all the freshness and interest of entire novelty; and we may well forget that the tale of "Roland's Squires" is but an embellished version of the simple legend of the "Three Soldiers and the Dwarf,"— "Richilda" of "Snowdrop," — "The Nymph of the Fountain" of "Catskin," and so on. For these legends in their unadorned state, we may refer to Grimm's famous "Kinder and Hausmärchen," or to "Household Tales and Traditions" (in this Series), where the greater part of them will be found. These Stories are so captivating in their original form, that we almost regret, at first, that any attempt should be made to embellish them; and, indeed, nothing but the wit and cleverness of a Musaeus, or, on the other hand, the poetry and deep earnestness of a Tieck, could compensate for the loss of their simple beauty. However, we believe they may be relished in both ways; and, without further preface, we commend the following specimens to the reader.



P. 7

Mute Love.

THERE was once a wealthy merchant, called Melchior of Bremen, who always used to stroke his chin with a kind of complacence when he heard the parable of the rich man in the Gospel read, whom, in comparison with himself, he considered but a poor shopkeeper. Such, indeed, was his wealth, that he had the floor of his banqueting-room paved with dollars; for luxury, though of a more substantial kind, was prevalent in those rude times, as well as now: and while his friends

and fellow-citizens were not much pleased at such a proof of his ostentation, yet it was, in fact, intended more as a mercantile speculation than for idle display. He was sagacious enough to see that reports would go abroad of his excessive wealth, which would greatly add to his credit even among those who censured his vanity. This was exactly the case; his idle capital of old dollars, so prudently as well as ostentatiously employed, brought large returns of interest: it was a visible bond of payment which gave vigour to all the wily merchant's undertakings. Yet, in the end, it proved the rock upon which the stability of his house was wrecked.

Melchior one day partaking rather too freely of a rich liquor at a city feast, died suddenly, without having time even to make his will. His son, however, having just attained the age of manhood, succeeded to the whole of the property. Franz was a noble-spirited youth, endowed with many excellent qualities. Health glowed on his cheek, while content and animation shone in his dark eyes. He grew like a vigorous plant, which only requires water and a hardier soil to bear noble fruit, but which shoots to waste in too luxuriant ground. The father's prosperity, as is often the case, was unhappily the son's ruin; for no sooner did Franz find himself possessed of so princely a fortune, than he contrived how he could best get rid of it: and instead of smiling in scorn at the rich man in the parable, he imitated his example only too closely. He feasted in the most sumptuous manner, and altogether forgot his duties in the continual round of pleasure into which he had plunged himself.

No feasts could be compared for superfluity and splendour with those he gave, nor will the good city of Bremen ever behold such substantial and magnificent proofs of hospitality, as long as it is a city, again; each citizen was presented with a fine joint of roast beef, with a flask of Spanish wine; the people drank to the health and long life of old Melchior's son, and young Franz became the hero of the day.

In this giddy maze of delights, no wonder he never thought of a balance of accounts, then the "vade mecum" of our old merchants, but since unfortunately gone too much out of fashion. Hence the evident tendency of the modern system towards heavy losses and utter bankruptcy, as if the scale were drawn down by magnetic influence. Still the old merchant's coffers had been so well stocked as to give his son no sort of uneasiness; hitherto his difficulty was rather how to dispose of his annual income. Open house, well-furnished tables, and throngs of parasites, loungers, &c., left our hero small time for reflection; one kind of pleasure followed another; his friends took care to provide a succession of extravagances lest he should pause, and think, and thus the prey should be snatched from their plundering grasp.

Suddenly the stream of prosperity ceased to flow; Franz

found he had drained his father's money-casks to their very lees. He ordered his steward one day to pay a large sum: he was not, however, in a condition to meet the demand, and he returned the bill. This was a severe reflection upon the young spendthrift; but he flew into a violent passion with his cashier, instead of blaming himself. He gave himself no kind of trouble to inquire into the cause; like too many thoughtless characters, he heaped reproaches upon his steward, and shrugging up his shoulders, ordered him, in very laconic style, to "find means!"

Now was the time for the old usurers and brokers of the city. They furnished Franz with means to continue his mad career, though on very exorbitant terms. In the eye of a creditor, a room well paved with dollars was then better security than bills upon an American house, or even upon the United Provinces. It served as a good palliative for a period; but it shortly got wind that the silver pavement had disappeared, and was replaced with one of stone. Judicial inquiry on the part of the creditors followed, and it was ascertained to be the fact. No one could deny that a floor of variegated marble, like mosaic, was more elegant for a banqueting-hall than one of old worn-out dollars; but the creditors, entertaining little reverence for his improved taste, one and all demanded their money. This not being paid, a commission of bankruptcy was issued against him; and forthwith an inventory was made of all the property,—the family mansion, the magazines, grounds, gardens, furniture, &c. All was then put up to auction, and Franz found himself deprived of all he possessed. He had saved a few of his mother's jewels, however, from the general wreck, and with the help of these he contrived to prolong existence for a period, though not in a very enviable manner.

He now saw clearly through his past errors. He lamented and repented of his faults, and tried his best to resign himself to his altered lot. He took up his abode in a retired quarter of the city where the sunbeams seldom shone, except towards the longest day, when they occasionally glanced over the high-built roofs. Here he found all he looked for in his present reduced circumstances. He dined at his host's frugal board; his fire-side was a protection against the cold; and he had a roof to shelter him from the effects of rain and wind: here, too, a new object awakened his attention and engaged his thoughts. Opposite his window, in the same narrow street, lived a respectable widow, who, in expectation of better times, gained a scanty livelihood, by means of her spinning-wheel, on which, with the assistance of a marvellously fair maiden, her only daughter, she produced every day such a quantity of yarn that it would have reached round the whole city of Bremen, ditch, walls, suburbs and all. These two spinners were not born for the wheel; they came of a good family, and had lived, at one time, in opulence and prosperity. The husband of Brigitta, and the father of young Mela, had been the

owner of a merchant-vessel, which he freighted himself, and in which he made every year a voyage to Antwerp. But while Mela was yet a child, a dreadful storm buried him and his ship, with the crew and a rich cargo, in the waves.

Her mother, a sensible well-principled woman, bore the loss of her husband and of her whole property with wise composure. Notwithstanding her poverty, she refused, with a noble pride, all the offers of assistance which the compassion or benevolence of her friends and relations prompted them to make; deeming it dishonourable to receive alms, as long as she could hope to obtain the means of subsistence by the labour of her hands. She resigned her large house and its costly furniture to the hard-hearted creditors of her late husband, took her present humble dwelling, and spun from morning till night. At first this occupation appeared very irksome, and she often moistened the thread with her tears. By her industry, however, she was enabled to preserve herself independent, and to save herself from incurring unpleasant obligations; she accustomed her daughter to the same mode of life, and lived so sparingly that she even saved a small sum, which she laid out in buying lint; and, from that time, carried on a trade in that article on a small scale.

This excellent woman, woman, however, whilst doing her best in her poor circumstances, nevertheless ventured to look forward to better times, hoping one day to be restored to something of that prosperity she had been deprived of, and to enjoy, in the autumn of her life, some of that sunshine which had gladdened its spring. Nor was this hope altogether an empty dream; it sprung from rational observation. She saw her daughter's charms unfold as she grew up, like a blooming rose, but not like it to fade and fall as soon as it is ripened into beauty. She knew her to be modest and virtuous, and gifted with such excellent qualities, that she already found in her society consolation and happiness. She therefore denied herself, sometimes, the common necessaries of life, to give her daughter the advantage of a respectable education; being convinced that, if a maiden only answered the description which Solomon has given of a good wife, such a costly pearl would be sought after, and selected as the brightest ornament an honest man could possess.

Virtue, united with beauty, were then quite as valuable in the eyes of young men, as powerful relations and a large fortune are at present. There were, likewise, a far greater number of competitors for a maiden's hand, a wife being then considered as the most essential, and not as (according to the present refined economical theory) the most unnecessary part of the household. The beauteous Mela, it is true, bloomed more like a rare costly plant in a greenhouse, than a healthy shrub in the free air. She lived quietly, and in retirement, under her mother's care and protection; visited neither the public walks, nor assembly-rooms, and,

contrary to all the present principles of marrying policy, scarcely once in a twelvemonth went outside of her native city. Mothers, now-a-days, know better; they look upon their daughters as a capital, which must circulate to produce interest; in those times, they were kept under lock and key, like hoarded treasure; but bankers knew where it was hidden, and how to obtain it.

One day, as Franz was at the window, observing the weather, he saw the beautiful Mela returning from church, where she regularly accompanied her mother to service. In his days of prosperity, he had paid little or no attention to the other sex; the chords of his finer feelings had never yet been struck, his senses having been blunted and bewildered by the incessant intoxication of pleasure, in which his companions had kept him.

Now, however, that he had become a wiser and better man, the stormy waves of youthful turbulence were still, and the slightest breeze ruffled the mirror-like surface of his soul. He was enchanted at the sight of the most lovely woman he had ever seen! and he began questioning his landlord concerning his fair neighbour, and her mother, from whom he learnt the greater part of what the reader already knows.

He now felt still more vexed with himself for his wasteful extravagance, as it had deprived him of the means of providing handsomely for the lovely Mela, which his growing inclination would have prompted him to do. His miserable lodgings now appeared a palace to him, and he would not have exchanged them for the best house in Bremen. He passed great part of his time at the window, watching for his beloved; and, when she appeared, he felt a keener sensation of pleasure than the astronomer experienced, who first saw Venus pass over the sun's disk. Unfortunately for him, the careful mother was vigilant in her observations, and soon discovered the cause of his constant presence at the window. As he was none of her favourites, on account of his former behaviour, she was so much offended at his continual watching and staring, that she kept her window-curtains close drawn, and desired Mela never to appear at the window. When she took her to church, she put a thick veil over her face, and hurried round the corner as fast as she could to screen her treasure from the unhallowed gaze of our hero.

Poor Franz was not famous for his penetration; but love awakens all our faculties. He perceived that he had given offence by his intruding looks, and immediately retreated from the window. He now employed all his invention to find out the means of continuing his observations unseen, in which he succeeded without much trouble. He hired the largest looking-glass he could get, and hung it up in his room in such a manner that it reflected every thing which passed in the opposite room of his fair neighbour. For many days he never showed himself, till, at length, the curtains were drawn back by degrees, and the mirror

sometimes received and reflected the beautiful form of the maiden to the great delight of its possessor. As love rooted itself deeper in his heart, his desire to make his feelings known to Mela grew stronger, and he resolved, if possible, to learn the state of her heart towards him.

It was, indeed, much more difficult in those modest times for youths to get introduced to the daughters of a family than at present; and Franz's foreign condition added to those difficulties. Notwithstanding this, however, things took their course as well then as now. Christenings, weddings, and burials, especially in a city like Bremen, were the privileged occasions for negotiating love affairs; as the old proverb says, "No marriage takes place but another is planned." An impoverished spendthrift, however, not being a desirable son, or brother-in-law, our hero was invited neither to weddings, christenings, nor burials. The by-ways of influencing the lady's-maid, waiting-woman, or some other subordinate personage, was, in Franz's case, likewise blocked up, for mother Brigitta kept neither one nor the other; she carried on her little trade in lint and yarn herself, and was nearly as inseparable from her daughter as her shadow.

Under such circumstances, it was impossible for Franz to open his heart to his beloved, either by speaking or writing; but he soon invented a language which seems expressly intended for the idiom of lovers. The honour of being the first inventor does not, indeed, belong to our hero; long before his time, the sentimental Celadons of Italy and Spain were in the habit of chanting forth the feelings of their hearts, under the balconies of their donnas. Their melodious pathos, more powerful than the eloquence of Cicero, or Demosthenes, rarely failed in its aim, and not only expressed the lover's feelings, but was usually successful in exciting in the object of his flame similar warm and tender emotions.

In a doleful hour, therefore, he seized his lute, and calling forth strains that far surpassed his usual powers, in about a month he made such rapid progress, that he might very well have been admitted to play an accompaniment to Amphion. To be sure, his sweetest melodies were at first little noticed, but, ere long, they attracted the admiration of the whole neighbourhood; for, the moment he touched his lute, mothers succeeded in quieting their children, the riotous little urchins ran away from the doors, and, at length, he had the delight of beholding a white hand open the window opposite, when he began to prelude an air. Having so far gained Mela's ear, he played several happy and triumphant strains, as if to express his joy; but when her mother's presence or other occupations deprived him of her sight, his sorrow broke forth in mournful tones, expressive of the agony of disappointed affection.

Mela proved an apt pupil, and soon acquired a knowledge of

the new language. Indeed, she often made an experiment, to learn whether she interpreted it correctly, and invariably found that she could influence the invisible musician's tones according to her own feelings. Mild and modest young maidens are more correct in observation, and possess quicker perceptions than those wild careless creatures, sporting from object to object, like a simple butterfly, without fixing long upon any. Fair Mela's vanity was somewhat flattered at finding she could bring just such strains as she liked best, whether mournful or merry, from her young neighbour's lute.

Occupied with trade, her mother paid no kind of attention to the music; and her daughter did not think it necessary to impart her late observations. She rather wished, either from inclination, or as a proof of her sagacity, to show that she understood, and also knew how to reply to the symbolical language, in some other way that would discover equal skill. With this view, she requested her mother to permit her to place a few flower-pots in the window, and the good lady no longer observing the prying young neighbour, and dreaming of no possibility of any harm, easily gave her permission. Now, to attend to all these flowers, to water, to bind them up to the sticks, and to watch their progress in leafing, and budding, and flowering, brought the young mistress very often to the window. It was now the happy lover's turn to explain these hieroglyphics, and he never failed to send his joyous greetings across the way to the attentive ear of his sweet young gardener, through the medium of his lute. This, at length, began to make a powerful impression on her young heart; and she felt vexed at her mother for calling him a spendthrift, a very worthless fellow, which she took great pleasure in repeating during their conversations after dinner; sometimes even comparing him to the prodigal son. Poor Mela, though with great caution, would venture to take his part, ascribing his follies to youthful indiscretion, and the seductions of bad companions; adding, "that now that he had had time for reflection, he had, in all probability, become a reformed character."

Meanwhile the youth, whom the old lady was so busily reviling at home, was indulging only the kindest feelings towards her, reflecting in what way, as far as his situation would permit, he could best improve her circumstances. His motive, to be sure, was rather to assist the young than the old lady by his gifts. He had just obtained secret information that her mother had refused Mela a new dress, under pretence of bad times. Apprehensive lest a present from an unknown would be refused, and that all his hopes might be blasted were he to name the donor, it was only by chance that he was relieved from this awkward dilemma, and the affair succeeded according to his wishes. He heard that Mela's mother had been complaining to a neighbour that the crop of flax having proved so small, it had cost her more than her customers would

pay her again, and that this branch of the trade was become wholly unprofitable. Franz directly hastened to a goldsmith's, sold a pair of his mother's gold earrings, and purchasing a quantity of lint, sent it by a woman to offer it to his neighbour at a more moderate price. The bargain was concluded, and on such good terms, that on next All Saints' Day the lovely Mela was seen in an elegant new dress.

At the moment our hero was congratulating himself on the success of his stratagem, it was unluckily discovered. For mother Brigitta, desirous of doing a kindness to the good woman who had served her in the sale of the lint, invited her to a treat, very common in those days, before tea and coffee were known, of rice-milk, made very savoury with sugar, richly spiced, and a bottle of Spanish wine. Such a repast not only set the old lady's lips in motion, as she sipped and sipped, but likewise loosened her tongue. She declared she would provide more lint at the same price, granting her merchant would prove agreeable; which, for the best of reasons, she could not doubt. The lady and her daughter very naturally inquired further, until their female curiosity was gratified at the expense of the old woman's discretion, and she revealed the whole secret. Mela changed colour, not a little alarmed at the discovery; though she would have been delighted had her mother not been present. Aware of her strict notions of propriety, she began to tremble for her new gown. The good lady was, indeed, both shocked and displeased at so unexpected a piece of intelligence, and wished as much as her daughter that she alone had been made acquainted with it, lest their young neighbour's liberality, by making an impression on the girl's heart, might eventually thwart all her plans. She forthwith determined to adopt such measures as should eradicate every seed of budding affection which might be lurking in Mela's heart. Spite of the tears and entreaties of its possessor, the gown was next day sold, and the proceeds, together with the profits of her late bargain, returned under the pretence of an old debt, by the hand of the Hamburg trading messenger, to young Mr. Franz Melchior. He received the packet as an especial blessing on the part of Providence, and only hoped that all the debtors of his father's house might be induced to discharge their debts with as much punctuality as the honest unknown. The truth never glanced across his mind; for the gossiping old body was careful not to betray her own treachery, merely informing him that Madame Brigitta had wholly discontinued the lint trade. His more faithful mirror, however, shortly told him that a great change had occurred in the opposite dwelling in the course of a single night. The flower-pots had vanished, and the blinds were drawn down even closer than before. Mela was rarely to be seen; and when she did appear, like the lovely moon, gleaming through a mass of dark clouds on the benighted traveller, her

eyes were downcast, she looked as if she had been weeping, and he fancied he saw her wipe a tear away. The sight of her filled his heart with sorrow; he took his lute, and in soft Lydian measures expressed the language of his grief. Then he tried to discover the source of her anxiety, but here he was quite at a loss. Not many days afterwards he remarked that his looking-glass was useless: it no longer reflected the form of his beloved. On examining more minutely into the cause, he found that the curtains had been removed; that the rooms were not inhabited; his neighbours had left the place in perfect silence only the evening before.

Now, alas! he might approach the window, inhale the fresh air, and gaze as much as he pleased. But what was all this to him—to him, who had just lost sight of the dearest object on the face of the earth! On first recovering from the trying shock, he was led to make many sage reflections; and, among others, the painful one that he had been the cause of their flight. The sum of money he had received, the cessation of the lint trade, and the departure,—each seemed to throw light upon the other. It occurred to him, that Madame Brigitta must have discovered his secret; that he was no favourite with her, and that this was no kind of encouragement. Yet the symbolic language he had held with the fair maiden herself,—the flowers and the music, seemed to revive his spirit. No! he was sure *she* did not hate him;—her melancholy, and the tears he had seen her shed, not long before she went, served to restore his confidence and courage. Of course, his first effort was to find out the ladies' new residence, in order to renew, by some means or other, his delightful intercourse with the lovely Mela. This he soon accomplished; but he was grown too prudent to follow them, contenting himself with frequenting the same church, whither they went to hear mass, and never omitting to meet them, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, on their return. He would then find opportunities of greeting Mela kindly, which was about as gratifying as a billet-doux.

Yet both were mute: neither had exchanged a single word, though they as perfectly comprehended each other as any language could have made them do. Both vowed in their inmost hearts to preserve the strictest secrecy and fidelity, and never even to dream of forgetting one another.

Directly opposite to their humble lodgings lived an opulent brewer, whom the witlings of the day chose to call the King of Hops, on account of his great wealth. He was a spruce young widower, whose time of mourning was just drawing to a close, and who, without offending the laws of decorum, might now look out for a second helpmate.

Scarcely had he seen the fair Mela, than he formed his determination. Early the next morning he made himself as smart as

possible, and sallied forth on his marriage business. He had no taste for music, and was ignorant of all the secret symbols and expressions of love; but his brewery was extensive; he had, besides, a large capital lent out at interest, a ship in the Weser, and a farm near the town. With such recommendations, he might well look for success, especially with a maiden who had no marriage portion.

According to the old custom, he went immediately to mother Brigitta, and, like a kind and affectionate neighbour, declared to her the honest intentions he had, in respect to her virtuous daughter. The appearance of an angel could not have delighted the good old lady more than this joyful piece of news. She now saw her well-laid plans about to be accomplished, and her long deferred hopes gratified. She blessed the circumstances that induced her to leave her former habitation; and, in the first spring of joy, looking on Franz as partly the cause of this, she thought with kindness even of him. Though he had never been a favourite with her, still she promised herself to make him, by some means or other, a sharer in her prosperity.

In her heart, she regarded the marriage articles as already signed, but decency required her to take some time for deliberation in so weighty an affair; she therefore thanked the honourable suitor for his good intentions; promised to consult with her daughter on his proposal; and to give him, as she hoped, a favourable answer at the end of eight days. With this, he seemed very well pleased, and politely took his leave.

He had scarcely turned his back, when the spinning-wheel, spite of its faithful services, was banished as useless lumber. When Mela returned from church, she was astonished at observing this sudden alteration in their parlour, where every thing had been put in order, as if it were some great festival of the church. But she was still more astonished at observing her mother, who was unusually industrious, sitting idle on a week-day, and smiling in such a way as to show she had not met with any disaster. Before she could ask her, however, about this change in the house, the latter gave an explanation of the miracle. Conviction was in her own heart, and a stream of female eloquence flowed from her lips, as she described, in the most glowing colours she could find in the range of her imagination, the happiness which awaited them. She expected from her daughter the gentle blush of modesty, and then a complete resignation to her will. For, in those times, daughters were exactly in the same situation as to marriage, as princesses at present. Their inclinations were never consulted, and they had nothing further to say in the choice of their husbands, than to give their assent at the altar.

Mother Brigitta, however, was much mistaken in her expectations; the fair Mela, far from blushing like a rose at this unexpected piece of news, grew pale as death, and fell fainting into her

mother's arms. After she had been called to life and consciousness, her eyes were suffused with tears, as if a great misfortune had befallen her. The experienced matron was soon convinced that the offer of the rich brewer was not received with a willing heart by her daughter, at which she was much astonished, and spared neither prayers nor advice in her endeavours to persuade Mela not to neglect this opportunity of acquiring a rich husband. But Mela was not to be persuaded that her happiness depended upon a match, to which her heart denied its assent.

Her mother's wishes and persuasions in the mean time affected her so powerfully, that she faded away like a blighted flower. Grief gnawed at her heart; sleep came not to quiet and to soothe her; she fell dangerously ill, and demanded the priest to confess her, and give her the sacrament. The tender mother thus saw the pillar of her hopes give way; she reflected that she might lose her daughter, and resolved, after mature consideration, that it would be wiser to resign the present flattering prospect than run the risk of hurrying her child to an early grave; she, therefore, gave up her own wishes to gratify those of her daughter. It cost her many a severe pang to decline such an advantageous alliance; but she at length submitted, like a good mother, to the superior authority of the dear child, and even gave up reproaching her. When the ready widower appeared on the appointed day, to his astonishment he met with a refusal, sweetened however with so much politeness, that it was like wormwood covered with sugar. He soon resigned himself to his fate, and was no more affected than if a bargain for malt had been broken off. Indeed, he had no reason to despair; his native city has never experienced any want of amiable maidens, well qualified to make excellent wives; and, in spite of this failure, before the end of the month, he had selected and obtained the hand of one of them in marriage.

Brigitta was now obliged to bring back the exiled spinning-wheel, and to put it once more into activity. Every thing soon returned to its usual course. Mela recovered her health, her bloom, and her cheerfulness; she was active at her work, and went regularly to church. But her mother could not conceal her grief at the destruction of her favourite plan. She became peevish, discontented, and melancholy. On the day on which the king of hops celebrated his wedding, she was particularly uneasy. When the festive train moved on towards the church, accompanied by all the pipers and trumpeters of the city, she sighed and groaned, as at the hour when she first heard that the raging waves had swallowed her husband and all his fortune. Mela saw the bridal festivities with great composure; even the beautiful jewels, the precious stones in the bridal crown, and the nine rows of large pearls round the neck of the bride, could not disturb her quiet, which is rather astonishing, as a new bonnet from Paris, or some

other fashionable trifle is sufficient, at times, to disturb the domestic peace of whole families. Nothing diminished her happiness, but the grief of her kind mother.

Towards the evening, when the dance began, Brigitta exclaimed, "Oh my daughter, you might at this moment have been leading this dance! But you have turned away from fortune when she smiled on you, and now I shall not live to accompany you to the altar."

"Confide in Heaven, my dear mother," answered Mela, "as I must;—if it is ordained that I shall go to the altar, you will live to adorn me with the bridal garment, and, when the right suitor comes, my heart will soon assent."

"Ah! child," replied the prudent mother, "portionless maidens are not much sought after; they must accept those who will have them. Young men are, in our days, more selfish than otherwise; they only marry when it suits themselves, and never think of the bashfulness of others. The heavens are not favourable to you, the planets have been consulted, and they are seldom auspicious to those born as you were in April. Let us see what says the almanack? 'Maidens born in this month bear kindly pleasant countenances, and are of a slender form, but they are changeable in their inclinations, like the weather, and must guard well the virgin mood. When a smiling suitor comes, let them not reject his offer.' See how well that answers! The suitor has come, and you have rejected his offer, and none will come again."

"Dear mother, heed not what the planet says! my heart whispers me that I ought to love and honour the man whom I wed; and if I find no such man, or am sought by none, then let me remain single. I can maintain myself by my own hands. I will learn to be both content and happy; and nurse you in your old age, as a good daughter ought. Yet, if the man of my heart should come, mother, oh! then bless us both; and inquire not whether he be great, honoured, and wealthy, but whether he is virtuous and good; and if he loves, and is beloved."

"Love, my poor daughter, keeps but a scanty table; it is not enough to live upon."

"But where love is, mother, there peace and content will abide; yes, and convert the simplest fare into luxuries too."—So inexhaustible a topic kept the ladies awake as long as the fiddles continued to play, nor could Madame Brigitta help suspecting that Mela's magnanimity, which, in the bloom of youth and beauty, made her hold riches in such slight estimation, must be owing to some secret attachment previously formed. She, moreover, suspected its object, though she had never before entertained the idea that the lint merchant in the narrow street occupied a place in her daughter's heart. She had considered him merely in the light of an extravagant youth, who made a point of gallanting every young creature that came in his way. The prospect before her

gave her very little pleasure, but she held her peace. Agreeably to her strict notions of propriety, she believed that a young maid who allowed love to enter her heart previous to marriage, was no better than cankered fruit, very well to look at, but with a maggot within. She thought it might do very well to decorate a chimney-piece, though it had lost its intrinsic flavour, and was of no kind of use. Henceforth, then, the poor old lady despaired of ever resuming her lost station in her native city; resigned herself, like a good Christian, to her lot, being resolved to say nothing to her daughter on the subject—least said, the soonest mended.

Tidings of Mela's refusal of the wealthy brewer having speedily gone abroad, shortly came to the ears of Franz, who felt quite overjoyed. He was no longer tortured with the suspicion lest some rich rival should supplant him in Mela's heart. He felt that he had ground for hope, and knew how to solve the problem which puzzled so many wise inhabitants of the city of Bremen. Love had metamorphosed a poor youth into an excellent musician, but unfortunately that character was not a very strong recommendation for a lover in those times; for it derived neither as much honour nor emolument as now. "Oh, dear Mela," he cried, "would that I had known you sooner, you would have become my guardian angel; you would have saved me from utter ruin! Ah, could I recall the years that are sped! could I be again what I was, when I began my mad career, the world would look like a paradise, and I would make it a paradise for you! Noble girl! you are sacrificing yourself for a wretch and a beggar—one who has lost all, but a heart torn with love and agony;—he cannot offer you a destiny worthy of your virtue." He then smote his forehead, in a fit of passion, reproaching himself as a thoughtless, wilful being, whose repentance had come too late.

Despondency, however, was not the sole result of his reflections. The powers of his mind were put into action; he became ambitious of altering his present condition, and he was resolved to try what exertion and activity would effect. Among other plans that occurred to him, the most rational and promising appeared to be, to examine into his father's accounts, in order to see what debts were still due to the house. With such remnants of a princely fortune, should he be lucky enough to recover them, he trusted he might be enabled to lay the groundwork of another, if not as large as that he had lost, yet enough for the happiness and support of life. He resolved to employ the money he recovered in some business, which he hoped would increase by degrees, until, as he flattered himself, his ships would visit all parts of the world. But he found that many of the debts were due from persons residing at a distance, and that he would have a better chance of succeeding, were he to wait upon the parties in person, and claim his own. Accordingly, to effect this, he sold his father's gold watch, the last remains of his inheritance, in order to purchase a

horse which was to carry him to his debtors, under the title of a Bremen merchant.

All that he regretted, was his departure from his beloved Mela. "What will she say to my sudden disappearance? I shall no longer meet her coming home from church; she will perhaps think me faithless, and banish me from her heart for ever!" Such ideas made him very uneasy, and, for some time, he could discover no means to inform her of his real intentions. Ingenious love at length supplied him with the happy notion of having prayers put up for the success of his journey in the church, which Mela and her mother generally frequented, and thus they would no longer remain ignorant of his object. With this view he gave the priest a small sum, begging that a daily prayer might be offered for a young man compelled to go abroad upon business, as well as for the success of his undertaking. The same prayer was to be continued until his return, when it was his intention to purchase a thanksgiving.

On meeting Mela for the last time, he was in his travelling dress. He passed quite close to her; saluted her in a more marked manner than usual, which brought the eloquent blood into the lovely girl's cheeks. Her mother scolded, made many unpleasant remarks, and expressed her dislike of him in no very guarded terms. She declared that such impertinence would injure her daughter's reputation, and spite of her vow to keep silence, she never dropped the subject during the whole of that day. Young Franz, however, had taken his leave of the good city of Bremen, and the most lovely eyes might now wander in search of him in vain.

Mela went to church, and heard her lover's prayer repeated very often; and, in truth, it was in some degree intended for her ears. Yet she paid little attention to it, such was her grief for the disappearance of her lover. The very words that would have explained it, escaped her ear, and she was at a loss what to think of it. In the course of a month or two, when her sorrow was a little abated, and his absence grew less trying, she had been, for the first time, paying attention to the words of the prayer, and comparing them with other circumstances, she suddenly guessed their meaning, wondering at her own stupidity in not sooner discovering it, and at the same time praising her lover's ingenious notion.

Franz, meanwhile, was pursuing his way towards Antwerp, where his father's debtors chiefly resided, and where he hoped to recover some considerable sums. Such a journey, from Bremen to Antwerp was, in those days, more formidable than one from Bremen to Kamschatka in the present. The peace just proclaimed by the Emperor Maximilian was so little observed, that the public roads were in all parts infested with nobles and knights, who invariably despoiled the poor travellers who refused to purchase a

safe passage from them, and frequently subjected them, in subterraneous dungeons, to a cruel and lingering death. Our hero nevertheless succeeded, in spite of these obstacles, in reaching his destination, having encountered only one solitary adventure.

As he was crossing over the sandy and deserted plains of Westphalia he was overtaken by night, before he could reach any place of sojourn. The day had been uncommonly sultry, and darkness came on with a terrific thunderstorm, and heavy showers, which drenched him to the skin. This was extremely trying and novel to one of Fortune's spoiled children, as he had been. He had never been accustomed to the changes of the weather, and yet he might perhaps be compelled to pass the whole night in this horrid spot. The thought filled him with horror—when suddenly he saw a light, to his infinite relief, only at a short distance. On spurring towards it, he found a miserable little hut, which promised him small comfort. It was more like a shed for cattle than a human habitation; yet the inhospitable boor refused him admittance, declaring he had only straw enough for his oxen, and was too sleepy to get up and light his fire again for the sake of a stranger. At first poor Franz complained bitterly, but as it served no purpose, he laid his malediction on all Westphalian deserts and their unnatural inhabitants, while the boor proceeded to put out his lamp with the utmost indifference, without troubling himself about violating the laws of hospitality. Our incensed hero at length threatened and thundered at the door in such a way as effectually to prevent the brute's repose, who, better understanding such an appeal, soon found his tongue:—"Do you think, man, you will find a good supper and a soft couch here? If you do, you will be disappointed, friend; so please to be quiet. Can't you ride through the little wood on your left, and knock at the Castle-gate of Sir Eberhard of Bronkhorst, instead of battering at my poor door? He welcomes a stranger as a knight-hospitaller does the pilgrim from the Holy Land. Heed thou not, though he be seized with a fit of madness, as he sometimes is; yet then he only wishes to give his guests a hearty drubbing before he takes leave of them. In all other respects, if you like to venture, you will find good entertainment."

Franz was some time at a loss how to act; yet he had rather run the risk of a sound drubbing, than stand drenched in his wet clothes the whole of the night. There was not much choice; he deliberated between passing the night upon a wooden bench without supper, suppose he were to get into the hut;—and a little flogging in the morning after enjoying a good supper and a bed. "Besides," he added, "such an application may, perhaps, drive away the fever which I am sure to take if I stay longer here, and that would be a sad thing." So he remounted, spurred away, and in a few minutes stopped before the gates of a Gothic castle, at which

he knocked pretty smartly. He was answered as loudly, "Who is there?" from the other side. Our hero begged somewhat impatiently for admission, and he would explain afterwards; but he was compelled to wait the pleasure of Sir Eberhard, until the butler had ascertained whether he chose to give a night's lodging, for the satisfaction he would have in beating his guest in the morning.

This Sir Eberhard had early in life entered the army of the Emperor; had served under the celebrated George of Frondsberg, and subsequently commanded a company against the Venetians. Afterwards, on retiring from service, and settling at his castle, he began to lead a more pious and charitable life:—he held open castle for the destitute, or for hungry and houseless travellers; but, on taking leave, he invariably flogged them out of the castle. Sir Eberhard was a rude soldier, and retained the manners of a camp, though he had been living some years in retirement.

In a few minutes the bars of the gate were withdrawn, with a melancholy sound, as if giving warning of the approaching flogging, and Franz had a fit of cold shivers as he walked across the courtyard. He was hospitably received, and a number of lackeys ran to help him to dismount: one took his baggage, another his steed, while a third ushered him into the presence of the Knight. He was seated in a splendid hall, but rose to meet his guest, and shook him by the hand so heartily that Franz almost cried out with pain, and was struck with fear and awe. He could not conceal his terror, and trembled from head to foot at the warlike appearance of the Knight, who exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "What is the matter, young man, that you tremble and grow pale, as if in the clutches of death?" Franz felt that it was now too late to retract, and, being convinced that he was likely to pay dear for his fare, he summed up all his courage, and assumed even a haughty air to conceal his fears.

"Sir knight," he boldly replied, "the rain has drenched me as if I had swam through the Weser; I wish, therefore, to change my wet clothes, and to get a good warm posset to banish these shiverings, which seem like the commencement of an ague."

"Well said," replied the knight; "make yourself at home, and ask for what you want."

Franz made the servants wait on him, as if he had been the grand Turk, and, having only blows to expect, he thought it best to deserve them properly. He therefore ordered the servants about, and teased them in every possible way.

The master of the house, so far from showing any displeasure at these liberties, even obliged his servants to fulfil Franz's commands, and called them blockheads, who knew not how to wait on his guests. When the posset was ready, both landlord and guest, partook heartily of it. Soon afterwards the former said,

"Will you take some supper, young sir?"

"Let them put on the table," answered Franz, "what the cook has at hand, that I may see whether your larder is well supplied."

Orders were accordingly given, and the servants soon afterwards served up an excellent supper, fit for a prince. Franz sat down to it, and waited not till he was pressed, to eat voraciously. After having satisfied his hunger, he said, "Your larder is indifferently well supplied, and if your cellar be the same, I shall have to praise your house-keeping."

The knight made a sign to the butler, to fill a goblet with common table wine, which he did, and offered it to his master, who emptied it to the health of his guest. Franz did not fail to pledge him, and after he had also emptied the goblet, the knight asked, "What do you think of this wine?"

"It's but poor stuff," replied Franz, "if it is your best; but tolerably good, if it is only your table drink."

"You are a connoisseur," answered Sir Eberhard, and bid the butler bring some of the best.

When Franz had tasted this, he said, "That is a noble beverage, let us keep to this."

The goblets were filled accordingly, and the knight and his guest drank together, till both became merry and pleased with each other. Sir Eberhard began to talk of his campaigns, and told his guest how he had fought against the Venetians, broke through their encampments, and had killed them like so many sheep. This subject awakened the enthusiasm of the old soldier; he hewed down bottles and glasses, brandished the carving-knife like a sword, and pressed so close on his companion, that the latter began to fear for his nose and ears.

The knight seemed quite in his element, when talking of his campaigns against the Venetians, and, though it grew late, he seemed to have no disposition to sleep. His description became more lively at every goblet he emptied; and Franz became apprehensive, lest this might be the prologue to the principal action, in which he was to perform the most conspicuous, though the least agreeable part. He wished to learn at once where he was to pass the night; and, therefore, asked for the parting cup, expecting that the knight would now begin to press him to drink, and, if he did not, would make his refusal the ground for a quarrel, and send him away with his usual quantum of blows, according to the custom of the house. Contrary to his expectation, however, his request was immediately complied with. The knight broke off his story, saying, "Every thing in proper time, more to-morrow."

"Pardon me, sir knight," replied Franz, "to-morrow I shall be far from here. I have a long journey before me to Brabant, and must depart early. I shall therefore bid you farewell to-night, that my departure may not disturb your rest in the morning."

"Do as you choose," said the knight, "but you shall not

leave my house till I am up, and have seen you refreshed by a morning's repast; and then I will accompany you to the gates, and part with you according to the custom of my house."

Frank needed no commentary to explain these words. He would willingly have dispensed with the last civilities of his landlord, but he did not seem disposed to depart from the usual ceremonies. He ordered the servants to show the stranger into the bedchamber, and soon Franz was safely deposited in an excellent bed of down. Before he fell asleep, he could not help confessing to himself, that such a lordly entertainment was not too dearly bought by a moderate beating. Pleasant dreams took possession of his imagination. He saw his beloved Mela walking about among roses, with her mother, gathering the beautiful flowers, and he quickly concealed himself behind a thick hedge, not to be seen by the severe old lady. Again, he was transported into his old lodgings, and saw the snow-white hand of the maiden busy among the flowers. Then he sat beside her in the grass, and wished to talk of love, but was so bashful, he could find no words for it. He might have dreamt thus till midday, if the loud voice and the trampling of the knight, who was already booted and spurred, had not awakened him at daybreak. Frank heard the butler and cook ordered to prepare a good breakfast, and the other servants to be ready to wait on and dress him at his rising.

The happy dreamer parted very reluctantly from his safe and hospitable bed: but the loud voice of his landlord deprived him of all desire to sleep; he knew he must get up, and therefore did; a dozen hands were immediately busy about him; and, when he was dressed, the knight himself came and led him into the hall, where he found a small but well-covered table. As the scene drew towards a close, however, our traveller had little appetite. His landlord encouraged him to eat, or at least to take something to protect himself against the coolness of the morning.

"Sir knight," said Franz, "your supper was too good to allow me to relish my breakfast; but, with your leave, I will fill my pockets, to be provided against hunger when it comes." He accordingly took the best and richest that was on the table, and crammed his pockets well. When his horse, well cleaned, bridled and saddled, was brought to the door, he drank in a glass of cordial to the health and welfare of his host, expecting that would be the signal for his being seized on and soundly beat.

But, to his great astonishment, the knight shook him as kindly by the hand as when he first met him, wished him a good journey, and the servants opened the gates. He mounted his horse, spurred rapidly on, and was in a few minutes outside of the gate, without a hair of his head being injured.

A heavy load fell from his heart when he saw himself at liberty, without having received the expected beating. He could not

conceive why his host should have spared him, contrary to his general custom, and was now first grateful for the hospitable knight's kindness; he felt a great curiosity to know whether there was any foundation in the report he had heard, and, therefore, turned his horse's head and rode back. The knight was still standing at the gate, making observations on the shape and breed of Franz's horse, breeding horses being his own favourite pursuit. He thought his guest had missed some part of his baggage, and looked with displeasure on his servants. "What do you want, young man?" he called out to Franz, as he approached, "why do you return when you intended to pursue your journey?"

"To have one word with you, sir knight," said the rider. "A malicious report has, to the discredit of your name and reputation, gone abroad, that you receive all strangers well, but that you beat them soundly before you allow them to depart. Relying on this report, I have done all I could to deserve the parting salutation, and you have allowed me to depart in peace, without making me pay the customary reckoning. This astonishes me. Tell me, therefore, is there any foundation for this report, or shall I give the foul defamers the lie?"

To this the knight replied, "Report has, in this instance, told the truth; and there is no popular saying indeed quite destitute of foundation. I shall explain to you, however, the real circumstances. I receive every stranger who comes to my gates, and share my food and my goblet with him. But I am a simple German of the old school, who speaks as he thinks, and I expect that my guests should be also cheerful and confiding, and enjoy with me what I have, and freely ask for what they want. But there are some people who tease me with all sorts of follies, and make a fool of me, with their bowing and scraping—who never speak openly, and use many words without sense or meaning; they want to flatter me with their smooth tongues, and behave at meals like foolish women. If I say "Eat," they take with great apparent reluctance a miserable bone, which I should not offer to my dog: if I say "Drink," they scarcely wet their lips with the good wine, as if they despised the bounties of God. They carry their follies to so great a length, that I scarcely know what to do in my own house. They put me at last into a passion, I seize them by the collar, cudgel them soundly, and turn them out of my doors. This is my plan, and I treat every guest thus, whom I find troublesome. But a man like you is always welcome to my house. You spoke your mind openly and freely, as the good people of Bremen always do. Let me see you again, therefore, on your return,—and now farewell."

After these words Franz departed, and continued his journey towards Antwerp with renewed strength and courage, sincerely wishing he might everywhere meet with as kind a reception as at the castle of Sir Eberhard of Bronkhorst. At his first entrance

into that city, the queen of the cities of Brabant, his hopes were raised to a high pitch. Opulence and luxury were everywhere visible, and it seemed as if want and poverty were banished from this seat of industry. "My father's debtors," he said to himself, "are most likely sharing in this general wealth; they have again improved their circumstances, and will be ready to pay me if I produce my documents to prove my demands are just." After he had recovered from the fatigues of his journey, he made some inquiries concerning the circumstances of some of his debtors, before he went to call on them. "How is it with Peter Martens?" he asked his companions at table, "is he still living, and does he thrive?"

"Peter Martens is a wealthy man," replied one of the company, "and drives a flourishing trade."

"Is Fabian van Plurs in good circumstances?"

"Oh! he scarce knows how to employ his immense capital; he is one of the council, and his woollen manufactures give him ample profits."

"Has the house of the Bütekant failed, or does it carry on business?"

"Some years ago it was tottering, but the Spanish *Caravelles*[1] have helped to prop it up, so that it seems now likely to stand."

Franz having inquired after several other houses, or persons, on whom he had demands, learned that most of them, who had in his father's time stopped payment, were now flourishing, which confirmed a common opinion, that a seasonable bankruptcy is a sure foundation for after prosperity. This news served to cheer up his spirits; he arranged his papers, and presented the old bills at their proper places. But he experienced from the people of Antwerp the same treatment which his travelling fellow-citizens of this age experience from shopkeepers in the provincial towns of Germany. Every one treats them well until they call to get in their money. Many would hear nothing of their old debts, declaring that they had all been settled at the time of the bankruptcy; and it was the creditor's fault if he had not accepted payment. Others said, they did not even remember the name; their books gave no account of any Melchior. A few submitted a large balance against Franz's father; and in the course of three days he found himself safely lodged in prison, to answer for them to the very last farthing.

This was an unpleasant prospect for a man who had so far confided in the honest people of Antwerp, as to consider them as the authors of his future fortune. The bubble had vanished in a moment; and he began to feel all the tortures of purgatory—thrown into prison—his vessel wrecked just as he was making the harbour, where he hoped he should be safe from the storms of life. The thought of Mela was a dagger to his heart: there was

[1] Spanish ships, which then traded to America.

no longer even a shadow of probability that he could ever emerge from this abyss of ruin into respectability and credit. And, were he able even to raise his head above water, his beloved was, on her part, perfectly unable to pull him to dry land.

It was not the intention of the hard-hearted citizens of Antwerp to make him pay money, so much as to compel him to renounce all claims upon them; so that at the end of three months Franz left his prison, upon condition of quitting the city within four-and-twenty hours, and never returning to it. He then received a small sum of money to defray his expenses home; for the law had already seized upon his horse and baggage, to pay for the proceedings against him, and for his board. With no other companion than a walking-stick, and with a heavy heart, Franz humbly took his leave of the proud city, whose walls he had shortly before entered with such grand expectations. Reckless and dispirited, he wandered on, without marking the road which he had taken. He asked no questions, saluted no one, and took notice of nothing, until excess of hunger and fatigue compelled him to seek out some place where he might relieve his wants. Many days he thus wandered on without any aim in view, and even ignorant that he had, instinctively, as it were, taken the right direction homewards. Suddenly he seemed to awake out of a disagreeable dream, and recognised the road he was going.

He now stopped to reflect whether he had better go on, or retrace his steps. He was overwhelmed with shame and trouble, at the idea of living a beggar in his native city, and soliciting the benevolence of those whom he had formerly surpassed in credit and opulence. How could he appear in the presence of Mela under such circumstances? She would die with shame to behold him! It was certain he would now lose her; and he turned away from the melancholy picture, as if he had already beheld the rabble gathering round and greeting his return to Bremen with scorn and mockery.

No! he determined he would rather make for one of the Dutch seaports, and enter on board some Spanish ship as a sailor. He would sail for the new world, try his fortune in Peru, where wealth abounded; and never return to his native land, until he succeeded in recovering that property which he had so heedlessly lavished. His beloved Mela appeared now only like some distant shadow that he should catch at in vain; though he felt a beam of pleasure warm his heart at the bare idea of her becoming connected with his future destiny; and he hastened rapidly forwards, as if he were about to reach the spot where she dwelt. He had returned as far as the frontiers of the Netherlands, when one night, about sunset, he approached a small place, called Rummelsburg, which was subsequently destroyed in the thirty years' war. There were a number of carriers in the tavern, and he could find no room. The landlord bade him hasten to the

next village, as he, in fact, mistook him for the spy of some gang of thieves, on watch, perhaps, for the carrier's goods. So, in spite of his increasing weariness, Franz found he must again take his bundle on his shoulder, and prepare for a farther journey that night.

As he went, however, he made some cutting reflections upon the landlord's inhumanity; insomuch, that, as if repenting of his own harsh proposal, he began to pity the poor traveller, and called out, "One word yet, young man: if you particularly wish to pass the night here, I think I can contrive it. There are plenty of apartments in the castle hard by; I have got the keys, if you should not think it too solitary for you." Franz willingly closed with the offer, requiring only supper and shelter, whether in a palace or in a hut. But mine host was somewhat of a wag, and, intending to revenge himself upon poor Franz for his abuse of him, he proposed a night's residence in the haunted old castle, where there had been no inhabitant for many years, owing to the cruel pranks of a spirit which had frightened them all away in succession.

This castle stood on a steep cliff, in the outskirts of the town, and directly opposite to the inn, being merely separated by the public road, and a small brook. It was kept in good repair, on account of its delightful situation: and was very well built and furnished, though it served its present possessor only for a hunting-seat. Occasionally he gave a splendid feast there, but was sure to leave it along with all his followers on the approach of evening, having so often been terrified by the spirit, which made a hideous noise, and raged through the castle, though he never appeared during the day. However disagreeable to the lord of the castle, as a spectre, it had the good effect of protecting his property from robbers, the boldest of whom refused to venture near the spot.

It was now quite dark. Franz carried a lantern, accompanied by the host, and a little basket of provisions. He was soon at the castle gates, where the host had provided a good supper, and a bottle of wine, which he did not intend to appear in the bill; likewise a pair of wax candles, as there were none in the castle, nobody remaining there after twilight. As they were walking, Franz observed the basket and candles, and, though they would be quite useless to him, thought he might still have to account for them in the bill.

"The piece of candle in the lantern is enough for me," said our hero, "until I go to bed. I hope I shall not open my eyes before it be broad day; for I feel very sleepy, and want a deal of rest."

"Then I ought not to conceal from you," replied the host, "what report says. The castle is haunted by a plaguy ghost, who walks about all night. But we shall be so near that you need not be the least afraid. Should anything occur, you have

only to call out pretty loudly, and we shall be ready to assist you. People with us are stirring all night, and somebody or other will be at hand. Why, I have lived here these thirty years, and, for my own part, I have never seen anything. The noise that is sometimes heard proceeds, I take it, from cats, or other animals, that harbour in the garrets. As a precaution, I have provided you with candles; and, as they are consecrated, no goblin will venture into their light."

Mine host spoke truth when he declared he had never seen any spectre; for he took care never to be near enough the castle at night. Even now the varlet did not venture to proceed across the threshold; but opening the door, he handed Franz the basket, directed him which way to proceed, and bade him a good night.

Our traveller entered the great hall without feeling the least awe, despising the story as mere gossip, or some old tradition of a real event adorned with a little of the supernatural. He called to mind the report of Sir Eberhard, whose heavy hand he had so much dreaded, and yet who had treated him with so much kindness. In fact, he made a point of believing just the contrary of what he had heard, quite forgetting, as the knight himself stated, that all such reports had some foundation in truth.

According to the host's direction, he ascended a winding staircase, which brought him to a door, the key of which the landlord had given him. He entered a long dark passage, where his steps echoed along the walls; thence he passed into a grand saloon, which led into a row of smaller rooms, well supplied with all that was necessary, both for ornament and use. He fixed on the most comfortable one he could find, with the windows looking towards the tavern-yard, whence he could gather every word that was spoken. This was reviving, and the room had a soft bed on which to repose his weary head. He now lighted his candles, sat down to his supper, of which he partook with as hearty a relish as if he had been eating at his old lodgings in the good city of Bremen. A large bottle soon removed his thirst, and while his appetite lasted he had no time to think of the spectre. When he heard some noise at a distance, and fear whispered, "Listen! there comes the ghost!" his courage only answered, "Nonsense! the cats are fighting." After supper he listened rather more attentively, as it drew near midnight, and fear uttered three anxious ideas before Franz's courage could find a single answer.

To protect himself against sudden surprise, he first locked and bolted the door, seated himself on a stone bench at the window, then opened it and looked out, to divert his mind with a view of the heavens and the silvery queen of night. Gradually the street below grew quite silent, contrary to mine host's assurance that his people were always stirring. Franz heard one door closed after another, the lights were extinguished, and the whole inn was buried in profound repose. The watch, going his round, told

the hour and the state of the weather; besides beginning, to Franz's great consolation, to sing an evening hymn directly under his window. Had he not feared that the man would be terrified away, if he heard himself spoken to from the haunted castle, he would gladly have entered into conversation with him.

In the midst of a populous town, when a man is harassed by silly people, it may appear a pleasant relief to retire to some solitary spot, and philosophize on the charms of solitude. He then represents it as most soothing to the mind; he multiplies its advantages, and sighs for its enjoyment. But where such solitude is,—as in the island of Juan Fernandez, where one poor shipwrecked sailor lived many years quite alone,—in a thick forest at midnight,—or in an old uninhabited castle, where damp walls and unexplored vaults create apprehension and horror, and where nothing gives signs of life, but the mournful ruin-loving owl,—there solitude is hateful, and companions pleasant, especially if the solitary person, like Franz, should expect every moment to see some horrid spectre. In such a situation, a conversation from the window, even with the watchman, may appear more entertaining than the most interesting book, were it even a dissertation on solitude. Had Zimmermann been in Franz's place, in the castle of Rummelsburg, on the frontiers of Westphalia, he would then probably have planned as interesting a work on the pleasures of society, as troublesome people provoked him to write on solitude.

The midnight hour is said to be the time when the spiritual world begins to live and act, while the more coarse animal kingdom enjoys repose. For this reason, Franz wished to go to sleep before the critical hour arrived; he shut the window therefore, surveyed once more every corner of his room, and quickly threw himself on the soft couch, greatly to the delight of his wearied limbs. Sleep, however, came not so soon as he wished. A palpitation, which he ascribed to the wine he had drunk, kept him awake for some time, during which he repeated his prayers more fervently than usual; at length he fell soundly asleep. After a short time, he awoke with a sudden start, when, on remembering where he was, he heard the town clock strike twelve; which news the watchman soon afterwards loudly proclaimed. No other noise was, however, heard. Franz listened for some time, and, turning round, was again relapsing into sleep, when at some distance he heard a door opened, and immediately afterwards shut with a loud crash.

"Woe! woe to me!" whispered fear, "here comes the ghost!" "It is the wind, nothing but the wind," replied courage. But the noise approached nearer and nearer, like the heavy steps of a man, rattling his chains as he moved, or like the chamberlain of some old castle, wandering about his domain clanging his bunch of keys. This could not be the wind—courage vanished, fear

drove all the blood to Franz's heart—till it beat, as if too full, and were trying to burst from its confinement.

As the noise approached, the matter appeared quite serious to Franz, and he could not even collect resolution enough to rise and call from the window to the people of the inn. He took refuge under his coverlet, which he drew quite over him, as the ostrich is said to hide his head in the grass, when he can no longer escape the enemy. Doors were opened and shut with a terrible noise; and at last, an attempt was made on the door of Franz's chamber. Several keys were tried, and at length the right one found: still the bars held the door, when at length a loud crash, like a clap of thunder, burst them asunder, and the door flew open. A tall thin man entered, with a very black beard, and clothed in an old-fashioned dress. A scarlet mantle was thrown over his left shoulder, and his hat was high and pointed. He walked silently through the room with the same slow and heavy step with which he had approached, looked at the candles, and even snuffed them. Then he threw off his mantle, opened a bag which he carried under his arm, took out instruments for shaving, and began to sharpen a shining razor on a broad leather strap, which he wore on his belt.

Franz perspired under his downy covering with fear and dread; recommended himself to the protection of Heaven, and looked forward with great anxiety for the end of this manœuvre, not knowing whether it was meant for his beard or for his throat. To his consolation, the spectre poured water from a silver flagon into a basin of the same material, and with his bony hand beat the soap up into foaming suds; placed a chair, and then, with great earnestness, beckoned the terrified Franz from his retreat. It was no more possible to resist this meaning sign, than it generally is to resist the mute who has orders from the grand Turk to bring him the head of some exiled vizier. It is the most sensible plan, in such a case, to make a virtue of necessity, and patiently allow oneself to be throttled. Franz obeyed the order, threw off the mattress, rose from his couch, and took the assigned place on the chair.

The spectre barber put the napkin round the neck of his trembling customer, seized his scissors, and cut off Franz's hair and beard. Then he proceeded to cover his chin, and even his head, with soap, and, when this was done, he shaved him so smoothly, and so completely, that not a hair was left on his whole head. When the spectre had completed this operation, he washed Franz very clean, dried him carefully, bowed, packed up his implements, resumed his scarlet cloak, and turned to depart. The consecrated candles burned perfectly bright during the whole of the proceeding, and, by the light, Franz saw in the mirror opposite him that the barber had made him like a Chinese pagod. He was vexed at losing his beautiful brown curls, but he breathed freely, being

aware that he should escape otherwise unhurt, and that the spectre had no longer any power over him.

The man in the red cloak walked in silence, as he had come, towards the door, and seemed quite the reverse of his gossiping brethren; scarcely had he retired three steps, however, when he stood still, looked round with a mournful mien at his well-served customer, and touched his own black beard with his hand. He repeated this ceremony twice; and again, a third time, when he had his hand on the door. Franz began to think that the ghost wished him to do something for him, and, the thought struck him, that he expected from him the same service which he had rendered to him.

The barber spectre, in spite of his mournful looks, seemed more disposed to jest than earnest, and as he had played Franz a trick rather than tormented him, the latter had lost all his fear. He therefore beckoned the spectre to take the place in the chair, which he had just left. The ghost obeyed with great alacrity, threw down his cloak, laid the bag on the table, and sat down in the position of a person who is to be shaved. Franz was careful to imitate the manner in which the ghost had proceeded, cut off the beard and hair with the scissors, and soaped his whole head, while his strange companion sat as still as a statue. The awkward youth had never before had a razor in his hand, knew not how to handle it, and shaved the patient ghost so much against the grain, that the sufferer displayed the oddest grimaces. The ignorant bungler began to be afraid; he remembered the wise precept, "Do not meddle with another man's business," but still he proceeded,—did as well as he could, and shaved the spectre as clean and as bald as he was himself.

Suddenly the ghost found its tongue: "Kindly I thank thee for the great services thou hast rendered me; by thy means I have been released from long captivity, which for three hundred years bound me within these walls, where my departed spirit was condemned to dwell, till a mortal man should retaliate on me, and treat me as I did others when I was alive.

"Know that, in times of yore, there dwelt a shameless infidel within this castle, who mocked both at priests and laymen. Count Hartman was no man's friend: he acknowledged neither divine nor human laws, and violated the sacred rules of hospitality. The stranger who sought refuge under his roof, the beggar who asked alms of him, was always seized and tormented. I was his barber, flattered his passions, and lived as I chose. Many a pious pilgrim, passing the gates, was invited into the castle; a bath was prepared for him, and when he meant to enjoy himself, I took hold of him according to orders, shaved him quite bald, and then turned him out of the castle, with scorn and mockery. In such cases Count Hartman used to look out at the window, and enjoy the sport, particularly if a number of malicious boys collected round the

insulted pilgrim,and laughed and mocked at him, calling out after him, 'Bald head, bald head!' as the wicked boys of old called after the holy prophet.

"Once a pilgrim came from abroad. He entered and asked for water to wash his feet, and a crust of bread. According to my custom, I took him into the bath, and, without respecting his venerable appearance, I shaved him also quite bald. But the pious pilgrim pronounced a heavy curse on me: 'After death, reprobate! heaven and hell, and the iron gates of purgatory shall be equally inaccessible to thy soul. It shall dwell, as a spectre, within these walls, till a wanderer unasked shall retaliate on thee thy own evil deeds!'

"I grew sick at hearing the curse; the marrow of my bones dried up, and I decayed away gradually, till I became like a shadow; my soul at length separated from its mortal dwelling, but remained within this place, as the holy man had ordered. In vain I expected deliverance from the dreadful chains that bound me to the earth. The repose which the soul languishes for when it is separated from the body was denied to me, and made every year which I was obliged to pass here an age of woe. I was obliged also, as a further punishment, to continue the business which I had carried on during my lifetime. But, alas? my appearance soon made this house be deserted; it was very rarely that a pilgrim came to pass the night here, and, though I shaved every one who came as I did you, no one would understand me, and perform for me that service which was to deliver my soul from captivity. Henceforth I shall not haunt this castle. I now go to my long desired repose. Once more I give thee my thanks, young stranger. If I had any hidden treasures at my command, they should all be thine, but I never possessed wealth; in this castle there is no treasure hidden. But listen to my advice. Tarry here till your chin and head are again covered with hair, then return to your native city, and wait on the bridge over the Weser at the time of the autumnal equinox, for a friend, who will there meet and tell you what you must do to thrive on earth. Farewell; I now depart hence, never to return."

The wicked wag of a landlord had watched from early dawn for the arrival of the castle guest. Anticipating a bald head, he was prepared to receive him with well-affected surprise, but secret ridicule, at his night's adventure. As midday came, and no guest appeared, he grew uneasy lest the spectre had treated him too roughly—perhaps strangled, or frightened him to death. Not wishing to have carried the joke so far, he hastened with his servants in some anxiety towards the castle; and sought out the room where he had seen the light the preceding evening. He

found a strange key in the door, but it was bolted, a measure Franz adopted on the ghost's departure. He knocked with such violence, that Franz leaped up at the noise, thinking, at first, that the spectre was coming on another visit. But hearing it was mine host's voice entreating him to give some sign, Franz rose and opened the door.

"Mercy!" cried the landlord, lifting up his hands with feigned surprise and terror, "then old Red Cloak has been here," (for the spectre went by that name,) "and the tradition is really true. How did he look? what said he? and more than all, what did he do?"

Frank, aware of mine host's roguery, replied, "How should he look? as a man in a red cloak does; what he did is evident to any one; and I shall always take care to remember his words. 'Kind stranger,' he said, 'trust not the landlord who dwells opposite, he knew too well what would happen to you. But leave him to me, I will reward him. I am going to leave the castle, and will take up my quarters at his inn—I will pinch and plague him to the end of his life; unless, indeed, he consent to receive you in his house, and treat you handsomely, until your hair and beard be again full grown.'"

Our poor host trembled sadly at hearing this threat; he crossed himself, and protested that he would be glad to give Franz the run of his house as long as he pleased. He forthwith conducted his guest to the inn, and waited upon him, with the utmost obsequiousness, himself.

Our hero obtained great reputation as an exorcist, for the spectre was no longer to be heard at the castle. He often went to sleep there, and a young fellow, who had courage to accompany him, returned without a shaven head. The owner of the castle, hearing that the spectre had disappeared, sent orders, with great alacrity, to have the stranger most hospitably treated, who had delivered his property from such a disagreeable house-steward.

By the approach of autumn, Franz's brown locks began to cover his temples again; and he grew anxious to proceed home. His thoughts were busied with conjectures about the friend whom he was to meet upon the bridge—the author of his future fortunes. Being prepared for his departure, the landlord presented him with a fine horse, and a well-filled purse, sent by the owner of the castle as some token of his gratitude for the service he had received. Thus Franz was enabled to re-enter his native city on horseback, quite in as good circumstances as those in which he had left it the year before. He sought out his old quarters in the narrow street, where he continued to live very retired, and contented himself with making inquiries after his beloved Mela, who, he learnt, was still single, and enjoying very good health. At present this was sufficient for him; as he would not presume to

appear in her presence until his fate was ascertained; so that he did not even inform her of his arrival in the place.

He looked forward very anxiously for the period of the equinox; his impatience made each day appear as long as a year. The long wished-for time at last arrived; and the night previous he could not close his eyes, on account of his eager anticipations: his heart beat strong, and he felt as if the blood was about to burst from his veins, just as it was in the castle of Rummelsburg before the spectre's appearance. He rose at daybreak, in order not to let his unknown friend wait, and hastened to the bridge, which he found quite deserted. He amused himself with planning a variety of modes of appearing before his beloved, when he had realized his grand hopes; not being able to decide whether it would be better to present himself in all his splendour, or to communicate the happy change of affairs by degrees. Then he was very inquisitive to learn who this secret friend of his might be. "One of my own old acquaintances, I wonder:—but they seem one and all to have abandoned me since my reverses. Then how will it be in his power to serve me so astonishingly? Will the affair be hard or easy to accomplish?" None of these questions did he know how to answer satisfactorily, in spite of all his earnest meditations. The bridge now began to be thronged with people, coaches, waggons, horse and foot passengers, hastening to and fro; besides a number of mendicants of every description, one after another coming to take their usual stations in a place so favourable to their calling. They soon began to work upon the compassion of passengers; and the first of this ragged regiment, who implored Franz's charity, was an old veteran, bearing his military honour of a wooden leg, having left the other behind him in his country's cause. As the reward of his valour, he was permitted to beg wherever he chose; and as he was a good physiognomist, versed in a knowledge of the human heart expressed in the lines of the face, he applied it with such success, that he seldom solicited alms in vain. He was not deceived with Franz on this occasion; for the latter, in the joy of his heart, flung a silver piece into his hat.

For some time Franz did not expect to see much company, besides the lower classes, passing over the bridge; the more rich and indolent still enjoying their morning slumbers. He imagined that his benefactor must, of course, belong to the wealthier class, and took no notice of the rest of the passengers, until, the courts of justice being opened, the lawyers and magistrates should proceed in their full dress to the Council, and the rich merchants to the Exchange. Then he began to grow very anxious, and peered into the faces of all the most respectably-dressed people who passed by. But hour after hour elapsed, until the morning was gone. Dinner came, and business seemed to cease; yet no friend caught our hero's eye. He paced to and fro along the bridge, where there remained only himself and the mendicants; who now

opened their scrips, and dined on cold meat, still keeping their respective stations. Franz wished to follow their example; but, having no provisions with him, he purchased some fruit, which he ate as he walked along. The members of the club, as they sat at dinner, remarked how long he had been haunting the same spot, without speaking to any one, or, like themselves, transacting business. They set him down for an idle youth, though most of them had experienced his benevolence; and he did not escape their facetious observations. At length, they gave him the title of the bridge-surveyor. The old soldier, however, noticed that his face no longer betokened the same cheerfulness; that he seemed to have some serious business upon his mind; his hat was slouched over his eyes, his step slow and cautious; while he was engaged in eating the remnant of an apple, as if hardly conscious of what he was doing.

The old physiognomist wished to apply his observations to some profit; he set his natural and artificial leg both in motion, passed to the other side of the bridge, and prepared to ask our musing hero for more alms, as if he had been a fresh comer. He succeeded—the thoughtful visionary only thrust his hand into his pocket, and threw a piece of money without even looking at him.

After dinner, numbers of new faces appeared; but not a single person spoke to poor Franz, who now began to grow impatient. His attention was still fixed upon every respectable passenger; strange, he thought, that no one addressed him—that all should pass him without the least notice; very few even deigning to return his salutation.

As he was leaving the bridge, he met the old soldier, who had been, meanwhile, busily guessing at the motive of the poor young fellow, in watching on the bridge the whole day. He waited longer than usual, to see whether he would take his departure, until his patience being quite exhausted, he could not resist his curiosity to inquire into the reason of his turning the bridge into a dwelling-place. "Pray, sir," he began, "may I be permitted to ask—?"

Franz, by no means in a communicative humour, and finding the long expected address come from the lips of an old mendicant, answered rather sharply—"What do you want, old greybeard? Speak out."

"Sir," said the old man, "you and I were the first who took our stations on the bridge to-day, and you see we are the last to leave it. As for me and my companions, it is our business; but you do not belong to our fraternity, and yet you have passed all the day here. May I be informed, if it be no secret, what can have been your reason, and what weighs so much upon your mind, that you want to get clear of here?"

"What boots it for thee to know, my old fellow, what ails me, and what lies so heavy upon my heart? it can avail thee nothing."

"But, sir, I feel an interest in you; you have given me alms twice this blessed day, for which God reward you. Yet your face is not so happy as it was this morning, and I am sorry to see it."

This simple honest expression of sympathy won Franz's heart; and losing all his misanthropy, he gave the soldier a kind answer. "Learn, then," said he, "why I have waited here so patiently the whole day; a friend promised to meet me here, who has, however, made me wait in vain."

"With your permission," said the cripple, "your friend, whoever he be, is a scoundrel, thus to make a fool of you. If he had treated me so I would make him feel the weight of my crutch. If he were prevented from coming, he should have let you know, and not have treated you like a schoolboy."

"I must not condemn him," said Franz, "he did not exactly promise. It was only in a dream that I was told of it."

Franz did not like to tell the old man the story of the Spectre Barber; so he changed it into a dream.

"That is another thing," said the old man; "if you believe in such things, I don't wonder that you should be disappointed. If I had all the money that has been promised me in my dreams, I might buy the whole town of Bremen with it, if it were for sale. Well, it amuses me, that you should waste a whole summer's day for the sake of an empty dream, while you might have been happy all the time with your friends."

"I was told so distinctly and circumstantially, however, more than three months ago, that I was to meet on this spot a friend to-day, who had things of the utmost importance to communicate to me, that I thought it was, at least, worth while to try the chance."

"Nobody," said the cripple, "dreams more clearly than I do. One dream I shall never forget. How many years ago it was I do not remember, but I dreamt that my guardian angel, in the shape of a beautiful youth, with yellow curled hair, and two wings on his shoulders, stood at my bedside, and said to me, 'Berthold, listen to my words, and lose none if thou desirest happiness. Thou art destined to possess a large treasure, and to enjoy it for the rest of thy life. To-morrow, after sunset, take a spade and shovel, and go from thy dwelling across the river to thy right hand; pass all the houses, and the monastery of St. John, till thou reachest a garden into which four steps lead from the road. Wait there concealed till the moon lends thee her light; then press with all thy strength against the door, and it will spring open. Enter the garden without fear, and turn towards the walk, on the left hand, which is overhung by vines. Behind them stands a large apple-tree; step up to the stem of it, with thy face turned to the moon. In this same direction, about two yards distance, thou wilt see two rose-bushes; begin to dig close to them, till thou comest to a stone plate, and under it thou wilt find an iron box full of gold and other valuables. Though it be heavy

and unwieldy, do not fear the trouble of lifting it out of the hole, and thy pains will be well rewarded, if thou findest the key which is concealed below the box.'"

Franz grew dumb with astonishment as he listened to the old man, and would not have been able to conceal his agitation, had not the darkness of the evening prevented his companion from seeing his face; he discovered, from the description and the peculiarities mentioned, that the soldier's dream related to a garden which had once been his own, and which he disliked from the remembrance that it had been his father's hobby.

The old cripple became instantly interesting to Franz, who now comprehended that he was the very friend to whom the spectre had directed him. He would fain have embraced him, and, in his first delight, have called him father and friend, but prudence suggested greater caution. He therefore merely said, "That was indeed a distinct dream! But, what did you do the next morning, friend? Did you follow the advice?" "Not I, indeed!" answered the invalid. "Why it was only a dream." Franz took the last silver coin out of his pocket; "Take this," he said, "old father, go and drink my health in a pint of rhenish; thy conversation has banished my ill temper. Do not forget to visit this bridge every day; I hope we shall meet again." The lame old man had not, for many days, received so much as on this day; he blessed his benefactor, therefore, and limped into a tavern to enjoy himself; while Franz, filled with new hopes, hurried home to his lodgings in the narrow street.

On the next day he prepared everything necessary for digging. He had not the materials usually employed by searchers after treasure; such as, a conjuration from an osier twig, an enchanted girdle, hieroglyphics, and the like; neither are they necessary, if the three principal things,—viz., a pickaxe, spade, and, above all, the subterraneous treasures are at hand. Soon after sunset, Franz carried the digging implements near to the spot, and hid them in a hedge. He waited for the appearance of the moon with great impatience, and, as soon as her silvery horns were seen through the bushes, he began his labour, observing, in its progress, to pay attention to everything the old soldier had said; and, at length, actually found and got out the treasure, without any accident or opposition, either from a black mastiff, or a scowling wolf, and without having the light of a blue flame to guide him.

He took up, with unspeakable joy, some of the different gold coins which the iron chest had faithfully guarded. After the first delight had somewhat subsided, he began to consider how he might transport the treasure safely and unperceived to his lodgings. It was too heavy for him to carry it without assistance, and he experienced, therefore, immediately, some of the anxiety which is inseparably united to the possession of wealth. Our

new Crœsus could discover no other way but to place his riches in a hollow tree, which stood in a meadow behind the garden; he then put the empty chest back into the hole, covered it with earth, and made the ground as level as he could. At the end of three days, he had carried all the money-bags from the hollow tree safely to his own humble dwelling. Thinking himself now authorized to throw off his incognito, he dressed himself richly, desired the prayers at church to be discontinued, and a thanksgiving to be offered in its place, for a traveller on his safe return to his native city, after having successfully concluded his business. He hid himself in a corner of the church, where he might, unobserved, see his beloved Mela; his eyes were fixed on her, and when the thanksgiving was pronounced, her cheeks glowed with joy, and she could scarcely conceal her raptures. Their meeting afterwards in the church was so expressive, that nobody who had seen it could have misinterpreted it.

From this time forward, Franz again appeared at change, and entered into business. He extended his transactions greatly in a few weeks, and, as his prosperity became every day more apparent, his envious fellow-citizens observed, according to the old proverb, that he must have had more luck than sense to get rich in collecting old debts. He took a large house opposite the statue of Sir Roland, in the principal square; engaged clerks and servants, and applied himself with great earnestness to his business. Those miserable races of parasites and toadeaters again flocked to his door, and hoped once more to be the partakers of his wealth. But, grown wise by experience, he returned only polite speeches for politeness, and allowed them to depart with an empty stomach, which he found to be a sovereign remedy, and it freed him at once from all further trouble from them.

In Bremen, Franz became the talk of the day; the fortune he had made abroad, in such an unaccountable manner, quite occupied the public attention. In proportion as his opulence increased, and became more known, Mela's happiness seemed to diminish. She thought her mute lover was at last in a condition to declare himself; still he remained silent, except occasionally meeting her in the street, and even here he became daily less attentive. Such a demeanour showed but a cold lover; and that harpy, jealousy, soon began to torment her, whispering the most unpleasant suspicions possible: "Let me banish the fond hope of fixing so variable a being, thus changing like a weathercock, blown about by the least breeze. True, he loved, and was faithful to me as long as he was my equal in rank; but with this revolution in his affairs, he looks down upon the purest affection, because of its poverty. Surrounded with wealth and splendour, he perhaps adores some haughtier beauty, who abandoned him in his misfortune, but now, with her siren voice, calls him back. Yes, and the voice of adulation has changed his heart. His new companions tell him to

choose from among the richest and loftiest of his native place; that no fathers would refuse their daughters, no maidens reject him as a lover. They will make him fond of power and importance; he will connect himself with some mighty family, and forget his poor Mela."

Thoughts like these tormented her incessantly. The first time she had heard of his prosperity, she hailed it with delight; not because she was ambitious to share so large a fortune, but to gratify her mother, who had never been thoroughly happy since she resigned the wealthy brewer. Mela now almost wished that the prayers which had been offered up for his success had not been heard, and that the traveller's business had not succeeded, as he would then, perhaps, have proved more faithful.

Her mother was at no loss to discover the cause of her daughter's melancholy. The report of the late lint merchant's improved circumstances had reached her; she was aware of Mela's attachment; and as he was now a busy reputable merchant, and the very model of good order, she could no longer see any reason for his delaying his offer of marriage, if he really wished to possess her. She never mentioned the subject to Mela, in order not to wound her feelings; but the latter, no longer able to conceal her grief, at length confided the source of it to her mother. The old lady, however, only heard what she knew well enough before; though it gave occasion for her to offer her opinion on the subject. Above all, she avoided saying a single word of reproach, being resolved to make the best of everything that could not be helped. In fact, she tried every means she could of consoling her unhappy daughter, teaching her to bear up against her blighted prospects with piety and firmness.

"Dearest child," she would say, "as you have brewed, you know, so you must bake; you threw away Fortune when she solicited, and you must learn to bear her loss. Experience has shown me that the hope we most count upon is often delusive. Follow my example; listen to it no longer, and endless disappointments will no longer destroy your peace. Look for no favourable change in your fate, and you will soon be contented. It is better to honour our spinning-wheel, which procures us the means of living, than to dream of greatness and wealth, since we have learnt to do without them." Such philosophical remarks came from the good old lady's heart, since the failure of her last dear hope connected with the worthy brewer.

But now came a report that Franz was preparing an establishment for the reception of his bride, a rich lady of Antwerp, who was on the point of arriving. This was, indeed, a death-blow to poor Mela's hopes, and was too much even for her feelings of resignation. She vowed to tear the image of the faithless wretch for ever from her heart, and to dry her tears,—while at the same time they flowed afresh.

In an hour,—and there were many such, when she quite forgot her vow, and was recurring with sweet and bitter fancies to the one loved idea, however she esteemed it unworthy her,—she was roused by a low tap at the door. Her mother opened it;—it was Franz; their old neighbour Franz, from the narrow street. He wore a rich dress, and his fine brown curls clustered round his forehead, and seemed to perfume the room. So splendid an appearance betokened some more important object than selling lint. The old lady started—she attempted to speak; but the words faltered on her lips. Mela rose suddenly from her seat;—she blushed and grew pale by turns, but remained silent, as well as her mother. Franz, however, was perfectly at his ease; he now adapted words to the soft melody which he had often played on his lute; and in bold open terms he at length declared his long silent love. Then, turning to the happy mother, he solemnly entreated her consent to his union with her daughter. Next he gave an explanation of all suspicious circumstances, concluding by declaring that the bride for whom preparations had been making was only the fair Mela herself.

On recovering from her surprise, the ceremonious old lady determined, as a matter of propriety, to take one week's consideration, though tears of joy were in her eyes, and eloquently spoke the consent she could not. Franz, however, became so pressing, that she was compelled to steer a middle course between old custom and propriety and the wishes of the new lover; and she delegated her daughter to give an answer agreeable to herself. A strange revolution had been at work in Mela's heart since his entrance into the room. No stronger proof of his innocence could be imagined than such a visit; his apparent indifference was all explained. He had been so very assiduous and active in his business, and in preparing also for their marriage, that he had not sooner had time; but there was now no reason why she should refuse her consent.

The happy lovers had now, for the first time, leisure to translate into its proper language the hieroglyphics of their secret correspondence,—which they soon discovered they had already understood,—and to do justice to each other's sentiments. This supplied them with a pleasant subject of conversation, and it was long before Franz took leave of his amiable bride.

He now wished to meet with his old friend the soldier, whom he had always remembered, though he had apparently neglected him. On his part, the cripple had examined the faces of all the passengers who had appeared on the bridge, without recognising his generous young friend, as he had been led to expect; but the moment he saw him approach, he limped as fast as his crutch could carry him, to bid him welcome; and Franz, kindly hailing the old man, said, "Do you think, friend, you could go with me to the new town on business? you shall be well paid for your trouble?"

"Why not?" returned the old veteran; "I have a wooden leg that is never tired; and I can walk at a pretty smart pace when it suits me. Only wait a little, till the little grey man comes; he never fails to cross the bridge towards evening."

"There is no need to wait for the little grey man," said Franz: "what can you have to do with him?"

"What!" repeated the soldier; "why, the grey man brings me a silver groat every night of his life, from whom I neither know nor care. Sometimes a thought crosses me, that it must be the Evil One, who wants me to barter my soul for money. But he has made no such proposal, so I shall not be bound by it."

"I fancy not," said our hero, smiling; "but if you will now follow me, you shall have the silver groat." So the cripple followed him through a number of streets, into a remote part of the town near the rampart. There he stopped before a small house, just newly built, and knocked at the door. On its being opened, Franz walked in, and said to the old man, "My friend, thou hast once bestowed upon me a very pleasant evening, and it is right that I should cheer up the evening of thy life. Behold this house and all its contents! they are thine, with the little garden beyond. There will be a person to take care of you, and you will find the silver groat every day upon your dining-table. Fear not the Evil One on the score of thy silver groat, old fellow, for he in the gray jacket was no other than an agent of mine. He appeared only to bring you the money until this thy new dwelling was provided.

Next morning the abode of the fair Mela resembled a fair; such was the throng of milliners, jewellers, lace-merchants, tailors, shoemakers, and semstresses, all vying with each other in laying their treasures at her feet. Mela spent the whole of that day in selecting the various articles which, in those days, made up a bridal-dress, and in giving orders to the tradespeople. The bridegroom went, in the mean time, to procure the banns to be published; for, in those days, the wealthy and high-born were not ashamed to tell the whole world they meant to contract the solemn engagement of marriage; and, before the expiration of a month, he led his long-loved Mela to the altar, with so much pomp and solemnity, as very far to outshine even the splendid wedding of the rich brewer.

Mother Brigitta had the satisfaction to see her daughter united to a prosperous and deserving young man; and to enjoy, in the evening of her life, that comfort she had so long wished for; and, indeed, she deserved her good fortune, for she was the most tolerable mother-in-law that ever lived.

THE NYMPH OF THE FOUNTAIN.

THREE miles beyond Dinkelsbuhl, in Swabia, there stood in former times an old castle, which belonged to a powerful knight called Wackerman Uhlfinger, the flower of fist and club ruling knighthood, the terror of the Swabian confederated states, as well as of all travellers and merchants, who had no letter of protection from him. Whenever Wackerman put on his cuirass and helmet, girded his sword on his loins, and buckled his golden spurs on his heels, he was, after the manner of his contemporaries, a rude hard-hearted man, who considered robbery and plunder the prerogative of nobility; he made war against the weak; and, because he himself was lusty and stout, he recognised no other law than the right of the strong. When it was rumoured, "Uhlfinger is approaching—Wackerman comes," terror spread throughout Swabia; the people fled into the fortified cities, and the watchmen from the battlements of the walls blew their horns, and made known the approach of danger. In that rude age, however, this barbarous heroism did not make his fame so abhorred throughout the land, as would have been the case in our more civilized age.

But this dreaded man, when he had laid aside his armour at home, was as quiet as a lamb, hospitable as an Arabian, a good-tempered head of the family and a tender husband. His wife was a tender and loving woman, well-bred and virtuous; like whom there are very few, even in this day. She loved her husband with inviolable constancy, and attended industriously to her household concerns, never looked out of the lattice in search of unlawful adventures when her husband was away, but covered her distaff with flax as fine as silk, turned her spindle with an active hand, and wove a thread which the Lydian Arachne would have claimed as her own. She was the mother of two daughters, whom she brought up with the greatest care, in virtue and frugality. In this cloister-like seclusion nothing disturbed her happiness but the freebooties of her husband, who enriched himself with unrighteous wealth. In her heart she disapproved of these privileged robberies, and it gave her no joy when he presented her with lordly stuffs, embroidered with gold and silver for rich clothes. "What good is plunder to me," she often said to herself, "on which hang sobs and tears?" She threw these gifts with secret aversion into her chests, and thought them worthy of no further notice, compassionated the unfortunate ones who

fell into Wackerman's custody, and, through her intercession, often set them at liberty, and provided them with money for their journey.

At the foot of the castled mountain, a plentiful spring, concealed among deep bushes, gushed out of a natural grotto, and, according to an old tradition, it was inhabited by a water nymph called Nixa, and the saying went that she sometimes, on particular occasions, showed herself in the castle. The noble lady often wandered alone to this spring, when, in the absence of her husband, she wished to breathe fresh air, outside the thick walls of the castle, or to perform some charitable deeds in retirement without attracting notice. She met there the poor whom the porters would not admit, and distributed, on certain days, not only the best things from her table, but carried her humble good-nature sometimes as far as the holy Landgravine Elizabeth, who, with stoical contempt of all repugnant feelings, with her royal hand, at St. Elizabeth's well, washed the beggars' linen.

Once Wackerman had gone with his followers to encamp and to waylay the merchants who came from Augsburg market; and stayed away longer than was his wont. This made the tender wife anxious; she fancied that her lord had met with some misfortune; that he might be slain, or have fallen into the enemy's power. Her heart was so heavy that she could neither sleep nor rest; already many days had she fretted, wavering between fear and hope, and often she cried out to the dwarf who held watch on the tower, "Kleinhansel, look out! what rustles through the wood? What sound of trampling in the valley? In what direction does the dust blow? Does Wackerman approach?" But Kleinhansel answered very sorrowfully, "Nothing stirs in the wood. Nothing rides in the valley; no dust is blown, and no plume of feathers waves." This went on till night, when the evening star rose, and the light of the full moon shone over the eastern mountains. Then she could not contain herself between the four walls of her chamber; she threw on her mantle, stole through the gates into the beech-grove, and wandered to her beloved spot, the crystal spring, in order to indulge undisturbed her sorrowful thoughts. Her eyes flowed with tears, and her mouth uttered melodious wailings which mingled with the rushing of the stream, as it murmured from the spring through the grass. While she approached the grotto, it appeared as if a light shadow hovered at its entrance; but her heart was so much troubled that she recked very little of it, and, at first sight, she thought that the quivering moonlight had presented to her this ideal figure. When she came nearer, the white figure seemed to move and to motion her with the hand. Then a shuddering came over her, yet she did not retreat, but stood to see what it really was. The tradition of the spring of Nixa, which was believed in the country round, was not unknown to her. She now recognised in the white lady, the nymph

of the spring, and this appearance seemed to her to foretel some important event in the family. What thought could now be nearer to her than that of her husband? She tore her black locks, and raised a loud cry. "Oh unhappy day! Wackerman! Wackerman! thou art fallen, cold and dead! Thou hast made me a widow, and thy children orphans." Whilst she thus lamented and wrung her hands, a soft voice proceeded from the grotto: "Matilda, fear not, I announce no misfortune to thee. Approach nearer, I am thy friend and desire to converse with thee." The noble lady saw so little cause of alarm in the figure and speech of Nixa, that she took courage to accept the invitation. She entered the grotto; the inhabitant took her hand friendlily, kissed her forehead, sat down cordially beside her, and began;— "Welcome to my dwelling, beloved mortal; thy heart is pure and clear as the water of my spring, therefore are the invisible powers favourable to thee. I will disclose to thee the fate of thy life, the only token of favour which I can grant thee. Thy husband lives, and before morning dawns he will again be in thy arms. Do not fear nor mourn for him; the spring of thy life will earlier fade than his; but before that, thou shalt kiss another daughter, who, born in an eventful hour, shall derive thereby, in a changeful uncertain manner, both good and bad fate. The stars are not unpropitious to her; but a hateful counter influence shall rob the orphan of the happiness of a mother's care." It grieved the noble lady very much, when she heard that her little daughter should be deprived of a mother's care, and she burst into loud weeping. The Nymph was much moved: "Weep not," said she, "I will take the place of a mother to thy child, when thou canst not guide her; but with this condition, that thou choose me as godmother to the tender child, that I may have an interest in her. Then remember, that if thou wilt intrust this child to my care she must bring back to me the sponsor's gift that I will give her at her christening." The lady Matilda acquiesced in this desire; thereupon the Nixa picked up a smooth pebble, and gave it her, saying, further, that she was to send it by a trusty maiden to throw it into the spring as a mark of invitation to the sponsorship. The lady Matilda promised faithfully to perform all, kept these words in her heart, and returned to the castle; but the nymph went back again into the spring and disappeared.

Not long after, the dwarf blew the trumpet joyfully from the tower, and Wackerman, with his followers, rode into the court laden with rich booty. After the course of a year, the lady perceived that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled; but it gave her great anxiety how she should manage about the sponsorship; her thoughts were all taken up how she should disclose to her husband her adventure at Nixa's spring. It came to pass that Wackerman received a challenge from a knight whom he had offended, and they resolved upon a combat for life or death. He

hastily prepared for his journey, and when he was on the point of setting out, and, according to custom, took leave of his wife, she inquired carefully about his designs, pressed him, contrary to her usual habit, to tell her against whom he was marching; and, when he kindly reproved her unusual curiosity, she covered her face and wept bitterly. This touched the knight to the heart, though he would not show it, but set off and hastened to the place of action, attacked his adversary, slew him after a spirited contest, and returned home triumphantly. His affectionate wife received him with open arms, conversed with him cheerfully, and left nothing untried to sound him, with smooth words and womanly arts, as to what adventure he had undertaken; but he carefully locked up his heart, fastened all its approaches with the bars of insensibility, and revealed nothing to her; nay, much more, he jested at her curiosity, and said laughingly, "Oh! mother Eve, thy daughters are not yet degenerate; curiosity and inquisitiveness are still woman's heritage to this day; any one of these would have desired to pluck from the forbidden tree, or to lift up the lid of the prohibited dish, and would thereby have let out the little mouse that lay therein."—"Pardon me, beloved husband," answered the prudent lady, "men have also received their appointed share of mother Eve's heritage; the only difference is, that a worthy woman dares keep no secret from her husband. I lay a wager that, if my heart could conceal anything from you, you would not sleep nor rest till I had disclosed to you my secret."—"And I," answered he, "give you my word that your secret would not concern me at all: I allow you to make the trial."

This was the point to which the lady Matilda wanted to bring her husband. "Well," said she, "my dear lord, it is permitted me to choose one of the sponsors who shall stand godmother to my child. Now, I have a friend in my mind unknown to you, and my request is that you never press me to tell you who she is, how she comes, nor where she dwells. When you have promised me this on your knightly honour, and kept your promise, I shall have lost my wager, and will freely acknowledge that manly spirit triumphs over womanly weakness." Wackerman unhesitatingly gave his wife this promise, and she rejoiced at the happy success of her stratagem. In a few days a little girl was born. Although the father would rather have embraced a son, he rode very cheerfully to his neighbours and friends, to invite them to the christening.

The company assembled on the appointed day; and, when the mother heard the noise of carriages, the neighing of horses, and the bustle in the courtyard, she called a trusty servant to her, and said, "Take this pebble, throw it silently behind thee, into the Nixa's spring." The servant did as the lady had enjoined, and, before he returned, an unknown lady entered the room

where the company were assembled, bowed courteously to the lords and ladies present, and, as the child was brought in, and the priest approached the font, she took her place among the godmothers. Every one gave place to her as a stranger, and she held the child first in her arms over the font. All eyes were fixed on her, as she was so beautiful, so well-bred, and so sumptuously clothed. She had a flowing robe of sky-blue silk, open up the front, and white satin underneath; over this she was adorned with jewels and pearl ornaments as richly as our Lady at Loretto on a gala day. A glittering sapphire clasped her transparent veil, which fell in thin folds from the crown of her head over her beautifully-arranged hair, across her shoulders, and down to her feet; but the veil was wet, as if it had been dipped in water. The unexpected appearance of the strange lady had so much interrupted the assembled godmothers in their devotions, that they forgot to give the child a name; so the priest baptized it Matilda, after its mother. When the christening was over, the little Matilda was carried back to her mother, and the godfathers crowded around to wish the child happiness, and the godmothers to offer their presents. The lady Matilda seemed somewhat embarrassed at the aspect of Nixa; perhaps also surprised that she had so faithfully kept her word. She cast a stolen glance at her husband, who answered with a smile, in which she could read nothing; and, for the rest, he seemed to take no further notice of the stranger. The godmothers' presents now gave them other occupation; a shower of gold streamed, from liberal hands, over the child. The unknown at last approached with her present, and disappointed the expectations of all the sponsors. They anticipated, from the splendidly-attired lady, a jewel or other memorial of great worth, particularly as she produced a silken pocket, which she drew out of another with great care; but my lady godmother had nothing wrapped up in it but a musk-apple, turned in wood. She laid this solemnly in the child's cradle, kissed the mother friendlily on the forehead, and left the room. At this pitiful present, a secret whisper arose among those present, which soon broke out into a scornful laugh. There failed not to arise many malicious remarks and speculations as to how she came into the room; but, as the knight and his lady observed a profound silence, there remained nothing for the curious chatterers but to entertain their own idle conjectures. The unknown appeared no more, and none knew whither she had vanished.

Wackerman was secretly tormented with the desire to ask who the stranger might be, as nobody knew the name by which the lady with the wet veil was called; only his dislike, as a knight, to show himself guilty of woman's weakness, and the inviolability of his plighted word, bound his tongue, when, in the hours of matrimonial intimacy, the question would rise, as it often did, to his lips, "Tell me, my dear, who was the godmother with

the wet veil?" He thought, however, to gain the secret from her in time, and reckoned on the qualities of woman's heart, which possesses in as small a degree the gift of secrecy, as a sieve the property of retaining fluid. But this time he was out in his reckoning; the Lady Matilda knew how to keep silence, and preserve the mysterious riddle as carefully in her heart, as she did the musk-apple in her jewel-box.

Before the little girl had escaped from leading-strings, the prophecy of the nymph was fulfilled on her good mother; she fell suddenly ill, and died, without having time to think of the musk-apple, or with it, according to the arrangement of Nixa, to commend the little Matilda to her care. Her husband was then present at a tournament at Augsburg, and, honoured with the approbation of the Emperor Frederic, returned home. When the dwarf, from the tower, saw his lord riding in the distance, he blew his horn, according to custom; but he did not produce from it a cheerful note, but, on the contrary, blew a mournful strain. This went through the knight's heart, and pierced his very soul. "What sound," said he, "strikes on my ear? Do you hear, squires, is it not a dissonant croak, a death-song? Kleinhansel announces nothing good to us." The squires, too, were confounded; they saw their lord mournful, and said to one another, "That is the note of the bird 'kreideweiss.' May God avert misfortune—there is a corpse in the castle!" Wackerman spurred on his steed, and rode over the plain so swiftly, that the sparks flew from his horse's heels. The drawbridge fell, he looked into the courtyard, and, alas! the sign of death was placed before the castle-gate—a lantern, without a light, adorned with waving crape, while all the window-shutters were closed. Then he perceived, by the sobs and lamentations of the servants, that the Lady Matilda was no more! At the head of the coffin he saw the two eldest daughters, clothed in black, who wept over their deceased mother with many tears. At the foot of the coffin sat the youngest daughter; as yet unable to comprehend her loss, pulling to pieces, with childish glee, and playing with, the flowers with which the bier was adorned. This melancholy sight overpowered Wackerman's manly firmness; he wept and wailed aloud, threw himself on the cold body, bedewed the pale cheeks with his tears, pressed with trembling mouth the white lips, and gave way, without restraint, to all the bitter feelings of his heart. Then he hung up his weapons in the armory, sat by the coffin in a flapped hat and black mourning cloak, bewailed his departed wife, and bestowed upon her the last honours, in a magnificent funeral.

According to the observation of a great man, the most violent grief is always the shortest; and so this distressed widower soon forgot his sorrow, and thought seriously of repairing his loss by taking a second wife. His choice fell on an impetuous active woman, quite the reverse of the gentle Matilda. The government

of the house took immediately another form; the new mistress behaved proudly and imperiously to the servants; she loved splendour and extravagance; and there was no end to the feasts and banquets which she gave. The house was soon peopled with numerous descendants of the new stock; and the daughters by the first marriage were no longer thought of. When the elder daughters grew up, the stepmother sought to rid herself of them, and sent them to board in a convent, at Dünkelsbühl; the little Matilda was placed under the care of a nurse, and was transferred to a little remote chamber, where she was out of sight of the vain lady, who did not meddle much with the cares of the family. Her extravagant expenditure increased also; so that the profits of the *fist and club* rights, though the knight did not slacken his former activity, were no longer sufficient; and she often saw herself compelled to make use of the property left by her predecessor, or to borrow gold from the Jews. Once she found herself in a particularly distressing position. She sought through drawers and chests for something valuable, and at last discovered a secret compartment, and a concealed press, in which, to her great joy, she found the Lady Matilda's jewel-case. The sparkling jewels, diamond rings, earrings, bracelets, girdles, and other trinkets, delighted her charmed eyes. She examined all accurately, counted piece by piece, and calculated in her mind what profit this splendid discovery would bring her. Among these valuables the wooden musk-apple met her eyes. For a long time she did not know what to make of it; she tried to unscrew it, but it was swollen by the damp. She shook it in her hand, and found it as light as an empty nut; so she took it for an empty ring-case, and supposing it contained nothing valuable, she threw it at once out of the window. At this moment, the little Matilda was sitting in her narrow garden, playing with her doll. When she saw the wooden ball roll down on the ground, she threw the doll out of her hand, seized her new plaything with childish eagerness, and was as much delighted with her discovery as her mamma with hers. She amused herself many days with this toy, and would not let it out of her hands. One beautiful summer's day, the nurse desired to enjoy, with her foster daughter, the fresh breeze by the rock spring; at evening-tide the child asked for her honey-roll, which her nurse had forgotten to bring. She did not wish to go back again; and to keep the child in good humour she went into the thicket to pluck for her a handful of raspberries. The child, in the mean time, played with the musk-apple, threw it here and there, like a catch-ball, till, in one of the throws, the child's plaything fell into the spring. Immediately there stood before her a young lady, as beautiful as an angel, and as mild as one of the Graces. The child, alarmed at the sudden appearance, thought she saw her stepmother before her, who always thrust her rudely about, and beat her whenever she came

under her eye. But the Nymph caressed her with soft words: "Fear not, dear little one," said she, "I am thy godmother, come to me. See, here is thy plaything which fell into the spring." And with these words, she took up the little Matilda in her lap, pressed her tenderly to her bosom, embraced and kissed her, and moistened her with tears. "Poor orphan," said she, "I have promised to take a mother's place to thee, and I will fulfil it. Visit me often, thou wilt always find me in this grotto, if thou wilt throw a stone into the spring. Examine this musk-apple carefully, and do not play with it, for fear of losing it; it will grant thee three wishes. When thou art grown up I will tell thee more; now thou canst not comprehend." She then gave her many good admonitions, suited to the child's age, and enjoined perfect silence as to what had happened. The nurse came back, and the Nymph disappeared.

The proverb says, "Now-a-days, no child is prudent; in olden times it was different." The little Matilda, at least, was a wise and cautious child; she had discretion enough not to mention her lady godmother to her nurse, but, on her return home, asked for a needle and thread, and sewed up the musk-apple carefully in the lining of her dress. Her wishes and thoughts were now all directed to the Nixa's spring; as often as the weather allowed, she obliged her nurse to take a walk; and because she could not refuse anything to the coaxing child, and this desire seemed natural to her, (for the grotto had been her mother's favourite resting-place,) she the more willingly agreed to the wish of the little one. The child always knew how to find a pretext to send her nurse away; and as soon as she had turned her back, the stone fell into the water, and procured for her the society of the charming godmother. After a few years the little orphan bloomed into maidenhood, and her beauty opened like a bud of the hundred-blossoming rose, which, transplanted among a crowd of variegated flowers, shone forth in modest dignity. She bloomed, it is true, only in a narrow garden; she lived retired among the servants, and when her luxurious mother feasted, she was never brought in, but sat in her chamber, occupied with household work; and in the evening, after accomplishing her day's task, she found ample compensation for the noisy joys from which she was excluded, in the society of the Nymph of the Fountain; she was not only her companion and friend, but also her teacher; she instructed the maiden in all the arts of womanly skill, and formed her mind and habits after the example of her virtuous mother. One day the Nymph seemed to redouble her tenderness towards the charming Matilda, she clasped her in her arms, drooped her head on her shoulders, and was so melancholy and sorrowful, that the maiden, too, was infected by it, and could not refrain from letting some tears fall on her godmother's hand, as she silently kissed her. At this mutual feeling the Nymph was still more sorrowful:

"Child," said she, with a mournful voice, "thou weepest and knowest not why, but thy tears are a presentiment of thy fate. A great change menaces thy house on the mountain; before the reaper handles the scythe, and the wind blows over the stubble of the wheat-fields, it will be deserted and waste. When the servants of the castle go out in the evening twilight to draw water from my spring, and return with empty pails, then know that misfortune is at hand. Take care of thy musk-apple, which will grant thee three wishes, and be not prodigal of them. Farewell, in this place we meet not again." She then taught the maiden the mysterious properties of the apple, that she might make use of it in case of necessity, wept and sobbed at parting, and as soon as the maiden was fully instructed in the mystic words, she finally disappeared.

At the time of the wheat harvest, the drawers of water returned one evening with empty pitchers, pale and terrified, trembling in all their limbs, as if shaking with the cold of an intermittent fever; and they related that the White Lady had been seen sitting by the spring, with mournful gestures, wringing her hands and loudly wailing, a sign which foreboded no good. This the warriors and armour-bearers mocked at; they thought it delusion, and mere woman's prattle. Curiosity impelled some to investigate the affair; they saw the apparition, but recovering their presence of mind, went forward to the spring. When they came there, the White Lady had disappeared, and many were the comments and discussions on the matter; nobody could understand the omen, Matilda alone knew, but she would not divulge it, because the Nymph had enjoined silence. She sat alone and sad in her chamber, in fear and expectation of the things that should happen.

Wackerman could not satisfy his extravagant wife by robbery and plunder, and when he did not go out on these predatory expeditions, she prepared for him daily a life of pleasure, called his topers together, encouraged his love of wine, and never allowed him to wake from his sleep of intoxication, and to perceive the decay of his house. When money or food were wanting, fresh supplies were always procured by the robbery of Jacob Fugger's heavy wagon, or by the seizure of rich parcels from Venice. Tired of these extortions, the general congress of the Suabian alliance at last resolved on Uhlfinger's destruction, since dissuasions and warnings had been tried in vain. Before he even thought it was seriously intended, the soldiers of the allied cities stood before the gate of his mountain fortress, and hemmed him in; and there remained nothing for him now but to sell his life as dearly as possible. The bombs and pieces of artillery shook the bastions, and the cross-bow men, on both sides, did their best; bolts and arrows showered thick, and one of them, in an unlucky hour, pierced the visor of Wackerman's helmet, sunk deep into

his brain, and in a few moments he lay in the cold sleep of death. At the fall of their lord, his men-at-arms fell into confusion; some of the faint-hearted ones showed the white feather, while the braver warriors rushed down again from the tower. The enemy now observed that disorder and confusion reigned within the tower, the besiegers assailed it more violently, climbed the walls, won the gate, let down the drawbridge, and put all they met with to the sword. Even the cause of all the mischief, the extravagant wife, was slain with all her children by the furious warriors, who were as furious against the plundering nobility as afterwards were the rebels in the Suabian peasants' war. The castle was entirely pillaged, set on fire, and, at last, levelled with the ground. During the tumult of the battle, Matilda kept quite quiet in the Patmos of her little attic, locked the door, and bolted it fast inside. But as she observed that all without was confusion, and that castle and bars could give her no further security, she threw her veil over her, turned her musk-apple three times in her hand, caught it skilfully while she repeated the little sentence which the Nymph taught her: "Night behind me, day before me, so that nobody may see me." And thus she walked unseen through the enemy's host, and out of the paternal citadel, although with a deeply sorrowful heart, and without knowing which way to take. As long as her tender feet did not refuse her their wonted service, she hastened on from the theatre of cruelty and devastation, until, overcome by night and weariness, she resolved to lodge under a wild pear-tree in the open field. She sat down on the cool turf and gave free vent to her tears. Once more she looked round the country, and wished to bless the spot, where she had passed the years of childhood; as she raised her eyes, she saw a blood-red sign of fire rise to heaven, by which she judged that the mansion of her ancestors would soon be a prey to the flames. She turned her eyes away from this miserable spectacle, and earnestly desired that the twinkling stars might grow pale, and the morning dawn appear in the east. Before it grew light, and while the morning dew lay in drops on the grass, the uncertain pilgrim set off, and soon reached a village, where she was received by a good-natured peasant woman, and refreshed with a morsel of bread and a cup of milk. With this woman she exchanged her own dress for a peasant's clothing, and joined a caravan of merchants, who escorted her to Augsburg. In this woful and deserted condition, no other choice remained for her than to hire herself as a servant; but, because it was out of the season, for a long time she could not find a situation.

Count Conrad of Schwabeck, a German knight of the cross, and also governor and protector of the bishopric of Augsburg, possessed there a sort of court, where he was accustomed to spend the winter. In his absence a housekeeper dwelt there, called Dame Gertrude, who conducted the domestic affairs. This woman was

considered a perfect Zantippe, by the whole city; no servant could remain with her, for she brawled and blustered about the house like a noisy ghost. The servants feared the rattle of her keys as children do the bugbear Rupert; the least neglect, or even only her own wicked tempers, cups and pots must compensate for; or she would arm her robust hands with a bunch of keys, and beat the servants on the back and loins black and blue; in short, if anybody wanted to describe a wicked woman, he said, she is as mischievous as Dame Trube at the county court. One day she had carried her punishments to such a violent height, that all her servants ran away; and just at this time the gentle Matilda arrived and offered herself for service. To conceal her elegant shape, she had padded one shoulder as if she were deformed; a broad headcloth concealed her beautiful silken hair, and she had spread over her hands and face with soot, to affect a gipsyish skin. When she rang the door-bell, and announced herself, Dame Gertrude put her head out of the window, and perceiving this odd figure, she thought it was a beggar, and called out, "This is no almonry, go to Jacob Fugger's almshouses, there farthings are distributed," and then she hastily shut the window. Miss Matilda would not let this deter her; she rang long, till the housekeeper again appeared, intending to requite her importunity with a torrent of scoldings. But before she could open her toothless mouth, the maiden made known to her her wishes. "Who art thou," asked Dame Gertrude, "and what canst thou do?" The pretended servant answered,—

"A poor young orphan maid am I,
Matilda named in infancy.
I can iron, crimp, and sew,
Spin and weave each varied hue,
Knit and net, and cut, and pound,
Roast and boil, and salt the round;
A skilful hand in every art,
Alert and active as a hart."

When the housekeeper heard these words, and perceived that the nut-brown maiden possessed so many useful talents, she opened the door, gave her the fee penny, and led her into the kitchen. She managed her employments so well that Dame Gertrude quite lost her habit of throwing pots at her servants. Although she always continued severe and sulky, and would blame everything, and wish it better done; still she never met with opposition or retort from the maiden, who defended herself only by meekness and patience against her bitterness. She was better and more bearable than she had been for many years;—a proof that good servants and good management, as well as good weather, make good and well-conducted governors. At the time of the first snow, the housekeeper had the house cleaned and swept, the windows washed, the curtains put up, and everything prepared for the reception of her lord, who arrived with a numerous train of

servants, and a multitude of horses and hunting hounds, at the beginning of the winter.

It happened one morning when Matilda drew water in the court, that the Count met her, and his appearance produced feelings in her heart, quite new and strange to her; the most beautiful young man she had ever seen stood before her; the cheerful fire of his sparkling eyes, his waving light hair, half concealed under the shadow of the ostrich feather in his hat, and his firm walk and noble manner, operated so powerfully on the maiden, that her heart beat quicker, and her blood rushed faster through her veins. She now perceived, for the first time, the great difference of her present station from that in which she was born, and this feeling oppressed her more than the heavy bucket; very sorrowful she went back into the kitchen, and for the first time failed in her functions, and spoiled the soup, which procured for her, from the housekeeper, a sharp reproof. By night and day the handsome knight hovered before her eyes, it pleased her to see him often, and when he went across the court-yard, and she heard his spurs jingle, she always perceived a want of water in the kitchen, and hastened with a pail to the spring; if only she might obtain a sight of the handsome young nobleman.

Count Conrad seemed to live only for enjoyment, he missed no kind of diversion and no festivity in the rich city, which intercourse with Venice had made luxurious. When Shrove-Tuesday's mummeries began, the intoxication of joy seemed at its height. Matilda had no share in any of the sports, but sat in the smoky kitchen, and wept her languishing eyes almost sore, mourned over the caprice of fortune, which overwhelmed her favourites with the joys of life, and cast away from her despised devotees every happy moment. Her heart was sorrowful, without her properly knowing why; she was quite ignorant that love had nestled in her heart. This troublesome guest, who makes confusion in every house where he takes shelter, in the daytime whispered to her a thousand romantic thoughts, and entertained her at night with waggish dreams. Soon she wandered with the lord in a flower-garden—soon she was confined between the holy walls of a cloister, and the Count stood outside the grating, desiring to converse with her, and the strict Abbess would not allow it; soon again she was dancing with him at a ball. This delightful dream was often destroyed suddenly by the sound of Gertrude's bunch of keys, with which in the morning she summoned the servants to their work. Still the ideas which this fantasy had excited during the night-season proved a source of enjoyment to her by day. Love shuns no danger, climbs mountains and rocks, jumps down precipices, finds ways and paths through the Libyan desert, and swims on the back of the white bull over the stormy sea. The loving Matilda mourned and philosophised long till she found a means to realize her most

beautiful dream. She had the musk-apple of her godmother Nixa, which would procure her the fulfilment of three wishes. It had not occurred to her hitherto to open it and prove its properties; and now she wished to make the first trial.

The citizens of Augsburg, on the birth of Prince Marcus, prepared a magnificent banquet in honour of the Emperor Frederic, and this feasting was to last three days, and many Prelates, Counts, and Lords were invited from the neighbourhood. Every day was set apart for a prize, and every evening the most beautiful maidens were invited to the town-hall, to dance with the noble knights, and this was to last till morning. Knight Conrad did not fail to be present at these festivities, and in the dance was the great hero and favourite of all the ladies and young maidens. Matilda had resolved on this occasion to undertake an adventure. After she had arranged the kitchen, and all was quiet in the house, she went to her chamber, washed with fine soap the sooty paint from her skin, and let the natural lilies and roses shine forth. Then she took the musk-apple in her hand, and wished for a box with a new dress, as beautiful and splendid as possible, with proper trimmings. She opened the lid, and drew forth a piece of silk, which lengthened and widened itself, rushed like a stream of water down to her lap, and became a perfect dress, with all the little ornaments pertaining to it, and it fitted her body as if it had been poured on it. She now delayed not to put her design into execution;—she turned the apple three times in her hand and said,—

"Let all eyes close,
And all repose."

Immediately a deep sleep fell on all the servants, from the vigilant housekeeper to the porter. Miss Matilda was quickly outside the gate, wandered invisible through the streets, and entered with the demeanour of a goddess into the dancing-hall. Each and all wondered at the charming form of the maiden, and in the balcony which ran round the hall arose a whispering noise, as when the preacher says "Amen" from the pulpit. Some wondered at the beauty of the form of the unknown, others at the taste of her dress, whilst some desired to know who she was, and from whence she came, although no neighbour could give another a satisfactory answer. Among the knights and nobles who pressed around to view the stranger maiden, the Count was not the last; he thought he had never seen a more happy physiognomy, nor a more charming form. He approached her, and asked her to dance; she modestly offered her hand, and danced beautifully to the admiration of all. Her light foot seemed scarcely to touch the ground; but the movements of her body were so noble and easy, that she charmed every eye. Knight Conrad enjoyed the dance with all his heart; he was quite smitten with his beautiful partner, and never left her side,—said all the fine things he could

think of to her, and pressed his love-suit with earnestness and passion. Miss Matilda was as little mistress of her heart; she conquered and was conquered; her first essay in love flattered her with agreeable consequences, and it was impossible to her to conceal her feelings under the veil of womanly reserve, so that the knight might not remark that he was not a hopeless lover. It only remained for him now to know who the beautiful unknown was, and where she dwelt, that he might pursue his fortune. All inquiries were in vain; she evaded every question, and with much trouble he obtained from her the promise to attend the dance on the following evening. He intended to outwit her, lest perchance she should not keep her word; and he despatched all his servants to lie in wait, in order to discover her dwelling when she should go home.

The morning was scarcely dawned ere Matilda found an opportunity to escape from the knight and to leave the dancing-hall. As soon as she was out of the hall, she turned her musk-apple three times in her hand, and repeated the little charm,—"Night behind me, day before me, so that nobody may see me,"—and so she reached her chamber without the Count's twilight birds, who were fluttering up and down every street, being able to perceive her. With her usual skill, she locked up her silken clothes in her chest, put on again her dirty kitchen-dress; set about her business; was earlier up than the rest of the servants, whom Dame Gertrude roused from their beds by the bunch of keys, and thus Miss Matilda earned a little praise from the housekeeper. Never had a day appeared so long to the knight as that after the ball; every hour seemed to him a year; the earnest desire and longing, the annoying doubts and cares, lest the inscrutable beauty should disappoint him, all disquieted his heart: suspicion is a consequence of love, and this now ran through his head as fast as the greyhounds through the court. In the evening he prepared for the ball, dressed himself more carefully than the previous day, and the three golden rings, the high distinction of nobility, set with diamonds, sparkled now on the edge of his ruff. He was the first at the place of the joyous meeting, examined every comer with the keen glance of his noble eyes, and awaited with impatience the appearance of the queen of the ball. The evening star had risen high above the horizon before the maiden found time to go to her chamber, and to think of what she would do; whether she should ask the second wish of the musk-apple, or reserve it for a more important event in her life. The faithful counsellor Reason advised her to adopt the latter course; but Love demanded the first with such impetuosity, that Dame Reason could not get in a word, and at last was not at all listened to. Matilda wished for another dress of rose-coloured satin, with a set of jewels as beautiful and splendid as a king's daughter was accustomed to wear. The good-natured musk-apple gave her what was in its

power, and the dress excelled her expectation. Cheerfully she made her toilet, and, by the help of the talisman, arrived, unperceived by any mortal eyes, where she was so anxiously expected. She was much more charming than the preceding day, and when the knight perceived her, his heart leaped for joy, and a power as irresistible as the gravitation of the earth impelled him towards her, through the vortex of dancers, there to stammer out his feelings. His heart beat, and his limbs shook; for he had already given up all hopes of again seeing the maiden. To recover himself again, and to hide his confusion, he asked her to dance, and all parties drew aside to look at this noble pair. The beautiful unknown floated delightfully round on the arm of the agile knight, as the goddess of flowers in spring, borne on the wings of the zephyr.

At the conclusion of the dance Count Conrad at last led the tired dancer, under pretext of seeking refreshment, into a side apartment; told her, in the language of a fine courtier, how charming he had found the previous day; but imperceptibly the cold court language changed into the language of the heart, and he ended with a declaration of love, as tender and sincere as a wooer is accustomed to use who seeks a bride. The maiden listened to the knight with bashful joy, and after her beating heart and glowing cheeks had plainly manifested her feelings, and a declaration of her sentiments was demanded, she said very modestly, "What you have told me, noble knight, both yesterday and to-day, of your tender love, pleases me well, for I cannot believe that you are talking to me with deceitful words; but how am I to share your married love, since you are a knight of Malta and have taken a vow to remain in singleness all your life? If your meaning were only mischief and gallantry, you have spoken all your smooth words to the winds; therefore, explain the riddle, and tell me how you can arrange it so that we may be wedded according to the rules of holy Church, and our union be indissoluble before God and man?" The knight answered earnestly and honourably, "You speak like a prudent and virtuous maiden, and I will, therefore, to your honest question give a candid answer, and free you from your doubts. At the time when I was admitted into the order of the Cross, my brother William, the heir of the family, was still alive; but since his death, I have obtained a dispensation, as the last of my race, to be married, and to renounce the order, when it pleases me. But love for woman had never fettered my heart until the day I saw you. From that moment I was convinced that you, and no other, was destined by Heaven to become my wife. If you refuse me not your hand, nothing but death shall ever sever us."—"Reflect well," answered Matilda, "that you do not afterwards repent; acting first and reflecting afterwards has brought much mischief into the world. You know not whether I am worthy of you, nor of

what station and rank I am; whether I am your equal in birth and fortune, or whether only a borrowed glitter dazzles before your eyes. It becomes not a man of your station to promise anything thoughtlessly; but sacredly to fulfil his promise according to the usage of noble hearts."

Knight Conrad seized her quickly by the hand, pressed her to his bosom, and fondly exclaimed, "That I promise you, upon my honour and salvation! If you," continued he, "were the child of the lowest man; only a pure and innocent maiden; I will honourably make you my wife, and promote you to wealth and honour." Then he took a diamond ring, of great worth, from his finger, gave it into her hand as a pledge of fidelity, took the first kiss from her pure lips, and said, "That you may not mistrust my promise, I invite you to my house in three days, where I will appoint my friends, the prelates and lords, and other noblemen, to witness our marriage." Matilda, however, resolutely declined this, because the quick current of the knight's love did not altogether satisfy her, and she wished first to prove the constancy of his affection. He did not cease to press her for her consent; but she would neither say yes nor no. As on the previous day, the company separated at morning dawn; Matilda disappeared; and the knight, from whose eyes sleep had fled, called his housekeeper very early, and gave her orders to prepare a splendid feast. As death, that dreaded skeleton, wanders with its scythe through palaces and thatched cottages, and unrelentingly mows down and kills all it meets; so Dame Gertrude, the evening before the feast, armed her inexorable hand with the slaughtering knife, to the destruction of chickens and ducks, and bore in her hand, like the fates, the life or death of the tenantry of the poultry-yard. By her polished and murderous steel, the careless inhabitants fell by dozens; for the last time their wings fluttered mournfully, and chickens, and pigeons, and foolish capons, and even turkey-cocks yielded up their lives. Miss Matilda had so many to pick, to scald, and to cook, that she was obliged to be up the whole night; still she cared not for the trouble, for she knew that the grand banquet was all on her account.

The feast began; the host moved quickly about to every comer in the hall, and, whenever the bell rang, he expected his unknown beloved to enter the door; but, when it was opened, only a prelate entered, or a solemn matron, or a venerable bailiff. The guests had been long assembled, and the server had not yet served up the meats. Knight Conrad still tarried for his beautiful bride; but as she delayed so long, with secret vexation he directed the server to arrange the table. They sat down and found one extra dish; but nobody could guess who it was that had slighted the invitation of their host. Every moment the knight's cheerfulness diminished, he could no longer banish the look of dejection from his forehead, although he exerted himself by a forced

serenity to keep up the good humour of his guests. This moody temper of their host soon soured the sweetness of social joy among the guests, and the feasting chamber became as still and quiet as a funeral assembly. The instruments which should have played to the expected dances were sent away; and thus ended the feast at Count Conrad's house, once the abode of mirth. The dejected guests disappeared earlier than usual, and the knight longed for the solitude of his own chamber, to give himself up to his melancholy grief, and to reflect, undisturbed, on the disappointments of love. He tossed impatiently in his bed, and knew not what interpretation to put on his deceived hopes. His blood boiled in his veins; morning came before he had closed his eyes, the servants entered and found their lord struggling with wild fantasies, and, to all appearance, in a high fever. Then the whole house was thrown into confusion, physicians ran up and down stairs, wrote prescriptions a yard long, and in the apothecaries' shops all the mortars were at work, as if they were sounding for matins. But the little herb, Eyebright, which alone softens the longings of love, no physician had prescribed; therefore, the sick man abused the restorative balsam, and pearl tincture, refused to subject himself to any regimen, and desired the physicians no longer to trouble him with their follies, but to let the sand gradually cease to flow in his hour-glass, without shaking it with their helping hands.

Seven days had Count Conrad wasted away in secret sorrow, so that the rose faded from his cheeks, the fire of his eyes disappeared, and life and breath only hovered between his lips, like a light morning fog in the valley, which only needs the least breath of wind to dissipate it entirely. Miss Matilda had accurate knowledge of all that passed in the house; it was not caprice nor prudish affectation, that she had not accepted the invitation; it cost her a hard struggle between head and heart, between reason and passion, before she could resolve not to listen to the voice of her beloved. Partly she wished to prove the constancy of his vehement protestations, partly she felt some hesitation in employing the third wish of the musk-apple; for though she thought that, as a bride, a new dress would become her, yet her godmother had enjoined her to use her three wishes prudently. But on the day of the feast her heart was very heavy: she sat in a corner and wept bitterly. The illness of the knight, of which she easily divined the cause, troubled her still more, and when she heard the danger he was in she was inconsolable. On the seventh day, according to the prognostications of the physicians, life or death was to be determined. It is easy to judge that Matilda voted for the life of her beloved; and that she could most probably effect this recovery was not unknown to her; only she found great difficulty as to the manner in which she should behave. Still, among the thousand faculties which love awakens and

discloses, one is always that of *invention*. When Matilda went, according to custom, early in the morning, to the housekeeper, to take counsel with her about the affairs of the kitchen, Dame Gertrude was so unnerved that she could not fix her thoughts on common things, nor attend to the choice of meats; great tears, like droppings from a roof, rolled down her leathern cheeks. "Alas, Matilda!" sobbed she, "I shall soon cease to be housekeeper here; our poor master cannot live out the day." This was very mournful news! The maiden thought she should sink with terror; but she recovered courage, and said, "Do not despair for the life of our lord, he will not die, but will recover: last night I had a good dream." The old woman was a living dream-book; hunted up every dream of the servants, whenever she could catch one; always explained it so that the fulfilment came to her liking—for the most agreeable dreams with her always alluded to quarrels, contentions, and scoldings. "Tell thy dream," said she, "that I may explain it."—"It seemed to me," began Matilda, "as if I were at home with my dear mother, who took me aside, and taught me to cook a broth from nine different kinds of herbs, which would cure any sickness, if only three spoonfuls of it are swallowed. 'Prepare this for thy lord,' said she, 'and he will recover from that hour.'" Dame Gertrude was much astonished at this dream, and abstained this time from her customary interpretations. "Thy dream is wonderful," said she, "and not accidental. Prepare thy broth at once, for breakfast; I will see if I can prevail on our lord to taste it."

Count Conrad lay in silent meditation, faint and powerless; he felt that he was on his last journey, and wished to receive the last consolations of the Church; when Dame Gertrude went in to him, drew him away by her voluble tongue from his meditations, and tormented him with well-intentioned talkativeness, so that he, to get rid of her, promised what she desired. In the mean while Matilda prepared her broth, put into it different kitchen herbs, and costly spices, and laid in it the diamond ring which the knight had given her as a pledge of fidelity, and called the servants to take it in. The sick man feared the loud eloquence of the housekeeper, which still rang in his ears so loudly, that he compelled himself to take a spoonful of the soup. As he touched the bottom, he observed a strange substance, which he fished up, and found it, to his astonishment, a diamond ring. His eye immediately shone full of life and youthful fire, the sickliness of his appearance was gone, and he emptied the whole cup with a decided appetite, to the great joy of Dame Gertrude and the expecting servants. All ascribed the extraordinary recovery to the soup, for the knight had not let any of them perceive the ring. Then he turned to Dame Gertrude, and said, "Who prepared this food which has done me so much good, restored my strength, and recalled me to life?" The careful old woman

wished that the invalid would keep quiet, and not talk so much; she therefore said, "Do not distress yourself, my lord, as to who prepared the broth; it is well for you and for us that it has worked the healthful effect which we hoped from it." But the knight was not to be put off with this answer; he demanded a reply to his question, to which the housekeeper at last responded; —that there was a servant in the kitchen, called the little gipsy, who was skilful in the knowledge of all herbs and plants, and that it was she who had prepared the broth that had made the knight so well. "Bring her to me," said the knight, "that I may thank her for this panacea of life."—"Hold," answered the housekeeper, "her look would disgust you: in form she is like a hooded owl, she has a hump on her back, is dressed in dirty clothes, and her face and hands are smeared with dirt and soot."—"Do my commands," said the Count, "and without a moment's delay." Dame Gertrude obeyed, called Matilda quickly out of the kitchen, threw a cloak over her which she was accustomed to wear at church, and led her, thus adorned, to the sick-chamber. The knight commanded her to retire, and when he had closed the door he said, "Little girl, confess to me freely, how didst thou become possessed of the ring which I found in the bowl in which you prepared my breakfast?"—"Noble knight," answered the maiden, modestly and respectfully, "I had the ring from you; you adorned me with it on the second evening of the dance, when you swore your love to me; see now, if my form and origin deserve that you should pine away and sink into the grave. Your condition grieved me, therefore I have no longer delayed to show you your error." Count Conrad had not expected such an antidote to love; for a moment he was confounded and silent. But the form of the charming dancer soon hovered before his eyes, and he could not make it agree with the antitype now before him. He thought, that perhaps his passion had been discovered, and that they wished to cure him by an innocent deceit; still the true ring which he had received back, made him think that the beautiful unknown was in some manner connected with the scheme; then he thought he would question the servant, and try to entangle her in her talk. "If you are that gentle maiden," said he, "who pleased me so much, and to whom I plighted my troth, do not doubt that I will truly keep my promise; but beware of deceiving me. Can you again take the form which appeared to me two successive nights in the dancing-hall? can you make your body as slender and even as a young fir-tree? can you change your dingy skin like a snake, and show different colours like a chameleon; so shall the word that I spoke when I gave away the ring, be 'yea and amen.' But if you cannot perform the conditions of this stipulation, I will have you scourged as a mischievous deceiver, till you tell me how you became possessed of this ring." Matilda sighed; "Ah, is it only the glitter of the form, noble knight, that

pleased your eyes? Woe is me! if time or circumstances should destroy these fleeting charms; if old age bends my slender shape and crooks my back; if my roses and lilies fade, my fine skin wrinkles and dries; if my deceitful figure, in which I now stand before you, really belonged to me, what would become of your plighted faith?" Knight Conrad wondered at this discourse, which seemed too wise and reflecting for a kitchen-maid. "Know," was his answer, "beauty commands a man's love, but virtue knows how to keep fast the soft bands of love."—"Well," answered she, "I go to fulfil your conditions, prepare your heart to decide my fate."

The Knight still wavered between hope and fear of a new deception; he rang for the housekeeper, and commanded her to "escort the maiden to her chamber, that she may clothe herself neatly; remain at the door till she comes out—I await you in the reception-room." Dame Gertrude took her prisoner with strict care, not knowing what her lord's command might mean. In going up she said, "Hast thou clothes to adorn thyself? why hast thou concealed them from me? If thou wantest any, follow me to my chamber, I will lend thee as many as thou needest." Hereupon she described her old-fashioned wardrobe (in which she had dressed herself for half a century) piece by piece, with eager remembrance of former times. Matilda had little need of any, she only desired a small piece of soap, and a handful of bran, took a washing-basin full of water, went into her chamber and fastened the bolt, while Dame Gertrude stood outside the door with great anxiety, expecting what would happen. The knight, full of expectation as to the issue of his love adventure, forsook his couch, clothed himself in elegant attire, and went into his state room, pacing the room with quick, uneven strides. Just as the clock on the Augsburg town-hall, and eighteen other clocks, told the hour of noon, a train of a silken robe rustled through the antechamber, and Miss Matilda entered, with hesitation and dignity, adorned as a bride, and beautiful as the Goddess of Love when she returned to Paphos from the council of the Gods on Mount Olympus. With the rapture of a delighted lover, the knight Conrad cried, "Goddess or mortal, whoever you may be, behold me here at your feet, ready to renew the vow that I have made you, if you will accept my heart and hand." The maiden modestly raised the knight: "Softly, noble knight," said she, "do not be in a hurry with your vow; you see me here in my proper form, though still unknown to you: a smooth face has betrayed many men. The ring is still in your hands." Immediately the knight took it from his finger; the maiden relinquished her hand to the charming knight, and he placed the ring upon her finger. "You are now my chosen," said she; "I can no longer conceal myself; I am the daughter of Wackerman Uhlfinger, the stout old knight, whose unhappy fate is,

without doubt, not unknown to you; sorrowfully, I escaped from the ruin of my father's house, and have in your dwelling, though in a mean condition, found shelter and security." Then she related to him her history, and did not conceal from him the secret of the musk-apple.

Count Conrad no more remembered that he had been at the point of death, but on the following day again invited the guests, whom his dejection had previously scared away so easily, and when the server served up, and counted around, no extra cover was found. Then the knight quitted the order, left the court, and solemnized his marriage with great splendour. The newly-married couple passed the first year of their union at Augsburg, in joy and innocent mirth. Impressed with feelings of delightful emotion, the youthful wife, leaning on the bosom of her wedded lord, confided to him the happy feelings of her heart, which overflowed with joy. "My heart, beloved lord," said she once, "in possessing you is at rest; no other wish remains to me; I give up the third wish of my musk-apple; if you have any concealed desire in your heart, make it known to me; I will make it mine, and from that hour it shall be accomplished." Count Conrad pressed his beloved wife heartily in his arms, and protested that no wish remained to him on earth but the continuance of their happiness. The musk-apple thus lost all its value in the eyes of its possessor, and she only preserved it in thankful remembrance of her godmother Nixa. Count Conrad had still a mother alive, who lived on her jointure at Schwabeck, whose hand the innocent daughter-in-law had a great desire to kiss, and to thank her for her valiant son; still the Count, under various pretences, declined the journey to his mother; but showed an inclination to visit a fief which had fallen to him, and which was not far from Wackerman's ruined castle. Matilda was very willing to visit once more the land where she had passed the days of her first youth. She sought out the ruins of her father's house, wept over the ashes of her parents, went to the Nixa's spring, and hoped that her presence would again invite the Nymph to make herself visible. Many stones dropped into the spring without the hoped-for effect, even the musk-apple swam like a bubble on the water, and she had the trouble of fishing it out for herself. The Nymph no more appeared, although another sponsorship was impending, for Lady Matilda was on the point of presenting her husband with a marriage blessing. She gave birth to a son as beautiful as Cupid, and the joy of the parents was so great that they nearly hugged him to death; the mother would not put him out of her arms, and watched every breath of the innocent little angel, although the Count had hired a cunning nurse to take care of the little child. But on the third night, when all in the castle lay buried in sleep, after the noise and bustle of a feast, the mother awoke from a sweet slumber, and when she awoke the baby was

gone from her arms! Astonished, the terrified Countess cried out, "Nurse, where have you laid my baby?" The nurse answered, "Noble lady, the dear little boy is in your arms." Bed and chamber were anxiously searched, but nothing was found except some drops of blood on the floor of the chamber. When the nurse perceived this, she raised a loud cry, "Oh, God and the Saints have pity on us! the man-wolf has been here and carried the child away!" The mother wept herself pale and thin for the loss of her noble boy, and the father was inconsolable. Although the knight had not, in reality, a mustard-grain of belief in the man-wolf, but treated it as woman's prattle, yet he could in no way clear up the mystery. He consoled his sorrowful wife as he best could; and she, to please him, compelled herself to assume a more cheerful mien. That anodyne of pain, beneficent time, at last healed the mother's heart-wound, and the loss was repaired by a second son. Boundless was the joy in the palace over the beautiful heir; the Count feasted with great mirth with all his neighbours within a day's journey round, the cup of joy passed unceasingly from hand to hand, from the host and guests to the door-keeper; all drank to the health of the new-born. The apprehensive mother would not have the child out of her sight, and watched its sweet sleep as long as her strength permitted; but when at last the demands of nature must be obeyed, she took the golden chain from her neck, passed it round the baby's body, and fastened the other end to her arm, signed herself and the child with the cross, that the man-wolf might have no power nor influence over it, and she soon fell into an irresistible slumber. When she awoke with the first dawn of morning, oh misery! the sweet boy had disappeared from her arms. In the utmost alarm she cried as before, "Nurse, where have you laid my baby?" and the nurse answered likewise, "Noble lady, the dear little boy is in your arms." Immediately she looked for the golden chain which she had fastened to her arm, and found that a link had been cut through by a sharp steel instrument, and she fainted away with terror. The nurse alarmed the house, the servants hastened in, full of consternation, and when Count Conrad heard what had happened, his heart burned with anger and indignation, he drew his knightly sword, intending to cleave the nurse's head. "Wicked woman!" thundered he with furious voice, "did I not give you strict orders to remain awake all night, that, if this monster came to rob the sleeping mother, you, by your screams, might alarm the house? Sleep now, indolent one, the sleep of death!" The woman fell on her knees before him: "Worshipful lord," said she, "by God's mercy, I conjure you to grant me some moments, that I may not take the crime which mine eyes have seen into the grave with me, and which should not have been extorted from me if it were not for the torture." The Count was astonished. "What crime," asked he, "have

your eyes seen, so black that your tongue refuses to mention it? Freely declare to me, without torture, what is known to you, like a true maiden."—"My lord," sobbed the servant, "what moves you to hear your misfortune? It is better that the frightful secret should be buried with my corpse in the cold grave."

But Count Conrad only became more desirous to know the secret; he took the woman aside into a private room, and, overcome by threats and promises, she disclosed to him what he had been so very desirous to know:—"Your wife," said she, "you must know, my lord, is an enchantress; but she loves you above measure, and her love goes so far, that she spares not her own children, thereby to procure the means of preserving your favour, and her beauty unchangeable. In the night, when all were asleep in great security, she placed herself as if she also slumbered. I did the same, I know not why. Soon she called me by my name, but I answered not, but pretended to snore and make a rattling in my throat. As she thought that I was fast asleep, she sat up in bed, took the baby, pressed it to her bosom, kissed it heartily, and whispered these words, which I clearly heard:—'Son of my love, be a means to preserve to me thy father's love; go now to thy little brother, thou innocent, that I may prepare with nine different herbs and thy little bones a strengthening drink, which shall preserve my beauty and thy father's favour.' When she had thus said, she drew forth a diamond needle, as sharp as a dagger, out of her hair, and pierced the baby to the heart, let it bleed a few drops, and, when it no longer struggled, she laid it before her, took the musk-apple, muttered some words, and when she lifted the lid, a light flame of fire blazed from it, as from a pitch-barrel, which consumed the corpse in a few moments; the ashes and little bones she collected carefully into a little box, and pushed it under the bedstead. Then she cried with an anxious voice, as if she had suddenly awoke from sleep—'Nurse, where have you laid my baby?' and I answered, with fear and trembling, in dread of her enchantments, 'Noble lady, the dear little lord is in your arms.' Then she began to behave as if she were very sorrowful, and I ran out of the chamber for the purpose of calling help. Behold, worshipful lord, these are the details of the shameful deed which you have obliged me to disclose to you; I am ready to prove the truth of my report by a red-hot iron bar, which I will carry with my naked hands three times up and down the castle-yard."

Count Conrad stood as if petrified; for a long time he could not utter a word. When he had collected himself, he said, "What need is there of the fiery ordeal? your words bear the impress of truth; I feel and believe that all is as you have said: keep this frightful secret fast in your heart; tell it to no man, not even to the priest when you make confession. I will procure for you a letter of pardon from the Bishop of Augsburg, that

this sin shall not be imputed to you either in this world or in the next. I will now go with a dissembling visage to this viper; take care that you, when I embrace her, and pretend to console her grief, draw forth the box of bones from under the bed unperceived, this will be more than proof to me. With a slightly clouded forehead, and a somewhat sorrowful look, but still like a determined man, he entered his wife's apartment, who received her lord with innocent eyes, but with a silent, mournful soul. Her face was like an angel's, and this extinguished the rage and fury with which his heart burned. The spirit of revenge softened into compassion and pity, he pressed the unfortunate lady tenderly to his bosom, and she poured tears of heartfelt anguish over his garments. He comforted her, talked kindly to her, and hastened soon to leave the theatre of cruelty and horror. The nurse had in the mean time prepared what she had been ordered; and delivered to the Count, in secret, the horrible receptacle of bones. It cost him a severe struggle in his heart before he could resolve what he should do with the supposed enchantress. At last he was of opinion that he would get rid of her without creating noise and wonder. He set off, and rode to Augsburg, and gave the steward these orders:—"When the Countess goes out of her chamber, after nine days, to bathe as usual, have the bath-room well heated, and bolt firmly the doors, that she may faint in the bath from the great heat, and may at last expire." The steward received this command with heartfelt sorrow, for all the servants loved the Countess Matilda, as a gentle and amiable mistress; still he did not dare open his mouth against his lord, because he perceived his great earnestness and impatience.

On the ninth day Matilda ordered the bath to be heated; she thought her husband would not remain long in Augsburg, and she wished that, on his return, all traces of their misfortune should be wiped away. When she entered the bath-room the air around her was greatly heated. She wished to draw back, but a strong hand pushed her violently into the chamber, and immediately all the doors were bolted and locked. She cried in vain for help; nobody listened; the fire was only stirred up hotter, so that the stove glowed red-hot, like a potter's oven. At this circumstance, the Countess easily guessed what was to happen; she resigned herself to her fate; only the shameful suspicion for which she was being punished tormented her soul more than this ignominious death. She employed the last moments of recollection in taking a silver needle out of her hair, and writing these words on the white wall of the room: "Farewell, Conrad; I die willingly at thy command; but I die innocent." Then she threw herself on a little couch, to begin her death-struggle, but nature involuntarily strove, for a little moment of time, to prevent her destruction. In the anguish of the stifling heat, the unhappy

dying one threw herself here and there; the musk-apple, which she always carried about with her, fell to the ground, she picked it up immediately, and cried, "Oh! Godmother Nixa, if it be in your power, free me from an ignominious death, and make my innocence clear." She hastily took the lid off, there arose from the musk-apple a thick mist, which spread itself through the whole chamber, and the Countess immediately perceived that there arose a coolness, so that she felt no more anguish and heat. The cloud of vapour at last collected into a tall figure, and the lady Matilda, who now no longer thought of dying, saw, with unspeakable delight, the lovely Nymph before her, the dear little baby in her arms, wrapped up in a little chrism-cloth, and in her hand the other little boy, in white robes, with rose-coloured borders. "Welcome, beloved Matilda," said the Nymph. "Well for thee that thou didst not use the third wish of the musk-apple so thoughtlessly as thou didst the two first. Here are two living witnesses of thine innocence, with which thou wilt triumph over the black calumny under which thou wast almost slain. The evil star of thy life has now declined to its fall, henceforth the musk-apple will not grant any more wishes, because nothing now remains for thee to wish more; but I will explain to thee the riddle of thy mournful lot. Know that the mother of thy husband is the author of all thy misfortunes. To this proud woman her son's marriage was as a poniard stab in her heart; she believed that Count Conrad had disgraced the nobility of his house by marrying a kitchen-maid; she immediately uttered curses and execrations against him, and would no longer acknowledge him as her son. All her thoughts and meditations were directed to destroy thee, although the vigilance of thy husband always prevented this wicked design. Still she contrived at last to deceive him by the hypocritical nurse. By great promises, she prevailed on this woman to take thy firstborn son in sleep from thy arms, and to throw it, like a dog, into the water. Luckily she selected the spring from my grotto for this crime; I received the boy with loving arms, and watched over him as a mother. Thus too she confided to me the second son of my beloved Matilda. This deceitful nurse was thy accuser; she persuaded the Count that thou wert a magician; that a salamander flame came out of the musk-apple (whose secret thou shouldst have carefully preserved) and destroyed the boy, whose ashes thou preparedst into a love-drink. She showed thy husband a small vessel, filled with pigeon and chicken bones, which he believed to be the remains of his child, and he gave orders to smother thee in the bath during his absence. In a few hours thou wilt again lean upon his friendly bosom." When the Nymph had thus spoken, she bent over the Countess's face, kissed her forehead, and, without waiting for an answer, wrapped herself in her thick veil of vapour, and vanished away.

The servants of the Count were in the meanwhile busy, to kindle again the extinguished fire; it seemed to them as if they heard human voices inside, whence they supposed that the Countess was still alive. But all their trouble was in vain; the wood caught as little fire as if the stove had been heated with snow-balls. Soon Count Conrad rode home, and anxiously asked how it was with his wife. The servants informed him, how they had well heated the bath, but that the fire was suddenly extinguished; and that they believed the Countess was still alive. This very much rejoiced his heart; he went to the door, and cried through the key-hole, "Dost thou live, Matilda?" and the Countess recognised her husband's voice, and answered, "Beloved lord, I live and my children live also." Enraptured at this speech, the impatient Count had the door broken open, because the key was not ready at hand, rushed into the bath-room to the feet of his innocent wife, bedewed her pure hands with a thousand tears of repentance, brought her and her pledges of love, to the joy and delight of the whole house, out of the frightful death-chamber back into her apartment, and heard from her mouth the whole particulars of the shameful slander, and the robbery of the children. Immediately he gave the command to seize the malicious nurse, and to shut her up in the bath-room. The fire in the stove began to burn merrily, the flames ascended on high, and speedily this devilish woman died a miserable and deserved death.

PETER BLOCK;

OR,

THE TREASURE-SEEKER OF THE HARZ.

ON the Tuesday after S. Bartholomew's-day, the same year that saw the Emperor Wenceslaus' flight from the prison at Prague, the shepherds at Rottenburg, according to ancient custom, held their annual festival, at which all the country people for several miles round were present. After service at the church of S. Wolfgang, they adjourned to the sign of the Golden Lamb, where they spent the remainder of the day, in quaffing their cups, playing on their rustic instruments, and dancing in the open air.

The younger part of the company had turned homewards; not so, however, the elder shepherds; they continued over their wine till the night was far advanced; and, the generous liquor having loosened their tongues, they began to indulge in lengthy conversation. Some uttered wise predictions as to the weather, on which subject, it may truly be said, they were in no wise inferior to our modern almanack-makers. Others recounted stories of their young days; how they had defended their flocks from the attacks of the wolf, by aid of their faithful companion—the dog; or put to flight the still more terrible were-wolf by devoutly crossing themselves, and repeating a prayer to their patron saint. Some, again, told how they had been led out of their way, through wilds and forests, and had been mocked and deluded by demons and spectres. So fearful were these tales, that they caused the townsfolk to shudder, and made their hair to stand on end with horror. Of these townspeople, no small number attended the festivities of the rustic holidays; and many a tradesman and mechanic betook himself on these evenings to the public room of the Golden Lamb.

No one contributed more to the conversation, on the present occasion, than the silver-haired Martin, a cheerful old man of eighty, who, like the patriarch Jacob, had seen a whole race of shepherds descended from himself. When the room was somewhat cleared of the company, he called for a cup, by way of farewell before retiring; not displeased, moreover, to find that, in the comparative quietness, it would now be in his power to make himself more easily heard.

"My good friends," said he, "you have, without doubt, been relating wonderful things; nor have they, I well believe, lost anything of their marvels by savouring a little of the wine-cup. I could tell you, however, of an affair, which, without embellishment, will appear still more remarkable than any of the tales you have related; but the night is now far advanced, and I should not be able to finish it."

All were silent, and such was the deep attention of the auditory, that you might have fancied the Bishop of Bamburg reading mass. When he paused, however, there were voices enough to be heard: "Father Martin, let us hear this adventure of thine; do not deprive us of such a pleasure on a holiday-night." Some of the townsmen, too, who had been preparing to go, turned back, and besought the old man to relate his marvels. These solicitations at last induced Martin to yield, and he spoke as follows:—

"In my young days, I was a destitute orphan-boy, and had to beg my bread from door to door; there was no place I could call my home, and I wandered about with my bag from village to village. When I grew up to be a lad, I hired myself to a shepherd on the Harz Mountains, with whom I remained three years. One evening, in autumn, ten of our sheep were missing, on which I was sent off to search for them. Night came on without my finding them; and, being unacquainted with the place, and not knowing how to find my way home, I resolved at last to pass the night under a tree. Towards midnight the dog began to howl, and to crouch close to me: I awoke, and, looking up, I saw, by the clear moonlight, a huge figure standing opposite to me, like a tall man, with his body entirely covered with long, shaggy hair. He had a beard reaching to his middle, a garland upon his head, and an apron of oak-leaves, while, in his right hand, he held a fir-tree that had been torn up by the roots. The terrific apparition motioned with his hand that I should follow him: I stirred not from the spot, however, for fear, and stood trembling like an aspen-leaf. He thus exclaimed, in a hoarse growling voice: 'Coward, take courage; I am the Treasure-keeper of the Harz. Come with me, and thou shalt find a treasure.' Although my fear threw me into a cold perspiration, I at length roused myself, and, making a sign of the cross, replied, 'Avaunt; I desire none of thy treasures!' On this, the figure grinned horribly in my face, and said, 'Fellow, thou rejectest thy good fortune! continue, then, a miserable wretch all thy days.' He then turned away as if to depart; but, again approaching me, said, 'Bethink thee well, thou foolish man; I will fill thy wallet, I will fill thy bag with a precious burden.'—'It is written,' I returned, 'Thou shalt not covet: away from me; I will have no dealings with thee.'

"As the goblin saw that I was not to be enticed by him, he desisted from further importunity, only adding, 'Thou wilt repent this;' then looking frightfully at me, after a short pause,

he continued, 'Give heed to what I am now about to say, so that it may yet avail thee, shouldst thou be wise enough to change thy mind. In the Brocken, deep under the earth, is buried an immense treasure of gold and precious stones. This treasure I have watched for seven hundred years; but, from this day forward, it becomes free to be taken by whoever discovers it:—my time is expired. Therefore did I intend to deliver this hoard to you; for, as you have tended your flock on these mountains, I have felt kindly disposed towards you.' He then acquainted me with the spot where the treasure lay, and described the manner of seeking it.

"'Proceed,' said he, 'towards S. Andrew's mountain, and there inquire for the valley called the Morgenbrodsthal. When you arrive at a stream called the Duder, follow its course upwards, until you reach a stone bridge, close by a saw-mill. Pass not over the bridge, but still proceed onwards, with the stream on your right, until you see before you a steep and rugged crag. A short distance from this, you will perceive a hollow somewhat resembling a grave. Do not be afraid, but clear it out without apprehension, although it will be no very easy task: you will perceive that it has been purposely filled up with earth. Having discovered the stone sides of the cavern, you will soon meet with a flat stone, built into the wall, and about a yard square. This being forced out, you will find yourself in the entrance of the vault where the treasure lies hid. Having proceeded a little way, you will reach a hall with three doors, two of which are open, but the middle one is fast closed with bolt and bar. You must open the closed door by means of the *spring-root*, which you must not fail to take along with you; for, without this, the utmost force will avail nothing. Fear not, even though the door should fly open with a crash of thunder; only remember to protect thy lamp, so that it may not be extinguished. You will probably be dazzled by the gold and shining jewels with which the walls and pillars of the vault are adorned, yet stretch not out thy hand to touch them; beware of that as you would of sacrilege. In the midst of this cavern stands a large brazen chest; in it you will find enough both of gold and silver, and you may take as much as you choose. Moreover, it is in your power to return three different times, but not more; on the fourth you would infallibly suffer the chastisement due to your avarice.' When the figure had ceased, my dog pricked up his ears and began to bark; I heard the sound of wheels at a distance, and, when I looked round me, I perceived that the vision had disappeared."

The wondrous tale of the old man affected the company in different ways. Some would treat it very lightly:—"Certainly this is a very fine dream, my old friend!" exclaimed they: some, again, gave implicit credence to the story; while others, more cautious, affected to look wise, but kept their opinions to themselves. As

for the worthy landlord of the Lamb, he very shrewdly remarked that the proof of the pudding was in the eating; that, let them dispute as much as they pleased, the question, after all, was, had any one been on this pilgrimage, and had he returned with the treasures? Then, addressing the old man,—

"Well, friend! let us hear whether, after all, you visited this cavern, and found what the spirit promised? or did the mischievous goblin only deceive you?"

"Indeed," replied honest Martin, "I cannot accuse him of deceiving me, since I never took even so much as a single step to seek out the cavern or its treasures. First, I had too much regard for my safety to expose myself to the danger of dealing with a spirit; and, besides, I have never been able to find the spring-root. I know not where it grows, at what time of the year, or what hour of the day, it should be gathered, though I have questioned many persons conversant with every kind of plant." Here a shepherd, well advanced in years, broke in, and addressing himself to the narrator of the story, said,—

"Neighbour Martin, your secret, I fear, is now somewhat out of date. But if you had had your wits about you some forty years ago, you certainly had not missed procuring the spring-root. I can myself inform you by what means the plant may be obtained. The easiest way is to call in the service of a black woodpecker. Watch one in the spring season, when it makes its nest in a hollow tree, and then, when it flies out to seek food for its young ones, drive a wedge of wood into the hole, whence it has taken its flight. When it returns, and perceives that the access to its nest is cut off, it will fly round the tree and scream; it will then suddenly direct its flight towards the west. You must take care to be provided beforehand with a scarlet mantle, which conceal under your garment, and wait until the bird returns with the spring-root in its mouth. No sooner will the bird touch the wooden plug with this wondrous plant, than it will immediately fly out, as a cork does from one of mine host's barrels. Lose no time then, but instantly spread the mantle under the tree. Terrified at the sight, supposing it to be fire, the woodpecker will let fall the root. Having obtained possession of the precious plant, bind it carefully to a piece of christ-thorn, otherwise it will certainly be lost whenever you lay it out of your hand."

Apart from the social circle of auditors, with no other companion than the cat, one solitary individual had occupied the landlord's leathern chair, and during the whole evening had observed so strict a silence, that he might rather have seemed a brother of a Carthusian monastery, than the inmate of an inn on a holiday night. This was Master Peter Block, once cook to a worshipful magistrate—an honourable employment long since abandoned—and who now occupied a much more private station; for, during the last ten years, Peter had but too quickly descended the step-ladder;

so that he who had formerly contributed to other men's feasting, was now obliged to practice fasting on his own account. In his former calling, he had been a man of a merry mood, tickling the fancies and the palates of the guests in pretty equal ratio. In the noble science of cooking his talent was unrivalled. There was no dish or culinary compound in which he did not exhibit the utmost skill of a professor. But, unfortunately, our hero would needs dress for himself a sauce that requires more of the ingredient called prudence than any other article in the cookery-book. Peter, in short, sought out for himself a helpmate; and, in evil hour, made choice of one whose unhappy tongue had already gained her the ill-will of the whole town. Whoever came in her way, be it friend or foe, she was sure to load them with abuse; nay, the very saints in the calendar did not always escape her with impunity. Master Block, however, had heard her commended as a thrifty, notable housewife, and he ventured accordingly to espouse this foul-mouthed specimen of the sex denominated fair.

The circumstances of the family soon altered very materially. He had given up his situation of cook, and ventured to open a tavern, in which new calling, however, he was, in the long run, unfortunate. Master Peter had at no time been a proficient in arithmetic; for, of all the rules, the only one in which he succeeded was subtraction; as to addition and multiplication, he could comprehend neither; nor was he much more successful in division. It was too great an exertion for him to keep an exact account of his money affairs; while it lasted, neither kitchen nor cellar went unprovided; his friends, too, were always sure of meeting with the best cheer, long credit, and open house. On the other hand, his kindly, compassionate nature displayed itself equally towards those whose only claim consisted in their inability to pay for their lodging and cheer. When his finances were exhausted, he borrowed money from the usurers; and as he went on, the more did his debts accumulate. The accommodating principle by which, like many other easy, well-disposed people, he found it convenient to regulate his conduct, was, that *all would turn out right at last.* But, at the last, however, Master Peter found that he had turned all the money out of his pockets, and himself out of doors; for, to the regret of all his good friends and boon companions, he was obliged to strike and take down his sign.

Under these unfortunate circumstances, therefore, he was compelled to become a dependant upon his wife, who set up a small flour trade; and, as an ass was an indispensable adjunct to her establishment, Peter had to act as substitute for that well-behaved animal. Without the least compunction, the dame loaded the shoulders of her partner with many a heavy sack of flour, which he was obliged to carry to the mill, although not without

groaning under the unaccustomed weight; but even these services did not always obtain the best of recompense, for most sparingly did she mete out to him his provender, and not unfrequently did this female vixen let him feel, too, the additional weight of her fist, whenever he ventured to complain of the weight of the sacks.

Such conduct afflicted greatly the affectionate nature of his excellent daughter, and drew from her in secret many a bitter tear. She was an only child, and dear as the apple of his eye to her father, who had trained her, from her very childhood, in his own ways; she therefore repaid all his affection with the most submissive filial love, and consoled him under all his domestic afflictions. The amiable Gertrude supported herself by needlework, especially embroidery, in which she had attained a great proficiency. She worked the robes used by priests at mass, altar draperies, and those variegated and fancifully-figured cloths, with which it was then the fashion to cover tables. Although obliged to give her mother a strict account of all her earnings, she nevertheless sometimes contrived to lay by a trifling sum, which she secretly presented to her father, in order that he might occasionally visit the Golden Lamb, and at least be able to feast now and then. Previously to this rustic festival, she had doubled her usual savings, and joyfully slipped them into her father's hand as he returned one evening from his labours at the mill. This kindness on the part of his child touched his very soul, and so affected him, that the tears came into his eyes.

During old Martin's tale of wonder, Peter dismissed every other thought, in order to catch it with a ready ear. The farther the narrator proceeded, the more eagerly did he listen. At first, it was merely curiosity that induced him to listen; but when he heard how the spring-root, the charm which was to give access to the treasure, was to be obtained, his imagination was completely inflamed. He instantly pictured himself standing before the brazen chest, and shovelling the bright gold pieces into his sack, and he quickly determined to rest all his hopes of fortune on the success of his journey to the Brocken.

Covetousness and avarice were by no means Peter's failings; as long as his prosperity lasted his money passed lightly through his fingers; the more difficult, therefore, was it for him afterwards to bear his indigence with tolerable patience. Whenever, therefore, he indulged in dreams of wealth, it was principally in order that he might resign his post of proxy to a beast of burden, and that he might no longer be obliged to carry sacks to the mill, but have it in his power to bestow a handsome dowry upon his dear Gertrude. Even before he had quitted the host's leathern chair, he had arranged every detail of his projected plan, except what regarded the funds necessary to accomplish it; and had even fixed upon the day for carrying it into execution.

Peter quitted the Golden Lamb as joyously as if he had obtained there the golden fleece itself. The only circumstance that now disturbed his happiness was, that he had not the magic root yet in his possession; and when he considered that the black woodpecker did not build its nest in those parts, he became as melancholy as if suddenly roused from a delightful fairy vision. Recovering himself, however, he struck a light, and, taking pen and ink, set down, from beginning to end, the whole process of obtaining the treasure, so that not a tittle might escape his memory. This being done, he felt his hope somewhat revived, trusting that, although he might be obliged to perform the part of ass for another winter, the time would yet come when he should be able to discontinue his sorrowful pilgrimages to the mill.

Full fifty times had our good Peter witnessed the return both of the stork and the swallow, without paying any attention to it; and as often, too, had he, on Maundy Thursday, served up to his friends a mess of cresses and other herbs, and the first produce of the spring, without even tasting them himself. But now he would not have exchanged for the best Martinmas goose, the first sorry cabbage which his frugal housewife dished for him the following spring; and no sooner did he observe the first return of the swallow, than he celebrated the wished-for event in a flask of wine, at the Golden Lamb. He now laid by every penny of the secret money with which he was supplied by his daughter, in order that he might have wherewith to reward the first lucky wight who should inform him where to find a black woodpecker's nest. He even retained a scout or two in his service, whom he sent to reconnoitre the forest for this purpose. The wicked fellows would sometimes, however, make an April fool of him, by sending him many a mile, over hill and dale, where his labour was at length rewarded by meeting a raven's or a squirrel's nest in the hollow tree to which he had been directed; and, if he pretended to be angry at this waggery, they would laugh in his face, and run off. At length, one of these scouts, less knavish as well as more fortunate than the rest, having actually met with a black woodpecker that had pitched its nest on an old decayed tree, arrived post haste with the important news. Our anxious ornithologist instantly flew off, as swiftly as if transformed into a bird himself, to ascertain the correctness of the report. His guide conducted him to a tree, where he saw a bird fly to and fro, which seemed to have its nest there; yet the black woodpecker, not belonging to any of those genera of birds which culinary ornithologists study, and being also less sociable in its nature than either the sparrow or swallow, and less familiar to him than either the capon or goose, he was doubtful how far the information was correct; for, to tell the truth, he was quite as well acquainted with the phœnix itself

as with the black woodpecker. Fortunately, a fowler, who was then passing, extricated him from his perplexity, and gave a decision on the point, which fully satisfied our bird-hunter.

When it appeared to him to be full season to set about his great work, he began by hunting out a red cloak; unfortunately, but a single article of the kind was to be found in the whole town, and this was in the possession of a person to whom people are usually somewhat reluctant in applying—namely, that public functionary the executioner. It cost him no little exertion to overcome his scruples; nevertheless, the urgency of the case compelled him. Provided then with this indispensable part of his apparatus, our friend set out to execute strictly, according to the prescribed formula, the ceremony which was to put him in possession of the mystic plant. All proceeded exactly as had been predicted; and, when the woodpecker came back with the root in its mouth, Peter suddenly advanced from behind the tree, and performed his manœuvre with such rapidity and dexterity, that, in its terror at sight of the flame-coloured mantle, the bird let fall the root, which he immediately seized, and wrapped up in a bunch of christ-thorn; and then proceeded homewards as overjoyed as if he had been already in possession of the wished-for treasure.

His travelling equipage was soon put in readiness, being only a sturdy staff, and a large and stout bag. It happened fortunately that, on the day fixed for his emigration, both Dame Ilse and Gertrude were gone to a convent of Ursulines, to see a nun take the veil; Peter availed himself of this opportunity to desert his post, he having been placed sentinel during the absence of the female part of the garrison.

Just as he was about to bestow a parting look on his household deities, it occurred to him that it would not be at all imprudent were he first of all to make a preparatory trial of his talisman, in order to satisfy himself of its efficacy. His worthy dame had in her chamber a cabinet built into the wall, in which shrine she kept certain golden relics, most religiously guarded under seven locks, the keys of which she constantly wore about her person by way of an amulet. Not having been allowed to hold a committee of inquiry on the state of his wife's financial arrangements, Peter was altogether ignorant of these private funds, although he had some suspicion that a secret hoard existed somewhere: as soon, therefore, as this cabinet met his eye, his heart acted the part of a divining rod. With a bosom throbbing with anxious expectation for the success of the experiment he was about to make, he took out the root, and touched the door of the shrine. To his rapturous astonishment the seven locks immediately unbolted, and the door flew open with a crash, when he here was displayed to his greedy gaze the store of bright seducing regal mmon, from whose snare his worthy partner took such pains upon th ure him. At first, he hardly knew whether to be more

delighted at the proved efficacy of the magic root, or at the treasure which he had discovered, but stood himself rooted to the spot, as if the secret spell had transformed him to a statue. At length, he bethought himself in earnest of his intended pilgrimage, and, being luckily furnished with this treasure for his journey, he departed on his expedition of discovery, in the highest possible spirits.

On their return, the females greatly wondered to find the house shut up, and the trusty sentinel nowhere to be found. To all their knocking and calling no reply was returned except by the mewing of a cat. Not being provided with so efficacious a key as the spring-root, the dame was obliged to have recourse to commoner means, and to apply to a locksmith. While the smith was employed in opening the door, the dame was equally busied in preparing sundry sharp epithets with which she intended to salute her unfortunate husband, whom she deemed to be sleeping at his post; but, alas! on opening the door, no sleeper was to be found.

Midday, evening, and midnight came in succession: still they brought not Peter Block. The business now grew serious, and mother and daughter held a solemn council as to the causes of this sudden absconding. The strangest conjectures were made; and, as that gloomy hour naturally suggested more alarming and mournful ideas, even Dame Ilse felt some compunctious visitings of conscience. "Alas," exclaimed she, wringing her hands, "I fear, Gertrude, thy father has come to an untimely end." All the ditches, and ponds, not forgetting the milldam, were scrutinized, and still no trace whatever of the lost sheep. So that, at length, the good dame resigned herself to her widowed state, and began to look out for a successor to Master Peter in his asinine duties, and to purchase a four-footed beast of burden to replace the biped. Having met with one to her satisfaction, and settled the price, she went to draw the sum upon her treasury, and for this purpose unlocked its well-secured door. But what could equal her horror at perceiving the dreary scene it displayed! For some minutes did she stand as in a mute trance; at length the dreadful conviction flashed upon her mind. Of what nature were the exclamations and apostrophes that now rolled in full torrent from her tongue, it is easy to divine.

About a month after this domestic catastrophe, a knock at the door announced some one's arrival: Dame Ilse hastened to open it in the expectation of a customer, when there entered a young man, apparently a person of some consequence and of prepossessing address; his attire was that of a country gentleman. The youth expressed his joy at seeing her so well, and inquired kindly after her daughter, although the dame could not remember to have seen him before. She found the visit, however, intended rather for Gertrude than herself; still she invited the stranger in, and having offered him a seat, inquired his business. With a

mysterious air he requested permission to speak with the fair needle-woman of whose work report spoke so high, as he had a commission to deliver to her. Dame Ilse had certain shrewd conjectures as to what this commission might be; yet, as the interview would be in her own presence, she summoned the industrious maiden from her task. On perceiving the visitor, the modest Gertrude blushed, and bent her eyes on the ground. Familiarly taking her hand, the youth cast on her a gaze of tenderness that by no means dissipated her confusion: nevertheless, anticipating his salutation, she exclaimed, "Ah Frederic! how came you here? I deemed that you were now a hundred miles from hence. You know my sentiments, and yet you are returned to disturb me again."—"No, dear Gertrude, rather I am come to ensure the happiness of us both. My condition is now altered, and I am no longer the poor youth I once was. A wealthy relation lately died and left me all his ample possessions; I need not therefore any longer anticipate your mother's opposition. That I love thee I know full well: that thou lovest me, I venture to hope."

During this speech the maiden's blue eyes assumed a livelier expression, and, at the last sentence, her beautiful mouth displayed a faint smile; at the same time she stole a side glance at her mother, to ascertain what were her thoughts on the subject. She seemed wrapt in thought, so great was her astonishment to discover that the bashful girl had been carrying on a love affair without her having the least suspicion of it. The maiden never went abroad, save accompanied by herself; while, at home, under her Argus eye, there was no opportunity; and the good dame was perfectly satisfied that not the most scheming gallant would be able to gain access to Gertrude. The event, however, proved the contrary; and Dame Ilse now learnt that the heart of a daughter, though so well guarded by her caution and experience, was no safer than a hoard of gold secured by seven locks.

Before she could finish her mental comments on this strange discovery, the suitor produced the most satisfactory authority for his boldness, by spreading out on the table a heap of sparkling gold pieces, whose brilliancy so dazzled the vision, both corporeal and intellectual, of the discreet matron, that she could no longer see either the lovers themselves, or the harm they had committed. Gertrude was now quite relieved from the apprehension of witnessing her lover exorcised as an unclean spirit, and doomed to repass the threshold. The good wife considered that beauty is an article not greatly improved by keeping; that, therefore, for such fading ware, it is better to take the first good customer that offers. She opined also that a marriageable daughter was to the full as safe under a husband's guardianship as her own. She had therefore already prepared her maternal consent, fit to be produced as soon as the suitor should solicit it: and very readily gave her yea and amen to the proposals of the wealthy wooer.

The treaty of marriage was quickly arranged. On being accepted as such, the joyous bridegroom, sweeping half the gold into his hat, threw it into the lap of the bride, as her marriage portion; the other half he as liberally scattered in a golden shower into the bosom of the greedy matron, whose dry countenance instantly acknowledged its influence.

The wedding-day was now fixed, and half the town received invitations to the feast, which was to be celebrated in the most spacious apartment of the Golden Lamb. As Gertrude was putting on her bridal wreath, she could not help saying, "This wreath would delight me, indeed, were but my good father here to conduct me to church. Would to Heaven that he were here with us once again! While we now enjoy all the blessings of Providence, what may he not be suffering;—if indeed he is still alive?" Even Dame Ilse could not now help expressing some regret, although some of it might probably arise from the want she experienced of having some one on whom to vent her spleen.

The eve of the great day had now arrived, when some one stopped before the house with a wheelbarrow, and knocked at the door. The bride opened the window to inquire what the stranger wanted, and, to her surprise, discovered that it was even her father himself!

All now was tumultuous joy: Gertrude rushed down and threw herself upon his neck, and even Dame Ilse reached out her hand in token of forgiveness of the theft he had committed. At length the bridegroom saluted him in his turn, while both mother and daughter expatiated at the same time on his merits, as a suitor; for Master Peter seemed to scrutinize his person with an eye of eager inquiry. No sooner, however, was he informed of the pretensions of the gallant, and the manner in which he had acquired his right to such intimate hospitality, than he appeared to be perfectly satisfied with his future son-in-law, and was soon as familiar with him as though he had long been acquainted with him. After having first brought him some refreshment, the dame expressed her curiosity to hear his adventures, and all that had happened to him in his travels.

"I have travelled far and wide," replied he, "and at length am become a dealer in hardware. All my wealth however consists in this cask of nails, of which I intend to make a present to the young folks here, to begin housekeeping with." Mother Ilse now vented herself in so many reproaches, that the bridegroom, little pleased at this specimen of female eloquence, was obliged to interfere, assuring her that he was well satisfied with the offer.

Peace being restored, Gertrude requested that her father might conduct her the following morning to the church; accordingly Master Peter appeared dressed out like a burgomaster, in honour of the ceremony, which was celebrated with no ordinary splendour. Soon after this happy event, the young couple set up a separate

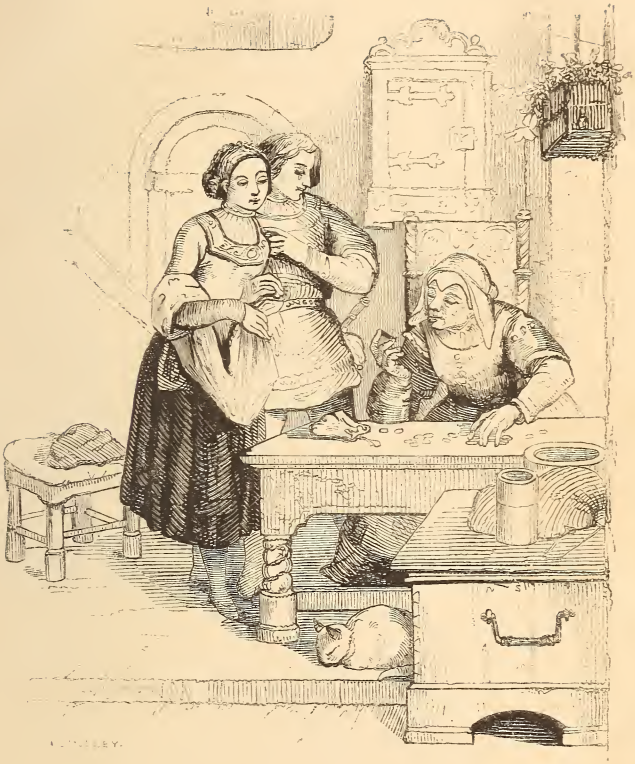
establishment, the bridegroom having purchased a noble mansion, where he resided in the style of an opulent citizen. Peter, in the meanwhile, set himself down at his ease, which it was believed the liberality of his newly-made son enabled him to do, no one suspecting that the cask of nails was his real treasure. We must now go back and recount our hero's adventures.

He had, totally unknown to any one, accomplished his journey to the Blocksberg with the greatest success, although certainly not altogether with the celerity with which the wizards ride thither on Walpurgis night; his manner of travelling, however, was quite as safe, and certainly quite as pleasant. He visited each house with a sign attached to it with as much punctuality as if he had been employed in taking a census of all houses of entertainment, and in ascertaining that their cellars were well stocked, and their larders well furnished.

But, at length, the mountains of the Harz appeared in the blue distant landscape, and on the near approach to the scene of action, he heroically braced himself up for the important enterprise.

Until he began to ascend the Brocken his nose had served him as a faithful compass, but he now found himself in a latitude in which this magnet no longer acted with effect. He wandered in various directions, yet no one could inform him where the Morgenbrod Valley was situated. At length, he got, by chance, into the right track; discovered S. Andrew's Mount, and the little stream, and last of all, the cave. He entered; the spring-root performed its office; he found the chest and the treasure, and filled his sack with as much gold as he could carry; enough to make him independent for the remainder of his days, and to enable him to bestow a handsome dowry on his dear Gertrude.

When he again beheld the light of day on his return from the cave, he felt like a mariner who, just escaped from shipwreck, has been combating in the midst of the watery element with all the horrors of death, and now again presses once more the firm earth as he exultingly scales the cliff. Notwithstanding the assurances which he had received of perfect security, it was not without certain apprehensions of mischief from the spirit of the mine, that he performed his subterraneous journey; he feared lest the stern guardian of the treasure should appear in some terrific form, and either throw him into a mortal dread, or even plunder him of the rich fruit of his daring enterprise. Everything, however, succeeded to his wish; he neither saw nor heard any evil spirit; only the iron door closed behind him with an awful sound, as soon as he set his foot out of the vaulted chamber. In his hurry, the alarmed treasure-seeker forgot his talisman, the spring-root, which he had laid out of his hand when occupied in scraping up the gold, on which account it was impossible for him to return for another freight; yet this circumstance did not cause him much affliction



PETER BLOCK.

P. 72.

as his desires were by no means immoderate, and as he had helped himself, on this occasion, pretty liberally.

Peter now took his departure, considering how he should best secure the prize he had obtained, and live comfortably upon it at home, without exciting idle curiosity or malignant suspicion. It was also very desirable that his shrew of a wife should know nothing of the treasure of the Harz king, else he feared that she would never desist from harassing him until he had surrendered up to her the fruit of his toils. She should, therefore, partake of the stream, but remain quite ignorant of its source. The first point was easily accomplished, the other caused him to belabour his brains greatly without determining anything. Having securely packed them up, he transported his riches to the nearest village: here he purchased a wheelbarrow, and ordered a cooper to make him a tub with a double bottom; in the centre of this he deposited his treasure, filling up the false bottom at either end with nails. With this load he returned home very leisurely; and, as he was in no great hurry to arrive there, he tarried at every hospitable tavern, desiring the obsequious master to set before him of the best.

As he approached towards Ellrich, he was joined by a young man of smart appearance, but whose countenance was marked with grief. Our merry pilgrim struck by the stranger's appearance inquired of him, "Young sir, whither art thou bound?" To which the other replied with a sigh, "I am journeying through the wide world, my good father, or perhaps, out of the world—anywhere, in short, where my feet carry me."

"And wherefore should it be out of the world?" kindly asked the compassionate Peter. "What has the world done to offend thee so grievously?"

"To me the world has done nothing, neither have I done aught amiss to the world, and yet, methinks, we do not agree well together."

Our good-natured traveller of the wheelbarrow, who, when things went well with himself, always delighted in seeing others in equally good spirits, exerted himself to cheer the desponding youth; but finding, at length, that his powers of eloquence were of no avail, he suspected that his gloomy mood might be occasioned chiefly by a vacancy in the region of the stomach, and that it was that organ, not either the heart or head of the patient, that was affected. He accordingly invited him to enter an inn, promising not to call upon him for his share of the reckoning; a proposal which his melancholy companion did not refuse. They here found a mirthful set of revellers, in whose society Master Peter soon found himself quite in his element; and, by degrees, waxed so full of joyous glee, and so liberal withal, that he insisted that no one but himself should have the honour of discharging the landlord's bill. This proposition tended by no means to

throw a damp upon these choice spirits; on the contrary, they in return became most liberal of jests and repartees, so that it was doubtful whether the number of good things that went into their mouths was not exceeded by that of those which proceeded out of them. Peter's young companion was the only one present who seemed insensible to the wit and gaiety round him; he sat in a corner of the room, with his eyes fixed on the floor, so coy too did he appear with his glass that he but rarely saluted it with his lips, and even then he did it in most maidenly guise.

Perceiving him so inaccessible to all social mirth, it now occurred to the good Peter that some heavy affliction, which was gnawing at his heart, was the real cause of the poor youth's despondency. His curiosity therefore became equally excited with his compassion.

"My good lad," inquired he the following morning, "what is it that disturbs thee so greatly? Acquaint me with the cause of thy uneasiness."

"Alas, my worthy father," returned the youth, "what can it avail me, should I disclose the cause of my sorrow? you can serve me neither by your pity nor your advice."

"Who knows how that may be? the old proverb says: Comfort travelleth with no outrider." Peter was now so urgent with him to disclose the cause of his disquietude, that the cheerless gallant was at length fain to comply.

"It is no trifle, no boyish misfortune," said he, "that causes my distress, but the calamitous destiny of virtuous affection. I am attached to an amiable pious girl in the town of Rottenburg, who some time since accepted me as her suitor; but her mother, who is a very dragon for fierceness and cunning, finding that I was not so rich as she imagined, forbade me access to the house. After many unsuccessful attempts, I have at last resigned all hope of again beholding the lovely maiden. I have quitted the town, and am now wandering about the country in the hope that my grief may speedily devour my heart."

Our hero listened very attentively to his companion's narrative, and already began to perceive where the wind lay.

"Your history," said he, "is a strange one enough; there is one point, however, which I would ask you—you do not speak of the *father* of your mistress—why did you not address yourself to him? He would hardly have rejected such an honest suitor for his daughter as thou appearest to be."

"Ah!" replied Frederic, little weening whom he was now speaking to, "the father is nought;—he is an idle fellow, that Peter Block, who has left his wife and child, nor does any one know what has become of him. Yet I do not blame the poor wight for having run off from such a cross-grained vixen as his wife is—but, then, to desert his sweet child!—she who is so mild, and meekly tempered, and who, even now, always takes his part,

and still speaks of him with the kindest affection!—were he here, I could pluck his beard for him."

At hearing this unexpected eulogium upon himself, Master Peter redoubled his attention, and was surprised to learn how minutely his companion was acquainted with all his family secrets; without, however, being offended at the indignation expressed against him. He thought, on the contrary, that Frederic would serve his designs most admirably; that he could make him the depository of his wealth, so as thereby to avoid all inquisitive curiosity as to the sudden change in his affairs, and, at the same time, conceal his treasure from the greediness of his wife. "My good friend," said he, "show me thy hand, and let me see what luck thy stars destine for thee."

"What should they forbode, save evil?" returned the hopeless lover.

Nevertheless, the pretended dealer in chiromancy would not be so put off; and as his companion did not care, for such a trifle, to offend one who had treated him so generously, he reached out his hand to him. Mustering up a look of profound sagacity, Master Peter considered all the lines very attentively, shook his head occasionally in the mean while, and, after he had carried on the game for a sufficient time, said, "Friend! he who has luck has also the bride! To-morrow, as soon as the sun rises, hie thee with all speed to Rottenburg. The maiden is faithful, and well-inclined towards thee, nor will she fail to receive thee with affection. A rich inheritance will shortly fall to thee, of which thou little dreamest; and thou wilt then have wherewith to support a wife handsomely!"

"Comrade," returned the youth, supposing that the prophet was making himself merry at his expense, "it ill becomes you to jest with the unfortunate. Seek some one on whom you can play your tricks, and leave me in peace."

"Nay, my good friend, I am not one that would deceive you, or amuse myself at your cost; on the contrary, I engage to accomplish my predictions to the letter. To convince you of it, I will now pay you as much of the said bequest as you choose to demand. Follow me into my chamber, and I will convince you of the truth of my words by the most satisfactory evidence."

At hearing his friend, the dealer in iron, speak of his gold, in a tone of such confidence, the youth's cheek burned with the glow of joy and sudden astonishment; nor did he know whether he was dreaming or awake, when, following his mysterious companion, he beheld him, after having secured the door, display the secret contents of his cask,—a golden yolk within an iron shell.

Master Peter now discovered himself to the lover of Gertrude, and confided to him the mystery of the treasure, and also his intention of letting him support the character of a wealthy suitor, while he, on the contrary, would enjoy himself more snugly.

The deep melancholy of the youth now altogether disappeared; he could find no words to express his gratitude for being thus suddenly rendered the most happy of all mortals. The following morning both the travellers set out for Ellrich, where the young one equipped himself in all the bravery of a noble gallant. Master Peter paid him in advance a considerable portion of the promised inheritance, and agreed with him that he should privately let him know of the success of his undertaking, in order that he might despatch a load of costly furniture, befitting the station and character he now had to support. At their parting with each other, the presumptive father-in-law made the youth a present of a piece of advice: "Take good heed to thy tongue, and disclose our secret to no one, save to the discreet Gertrude, when she becomes thy bride."

The sequel of the story the reader already knows.

Master Peter now enjoyed the golden fruit of his trip to the Harz Mountain, yet wisely forbore to entertain the public with any description of it, and possessed so much wealth that he hardly knew its amount. Frederic, however, was supposed to be the source of this sudden prosperity; and, as honour follows quick upon riches, he soon attained the highest dignities which the town of Rottenburg could bestow. And ever since it has become a common proverb, when the people of Rottenburg wish to describe a wealthy person, to say, "He is as rich as the son-in-law of Peter Block."

THE THREE SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

VERY wealthy Count squandered away all his riches and possessions. He lived like a king, and kept open table every day; whoever appeared at his castle, whether knight or squire, was richly feasted for three days, and all his guests went away rejoicing. His court swarmed with pages in gold embroidery, running footmen, and lackeys in handsome livery, and, in his stalls, fed countless horses and hounds. Through this lavish expenditure, his treasures were exhausted. He mortgaged one city after another, sold his jewels and plate, dismissed his servants, and shot his hounds; nothing remained to him of his entire property, but an old castle in a forest, a virtuous wife, and three wondrously beautiful daughters.

In this castle he dwelt, forsaken by all the world; the Countess and her daughters themselves attended to the culinary department; but, not being versed in gastronomy, they could only boil potatoes. These frugal repasts pleased the old Count so little, that he became morose and peevish, and stormed and scolded through the wide forsaken halls, till the dismantled walls re-echoed these outbursts of ill-humour.

One fine summer's morning, he seized his hunting-spear in a passion, and hastened to the forest, to shoot a buck, that he might, for once, have a savoury meal. This forest was said to be an unlucky spot; many travellers had been led astray in it, and many (either strangled by demons or devoured by wild beasts) had never returned. The Count feared not; he strode vigorously over hill and dale, and scrambled through bushes and thickets, without meeting with any game. Growing weary, he sat down under an oak, to make his dinner off some boiled potatoes and a little salt, the sole contents of his wallet. By chance he raised his eyes, and behold! a savage bear was approaching. The poor Count was horribly frightened at the sight; he could not escape by flight, and he was not armed for an encounter with a Bear. He seized his spear to defend himself as well as he could. The monster drew near; suddenly it stopped, and growled forth distinctly these words: "Robber! plunderest thou my honey-tree?—Thou shalt expiate the crime with thy life!"—"Ah!" supplicated the

Count, "ah! eat me not, my lord Bear, I sought not your honey, I am an honest knight. If you have an appetite, deign to put up with my homely fare, and be my guest." Hereupon he dished up all the potatoes in his hunting-cap, and presented them to the bear. Bruin, however, despised the Count's fare, and growled surlily: "Wretch! thou savest not thy life at this price, promise me instantly thy daughter Wulfilda in marriage; if not, I eat thee alive!" In his distress of mind the Count would have promised all his three daughters, and his wife to boot, to the enamoured bear, had he demanded them; since necessity knows no law. "She shall be yours, my lord Bear," said the Count, who began to recover himself; but, he added artfully, "on condition that, in conformity with the established etiquette of the land, you come in person to fetch the bride home."—"Agreed!" growled the bear; "shake hands," and he offered his shaggy paw; "in seven days I will redeem the bride with a hundred weight of gold, and lead the fair one home."—"Agreed," replied the Count; "few words to the bargain!" Thereupon they parted in peace; the bear trotted back to his den, and the Count, who did not linger in the fearful forest, arrived by moonlight at his castle, wearied and dispirited.

It is easy to comprehend, that a bear which can talk and act reasonably like a man, cannot be an ordinary, but an enchanted animal. This the Count perceived; he hoped therefore to baffle his shaggy son-in-law through craft, and so to fortify himself in his strong castle, that the bear should find it impossible to enter, when he came on the appointed day to fetch away the bride. Even though the gifts of speech and reason be granted to an enchanted bear, reasoned he, he is still a bear, and has, in all other respects, the nature of an ordinary individual of that species. He will not certainly be able to fly like a bird, nor to enter a locked door through the keyhole, like a spirit, nor to glide through the eye of a needle. The following day he informed his wife and daughters of his adventure in the wood. Miss Wulfilda swooned with terror, when she heard that she was destined to espouse a grisly bear, the mother wrung her hands and wept aloud, and the sisters were dismayed and trembled with grief and horror. The papa, however, went forth to reconnoitre the walls and fosses of the castle, examined the locks and bolts of the iron door, drew up the drawbridge, and provided against all access; ascended then to the watch-tower, where he found, under the battlements, a small chamber, strongly walled around, and there he immured the maiden, who ceased not to weep with her eyes of heavenly blue, or to tear her silky flaxen hair.

Six days had elapsed, and the seventh was breaking, when great noises were heard proceeding from the wood, as though a large army were marching through it: the cracking of whips, the blasts of horns, the prancing of horses, the rumbling of wheels. A splendid

state-carriage with outriders drove over the plain to the castle gate. All the bolts fell back, the door burst open, the drawbridge fell, a young prince alighted from the carriage, handsome as the day, and clothed in velvet embroidered with silver. He wore a gold chain, looped three times round his neck, so long that a man might stand upright in it; his hat was surrounded by a wreath of pearls and diamonds, which dazzled all eyes, and a dukedom would not purchase the clasp which fastened the ortrich-feather. Swift as the whirlwind he ascended the turret stairs, and, in another instant, the affrighted bride trembled in his arms below.

The noise awakened the Count from his morning slumbers; he opened the window of his chamber, and when he perceived the carriage and horses, and the horsemen in the courtyard, and his daughter in the arms of a stranger, who was assisting her to enter the carriage, and when the cavalcade issued from the castle gates, his heart smote him, and he cried in great grief, "Adieu, my daughter! Depart thou bear's bride!" Wulfilda recognised her father's voice, waved her white handkerchief from the window of the bridal carriage, and thus gave the signal of farewell.

The parents were startled at the loss of their daughter, and stared at one another in mute astonishment. The mamma would not, however, trust her eyes, but considered the elopement the work of magic or of the devil; she seized a bunch of keys, ran to the turret and opened the cell, but she found neither her daughter nor her effects; but there lay, on a small table, a silver key, which she took, and, looking by chance through the latticed window, she perceived, in the distance, a whirlwind of dust towards the east, and heard the huzzas and the rejoicings of the bridal party, who were now entering the wood. Much distressed, she descended from the tower, put on mourning, heaped ashes on her head, and wept for three days, in company with her husband and her remaining daughters. On the fourth day the Count quitted the chamber of mourning to breathe the fresh air, and, in passing through the courtyard, he found a handsome chest of ebony, well secured and difficult to lift. He easily guessed the contents; the Countess gave him the key, he opened it, and found a hundred weight of gold, pure doubloons, all of one coinage. Delighted at this acquisition, he forgot all his sorrow, bought horses, falcons, and handsome clothes for his wife and lovely daughters, hired servants, and began again to feast and make merry, till the last doubloon disappeared from his chest. Then he plunged into debt, and the creditors came in swarms, seized all the contents of the castle, and left him nothing but an old falcon. The Countess and her daughters again boiled potatoes; and he, full of chagrin and ennui, daily pursued his hawking in the fields. One day he threw up his falcon, which rose high in the air, and would not allow itself to be enticed back to his hand. The

Count followed its flight, as well as he could, over the broad plain. The bird directed its flight towards the terrible forest, which the Count was not reckless enough to enter, and, therefore, gave up his favourite amusement for lost. Suddenly, a vigorous eagle mounted from the forest and pursued the falcon, which no sooner perceived its powerful foe, than it flew back, with the speed of an arrow, to seek protection from its master. The eagle, however, shot down through the air, fastened one of its powerful claws in the shoulder of the Count, and with the other crushed the faithful falcon. The astonished Count sought to free himself with his spear from his feathered antagonist, beating and stabbing the monster. But the eagle seized the weapon, broke it like a reed, and with a loud voice screamed these words into his ear: "Rash man, wherefore disturbest thou my aerial kingdom with thy hawking? Thou shalt expiate the crime with thy life!" From this speech of the bird the Count soon understood what kind of adventure he had to expect. He took courage and spoke: "Softly, my lord Eagle, softly! what have I done to you? My falcon has paid the penalty of its crime, that I will leave to you, to appease your appetite."—"No," continued the eagle, "I thirst to-day after the blood of man, and thou appearest to me a fat morsel."—"Pardon, my lord Eagle," screamed the Count in anguish, "ask from me what you will and I will give it you, only spare my life."—"Well," replied the murderous bird, "I will keep thee to thy word;—thou hast two lovely daughters, and I want a wife; promise me thy Adelheid in marriage, and I will allow thee to depart in peace, and will redeem her with two wedges of gold, each weighing a hundred weight; in seven weeks I will fetch the fair one home." Thus speaking, the eagle soared aloft, and was lost in the clouds.—Necessity makes all things easy. When the father saw that the sale of his daughters was so thriving, he grieved the less at losing them. This time he returned home cheerfully, and carefully concealed his adventure; partly to avoid the reproaches which he dreaded from his wife, and partly to avoid distressing his beloved daughter before there was any necessity for it. He lamented apparently only for the lost falcon, which he pretended had flown away. Miss Adelheid was unequalled in spinning; she was also a dexterous weaver, and at the time we are speaking of she had just taken out of the loom a web of costly linen, as fine as cambric, which she bleached on a plot of grass not far from the castle. Six weeks and six days elapsed, and the lovely weaver had no suspicion of her destiny, although her father, who became somewhat sad as the day fixed by the eagle for his nuptials approached, gave her many covert hints; sometimes relating a remarkable dream, sometimes making Wulfilda, who was almost forgotten, the theme of conversation. Adelheid, who was of a frank and joyous nature, imagined that the moodiness of her father proceeded from hypochondriac fancies.

She tripped merrily forth at the dawn of the appointed day to the bleaching-ground, and spread out her linen to soak in the morning dew. When she had fulfilled her task, she looked around her, and saw galloping forward a splendid cavalcade of knights and squires. She had not yet made her toilet, and therefore concealed herself behind a wild brier in full flower, and peeped forth at the procession. The handsomest rider of the party, a slim young man, with a raised visor, sprang to the bush and said, in a sweet voice, "I see thee, I seek thee, fairest, dearest; ah! conceal thyself not, mount swiftly behind me, lovely Eagle's-bride!" When Adelheid heard these words, she was much confused; the handsome knight pleased her well, but the title "Eagle's-bride" made the blood freeze in her veins; she sank on the turf, her head whirled round, and, when she came to herself, she found herself in the arms of the courteous knight, and *en route* for the forest.

Meanwhile her mamma was preparing the breakfast, and as Adelheid was missing, she despatched her youngest daughter to seek her. She went, but did not return. The mother, foreboding something wrong, felt desirous to see what detained her daughters. *She* went, but did not return. The papa observed what had happened, his heart beat loudly in his breast, he hastened to the bleaching-ground, where the mother and daughter were still seeking anxiously for Adelheid, and calling her loudly by name; and he also caused his voice to resound, although he well knew that all calling and seeking was in vain. He chanced to approach the brier, and, seeing something shine, discovered, on a closer examination, two golden wedges, each a hundred weight. Now, he could no longer delay to declare to his wife the adventure of his daughter. "Scandalous trafficker in souls!" screamed she. "Oh, father! oh, murderer! dost thou offer up thine own flesh and blood to Moloch for filthy lucre?" The Count, though not very eloquent, now defended himself to the best of his ability, offering, as an excuse, the imminent peril of his life; but the disconsolate mother ceased not her bitter reproaches. He chose the safest means to put an end to the war of words, held his tongue and allowed the lady to talk as long as she liked. Meanwhile he conveyed the golden wedges to a place of safety, rolling them silently before him: then, for the sake of appearances, he put on family mourning for three days, and thought only of recommencing his former life.

In a short time the castle became again the abode of joy, an elysium of feasts. Balls, tournaments, and banquets followed each other in constant succession. The lady Bertha dazzled the eyes of the stately knights at her father's court, as the silver moon, on a clear summer's night, delights the romantic wanderer; she awarded the prize in the daily tournament, and led the evening dance with the victor. The hospitality of the father, and the

beauty of the daughter, attracted noble knights from the most distant lands. Many were rivals for the heart of the rich heiress, but among so many rivals the choice was difficult, as each new comer surpassed his compeers in grace and dignity. The lovely Bertha hesitated and delayed till the golden wedges, on which the Count had not spared the file, were reduced to the size of hazel-nuts.

The Count's finances now dwindled to their former condition; the tournaments ceased; knights and squires disappeared; the castle again wore a deserted air, and the noble family returned to their diet of potatoes. The Count strode moodily through the fields, longed for a fresh adventure, but found none, while he avoided the enchanted wood. One day he pursued a covey of partridges so far that he approached the dreaded forest, and, though he did not venture within its precincts, he approached very near to its limits, and perceived there a large fish-pond, which he had never before observed, in whose silver waters countless trout were swimming. He rejoiced much at this discovery. The pond did not look at all suspicious, therefore he hastened home, made a net, and the next day saw him early on the shore, prepared to use it. By good fortune, he found a small skiff with a helm, among the rushes. He sprang into it, pulled merrily about, cast forth his net, took at one haul more trout than he could carry, and pulled back to the shore delighted with his booty. At about a stone's throw from the land, the boat stopped in its course, and remained as immovable as though he had run aground. The Count believed that this was the case, and laboured, with all his might, to set it afloat again; but his efforts were unavailing. The water diminished around him; the skiff appeared to hang to a cliff, and rose far above the surface. The inexperienced fisherman was not much delighted at this. Although the boat remained immovable, the shore appeared to recede from him on all sides, the pond expanded to a large lake, the ripple became waves which foamed and roared, and, with terror, he perceived that he and his boat were borne on the back of a monstrous fish. He gave himself up to his fate, which he awaited with great anxiety. Suddenly the fish dived, the boat was again afloat, but, in less than an instant, the monster appeared on the surface, opened its jaws, and uttered, as from a vault, these precise words: "Daring fisher, what attemptest thou here? Thou murderest my subjects! Thou shalt expiate the crime with thy life!"

The Count was by this time so well acquainted with similar adventures, that he knew how to behave on the occasion. He soon recovered from his first astonishment, and, perceiving that the fish would listen to a word of reason, spoke out boldly: "My lord Behemoth, violate not the rites of hospitality; grant me a dish of fish out of your pond; if you appeared at my

castle, both cellar and kitchen would be immediately open to you."—"We are not such trusty friends," replied the monster. "Knowest thou not yet the right of the strongest, who eats the weak? Thou robbest me of my subjects, to gobble them up, I will gobble thee up!" Here the grim-looking fish opened his jaws yet farther, as if he wished to devour boat, man, and trouts. "Oh! spare, spare my life," cried the Count, "you see I am but a meagre breakfast for your whale's stomach!" The great fish appeared to reflect a little: "Well then," he replied, "I know thou hast a lovely daughter, promise her to me in marriage, and so save thy life." When the Count heard that the fish began to talk in this manner, all his fear disappeared. "She is at your service," said he; "you are a brave son-in-law, to whom no honest man would deny his daughter. But, with how much wilt thou redeem the bride, after the custom of the land?"—"I have," replied the fish, "neither gold nor silver; but, in the depths of this lake lies a great treasure of pearl-oysters, thou hast only to name the quantity."—"Well, now," said the Count, "three bushels payment in pearls are in truth not too much for a lovely bride."—"They are thine," decreed the fish, "and the bride is mine: in seven moons I will fetch my fair one home." Hereupon he lashed his tail briskly, and soon sent the boat to the shore. The Count brought his trout home, had them boiled, and enjoyed this Carthusian meal with the Countess and the lovely Bertha. The poor maiden did not forebode how dear this meal would cost her. Meanwhile, the moon had six times attained her full, and as often waned, and the Count had nearly forgotten his adventure; however, as the silver luminary began, for the seventh time, to fill her horn, he thought on the approaching catastrophe, and, to avoid being an eye-witness thereof, he tore himself away, and undertook a little journey into the country. At the sultry hour of noon, on the day of the full moon, a stately squadron of horsemen rode in haste to the castle; the Countess, startled at the visit of so many strangers, knew not whether she should open the gates or not. However, on a well-known knight announcing himself, she opened to him. He had, indeed, very often, in the days of prosperity and of plenty in the castle, frequented the tournaments, and tilted both in jest and earnest; he had also received many meeds of valour from the hand of the fair Bertha, and led with her the dance; but, since the change in the fortunes of the Count, he, like the other knights, had disappeared. The good Countess was much ashamed of her great poverty, for she had nothing to present to the noble knight and his retinue. He, however, approached her in a friendly manner, and only begged a draught of fresh water from the cool rock-spring of the castle, as he had formerly been accustomed to do, for he had a habit of never drinking wine, from which he was named, in jest, "the Water Knight." The lovely Bertha hastened, at the command of

her mother, to the spring, filled a pitcher, and presented to the knight a crystal bowl. He received it from her delicate hand, put to his lips the part which her rosy mouth had touched, and pledged her with inward rapture. Meanwhile the Countess was greatly embarrassed at not being able to offer a repast to her guest; at length she bethought herself of a fine juicy water-lemon, which was ripening in the castle garden. In a moment she slipped out of the door, gathered the melon, and placed it on an earthenware plate, covered with many vine-leaves, and garnished with the loveliest and most odoriferous flowers, in order to present it to her guest. When she came back from the garden, the castle-yard was empty and deserted, she saw neither horse nor rider more; in the hall was neither knight nor squire: she called her daughter Bertha; sought her through the whole house, and found her not. In the porch, however, were placed three sacks of new linen, which she had not remarked in her first confusion, and which appeared, on her feeling them, to be filled with grain; her affliction did not permit her to search more closely into them. The good mother abandoned herself entirely to her sorrow, and wept aloud until the evening, when her husband returned and found her in great grief. She could not conceal from him the event of the day, however gladly she would have done so, for she feared great reproaches from him, for having admitted into the castle a strange knight, who had carried away the beloved daughter. But the Count consoled her tenderly, and only inquired after the sacks of grain, of which she had spoken, went forth to view them, and opened one in her presence.

How great was the astonishment of the sorrowful Countess when beautiful pearls rolled out, as large as the biggest garden-seeds, perfectly round, delicately bored, and of the purest water. She perceived that the robber of her daughter had paid her mother's tears in pearls, conceived a high opinion of his possessions and rank, and consoled herself with the idea that this son-in-law was no monster, but a stately knight; while the Count did not deprive her of this consolation.

Now the parents had, indeed, lost all their daughters, but they possessed, in recompense, an immeasurable treasure. The Count soon turned a part of it into gold. From morning to evening, the castle swarmed with merchants and Jews, who traded for the precious pearls. The Count redeemed his towns, let his forest castle to a tenant, returned to his former residence, established again his princely household, and lived now no longer as a spend-thrift, but as a good host, since he had now no more daughters to negotiate for. The noble pair lived again in great delight; but the Countess could not console herself for the loss of her daughters; she constantly wore mourning, and never was cheerful. For some time she hoped to see again her Bertha, with the rich pearl-knight; and, as often as a stranger was announced at the

court, she expected the returning son-in-law. At length the Count could no longer persuade himself to amuse her with empty hopes: one day he ventured to tell her, that this lordly son-in-law was a monstrous fish. "Ah!" sighed the Countess,—"ah! unhappy mother that I am! Have I given birth to children that they might become the prey of horrible monsters? What is all earthly happiness—what are all treasures to a childless mother?"

CHAPTER II.

All the maidens at the castle sympathized much in the griefs of their good lady, and wept and condoled with her: they also sought at times to make her merry with songs and instruments of music; but her heart was inaccessible to joy. Every lady of the court gave wise counsel, how the spirit of melancholy might be banished; notwithstanding this, nothing could be thought of which in any degree lessened the sorrow of the Countess. The maiden who presented to her water for her hands was clever and sensible above all her fellow-servants, and was much favoured by her mistress; she had a feeling heart, and the grief of her lady brought many tears into her eyes. In order to avoid appearing forward, she had ever remained silent; at length she could no longer repress her inward desire to communicate also her good counsel. "Noble lady," said she, "if you would listen to me, I could, in truth, tell you a method by which the wounds of your heart might be healed." The Countess said, "Speak!"—"Not far from your residence," continued the maiden, "dwells a pious hermit, in a lonely grotto, whither many pilgrims direct their steps in different necessities. How would it be, if you sought from the holy man consolation and assistance? at least his prayers would restore the tranquillity of your heart." The Countess was pleased with this proposal; she wrapped herself in a pilgrim's mantle, repaired in that guise to the pious hermit, disclosed to him her suit, presented him with a rosary of the ransom pearls, and begged his prayers and blessing. These were so efficacious, that, before a year had elapsed, the Countess was quite recovered from her sadness; and shortly after she gave birth to a young son.

Great was the joy of the parents over the new-born darling. The whole territory was changed into a theatre of rejoicings, and of solemnities, on occasion of the birth of the young heir. His father named him "Reinald,—the child of wonder." The boy was beautiful as Cupid himself, and was brought up with as much care as if the dawn of the philanthropic method had then already commenced. He grew up active, strong, and cheerful, and was the joy of his father and the comfort of his mother, who tended him as the apple of her eye. Although he was now in truth the

darling of her heart, yet the remembrance of her three daughters faded not from her mind; often, when she clasped the little smiling Reinald in her arms, a tear trickled on his cheek, and, as the dear boy grew somewhat older, he often asked sadly, "Good mother, why weepest thou?" The Countess, however, concealed from him, with great care, the cause of her secret grief; since, with the exception of her husband, no one knew what had become of the three young countesses. Many speculative people imagined they had been carried off by knights-errant, which was not then unfrequently the case; others maintained that they lived concealed in a cloister; others, still, fancied they had seen them in the suite of the Queen of Burgundy, or of the Countess of Flanders. By a thousand caresses, Reinald at length drew from his tender mother the secret; she related to him the adventures of his sisters, with all the attendant circumstances, and he lost not a word of the wonderful history out of his heart. Now he had no other wish than to be able to bear arms, that he might undertake the adventure of seeking his sisters in the enchanted forest, and breaking the spell which bound them. As soon as he was dubbed a knight, he sought permission from his father to make, as he pretended, a campaign in Flanders. The Count rejoiced at the knightly spirit of his son, gave him horses and weapons, together with esquires and baggage-bearers, and sent him away with his blessing, though the careful mother gave a very unwilling consent to his departure.

Scarcely had the young knight turned his back on his native place, when he quitted the high-road, hastened with romantic eagerness to the forest castle, and sought shelter from the tenant, who received and entertained him honourably. In the early morning, while all in the castle lay yet in sweet slumber, he saddled his horse, left his retinue behind, and rode at full speed, full of energy and youthful fire, into the enchanted forest. The farther he advanced, the thicker grew the bushes, and the rugged rocks re-echoed to the hoofs of his horse. All around him was solitary and waste, and the thick-growing trees appeared compassionately to arrest the further progress of the young adventurer. He dismounted, let his horse graze, cut a way through the bushes with his sword, scrambled over the steep rocks, and slid down the precipices. After long efforts, he arrived in a winding valley, through which a clear brook meandered. He followed its windings; in the distance a rocky cave opened its subterranean jaws, before which something resembling a human form appeared to move. The daring youth redoubled his steps, followed the path between the trees, looked closely into the grotto from behind a high oak, and saw a young lady sitting on the grass, caressing, in her lap, a small unshapely bear, whilst a large one sported around her, sometimes imitating a little man, sometimes tumbling sportively head over tail, which game seemed much to amuse the

lady. Reinald recognised the lady, from the description of his mother, for his sister Wulfilda, and sprang hastily forth from his concealment, to discover himself to her. As soon, however, as she looked on the young man, she gave a loud scream, threw the little bear on the grass, sprang up to meet the approaching youth, and spoke thus to him, with a melancholy voice and troubled mien: "O youth, what unpropitious star leads thee into this wood? Here dwells a wild bear, which eats all the children of men who approach his dwelling; flee, and save thyself!" He bowed modestly to the lovely lady, and answered, "Fear nothing, O kind petitioner, I know this forest and its adventures, and come to break the spell which holds thee here a prisoner."—"Fool!" said she, "who art thou, that thou darest venture to break the mighty spell? and how hast thou the power?"—He replied: "With this arm, and by this sword! I am Reinald, named the child of wonder, the son of the Count, whom this forest robbed of three lovely daughters. Art thou not Wulfilda, his firstborn?" At this discourse the lady was yet more distressed, and stared at the young man in silent astonishment. He profited by this pause, and proved his identity by so many family circumstances, that she could no longer doubt Reinald to be her brother. She embraced him tenderly, though her knees shook with fear at the imminent danger to which he was exposed.

The lovely Wulfilda hereupon conducted her beloved guest into the den, in order to seek out there a nook in which to conceal him. In this spacious, gloomy vault lay a heap of moss, which served as a couch for the bear and his young; opposite stood a splendid bed, hung with red damask and adorned with gold lace, for the lady. Reinald was obliged to take his place hastily beneath the bedstead, and there await his fate. All noise and rustling was forbidden to him on peril of his life; moreover, his anxious sister carefully enjoined him neither to cough nor to sneeze.

Scarcely was the daring young man in his place of refuge, when the fearful bear growled within the den, and snuffed all around with a bloody snout; he had discovered the noble steed of the knight in the forest, and had torn him up. Wulfilda sat on her throne-bed as on coals; her heart was depressed and anxious, for she soon perceived that her lord and husband was in a bearish mood, while he probably remarked the presence, in the cave, of the strange guest. She did not neglect, on this account, to caress him tenderly, stroked him gently down the back with her velvet hand, and rubbed his ears; but the terrific brute appeared to care but little for these caresses. "I smell the flesh of man," murmured the glutton out of his wide throat. "Bear of my heart," said the lady, "thou mistakest, how should a man come into this dreary wilderness?"—"I smell the flesh of man," repeated he, and began to spy around the silken bed of his spouse. This was not

very encouraging for the knight; and, in spite of his stout-heartedness, the cold sweat stood upon his brow. Meanwhile the extreme peril rendered the lady courageous and determined. "Friend Bear," said she, "thou wilt soon drive me beyond bounds: away with thee from my place of repose, or fear my wrath." The grisly bear did not take this menace much to heart, and ceased not to smell around the bed-hangings. Although he was so much a bear, yet he was, nevertheless, under the dominion of his lady. When he prepared to force his thick skull under the bedstead Wulfilda took heart, and sent him off with such an energetic kick in his side, that he crept quite submissively to his litter, cowered down there, growling till the approach of day, and caressing his young. Soon afterwards he fell asleep, and snored like a bear. Immediately the trusty sister refreshed her brother with a glass of sack and some biscuit, and admonished him to be of good cheer, since the danger was now, in a great measure, past. Reinald was so fatigued with his adventure, that he soon after fell into a deep sleep, and snored in emulation of his brother-in-law Bear.

On awaking he found himself in a splendid state bed, in a chamber with silken tapestry. The morning sun peeped cheerily in between the drawn curtains; near the bed lay his clothes and knightly armour on a low stool covered with velvet, also a little silver bell stood near, to summon the servants. Reinald understood not how he could have been transported from the horrible grotto into so splendid a palace, and doubted whether he dreamed now, or had previously dreamed the adventure in the forest. To free himself from this uncertainty, he rang the bell. An elegantly-dressed valet-de-chambre entered, inquired his commands, and informed him that his sister Wulfilda, and her husband Albert the Bear, awaited him anxiously. The young Count could not recover from his astonishment. Although even the mention of the Bear caused the cold perspiration to stand on his forehead, he caused himself to be quickly dressed, and went forth into the antechamber, where he found attendant pages, couriers, and heydukes. With this retinue he proceeded through a vast number of state apartments and halls to the audience-chamber, where his sister received him with the air of a princess. She had near her two most lovely children, a prince of seven years old and a delicate little girl, who was still in leading-strings. A moment afterwards entered Albert the Bear, who had now laid aside his terrible aspect, and all the characteristics of a bear, and appeared as the most estimable prince. Wulfilda presented to him her brother, and Albert embraced his brother-in-law with all the warmth of friendship and fraternal love.

The prince was, with all his court, enchanted by an evil magician on certain days. He enjoyed the privilege, every seventh day, to be free from the enchantment from one dawn till another. As soon, however, as the silver stars began to fade in the heaven.

and the morning dew to sparkle on the grass, the previous enchantment resumed its power; the castle changed into a rugged inaccessible rock, the beautiful park surrounding it into a dreary wilderness, the springs and cascades into stagnant desolate marshes, the owner of the castle became a shaggy bear, the knights and squires became badgers and martens, the ladies and chambermaids of the court, owls and flittermice, which hooted and moaned day and night.

It was on one of those days of disenchantment, that Albert led home his bride. The lovely Wulfilda, who had for six days wept her union with a shaggy bear, allowed her melancholy to abate, when she found herself in the arms of a young and shapely knight, who embraced her lovingly and conducted her to a splendid palace, where dazzling bridal pomp awaited her. She was received with music and songs by lovely slaves in myrtle wreaths, divested of her country dress, and adorned as the bride of a king. Although indeed she was not vain, yet she could not conceal an internal delight at her lovely figure, when the crystal mirrors on all the walls of the bridal chamber told her a thousand flatteries. A splendid entertainment followed the marriage ceremony, and a magnificent state ball closed the festivities of the auspicious day. The charming bride breathed joy and felicity in the feeling of love which kindled first in her maidenly heart on her wedding-day, after the fashion of the old times, and the revolting image of the bear was quite driven out of her imagination. At midnight she was conducted by her husband with much pomp to the bridal chamber. In the morning how great was her astonishment! She could nowhere find her husband, and she speedily found herself transported into a gloomy vault, where the broken daylight entered through the mouth, and only gave sufficient brightness, to make her sensible of the presence of a terrible bear, which looked sadly at her from a corner. She sank back on her couch and swooned away with horror. After a long interval she came to herself again, and collected sufficient strength to raise a loud cry, which was answered by the croaking voice of a hundred owls from without the cave. The feeling bear could not remain, to witness this scene of grief, he must needs go forth, to pant out his grief and distress, at his hard destiny, under God's free heaven. He raised himself sluggishly from his place and staggered forth growling into the forest, from which he did not return till a short time before the transformation on the seventh day. The six days of grief appeared like years to the inconsolable lady. In the marriage festivities they had neglected to furnish the couch of the lady with food and refreshment, for over all lifeless things which the lovely Wulfilda herself touched the magician had no power; although her husband would even in her arms have returned to a bear, in the hour of transformation. In the anxiety of her heart, the unhappy lady pined

for two days without thinking of nourishment; at length, however, nature demanded, with great importunity, the means of support, and created a wild feverish hunger which drove her out of the den to seek food. She ladled in the hollow of her hand a little water out of the neighbouring purling stream, and refreshed with it her heated parched lips, plucked some hips and bramble-berries, and swallowed in her confusion a handful of acorns, which she eagerly picked, and she carried back with her into the den an apron-full more, through mere instinct, for she had but little care for her life, and she desired nothing more eagerly than her death. With this wish she fell asleep on the evening of the sixth day, and awoke with the dawn in the same chamber which she had entered as a bride. She found there everything in the exact order in which she had left it, the handsomest and most loving bridegroom at her side, who testified to her in the most moving expressions his sympathy at the melancholy situation into which his irresistible love for her had brought her, and with tears in his eyes solicited forgiveness. He explained to her the circumstances of the enchantment which every seventh day rendered inefficacious, restoring everything to its natural form. Wulfilda was moved by the affection of her husband; she reflected that a marriage would be pleasant enough, when the seventh day would always be peaceful, and that only the most fortunate of married people can boast this privilege; in short, she resigned herself to her fate, returned love for love, and made her Albert the happiest bear under the sun. In order to be never again in danger of starving in the forest den, each time that she sat down to table she put on a pair of capacious pockets, which she loaded with confectionary, sweet oranges, and other costly fruits. Also the customary evening draught of her lord, which was placed in the bedchamber, she concealed carefully in her bedstead, and thus, both kitchen and cellar were ever sufficiently prepared before the hour of transformation.

She had already passed one-and-twenty years in the enchanted forest, and this long time had impaired none of her youthful charms; the mutual love of the noble pair was also still the effect of the first powerful instinct. Mother Nature maintains her rights everywhere, notwithstanding apparent interruption; even in the world of enchantment she watches for them with great care and anxiety, and averts all the advances, and all powerful changes of time, as long as the things of this lower world are removed from her dominion by the unnatural encroachments of magic. According to the testimony of the holy legend, the pious seven sleepers arose from the catacombs of Rome, after they had slept out their sleep of a hundred years, as vigorous and active as they had lain down, and had only aged one single night. The lovely Wulfilda had, according to the reckoning of good mother Nature, only lived three years in the twenty-one years, and was

still in the flower of her days. This reckoning held good also with her husband, and with all the enchanted court.

All this the noble pair disclosed to the amiable knight in the course of a ramble in the park, under an arbour, in which the wild jasmine and climbing honeysuckle were interwoven. The happy day passed only too quickly amid the pageantry of a court-gala, and mutual protestations of friendship. They partook together of the noonday meal, which was followed by games and diversions. Some of the courtiers wandered forth for amusement with the ladies, into the park, and passed the time in jests and lays of love, until the trumpet sounded for the evening meal, which was served in a gallery hung with mirrors, and lighted by innumerable wax tapers. They ate, drank, and made merry, till, at midnight, Wulfilda stored her pockets as usual, and counselled her brother not to forget his own. When the table was cleared, Albert appeared to become troubled, and whispered something in the ear of his wife; thereupon she took her brother aside, and spoke sorrowfully: "Beloved brother, we must part; the hour of transformation, when all the joys of this palace disappear, is now near at hand. Albert is troubled for thy sake; he fears for thy life; he would not have power to resist the brute instinct to tear thee in pieces, if thou shouldst await here the approaching change. Quit this unlucky wood, and never return to us again."—"Ah!" answered Reinald, "let whatever fate has decreed for me happen, I cannot part from thee, thou loved one. To seek thee out, O sister! was my enterprise, and now that I have found thee, I will not quit the forest without thee. Say, how can I dissolve the powerful enchantment?"—"Ah!" said she, "it is in the power of no mortal to dissolve it." Here Albert joined in the conversation; and when he learned the daring resolve of the young knight, he dissuaded him so plausibly from his project with loving words, that the latter, at length, yielded to the desire of his brother-in-law, and to the entreaties and tears of his tender sister, and was forced to prepare to take leave.

Prince Albert embraced the brave young man in a brotherly manner; and after the latter had embraced his sister, and was now ready to depart, the prince drew forth his pocket-book, and took out of it three bear's hairs, rolled them in a paper, and gave them, laughingly, to the knight, as a memento by which to remember the adventure in the enchanted wood. "Yet," he added, earnestly, "despise not this trifle; should you by chance, at any time, be in need of help, rub these three hairs between your hands, and await the result." In the castle-yard stood a handsome phaeton, with six black horses, together with many riders and attendants. Reinald entered it. "Adieu, my brother," cried Albert the Bear, at the threshold.—"Adieu, my brother," replied Reinald, the Wonder Child, and the carriage thundered over the drawbridge and away. The golden stars twinkled still

brightly in the heavens; the procession went over stock and stone, over heaths and fields, up hills and down hills, through wildernesses and forests, without rest or repose, at a good trot. After a full hour the heavens began to wear a grey aspect; suddenly all the torches were extinguished; Reinald found himself placed on the ground rather roughly, without knowing how it happened; the phaeton, with horses and riders, had disappeared; but in the glimmering of dawn, he saw six black ants galloping away between his feet, drawing after them a nutshell.

The courageous knight now knew easily the solution of the adventure, he carefully avoided crushing an emmet by any accident, awaited tranquilly the rising of the sun, and, as he still found himself within the limits of the forest, he resolved to seek out likewise his two youngest sisters, and if he should not succeed in disenchanting them, at least to pay them a visit.

Three days he wandered about uselessly in the wood without encountering anything marvellous. He had but just consumed the last remnant of a milk-loaf from the table of his brother-in-law, Albert the Bear, when he heard something rustle in the air above him, as when a ship in full sail cleaves the waves. He looked up, and perceived a powerful eagle, which stooped from the air into a nest which he had in a tree. Reinald was much rejoiced at this discovery, concealed himself in the undergrowth of the wood, and waited till the eagle should again fly forth. After seven hours he rose from the nest; immediately the ambuscading youth stepped forth into the fresh air, and cried with a loud voice—"Adelheid, beloved sister, if thou dwellest in this high oak, answer to my voice. I am Reinald, named the Child of Wonder, thy brother, who seeks thee, and labours to destroy the powerful enchantment which fetters thee." So soon as he had ceased to speak, a soft womanly voice answered him from above, as if out of the clouds, "Art thou Reinald, the Child of Wonder? Welcome then to thy sister Adelheid, delay not to climb up to her, and embrace the disconsolate one." Delighted at this affectionate welcome, the knight joyfully ventured the attempt to scramble up the high tree, but to no purpose. Three times he ran round the stem, but it was too thick for him to embrace, and the lowest branches were much too high for him to reach. While he was thinking eagerly of some means of reaching his end, there fell down a silken rope ladder, through the help of which he soon arrived at the eyrie, at the summit of the tree; it was as roomy and as strongly built as a balcony on a lime-tree. He found his sister sitting under a canopy, protected from the weather on the exterior with honeycomb, and hung in the interior with rose-coloured satin. The meeting was very affectionate on both sides. Adelheid had regular news from her father's house, and knew that Reinald was her young brother. Edgar the Eagle, her husband, was enchanted for weeks. In every seven weeks he

passed one free from enchantment. In this interval he had, from love to his wife, often visited incognito the court of his father-in-law, and had given her news from time to time how things were going on there. Adelheid invited her brother to await the next transformation with her, and although the event was six weeks distant, he willingly agreed. She concealed him in a hollow tree, and fed him daily out of the magazine under her sofa, which was richly provided with ships' stores, that is to say, such provisions as will keep good for six weeks. She dismissed him with the well-intentioned exhortation—"As thou lovest thy life, preserve thyself from Edgar's eagle glance; if he see thee in his enclosure, all is over with thee; he will tear out thy eyes, and eat out thy heart, as he did only yesterday to three of thy squires who sought thee here in the forest."

Reinald shuddered at the fate of the poor squires, promised to take great care of himself, and remained six tedious weeks in the Patmos of the hollow tree; yet he enjoyed the pleasure of talking with his sister, as often as the eagle flew from the nest. But, for this trial of his patience, he was afterwards fully recompensed by seven joyful days.

The reception at the court of brother-in-law Eagle was not less friendly than at that of brother-in-law Bear. His castle, his court, all was here as there; every day was a festival; but the time of the fatal transformation now approached too quickly. On the evening of the seventh day Edgar dismissed his guest with the most tender embraces, yet he warned him not to enter again his domain. "Shall I," said Reinald, sorrowfully, "separate for ever from you dear ones? Is it not possible to break the baneful spell which detains you here? Had I a hundred lives to lose, I would venture them all to free you." Edgar pressed his hand warmly. "Thanks, noble young man, for your love and friendship, but give up the rash enterprise. It is possible to dissolve our enchantment, but you shall not, you must not, do it. Whoever attempts it, if it miscarries, pays for it with his life, and you shall not be the sacrifice for us."

The heroic courage of Reinald was yet more excited by this speech to undertake the adventure. His eyes sparkled with desire, and a ray of hope of the attainment of his end tinged his cheek. He implored his brother-in-law Edgar to confide to him the secret of the dissolving the enchantment of the forest; but the former would disclose nothing to him for fear of placing the life of the young man in danger. "All that I can tell you, beloved brother, is, that you must find the key to the enchantment if you *will* succeed in freeing us. If you are destined by fate to be our deliverer, the stars will point out to you the way in which to attempt it, otherwise all your attempts will be but folly." Here he drew out his pocket-book, and took out of it three eagle's feathers, which he presented to the knight as a

remembrance of him. If he was at any time in need of help, he was to rub them between his hands, and await the result. They then parted affectionately. Edgar's grand-marshal and the courtiers accompanied the beloved stranger through a long avenue, planted with Weymouth pines, spruces, and yews, as far as the boundary of the grounds, and as soon as he was beyond their limits, they closed the grated door, and hastened speedily back, since the hour of transformation was fast approaching. Reinald sat down under a lime, in order to witness the marvel; the full moon shone out clear and bright; he still saw clearly the castle, standing prominently forth above the summits of the high trees. But in the morning twilight he found himself enveloped in a thick fog, and as the rising sun dispersed this, castle, park, and grated door had vanished, and he found himself in a dreary waste, on the summit of a cliff, near an unfathomable abyss. The young adventurer looked all around to find a way down into the valley; he perceived in the distance a lake, whose mirrored surface was silvered by the reflection of the sunbeams. With great labour he forced himself all day through the thickly-growing wood; his thoughts and desires were all directed to the lake where he imagined his third sister, Bertha, to be; but the farther he advanced in the tangled thicket, the more intricate it became; he lost sight of the lake, and also lost the hope of seeing it again. Towards sunset, he saw indeed the expanse of water glimmering between the trees where the wood grew thinner, but still he did not reach the shore till the approach of night. Tired out, he made his couch under a tree, and did not awake till the sun stood already high in the heavens. He found himself refreshed by the sleep, and, with vigorous and hardy limbs, he sprang up suddenly, and wandered along the shore, full of thought and of projects for reaching his sister in the lake. To no purpose he made his words of greeting to resound: "Bertha, beloved sister, dwellest thou in this water? answer my speech! I am Reinald, named the Wonder Child, thy brother; who seeks thee in order to dissolve thy spell, and to lead thee forth from this watery prison." Nothing but the many-voiced echo of the wood replied to him. "O you beloved fish," continued he (as whole troops of red-spotted trout swam to the shore and appeared to gape at the young stranger), "you beloved fish! say to your mistress, that her brother tarries on the shore to see her." He crumbled all the fragments which he found still in his pockets, and threw them into the pond, to entice the fish that they might carry a message from him to his sister; but the trout snapped greedily for the crumbs, without troubling themselves any further about their benefactor. Reinald saw well that nothing was to be attained by his fish-homily, so he sought to conduct his undertaking in another manner. As an active knight, he was well skilled in all bodily exercises, and could swim like a

water-rat; therefore he quickly took his resolution, disencumbered himself of his armour, took no weapon but his naked sword in his hand, and sprang in his doublet of fire-coloured satin (for he did not find a boat as his father had previously done) courageously into the water, to seek out his brother-in-law, Behemoth. "He will not," thought he, "gobble me up at once, but will listen to a word of reason, as he did with my father." Therefore he struck out lustily among the waves, and dashed about in the blue waters, in the middle of the pond, hoping to decoy the monster to the surface.

As long as his strength permitted him, he followed boldly the watery path without encountering any adventure; when, however, he began to tire, he looked towards the shore, and saw, at a short distance, a thin vapour ascending, which appeared to issue from behind a lofty piece of ice. He swam with all his strength to behold this appearance more closely, and found, standing forth above the water, a column of rock crystal, which appeared to be hollow, as out of it arose a heart-rejoicing odour, ascending in little clouds of steam, which the current of air flung back on the water. The daring swimmer imagined that this might well be the chimney of the subterranean dwelling of his sister. He ventured also to slip into it, and his expectations did not deceive him. The chimney led undoubtedly into the flue of the sleeping-apartment of the lovely Bertha, who was then occupied, in the most enchanting morning costume, in preparing her chocolate over a small fire of red sandal-wood. When the lady perceived the rustling in the chimney, and suddenly saw the figure of a man emerging from the chimney, her spirits were so much disturbed at this unexpected visit, that she overturned the chocolate-pot in her fright, and fell back fainting in her arm-chair. Reinald shook her till she came to herself, and, as soon as she had recovered herself a little, she said in a feeble voice, "Unhappy man, whoever thou mayest be, how darest thou venture to enter this subterranean dwelling? knowest thou not that this temerity brings thee to unavoidable death?"—"Fear nothing, my love," said the knight, "I am thy brother Reinald, named the Wonder Child, who neither fears danger nor death in seeking out his beloved sister, and breaking the bands of the enchantment which enchains her." Bertha embraced her brother tenderly, but her slender person trembled with fear.

Ufo the Dolphin, her husband, had likewise, at times, sought the court of his father-in-law in the strictest incognito, and had lately learned that Reinald had departed to seek out his sisters. This daring project of the young man he had often lamented. "If," said he, "brother-in-law Bear does not eat him, nor brother-in-law Eagle peck out his eyes, brother-in-law Dolphin will certainly gobble him up. I fear that, in a fit of brute rage, I may not have power to resist the impulse to eat him, and even if thou, beloved, shouldst embrace him with thy tender

arms for protection, I should destroy the crystal dwelling, so that the entering waters would drown thee, and I should bury him in my whale-like stomach, since at the time of transformation thou knowest that our dwelling is inaccessible to every stranger.

All this the lovely Bertha concealed not from her brother. He however answered, "Canst thou not conceal me from the eyes of the monster as thy sisters did, that I may remain here till the charm disappears?"—"Ah!" replied she, "how could I conceal thee? seest thou not that this dwelling is of crystal, and that all the walls are as transparent as a glass-house?"—"There must yet be somewhere an opaque corner in the house," replied Ronald, "or art thou the only German wife who has not the power to deceive the eyes of her husband?" The lovely Bertha was quite inexperienced in this art, she thought and thought, at length the wood-room came happily into her head, wherein she could conceal her brother. He received the proposal without making any objection, arranged the wood in the transparent chamber as artfully as a beaver constructs his subterraneous dwelling, and concealed himself in it to the best of his power. The lady hastened immediately to her toilet-table, made herself look as charming as possible, put on one of her prettiest dresses, which set off her slim figure, went into the audience-chamber, awaiting the visit of Ufo the Dolphin, and stood there as lovely as one of the three graces in the imagination of a poet. Ufo the Dolphin could not otherwise enjoy the society of his amiable lady, than by daily paying her a visit, gazing on her form without through the glass-house, and thus feeding on the sight of her loveliness.

Scarcely had the virtuous Bertha entered her audience-chamber when the monstrous fish came swimming towards it, the water soon began to foam in the distance, and the waves curled in a vortex around the crystal palace.

The sea-monster stood without before the chamber, spouted forth streams of water, imbibing them previously in his wide jaws, and gazed with his sea-green eyes, silently and vacantly on the lovely lady. The more the good lady endeavoured to assume an air of unconcern, the less was it in her power; all cunning and dissimulation was foreign to her, her heart quaked and was dismayed, her bosom rose high and quickly, her cheeks and lips glowed and suddenly grew pale. The dolphin, notwithstanding his dull fish nature, had yet sufficient acquaintance with physiognomy to suspect something from these signs,—made horrible grimaces, and darted forth like an arrow. He circumnavigated the palace in innumerable whirls, and made such confusion in the waters that the crystal dwelling shook, and the affrighted Bertha expected every moment that he would dash it in pieces. The watchful dolphin could meanwhile discover nothing, in this rigid examination, which might strengthen his suspicions, therefore he became suddenly more peaceable, and luckily he had

in his wrath so troubled the water, that he could not see in what a state the timid Bertha was. He swam away, the lady recovered from her fright, Reinald concealed himself peacefully and tranquilly in the wood-cellar, till the time of transformation should arrive; and although according to all appearances brother-in-law Dolphin did not let all suspicion sleep, for he never forgot in his daily visits to swim three times around the house, and to peep through every corner of the crystal palace, yet he did not behave so furiously as the first time. The hour of transformation at length freed the patient prisoner from the wood-house.

One day, when he awoke, he found himself in a kingly palace, on a small island. Buildings, pleasure-gardens, market-places,—all appeared to swim on the water; hundreds of gondolas plied up and down the canals, and all lived and moved in the public places in pleasant occupation; in short, the palace of brother-in-law Dolphin was a little Venice. The reception of the young knight was here quite as friendly and hearty as with the two other brothers-in-law. Ufo the Dolphin was enchanted by months; the seventh was always the rest-month of the enchantment; from one full moon to another all prospered in its natural form. Since Reinald's sojourn here extended longer, he became also better acquainted with brother-in-law Ufo, and lived on terms of greater intimacy with him than with the others. His curiosity had long troubled him to learn through what fate the three princes had been placed in the unnatural state of enchantment; he inquired diligently on the subject of his sister Bertha, but she could give him no information, and Ufo observed on this point a taciturn silence. Reinald thus learned not what he wished. Meanwhile, the days of joy hurried away on the wings of the wind; the moon lost her silver horns, and rounded her form more every day.

In a sentimental evening promenade, Ufo explained to his brother-in-law Reinald that the hour of separation was but a few hours distant, and exhorted him to return to his parents, who lived in great anxiety on his account; his mother was quite inconsolable since it was known at the court that he was not gone to Flanders, but to seek adventures in the enchanted wood. Reinald asked if the forest yet contained many, and learned there was but one remaining, of which he was already informed,—namely, to seek the prize of the key to the enchantment, and to destroy the mysterious talisman; as long as this worked, no deliverance could be hoped for the princes. "But," added Ufo the Dolphin, in a friendly manner, "follow good counsel, young man; be thankful to Heaven, as well as the protection of the ladies your sisters, that you are not the sacrifice of your brave undertaking to penetrate the enchanted wood. Let the glory which you have acquired suffice you; depart, and carry news to your parents of what you have heard and seen, and, through your return, restore

your good mother from the brink of the grave, to which grief and sorrow, on your account, have brought her." Reinald promised what brother-in-law Ufo desired, with a reservation to do what he liked best; for the sons of nobles, when they are grown beyond their mother's discipline, and are become tall, and strong, and mount proud coursers, trouble themselves but little about the tears of their affectionate mothers. Ufo soon perceived on what the thoughts of the young man were fixed; for this reason, he drew forth his pocket-book, and took out of it three fish's scales, made him a present of them, and said, "If at any time you are in need of help, rub them between your hands; they will instantly become warm, and await the result." Reinald entered a handsomely-gilded gondola, and was rowed to the land by two gondoliers. Scarcely was he on the shore, when the gondola, the castle, the gardens, and the market-places, disappeared, and nothing remained of all the splendour but a large fish-pond, surrounded by high sedges, through which a cool morning zephyr played. The knight found himself again at the spot where, three moons previously, he had boldly plunged into the water; his shield and armour lay yet on the ground, and his spear was planted near, just as he had left them. However, he permitted himself no rest until the key to the enchantment should be found.

CHAPTER III.

Reinald now pursued his pathless way towards the interior of the wood. He penetrated for seven days, without fear or anxiety, the endless wilderness, and slept seven nights under the free air of heaven, so that his weapons rusted with the night-dew. On the eighth day he ascended a pinnacle of rock, from which, as from S. Gotthard, he looked down on inhospitable valleys. On one side opened a valley, covered with green vinca, and surrounded with high granite rocks, overgrown with hemlocks and mournful cypresses. In the distance, it appeared to him as if he saw a monument erected. Two marble pillars, of colossal height, with brazen tops and feet, supported a Doric roof, which rested against a wall of rock, and overhung an iron door, well provided with strong bolts and bars, and, for still greater security, with a padlock as big as a bushel. Not far from the portal, a black bull was feeding in the grass, and looking about with sparkling fiery eyes, as if appointed to guard the approach.

Reinald doubted not that he had found the adventure of which his brother-in-law Ufo had warned him; and immediately he resolved to undertake it, and slipped gently down from the rock into the valley. He approached within bow-shot of the beast

before it appeared to notice him; but it now sprang up suddenly, and ran savagely hither and thither, as if preparing for combat with the knight. Like an Andalusian bull, he snorted on the ground and raised clouds of dust; stamped with his feet till the ground shook, and struck with his horns against the rocks, so that they fell off in splinters.

The knight placed himself in an attitude of defence, and as the bull ran against him, he avoided the powerful horns by a dexterous turn, and struck so powerful a blow with his sword on the neck of the monster, that he expected to sever the head from the body, like the brave Scandenberg. Oh! consternation! the neck of the bull was invulnerable to steel and iron: the sword broke into pieces, and the knight retained only the hilt in his hand. He had nothing remaining for his defence, but a lance of maple-wood, with a double head of steel; but this also shivered at the second thrust, like a weak straw. The goring ox seized the weaponless young man with his horns, and tossed him high in the air like a light shuttlecock, waiting to seize him again, or to crush him under his feet. By good luck he fell between the outspread branches of a wild pear-tree, which benevolently embraced him. Although all the ribs in his body appeared to crack, yet he retained sufficient recollection to cling tightly to the tree; but the raging ox butted with his brazen brow so powerfully against the stem, that it became unrooted, and bent towards its fall.

In the interval, as the murderous beast turned himself to take a run, in order to renew his powerful thrust, Reinald thought of the gifts of his brothers-in-law. Chance brought the paper with the three bear's hairs first to hand; he rubbed them with all his strength, and instantly there trotted forth a frightful bear, which began a severe fight with the ox. The bear soon overcame him, strangled him, and tore him to pieces. When the hollow stomach was opened, there issued from it a frightful drake, which flew away with horrid cries. Reinald perceived that this enchanter mocked the victory which the bear had obtained, and thus took away the advantage of it; he, therefore, seized immediately the three feathers, and rubbed them between his hands. Thereupon appeared a powerful eagle, high in the air, before which the faint-hearted drake squeezed himself into the bushes. The eagle hovered at an immeasurable height above him; while the knight remarked, that he roused him and pursued him, till the wood became opener; and when he could no longer conceal himself, he flew up, and directed his course straight to the pond. The eagle, however, pounced down from the clouds, seized and lacerated him with his powerful talons. In dying, he let a golden egg fall into the pond. The watchful Reinald knew how to meet this new deception: he suddenly rubbed the fish's scales between his hands—there arose a whale out of the water, which seized the egg in his wide jaws, and spit it out upon the land. The knight

was heartily rejoiced at this, and delayed not to break the golden egg in two, with a stone. A little key fell out, which he recognised triumphantly, as the key to the enchantment. Swiftly he now hastened back to the iron door; the tiny key did not appear to be made for the gigantic padlock, yet he would make an attempt with it; but scarcely did the key touch the lock when it sprang open—the heavy iron bolts pushed themselves back, and the steel door opened of its own accord. With a cheerful mind he descended into a gloomy grotto, in which seven doors led into seven different subterranean chambers, all splendidly embellished and magnificently lighted up with tall candles. Reinald traversed one after another, and entered, from the last, a cabinet, where he perceived a young lady, who reposed on a sofa in an unawakable magic slumber.

After the knight Reinald had recovered from his first astonishment, he looked a little round the chamber, and saw near the sleeping lady an alabaster table covered with wonderful characters. He presumed that the talisman was engraved thereon, which held all the enchantments of the wood in their strength. From mere indignation he closed his fist armed with the iron gauntlet, and struck it with vigour. Immediately the lovely sleeper shrank with horror, awoke, gave one fearful look at the table, and fell back in her confused slumber. Reinald repeated the blow, and all happened as before. Now he resolved to destroy the talisman; but he had neither sword nor spear—nothing but two vigorous arms. With these he seized the magic table, and flung it from its high pedestal down upon the marble pavement, so that it broke to pieces. Suddenly the young lady woke again from her deadly slumber, and now, for the first time, on her third awakening, she perceived the presence of the young knight, who respectfully and courteously fell on one knee before her; yet, before he began to speak, she concealed her lovely face with her veil, and said, quite scornfully, "Away from me, shameful sorcerer! even in the form of the most beautiful youth thou shalt neither deceive my eyes, nor impose upon my heart. Thou knowest my determination, leave me to my deadly sleep, to which thy magic has reduced me."

Reinald perceived the error of the lady, therefore he allowed not this speech to astonish him, but replied, "Amiable lady, be not wroth, I am not the dreaded sorcerer who holds you here a prisoner; but I am Count Reinald, called the Wonder Child; see here the enchantment destroyed which held your senses enchained." The lady peeped a little forth from under her veil, and when she saw the alabaster table destroyed, she marvelled at the daring deed of the young adventurer—looked kindly on him, and appeared pleased with him. She raised him in a friendly manner; and in offering him her hand she said, "Is it as you say, noble knight? then fulfil your work, and lead me out of this horrible

cave, that I may behold the brightness of God's sun, if it is now day, or the golden stars in the nightly heavens." Reinald offered her his arm to conduct her through the seven splendid apartments through which he had entered. He opened the door, but without was Egyptian darkness, that could be felt as in the beginning of the creation, before the electric ray of light was kindled. All the tapers were extinguished, and the crystal chandeliers shed no more their soft light down from the high dome of the basaltic vault. The noble pair groped long in the dark before they could find their way out of these intricate labyrinths, and saw the daylight glimmering through the distant mouth of an ill-shaped cavern. The disenchanted lady felt the quickening balsamic power of all-invigorating nature, and breathed with delight the fragrance of the flowers which the warm zephyrs wafted to her over the blooming meadows. She sat down with the gentle knight on the grass, and he kindled with warm love for her, for she was lovely and beautiful as one of the Graces. Yet another passion tortured him almost more, and that was, the curiosity to learn who the lovely incognita was, and how she had been enchanted in the wood. He begged her, courteously, to answer his questions, and the lady opened her rosy mouth, and spoke:—

"I am Hildegard, the daughter of Radbod, prince of Pomerania Zornebock. The prince of Sorbia demanded me of my father in marriage, but, as he was a frightful giant and a heathen—besides that it was whispered he dealt much in black arts—he was rejected on the plea of my tender youth. Thereupon the pagan became so furious, that he made war on my good father, killed him in combat, and took possession of his territories. I had fled to my father's sister, the Countess of Vohburg, and my three brothers, all stately knights, were at that time out of the land, on their knightly travels. My abode could not remain concealed from the enchanter, and, as soon as he had possession of my father's lands, he resolved to carry me away; and, by means of his magic skill, this was easy to him. My uncle, the Count, was a lover of the chase, I was accustomed often to accompany him, and all the knights of his court contended, on such occasions, to present me with the finest-moulded horse. One day an unknown equerry approached me with a noble white courser, and begged me, in the name of his lord, to mount the horse, and to condescend to receive it for my own. I inquired the name of his master, he excused himself from answering this question till I should have tried the horse, and on returning from the chase should have declared that I did not disdain the gift. I could not well reject this proposal; besides, the horse was so beautfully moulded that he drew on himself the eyes of the whole court; gold and precious stones, and splendid embroidery, were lavished on the purple saddle-cloth; a red silk bridle ran from the bit around the neck;

bit and stirrups were of beaten gold, thickly set with rubies. I sprang into the saddle, and had the vanity to be pleased with myself in the cavalcade. The movement of the noble horse was so easy and light, that he scarcely seemed to touch the ground with his hoof. Lightly he leaped ditches and hedges, and the most daring riders were unable to follow him. A white hart, which started near me in the chase, and which I pursued, led me far into the wood, and separated me from the followers of the hunt. In order not to lose myself, I left the stag, to return to the place of meeting; but the horse refused to obey me, pranced, shook his mane, and became restive. I sought to soothe him, but immediately perceived with horror that the white courser under me had changed into a feathered monster; the fore-feet changed themselves into a pair of wings, the neck lengthened, a broad bill extended in front of the head; I saw under me a long-legged hippogriff, which took a spring with me into the air, and, in less than an hour, transported me into this wood, where he alighted before the iron gates of an old castle.

"My first horror, from which I have not even yet recovered, increased, when I perceived the equerry who had, in the morning, presented me with the white courser, and who now approached respectfully to help me from the saddle. Stupified with horror and fear, I allowed myself to be conducted in silence through a suite of state apartments, to a company of ladies in full dress, who received me as their mistress, and awaited my commands. All exerted themselves to wait upon me in the best manner, but no one would tell me where, and in whose power I was. I abandoned myself to a silent melancholy, which was interrupted in a few moments by Zornebock, the enchanter, who, in the form of a yellow gipsy, lay at my feet and implored my affections. I treated him as my heart prompted me to treat the murderer of my father. The barbarian was furious at his rejection; fierce passions raged in his breast: I struggled with despair, defied his rage, and bid him fulfil his menace to destroy the palace and bury me under the ruins; but the sorcerer soon quitted me, and gave me, as he said, time to reflect.

"At the end of a week he renewed his hated proposal; I spurned him from me with contempt; and he hastened, storming, out of the chamber. Soon after, the ground trembled under my feet, and the castle appeared to be precipitated into an abyss. I sank down on my sofa, and my senses left me. From this death-like slumber the terrible voice of the enchanter roused me: 'Awake,' said he, 'beloved sleeper, from thy seven years' slumber, and tell me if beneficent time has lessened thy hatred for thy true paladin. Rejoice my heart with the least ray of hope, and this melancholy grotto shall change into the temple of joy.' I deigned to the shameful enchanter neither answer nor look, covered my face with my veil, and wept. My sorrow appeared to move him; he

begged, he prayed, he moaned aloud, and flung himself, like a worm, at my feet. At length his patience became exhausted; he sprang up suddenly, and said, 'Well, then, so let it be; in seven years we will speak together again!' Thereupon he lifted the alabaster table on the pedestal; immediately an irresistible sleep fell on my eyelids, until the wretch again interrupted my repose. 'Unfeeling one!' said he to me, 'if thou art still so savage against me, at least be not so against thy three brothers. My faithless equerry has discovered to them thy fate; but the traitor is punished. These unhappy men came with powerful armies to wrest thee out of my hand; but my power was too great for them, and they deplore their rashness under different forms, in this wood.' So poor a lie, to which the sorcerer had recourse to overcome my firmness, embittered my heart yet more against him. Scorn sat on my lips, with the bitterest contempt. 'Unhappy one,' exclaimed the furious heathen, 'thy fate is decided, as long as the invisible powers obey this talisman!' Immediately he pushed the magic alabaster table straight, and the magic sleep deprived me of life and feeling. You have, noble knight, awakened me from this deathlike slumber, through the destruction of the talisman. Yet I comprehend not through what power you have been able to perform the deed, and what can restrain the magician from opposing you. Zornebock can no longer be alive, otherwise you would not have laid hold of his talisman unpunished."

When the lovely Hildegard ceased to speak Reinald took up the narration, and related to her his adventures. When he spoke to her of the three enchanted princes in the wood, who were his brothers-in-law, she was seized with great astonishment, for she now perceived that the tale of Zornebock was no lie, but truth. The knight was in the act of ending his history, when there arose amid the mountains great cries of joy and triumph. Soon after, three cavalcades of riders burst forth from the forest, at the head of which Hildegard recognised her brothers and Reinald his sisters. The enchantment of the forest was now dissolved. After mutual caresses and endearments, the whole party of the disenchanted quitted the horrible wilderness, and set out for the old forest castle. Expresses flew to the residence of the Count to announce the glad tidings of the return of his children. The court was then in deep mourning for the loss of Reinald, whom they wept as dead; his parents believed that the enchanted forest had enclosed him for ever. The afflicted mother had no more consolation on earth; and they were even then in the act of celebrating Reinald's obsequies. But the juggling Ricolini could not, formerly, more quickly transform his pantomimic theatre, than all things in the residence of the Count changed their form at this joyful news; all now breathed again life and joy.

In a few days the worthy parents had the delight of embracing their children and grandchildren.

Among all the festivities of this happy return, the celebration of Reinald's marriage with the lovely Hildegard was the most brilliant. A whole year passed in every variety of joy and delight.

At length the princes bethought themselves that a too long enjoyment of pleasure might deaden the manly courage and the prowess of their knights and squires; the residence of the Count was also too small to contain conveniently so many households; the three sons-in-law prepared, therefore, with their ladies, for departure. Reinald, the Wonder Child, never left his hoary parents again, but closed their eyes, like a pious son. Albert the Bear purchased the territory of Ascania, and founded the town of Bern; Edgar the Eagle entered the land of Helvetia, under the shadow of the Alps, and built Aarburg, on a nameless river, which, however, was afterwards called from the town through which it runs. Ufo the Dolphin made an incursion into Burgundy, possessed himself of a portion of that kingdom, and named the conquered province Dauphiny. And as the three princes, in naming their towns and dynasties, made allusion to their enchantment, so they also took their brute forms in the time of enchantment, as the symbol of their arms;—thence comes it that Bern has a bear with a golden crown, Aarburg an eagle, and Dauphiny a sea-fish, in their escutcheons, to this day. And the costly pearls which on gala-days adorn the Olympus of the assembled goddesses of the earth, in our part of the world, are the store from the pond in the enchanted forest, and which formerly were contained in three linen sacks.

RICHILDA.

RICHILDA, the beautiful daughter of Gunderich, Count of Brabant, was an only child; and at her birth, great feasts and rejoicings were held, and persons from all parts were present and partook of the entertainments. Among others, a famous philosopher, by name Albert, was present, and took much interest in the little stranger. When he was about to take his departure the Countess begged of him a token of remembrance for her daughter.

Albert struck his forehead and said, "You remind me well, noble Lady, that I have omitted to present your little one with a gift; but let me alone a little, and tell me at what hour the baby was born." Then he shut himself up for nine days in a solitary apartment, that he might produce a curious performance, by which the little Richilda might remember him. When this skilful person had concluded his work, and observed that it had succeeded well, he brought it in secret to the Countess, and disclosed to her all the virtues and secret effects of his work, and how it was to be made use of; and desired her to teach her daughter when she grew up, its use and profit; he then took a friendly farewell and rode off. The Countess, overjoyed at this gift, took the magic secret, and concealed it in the drawer, where she kept her jewels. The Count soon after died, and it was not long before his good Countess followed him; and as she observed her latter hour approaching, she called her daughter aside, bade her dry her tears, and thus spoke her farewell: "I leave thee, beloved Richilda, at a time when motherly assistance is most needful to thee; but grieve not! the loss of a good mother shall be compensated to thee by a faithful friend and counsellor, who, if thou art wise and prudent, will guide thy steps. In the drawer, where my jewels are kept, is to be found a wonderful secret, which thou shalt receive after my decease. A highly learned philosopher, who sympathized greatly in the joy at thy birth, has composed it under a certain constellation, and confided it to me, to teach thee the use of it. This master-work is a metallic mirror set in a frame of solid gold. It has, as is evident, the properties of a common mirror, faithfully to give back all the figures which it receives. But for thee it also possesses this gift; all that thou askest it will

disclose in clear and living forms, as soon as thou hast uttered the words. But, take care not to ask counsel of it out of mere curiosity, or to please thy vanity; nor thoughtlessly demand of it the future fate of thy life. Guard this wonderful mirror as a friend worthy of regard, whom one would be afraid of tiring with useless questions, but in whom one would always find a faithful counsellor, in the most important affairs of life. Therefore, be wise and cautious in its use, and walk in the ways of piety and virtue; then the polished mirror will not be clouded before thy face, by the poisoned breath of vice. When the dying mother had ended her swan's song, she embraced the lamenting Richilda, and expired.

The maiden felt deep in her heart the loss of her tender mother, clothed herself in mourning, and passed one of the most beautiful years of life in weeping, between the walls of a narrow convent, in the society of the worthy Canoness and the pious sisterhood, without once examining the temporal property of her mother, or looking into the secret mirror. By degrees, time softened this childish feeling of sorrow, her tears ceased, and as the maiden's heart could find no more occupation in the overflow of sorrow, she felt herself oppressed by weariness in her lonely cell. She often sought the audience-chamber, and found great pleasure in chatting with the friends and kinsmen of the nuns; and the latter were so eager to see the innocent novice, that they pressed in troops to the grating, whenever the beautiful Richilda was in the audience-chamber. There were many stately knights among them, who made fine speeches to the unveiled boarder, and in these flatteries laid the first seeds of vanity, which here fell on no unfertile soil, but soon took root, and grew up. Richilda thought that she would be better outside in the open air, than in the cage behind the iron lattice; she hastily forsook the cloister; fixed the place of her court; appointed, for propriety, a matron as a guardian, and entered with much splendour into the great world.

The fame of her beauty and modesty spread itself towards the four winds of Heaven. Many princes and counts came from distant lands to make their court to her. The Tagus, the Seine, the Po, the Thames, and father Rhine, sent their heroic sons to Brabant, to do homage to the beautiful Richilda. Her palace seemed to be a fairy's castle; strangers enjoyed there the best reception, and failed not to requite the politeness of the charming possessor with the finest flatteries. No day passed in which the tilting course was not occupied by some well-armed knights, who caused their challenges to be proclaimed by their kings-at-arms, in the market-place and corner houses of the city; whoever would not acknowledge the Countess of Brabant as the most beautiful woman among her contemporaries, or ventured to maintain the contrary, was challenged to appear in the lists, and support his

assertion with weapons, against the champion of the beautiful Richilda. Usually no one replied to this; or if they wished to fight on a festival-day, and any knight allowed himself to be persuaded to accept the challenge, and to dispute the prize for the beauty of the lady of his heart, it only ended in show; the politeness of the knights never permitted them to throw the Countess' champion from the saddle; they broke their lances, acknowledged themselves defeated, and the prize of beauty was awarded to the fair Richilda; an offering which the Countess always received with ladylike modesty.

As yet she had never asked anything of her magic mirror; she only used it as a common looking-glass, to examine her headdress, and to see if her tirewoman had put it on becomingly. She had not hitherto allowed herself to put any question, either because no critical circumstance had yet happened, which required a counsellor; or because she was too timid, and feared that her question might be impertinent and silly, and thereby the polished mirror become clouded. The voice of flattery, however, constantly increased her vanity, and produced in her heart the wish to be indeed, what report daily sounded loudly in her ears, she was. To a blooming and accomplished maiden, the question of her pleasing or disagreeable form is as weighty a problem, as that of the four last things to an orthodox preacher. Therefore it was not to be wondered at, that the beautiful Richilda desired information on a matter so interesting to her; and from whom could she expect such secure and indubitable information, as from her incorruptible friend the mirror? After some reflection, she found this inquiry so just and reasonable, that she hesitated not to use her proper authority. She shut herself up one day in her room, stood before the magic mirror, and repeated this speech:—

> "Mirror shining, mirror bright,
> Golden mirror on the wall,
> Within the land of wide Brabant,
> Show me the fairest maid of all."

Quickly she drew back the curtain, looked on the wall, and saw with delight her own figure, which the mirror had so often shown her unasked. Then her soul was highly rejoiced, her cheeks coloured deeper and her eyes sparkled with glee; but, alas, her heart was hard, proud, and arrogant, as the heart of Queen Vashti.

The praises of her pleasing form, which she had before received with modesty and soft blushes, she now demanded as a tribute; she looked down on all the maidens of the land with pride and arrogance, and if sometimes their beauty was praised, it went to her heart, and she pursed up her mouth, and fell into a bad humour. The courtiers, who soon discovered their mistress's weakness, flattered and dissembled shamelessly, calumniated the whole world of women, and declared that no lady beside their mistress was worth a doit in regard to beauty. Even the famed beauties

of former ages, who bloomed many hundred years ago, were not spared, and were most unjustly and severely criticised.

The beautiful Richilda was acknowledged in her court as the only and highest image of womanly beauty, and because by the testimony of the magic mirror she was indeed the most beautiful woman in Brabant, and possessed great wealth, even many cities and castles, high-born suitors were not wanting. She counted as many of them as did formerly Dame Penelope, and wished to encourage them with sweet hope as cunningly and artfully, as in later times did the British Queen Elizabeth. All the wishes that Henry's daughter in our days used to dream;—to be admired, flattered, adored, to stand foremost in the ranks of her companions, and to shine above all, like the lovely moon among the little stars; to have a circle of admirers and worshippers around her, who were ready, according to the old fashions, to offer up their life for their lady, in the lists, to seek adventures at her command, and to conquer giants and dwarfs for her,—or, according to modern usage, to weep, to moan, to look up mournfully at the moon, to rave, to throw themselves from precipices, to rush into water, &c. &c.;—all these dreams of giddy maidens took place in reality at the Countess Richilda's. Her charms had cost many young knights their lives, and the enthusiasm of secret love had reduced many unhappy princes to mere skin and bone. The cruel beauty was secretly delighted at these victims, whom her vanity daily slew, and the torments of these unfortunates pleased her more than the soft feelings of happy and virtuous love: her heart had till now only been sensible of a slight impression of a superficial passion; she did not properly know to what this belonged; each sighing Damon stood before her, but according to the rules of hospitality, usually not longer than three days. When a new comer took possession, the former inhabitant of her heart was coldly dismissed. The Counts of Artois, of Flanders, of Hennegan, of Namur, of Gelder, of Gröningen, in short, all the seventeen Counts of the Netherlands (with some exceptions, of those who were already married, or who were quite grey-headed) courted the heart of the beautiful Richilda and desired her for a wife.

The wise Aja found that her young mistress could not long continue such coquetry: her good reputation seemed to diminish, and it was to be feared that the deceived suitors would revenge their insult on the beautiful prude. She therefore represented this to Richilda, and extorted from her a promise to choose a husband within three days. At this resolution, which was soon made openly known in the court, all the wooers were greatly rejoiced. Each candidate hoped the chance of love would favour him; they agreed together to sanction the choice (whoever was favoured with it), and to maintain it with united hands.

The strict Aja, by her well-intentioned importunity, had only

succeeded in giving to the beautiful Richilda, three sleepless nights; without the maiden,—when the third morning dawned,—being nearer to her choice than in the first hour. She had, within the term of three days, unceasingly mused on her list of wooers, examined, compared, separated, selected, rejected, selected again, again rejected, and ten times made her choice and ten times altered her mind; and by all these thoughts and meditations she got nothing but a pale countenance, and a pair of melancholy eyes. In affairs of the heart, the understanding is always a poor prattler, who, with its cold reasonings, as little warms the heart as a stove without a fire heats a room. The maiden's heart took no part in the deliberation, and refused its assent to all the motions of the speakers in the upper house, the head; therefore no choice could stand good. With great attention she weighed the birth, merits, possessions, and honour of her suitors; but none of these honourable qualities interested her, and her heart was silent. As soon as she took into consideration the pleasing forms of her wooers, it gave a soft accord. Human nature has not altered a hair's breadth in the half thousand years which have elapsed from the time of the beautiful Richilda to ours. Give a maiden of the eighteenth or of the thirteenth century a wise, clever man, in a word a Socrates, for a lover; place beside him a handsome man, an Adonis, Ganymede, or Endymion, and give her the choice; you may lay a hundred to one, that she will turn coldly away from the former, and foolishly choose one of the latter. Just so the beautiful Richilda! Among her lovers were many handsome men; it then remained to choose the handsomest; time slipped away in these consultations, the court assembled in the drawing-room, the Counts and noble Knights came in full dress, awaiting with beating of heart the determination of their fate.

The maiden found herself in no little embarrassment; her heart refused (notwithstanding the sacredness of her promise) to decide. At last she thought there must be a path out of the wood; she sprang hastily from her sofa, stood before the mirror, and asked it—

> "Mirror shining, mirror bright,
> Golden mirror on the wall,
> Within the land of wide Brabant,
> Show me the finest knight of all."

This question was not of the best, that is of the most virtuous, the most noble and faithful man, but only of the handsomest. The mirror answered as it had been asked; as she drew back the silken curtain, there was presented to her view, on the surface as smooth as water, the figure of a stately knight, in full armour, but without his helmet. His hair waved in chestnut-coloured locks from the top of his head; his small and thick eyebrows imitated the form of the rainbow; in his fiery eyes shone boldness and heroic courage, his cheeks, tinged with manly brown and red,

glowed with warmth and health. As soon as the maiden looked on this noble knight, all the sleeping feelings of love were awakened in her soul; she drank from his eyes delight and rapture, and took a solemn vow, to give her hand to no other man. Now great wonder seized her, that the figure of this handsome knight should be quite unknown and strange to her; she had never seen him at her court, although there was not a young cavalier in Brabant who had not sought her. She therefore carefully inspected the marks of his armour and livery, stood a whole hour before the mirror, without turning her eyes from the attractive form which she looked at in it; every feature, the whole attitude, and the least peculiarity, which she observed, were fixed in her memory.

In the mean time, the suitors became impatient in the antechamber; the ayah and the maiden's attendants waited till their mistress should come forth from her chamber. The maiden at last unwillingly drew down the curtain, opened the door, and when she saw the ayah, she embraced the worthy dame, and said with loving demeanour, "I have found him, the man of my heart;—congratulate me, your loved one,—the handsomest man in Brabant is mine! The holy Bishop Medardus, my patron, has appeared to me in a dream, and has shown me this husband, appointed for me by Heaven." This falsehood the cunning Richilda invented; for she would not disclose the secret of the magic mirror, and beside her, no mortal knew it. The governess, highly rejoiced at the resolution of her young mistress, eagerly asked who the happy prince was, chosen by Heaven to lead home the beautiful bride. All the noble maidens of the court pricked up their ears; they soon turned over in their minds this and that valiant knight, and one might be heard whispering, somewhat loudly, in the ear of another, the name of the intended husband. But the beautiful Richilda, when she had somewhat recovered her spirits, opened her mouth and said, "It is not in my power to inform you of my betrothed's name, nor to say where he dwells; he is not among the princes and nobles of my court, nor have I ever seen him; but his form is imprinted on my soul, and when he comes to lead me home, I will not refuse him.

At this speech, the wise ayah and all the ladies wondered not a little; they supposed that the maiden had contrived this invention, to evade the necessary choice of a husband; but she persisted in her resolution, to have no other spouse forced on her, than he to whom the Bishop Medardus had married her in her dream. The knights had, during this controversy, waited long in the antechamber, and would now be admitted to learn their fate. The beautiful Richilda stepped forward, made a speech with much dignity and courtesy, and concluded thus: "Suppose not, noble lords, that I speak to you with deceitful words; I will inform you of the figure and form of the unknown knight,—in case any one can

give me notice who he is, and where he may be found." Hereupon she described the figure, from top to toe, and added;—"His armour is golden, painted with azure; on his shield is a black lion in silver, on a field strewn with red hearts; and the livery of his sash and sword-belt is the colour of the morning dawn, peach-blossom and orange.

When she was silent, the Count of Brabant, heir of her lands, took up the word and said, "We are not here, beloved cousin, to contend with you; you have the power and will to do what you please; it is enough for us to know your intention honourably to dismiss us, and not further to deceive us with false hopes; for this we pay you just thanks. But what relates to the noble knight, whom you have seen in a dream, and of whom you fancy that he is intended by Heaven for your husband, I may not conceal from you. He is well known to me, and is my vassal; for by your description of the marks of his armour and livery, he can be no other than Count Gombald of the Lion; but he is already married, and, therefore, cannot be yours."

At these words the Countess grew so faint, that she thought she should have fallen down; she had not supposed that her mirror would play her this trick, and show her a man whose lawful love she could not share; also, she could not bear that the handsomest man in Brabant should wear any fetters but hers. Still the Countess asserted that her dream might, perhaps, have a concealed interpretation; at least, it seemed to indicate that she should not give her hand, at present, in any contract of marriage. The wooers all left together, some went this way, some that, and the Countess's court was at once solitary and desolate.

Hundred-tongued fame, in the meanwhile, spread the strange news of the wonderful dream in every highway; and it came to the ears of Count Gombald himself. This count was a son of Theobald, called the Brother-heart, because he was attached to his younger brother, Botho, with such sincere love, that he lived with him in constant concord, and allowed to his posterity all the prerogatives and possessions of a first-born. Both brothers dwelt together in one castle; their wives loved each other like sisters, and, because the elder brother had only one son, and the younger a daughter, the parents thought to bequeath their friendship to their children, and betrothed them in the cradle. The young pair were educated together, and as death early divided these heirs from the side of their parents, they found it written in their parents' last will, that no other choice remained to them but to marry. For three years they had been married, and lived after the example of their peaceful parents, in a happy marriage, when Count Gombald heard of the wonderful dream of the beautiful Richilda. Fame, which exaggerates everything, added, that she loved him so passionately, that she had taken a vow to go into

the cloister, because she could not share his affections. Count Gombald had, until now, known the quiet joys of domestic happiness in a peaceful family, and with a wife worthy of his love. But, suddenly, strange desires arose in his heart; quiet and content disappeared from it; it produced in him foolish wishes, which he secretly nourished, in the sinful hope that death might, perhaps, relieve him of his wife, and set him at liberty.

In a short time, the image of the beautiful Richilda changed a once good and virtuous man, and made him capable of every vice. Wherever he went, the form of the Countess of Brabant hovered before his eyes; it flattered his pride to be the only man who had moved this proud beauty; and these heated fantasies painted the possession of her in such high colours, that his wife was thrown quite into the shade; he lost all love and affection for her, and only wished to be free from her. She soon perceived the coldness of her lord, and, in consequence, redoubled her tenderness; but she could do nothing more to please him; he was morose, sulky, and peevish; left her on every occasion, and travelled about between his castles, and in the woods, whilst the solitary one wept and moaned at home, so that it might have moved a very stone.

One day he surprised her in a fit of overwhelming sorrow: "Wife," cried he, "why dost thou weep and groan? What is this owl-screeching about, which so much displeases me, and which can be of no use either to thee or me?"—"Beloved lord," answered the gentle sufferer, "permit me my sorrow, since I have lost your love and favour, and do not know how I have deserved this dislike. If I have found grace in your sight, make known to me the cause of your displeasure, that I may see if I can amend it." Gombald found it was now time to act his part; so, taking her hand with pretended cordiality, "My good wife," said he, "you have not offended; still, I will not conceal from you what oppresses my heart, and this must not surprise you. I have scruples about our marriage; I think it is a sin which will not go unpunished, in this world or the next. We are married in a forbidden relationship, that of first cousins; which is almost a marriage between brother and sister, for which no absolution or dispensation is of any avail: this troubles my conscience night and day, and eats into my very soul."

The good lady might oppose and object as much as she pleased, to quiet her lord's conscience; it was useless trouble. "Ah! beloved husband," said she, "if you have no pity for your unhappy wife, pity our innocent babe!" A flood of bitter tears followed these words. But the iron breast of the wicked man felt not the seven-fold sorrow of his wife; he hastily left her, took his horse and rode off; bought a divorce with hard gold, and shut up his good faithful wife and her daughter in a cloister, where she grieved and mourned, until, at last, the angel of

death released her from her sufferings. The Count rode to the nunnery, took the child, put it under the charge of the superintendent of one of his castles, and gave her seven court dwarfs to wait upon her; but he armed himself magnificently, for all his thoughts and cares were to obtain the beautiful Brabantine.

With a joyful heart, he went to the court of the Countess Richilda; intoxicated with delight, he threw himself at her feet; and when she looked on the splendid man, for whom her heart had so long sighed, she felt indescribable pleasure, and from that hour swore to the knight the vow of fidelity. In the sweet passion of joy, in the choicest delights, days and years passed along, like a happy day-dream. But this luxurious pair possessed too little philosophy to comprehend that a too great enjoyment of pleasure is the tomb of pleasure, and that the relish of life, taken in too strong doses, deprives it of refined taste and of charms. Imperceptibly the sensibility of the organs for the joys of life relax, all enjoyments become monotonous, and the most refined variety will at last become tame. Only virtuous joys are lasting, and of these they knew nothing.

The Lady Richilda, according to her fickle temper, first felt this change, grew peevish, imperious, cold, and even jealous. Her lord no longer found comfort in his married state; a certain spleen pressed on his soul, the gleams of love had faded from his eyes, and his conscience, of which he had formerly made a hypocritical jest, began now to sting him in earnest. A scruple came over him for having so cruelly injured his first wife; he often thought of her with melancholy and even with affection, and, according to the saying,—"it bodes no happiness to the second marriage, when the late wife is often spoken of,"—disputes often arose between him and Lady Richilda, and he sometimes told her to her face, that she bred mischief.

"We can no longer dwell together," he said one day to his wife, after a conjugal difference;—"my conscience urges me to expiate my guilt; I will make a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, and try if I can there again find peace of heart." Richilda only faintly opposed this resolution, Count Gombald armed himself for the pilgrimage, made his will, took a lukewarm farewell, and departed.

Before a year had passed away, news came to Brabant, that the Count had died in Syria, of the plague, without having had the consolation of confessing his sins at the holy sepulchre. The Countess received these tidings with great indifference, but, nevertheless, outwardly observed the rules of good society, mourned, wept, clothed herself in mourning weeds, according to the precepts of etiquette, and caused a splendid monument to be erected to her departed lord. An old spy on men has well observed, that young widows resemble a piece of green wood, which burns at one end while water drops out of the other. The heart of the Countess

Richilda could not long remain unoccupied; her morning dress set off her charms so well, that every one pressed to see the beautiful widow. Many knight-errants came to her court to try their fortune, and to seize on the rich prize; she found worshippers and admirers in crowds; and the court flatterers were again, as regards the praise of her beauty, in full swell. This pleased the vain lady uncommonly well; but because she wished to be convinced with greater certainty that the finger of time had diminished none of her charms, during fifteen years, she took counsel of her friend the mirror, with the usual speech. A shudder of horror passed over her, as she drew back the silken curtain, and her eyes fell on a strange form, beautiful as one of the graces, an angel in woman's form, full of loveliness and sweetest innocence; but the form had no trace of resemblance to her. At first she found it difficult to believe that some misapprehension did not exist between the question and answer; but this last hope soon vanished, and vexation and bitter disappointment filled her heart.

The Lady Richilda, inconsolable at this discovery, formed a deadly hatred against the innocent beauty, who was in possession of the qualities she had arrogated to herself. She fixed the lovely Madonna face in her memory, and sought, with great eagerness, after its possessor. The discovery of this gave her little trouble, she learned very soon that, according to her description, her stepdaughter Blanche, so called from her complexion, had taken from her the prize of beauty. Satan immediately put it into her heart to destroy this charming plant, which would have been an ornament to the garden of Eden. The cruel one, with this design, called her court physician Sambul to her, gave him a preserved pomegranate, put fifteen gold pieces into his hand, and said, "Prepare this apple for me, so that one half may be quite harmless, but the other endued with deadly poison, so that whoever eats of it shall die in a few hours." The Jew joyfully stroked his beard, put the gold into his pocket, and promised to do what the wicked woman desired. He took a pointed needle, made three little holes in the pomegranate, poured into it a certain liquid; and when the Countess had received the pomegranate, she mounted her horse, and trotted, with a few attendants, to her daughter Blanche, in the solitary castle where the maiden lived. She sent a messenger on before, to give notice that the Countess Richilda was advancing, to visit the maiden, and to weep with her over her father's loss.

This message put the whole castle in an uproar. The fat duenna waddled up and down stairs, put all the brooms in motion, had everything hastily cleaned, cobwebs destroyed, the best chambers adorned, the kitchens prepared, scolded and urged the lazy servants to diligence and labour, bawled and commanded with a loud voice, like a pirate who perceives a merchantman in

the distance; but the maiden adorned herself modestly, dressed in the colour of innocence; and when she heard the trampling of horses, she flew to her mother, and received her respectfully, and with open arms. At the first glance, the Countess perceived that the maiden was seven times handsomer than the copy, which she had seen in the mirror, and withal discreet, gentle, and intelligent. This oppressed her envious heart; but the serpent concealed her viper's poison deep in her bosom, talked hypocritically with her, complained of the hard-hearted father, who, all the time that he lived, had refused her the pleasing sight of the maiden, and promised, for the future, to embrace her with a mother's love. Soon the seven little dwarfs prepared the table, and spread a lordly repast. For dessert, the superintendent placed before them the most costly fruits out of the garden. Richilda tasted them, found them not sufficiently pleasant, and asked her servants for a pomegranate, with which, as she said, she was accustomed to end each meal. The servants immediately handed it her on a silver waiter; she cut it up neatly, and begged the beautiful Blanche to take half as a token of her kind disposition towards her. As soon as the pomegranate was eaten, the mother, with her attendants, set off, and rode home. Soon after their departure, the maiden had a pain at her heart, her rosy cheeks faded, all the limbs of her tender body shook, all her nerves were convulsed, her lovely eyes grew dim, and at last slumbered in the sleep of death.

Ah! what sorrow and heart-grief arose within the walls of the palace at the death of the beautiful Blanche, who was plucked like a hundred-leaved rose, by a thievish hand, in its most beautiful bloom, because it was the ornament of the garden. The fat duenna shed torrents of tears, like a swelled sponge, which, by a hard squeeze, gives out its hidden moisture all at once. But the ingenious dwarfs prepared for her a wooden coffin with silver plates and handles, and, that they might not at once be robbed of the sight of their beloved mistress, they made a glass window to it; the servants prepared a shroud of the finest Brabant linen, wrapped the corpse up in it, put the maiden's crown, and a wreath of fresh myrtle on her head, and carried the coffin, with much sorrow, into the chapel of the castle, where father Messner performed the requiem, and the little bell tolled the mournful funeral knell, from morning till midnight.

In the mean time Lady Richilda, well pleased, reached her home. The first thing she did was to repeat her question to the mirror, and nimbly she drew back the curtain. With inward joy, and a look of triumph, she again saw her own image reflected; but on the metallic surface, great marks of rust, the plague-spots of sin, were here and there to be seen, which disfigured the clear polish as much as smallpox scars do a young lady's face. "What a pity!" thought the Countess to herself; "it is better it should happen to the mirror than to my skin; it is still useful, and has

again assured me of my property." In danger of losing a good, one commonly first learns to prize its worth. The beautiful Richilda had formerly often allowed years to pass without taking counsel of the mirror with regard to her beauty, now she let no day pass without doing so. She enjoyed, several times, the pleasure of bringing *her* figure as an offering to the idol; but one day, on drawing back the curtain,—oh! wonder upon wonder!—again there stood before her eyes in the mirror the form of the charming Blanche. At this sight, the jealous woman fell into a fainting-fit; but she quickly collected her energies, in order to investigate whether a false fancy had not deceived her; but she again received ocular demonstration.

She immediately brooded over a new wickedness. Sambul, the physician, was summoned, to whom the Countess said, in an angry tone, "Oh, thou shameful deceiver! thou rascally Jew! Dost thou despise my commands, that thou darest to mock me? Did I not command thee to prepare a pomegranate, that its enjoyment should kill, and thou hast put into it vital power and the balsam of health? Thy Jew's beard and ears shall atone to me for this." Sambul, the physician, terrified at this speech of his enraged mistress, answered and said, "Oh woe is me! What has happened? I know not, worshipful lady, how I have deserved your anger. What you commanded me I carefully performed; if the power has failed, I know not the reason." The lady seemed somewhat softened, and continued, "This time I forgive thy failing, on condition that thou preparest a sweet-scented soap, which shall certainly accomplish what the pomegranate failed to do." The physician promised to do his best, and she again put fifteen gold pieces into his pouch, and left him.

After the course of some days, the physician brought to the Countess the murderous composition; she immediately dressed her nurse, an old woman, as a pedler with hardware, gave her fine thread, needles, sweet-scented pomatums, smelling-bottles, and marble soap balls, with red and blue veins, in her box; bade her go to her daughter Blanche, put the poisoned ball into her hand; and for this she promised her great reward. This false woman came to the maiden, who suspected no deceit, allowed herself to be persuaded by the wicked talker to handle the soap, which would preserve the beauty of her skin to old age, and to make a trial of it without the knowledge of the duenna. The wicked stepmother, in the mean while, eagerly consulted the rusty mirror, and expected, from its condition, that her plot must have succeeded; the rust-spots had in one night spread themselves over the surface of the mirror, so that, at her inquiries, only an obscure shadow appeared on the surface, of which it was impossible to distinguish the form. The loss of the mirror went to her heart; still she believed what fame reported, that she was the first beauty in the land, and she did not think she had purchased it too dearly.

For some time the vain widow enjoyed this imaginary pleasure with secret content, till a strange knight came to her court, who, on the way, had called at the Countess Blanche's castle, and had found her not in the grave, but at her toilet, and, struck with her beauty, had chosen her for the lady of his heart. Because he was very much attached to the young Countess of Brabant, and wished to fight for her in a tournament, (not knowing that the mother was jealous of the daughter,) heated with wine, at a feast, he threw his iron gauntlet on the table, and said, "Whoever does not acknowledge the Lady Blanche of the Lion as the most beautiful woman in Brabant shall take up this gauntlet as a token that he will break a lance with me the next day." At this thoughtlessness of the Gascon, the whole court was highly scandalized; they secretly reproached him as Master Dunce and Sir Greatloaf. Richilda grew pale at the news that Blanche still lived; the challenge was a stab to her heart; yet she forced herself to a gracious smile, and approved of the match, hoping that the knights of her court would take up the gauntlet for her. But when no one stepped forward to espouse the quarrel—for the stranger had a bold look, and was very strongly made—her face became so sorrowful, that displeasure and affliction were easily read in it. This moved her faithful master of the horse so much, that he picked up the iron gauntlet. But when the combat began, the following day, the Gascon gained the victory, after a valiant course, and received knightly thanks from the Countess Richilda, who, however, was ready to die of indignation.

In the first place, she made the physician Sambul feel her displeasure. He was thrown into prison, put into chains, and, without farther examination, the severe woman had his venerable beard plucked out, hair by hair, and both ears cut off. After the first storm had blown over, and the cruel one remembered that her daughter Blanche would still triumph over her if she did not succeed in putting her to death by stratagem, (for the father's will had deprived her of all power over the daughter,) she wrote a letter to the daughter, so tenderly, and rejoiced so like a mother at her recovery, that her heart seemed to have dictated every word. This letter she gave to her confidant, the nurse, to take to the imprisoned physician, with a small piece of paper, on which these words were written: "Shut up death and destruction in this letter for the hand that opens it. Take care not to deceive me the third time, as thou lovest thy life." Sambul, the Jew, long deliberated on what he should do. At last the love of life prevailed, and he promised to obey. The Countess sent the letter by a messenger on horseback, who, on his arrival, was to make many grimaces, as if the letter contained wonderful things, and also he was not to say whence he came. The maiden, desirous to learn the contents, broke open the seal, read a few lines, and fell back on the sofa, shut her light blue eyes, and

expired. From that time the murderous stepmother heard no more of her daughter; and although she often sent spies, they brought her back no other message than that the maiden had not again awoke from her death-slumber.

Thus was the beautiful Blanche, by the artifices of this hateful woman, three times dead and three times buried. After the faithful dwarfs had buried her the first time, and masses had been performed, they, with the weeping servants, kept constant watch by the grave, and often looked through the window into the coffin, to enjoy the sight of their beloved mistress, till corruption should destroy her form. But, with wonder, they perceived, that after a few days, her white cheeks were tinted with a faint blush, the purple of life again began to glow on her faded lips, and soon the maiden opened her eyes. When the watchful servants observed this, they joyfully took the lid off the coffin; the lovely Richilda sat up, and wondered to see herself in a grave, and her attendants in mourning around her. She quickly left this horrible place, and returned, like Eurydice, from the realm of shades, with tottering knees, to the reviving light of day. Instead of the poison, which he ought to have put into the pomegranate, Sambul had only tinged the half with a narcotic essence, which deprived of sensation, without destroying the body. The second time he did the same with the soap-ball, only that he increased the portion of opium, so that the maiden did not awake at the same time as before, and the dwarfs fancied that she was really dead; but after watching for some days with great anxiety, she, to the joy of all her faithful attendants, again awoke.

The maiden's guardian angel saw the danger which menaced the life of her ward, as the fear of death might make the physician resolve really to accomplish the knavish trick of poisoning her. Therefore, he slipped invisibly into the prison, and began a powerful contest in the Jew's soul, conquered him, after a severe strife, and extorted from him the resolution to devote his neck to his conscience, as he had formerly done his beard and both ears. By means of his chemical knowledge, he concentrated his sleepy liquor into a volatile salt, which was dissolved in the open air, and spread abroad; with this he strewed the letter to the beautiful Blanche, and as she read it the atmosphere received a stunning property, and she inhaled the refined spirit of poppies. The effect of it was so powerful, that the torpidity of the body lasted longer than before, and the impatient duenna, quite despairing of the reanimation of her young mistress, insisted on having the requiem performed.

Whilst the attendants were occupied with this mournful solemnity, a young pilgrim approached, went into the chapel, knelt before the altar at matins, and performed his devotions. He was called Godfrey of Ardennes, who, in performance of a vow, visited many holy places and churches, and was now on his way through

Brabant. When the pious pilgrim had performed his devotions, and, according to his custom, placed a small gift in the alms-box, he asked the Brother Sacristan why the chapel was hung with black, and what the grief of the whole castle meant? The latter related to him all that had happened to the beautiful Blanche through the wicked hatred of her stepmother. At this Godfrey was much surprised, and said, "Is it permitted to see the corpse of the maiden? Lead me to the grave. If God will, I can call her back to life, if indeed her soul still be in her. I carry with me a relic from our holy father at Rome, which destroys enchantment, and resists all other attacks but those of nature.

The Sacristan quickly called the watchful dwarfs; and when they heard the pilgrim's words, they rejoiced very much, led him to the grave, and Godfrey was charmed at the face of the lovely alabaster form, which he saw through the window in the coffin. The lid was taken off, he bade the sorrowful servants, except the dwarfs, go out, brought forth his relic, and laid it on the heart of the corpse. In a few moments the torpidity disappeared, and soul and life returned into the body. The maiden wondered at the handsome youth who was near her; and the rejoiced dwarfs considered the wonder-worker as a very angel from heaven. Godfrey told the restored one who he was, and she informed him of her fate, and of the persecutions of her cruel stepmother. "You will not," said Godfrey, "escape the efforts of the poisoner if you do not follow my counsel. Abide still, a short time, in this grave, that it may not be rumoured about that you live. I will accomplish my pilgrimage, and soon come back, to take you to my mother in Ardennes, and then I will finish by avenging you on your murderess."

This advice pleased the lovely Blanche well; the noble pilgrim left her, and spoke without, to the attendants who crowded around him, with feigned words,—"The corpse of your mistress will never again arise; the fountain of life is dried up; all is lost—all is dead." But the faithful dwarfs, who knew the truth, kept the secret, privately provided the maiden with food and drink, watched round the grave as before, and awaited the return of the pious pilgrim. Godfrey made haste to reach Ardennes, embraced his tender mother, and, as he was tired with his journey, he early retired to rest, and quickly fell asleep, with pleasant thoughts of the maiden Blanche. Early the next morning, Godfrey armed himself like a knight, assembled his horsemen, took leave of his mother, and set off. When he had accomplished his journey, and at midnight heard the bell toll in the castle of the beautiful Blanche, he jumped from his horse, put his pilgrim's dress over his armour, and went into the chapel. The watchful dwarfs had no sooner perceived the kneeling pilgrim at the altar, than they hastened to the grave, to make known the good news to their mistress. She threw off her shroud; and, as soon as the mass

was over, and sacristan and clerks had hastened from the cold church to their warm beds, the charming maiden jumped up out of the grave, with a joyous heart. But when she found herself in the arms of a young man, who wished to lead her thence, fear and terror came over her, and she said, with a bashful countenance, "Think well of what you do, young man; ask your heart if your intentions be pure and sincere; if you disappoint the confidence that I place in you, know, that the vengeance of Heaven will pursue you." The knight answered discreetly, "The holy Virgin be witness to the purity of my intentions, and may the curse of Heaven strike me, if there be a guilty thought in my soul!"

Then the maiden sprang with confidence on a horse, and Godfrey led her safe to Ardennes to his mother, who received her with the tenderest affection, and took as much care of her as if she had been her own beloved daughter. The soft sympathetic feelings of love were soon awakened in the hearts of the young knight and the lovely Blanche; the wishes of the good mother and of the whole court conspired in wishing the union of this noble pair, sealed by the holy rite of marriage.

But Godfrey, in the midst of the preparations for marriage, left his residence, and went to Brabant, to the Countess Richilda, who was still occupied with her second choice; and, as she now had no mirror of which to take counsel, she had never come to any conclusion. As soon as Godfrey of Ardennes appeared at the court, his fine figure so drew on him the eyes of the Countess, that she gave him the preference above all the other nobles. He called himself the Knight of the Grave, and this was the only thing Lady Richilda found to object to; she wished he had a more pleasing surname, for life had still many charms for her, and she always, with horror, cast away all thoughts of the grave. She explained it to herself that the surname of the knight of Ardennes meant the holy grave, and signified that he had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and was a knight of the Holy Sepulchre; and so she acquiesced in it without farther inquiry. When she had held a consultation with her heart, she found that, among the assembled knights who came and went, Knight Godfrey held the first rank. She knew how, by art, to revive her charms, and to conceal those that were faded, and to adorn her head with the finest Brabant tissues. She omitted not to make the most alluring advances to her favourite, and to charm him by every art in her power.

With feigned enthusiasm, Godfrey, one day, kneeling at her feet, addressed the Countess and said, "Cease, beloved cruel one, to tear my heart by your powerful charms, and to awake sleeping wishes, that confuse my brain; love without hope is worse than death." Sweetly smiling, Richilda raised him with her swan-white arms, and answered him with mild persuasion; "Poor

hopeless one, what disheartens you? Are you so unlearned in the sympathies of love, which agitate my heart, as not to perceive or care for them? If the language of the heart is unintelligible to you, take the confession of love from my mouth. What hinders us for the future to unite the fate of our lives?"—"Ah!" sighed Godfrey, "your goodness enraptures me; but you know not the vow which binds me, to receive no wife but from the hand of my mother, and not to leave this good mother, till I have performed a child's last duties, and closed her eyes. Could you resolve to quit your court and follow me to Ardennes, my lot would be the happiest on earth."

The Countess did not take long to consider; she agreed to all that he desired. The proposal to leave Brabant did not much please her, nor the stepmother either, whom she thought a troublesome addition; but love overcame all. With great celerity was the procession prepared, the persons of the glittering train appointed, among whom appeared the court physician Sambul, although his beard and both ears were wanting. The cunning Richilda had loosened his fetters, and again graciously accorded to him the former honour of favourite; for she thought to make use of him, to send the stepmother quickly out of the world, and then to return with her husband to Brabant.

The worthy mother received her son and the supposed daughter-in-law, with courtly etiquette, seemed highly to approve the choice of the Knight of the Grave, and everything was put in readiness for a marriage festival. The appointed day arrived, and the Lady Richilda, arrayed like the queen of the fairies, entered the hall, and wished that the hours had wings. Then came a page, and with a sorrowful air whispered into the bridegroom's ear. Godfrey clasped his hands, and said with a loud voice, "Unhappy youth! who will on thy wedding-day stand for thee in the row of brides, since thy beloved has been murdered by a cruel hand?" Then he turned to the countess and said, "Know, beautiful Richilda, that I have portioned twelve maidens, who should go up to the altar with me, and the most beautiful has been murdered by the jealousy of an unnatural mother; say, what revenge does this crime deserve?" Richilda, angry at an event which would delay her wishes, or at least diminish the joy of the day, said with indignation, "Oh! the horrid deed! The cruel mother deserves to stand in the row of brides, with the unhappy youth, in the place of the murdered, in red-hot iron slippers, which will be a balsam for his wounded heart, for revenge is sweet as love." — "You decide aright," replied Godfrey. "It shall be so." The whole court approved the righteous sentence of the Countess, and the wits presumed to say, that the queen of rich Arabia, who had travelled to Solomon to fetch wisdom, could not have have spoken better.

At this moment, the folding doors of the next chamber, where the altar was prepared, flew open; there stood the innocent angel

form, Lady Blanche, adorned with costly bridal ornaments. She leant on one of the twelve maidens, when she perceived the dreaded stepmother, and timidly cast down her eyes. Richilda's blood froze in her veins; she sank on the ground as if struck by lightning, her eyes grew dim, and she fell down in a deep swoon. But, by the exertions of the courtiers and ladies, she again returned to consciousness against her will. Then the Knight of the Grave, read her a lecture, every word of which smote her soul, and he then led the beautiful Blanche to the altar, where the Bishop, in his pontifical robes, married the noble pair, and afterwards the twelve dowered maidens to their beloved. When the ceremony was over, the bridal procession went into the dancing-hall. The skilful dwarfs had in the mean time, with great care, prepared a pair of steel slippers, put them in the fire, and made them hot. Then Gunzalin, the strong Gascon knight, stepped forward, and asked the poisoner to dance, to begin the bridal festival, and though she would willingly have declined, neither prayers nor resistance were of any avail. He embraced her with his powerful arm, the dwarfs put on the red-hot slippers, and Gunzalin dragged her down the hall, in so rapid a dance, that the very floor smoked, and the musicians blew so heartily that all her groans and cries of pain were drowned in the noisy music. After endless twirls and circles, the active knight turned the heated dancer out of the hall, down the staircase, into a well-guarded prison, where the wicked sufferer had time and leisure for repentance. But Godfrey of Ardennes and Blanche, his fair and innocent bride, lived in peace and happiness to a good old age, and their descendants long flourished prosperously after them.

ROLAND'S SQUIRES.

COUSIN ROLAND had, as all the world knows, conducted the wars of his uncle, the Emperor Charles, with glory and success, and had done immortal deeds, recited by poets and romance singers, until Ganelon the traitor deprived him of the victory over the Saracens, and at the same time of life, at Roncesvalles, at the foot of the Pyrenees. Of what avail was it to the hero that he had slain the son of Anak, the giant Ferracutus,—the insolent Syrian, of the race of Goliath, since he still must succumb to the sabre-strokes of the unbelievers! against whom his good sword Duridana could not protect him this time; for he had run through his heroic career, and was now at its close. Deserted by all the world, he lay among the heaps of slain, grievously wounded, and tormented with burning thirst. In this sad condition, he collected all his strength, and sounded three times his wonderful horn, to give Charles the concerted sign that he was in the last extremity.

Although the Emperor, with his army, was encamped at eight miles' distance from the battle-field, he yet recognised the sound of the wondrous horn, dismissed the feast (to the great chagrin of his courtiers, who scented a dainty pasty which was just then served up), and caused his army to set forth immediately to the succour of his nephew. It was then, however, too late; since Roland had already breathed out his heroic soul. The Saracens, however, rejoiced in their victory, and gave to their general the honourable title of "Malek al Raffer," or the victorious king.

In the confusion of the fight, the shield and armour bearers of the brave Roland had become separated from their lord, and had lost sight of him, when he flung himself into the midst of the enemies' squadrons. When the hero fell, and the dispirited army of the Franks sought safety in flight, most of them were hewn down. Only three out of the multitude succeeded, by swiftness of foot, in escaping from death or slavish chains. The three comrades in misfortune fled far into the mountains, among untrodden places, and looked not behind them in their flight; since they believed Death pursued them with hasty feet. Wearied with thirst and the heat of the sun, they lay down to rest under a shady oak; and, after they had breathed a little, they took counsel together what they should now do. Andiol, the sword-

bearer, first broke the silence, which the hurry of the flight and the fear of the Saracens had imposed on them.

"What counsel, brothers?" asked he. "How shall we reach the army, without falling into the hands of the unbelievers; and what road shall we follow? Let us make an attempt to force our way through these wild mountains; on the other side of them are, I believe, the Franks, who will certainly conduct us to the camp."—"Thy proposition would be good, companion," answered Amarin, the shield-bearer, "if thou wouldst give us the wings of eagles, to transport us over the wall of steep rocks; but with these wearied legs, from which hunger and the sun's power have consumed the marrow, we shall certainly not climb the cliffs which separate us from the Franks. Let us first find a spring to quench our thirst, and to fill our gourd, and afterwards slay a deer, that we may eat: then we will spring over the rocks like light-footed chamois, and soon find a way to the encampment of Charles." Sarron, the third squire, who was wont to bear the spurs of the Knight Roland, shook his head and said, "As concerns the stomach, comrade, thy counsel is not bad; but both propositions are dangerous for our necks. Do you imagine that Charles would feel grateful to us if we returned without our good lord, and did not even bring back his costly armour which was confided to us? If we should kneel at his throne, and say, 'Roland is fallen!' and he should answer, 'Very sad is this news; but where have you left his sword Duridana?' what wouldst thou answer, Andiol? Or should he say, 'Squires, where have you his mirror-polished steel shield?' what wouldst thou reply, Amarin? Or should he inquire for the golden spurs, with which he invested our lord when he dubbed him Knight, must I not keep silence in shame?"—"Well remembered," replied Andiol; "thy understanding is as clear as Roland's shield, as penetrating, bright, and sharp as Roland's sword. We will not return to the camp of the Franks."

Amongst these counsels night had approached; no star glistened in the clouded heavens; no zephyr awoke. In the wide desert the stillness of death reigned around, unbroken, save by the occasional croak of some night-bird. The three fugitives stretched themselves on the turf under the oak, and thought by sleep to cheat the ravenous hunger which the severe fast of the long day had awakened; but the stomach is a relentless creditor, who is not willing to give credit even for four-and-twenty hours. Notwithstanding their weariness, hunger permitted them no sleep, although they had taken their shoulder-belts for girdles, and drawn them as tight as possible. When, by way of passing the time, they began again, in their sadness, to converse, they perceived, through the bushes, a small distant light, which they at first considered to be the exhalation from a sulphureous marsh; but when, after some time, this same light neither changed its

appearance nor its position, they came to a resolution to seek more closely into the cause. They left their quarters under the oak, and after they had overcome many difficulties, fallen in the darkness over many stones, and run their heads against many branches, they arrived in a cleared spot before an upright wall of rock, where, to their great joy, they found a saucepan on a trivet over a fire. The bright ascending flames discovered to them at the same time the entrance to a cave, over which hung down branches of ivy, and which was closed by a strong door. Andiol approached and knocked, imagining that the inhabitant might perhaps be a pious, hospitable hermit. But he heard a woman's voice from within, which asked, "Who knocks; who knocks at my house?"—"Good woman," said Andiol, "open to us the door of your grotto; three wandering travellers wait here on the threshold, and are faint with hunger and thirst."—"Patience," answered the voice from within, "let me first put my house in order, and prepare it for the reception of my guests. The listener at the door heard then a great rustling within, as if the whole house were set in order and scoured. He ceased for an interval, as long as his impatience permitted; but, as the mistress of the house did not seem to put an end to her cleaning, he knocked again at the door after a soldierly fashion, and desired to be admitted, with his companions. The voice again answered softly, "I hear, but allow me time to put on my dress, that I may be fit to appear before my guests. Meanwhile, stir the fire that the pot may boil well, and eat none of the broth."

Sarron, who had ever been accustomed in Knight Roland's kitchen to peep into the pot, had, from natural instinct, already undertaken the office of keeping up the fire; he had also previously examined the pot, and made a discovery which did not quite please him. For when he raised the lid and dipped in the meat-fork, he drew forth a hedgehog, which cured his stomach of all its impetuous cravings. He did not, however, reveal this discovery to his companions, in order that, when the broth should be served up, he might not deprive them of their appetite. Amarin had fallen asleep through weariness, and had almost slept enough before the inhabitant of the grotto had finished her toilet. On awaking, he joined himself to the noisy Andiol, who was making conditions for admission with the proprietress of the cave, in a boisterous dispute. When at last all was adjusted, she had unluckily mislaid the house-door key, and as, in her great hurry, she had also overthrown her lamp, she could not find it again. The famished wanderers thus were compelled to exercise an already tried patience until, after a long delay, the key was at length found, and the door opened. But a new delay occurred to prove the resignation of the strangers. Scarcely was the door half opened, when a great black cat sprang out, with eyes emitting fire; immediately the mistress of the house shut the

door to and bolted it carefully, scolding and abusing the boisterous guests who had disturbed her dwelling, and had made away with her beloved pet animal. "Catch my cat! you creatures," screamed she from within, "or don't take it into your heads to pass my door."

The three comrades looked hesitatingly on each other as to what they were to do. "The witch!" murmured Andiol between his teeth, "has she not mocked us long enough, that she now scolds and threatens? Shall a woman befool three men? By the shade of Roland, that shall not be! Let us break down the door, and quarter ourselves here like good soldiers." Amarin agreed; but the wise Sarron said, "Bethink you, brothers, of what you do; the attempt may have an evil issue; I suspect there are wonderful things here; let us punctually obey the commands of our hostess; if our patience does not tire, her humour for jeering us will tire. This good counsel was taken, and immediately a general chase for Grimalkin began, but he had flown into the wood, and was not to be discovered in the dark night. For, although his eyes sparkled as brightly as the eyes of the pet cat of Petrarch, whose light served the poet as a lamp, by which to inscribe an immortal sonnet to Laura,—the Pyrenean Grimalkin appeared to have the humour of his mistress to jeer the three wanderers, and either blinked studiously with his eyes, or turned them so that they did not betray him. Yet the wily Sarron knew how to catch him. He understood the art of mewing so well, that the anchorite of the wood, who had taken refuge in an oak-tree, was deceived by it, and immediately replied.

As soon as the miauling cat betrayed himself by his voice, the ambushed squire was at hand, surprised him and brought the entrapped fugitive in triumph to the entrance of the cave in the rock, which was now no longer blockaded. Highly delighted, the three squires entered, in company with the strayed Penates, curious to make the acquaintance of their hostess; but they shuddered with dismay when they perceived a living skeleton—a dry and very old hag. She wore a long gown, held in her hand a bough of mistletoe, and touched with it, in a solemn manner, the new comers, while she welcomed them and forced them to sit down to a furnished table, on which a frugal meal of milk, meat, roasted chestnuts, and fresh fruits were served up. No pressing was necessary; the hungry guests fell upon the provisions like ravening wolves, and, in a short time, the dishes were so effectually emptied, that no dainty mouse would have found enough of the remains to satisfy itself. Sarron exceeded his two table companions in his haste to appease his stomach, for he imagined there would be yet another course, where the hedgehog ragout would make its appearance, which he intended to leave to his companions alone; but, as the mistress of the house produced nothing more, he believed that she had saved this dainty bit for

herself. When night came, the squires entreated a night's lodging, and the old woman, after some entreaty, began to prepare a couch of quilts, spun of Spanish wool, but it was so narrow and small that it seemed hardly possible for three men to find room in it; however, they made it suffice, and next morning they were roused by the voice of the old dame, who desired them to get up and dig her garden. This employment occupied them the whole of the day. Next day and the day after they had also their work given them to do, and for their labour they were rewarded with board and lodging, such as it was.

When, on the third day, the old woman dismissed the three friends, and, with kind words, told them she had no further occasion for their services, and exhorted them to go on their way, the speaker, Sarron, rose and said, "It is not the custom of the country to dismiss a guest empty-handed; moreover, we have merited from you more than thanks. Have we not stirred the fire under your kettle like kitchen-maids? Have we not caught again your house friend the black cat, which had strayed? Have we not digged your garden, carried water for you, and done everything for you, like obedient servants?

The old mother appeared to bethink herself; she was, according to the custom of old matrons, of a close nature, and did not give anything away lightly; but she had conceived an affection for the three men, and appeared inclined to grant their request. "Let us see," said she, "if I can find a gift for you, to remind each of you of me." Thereupon she tripped into her store-room, stirred about in it for a long time, opened and shut chests, and jingled with her keys, as if she had had the care of locking the hundred gates of Thebes. After a long delay, she made her appearance again, carrying something concealed in the lap of her dress, then turned towards the wise Sarron and asked, "Who shall have what I hold now in my hand?" He replied, "The sword-bearer, Andiol." She drew forth a rusty, copper penny, and said, "Take this, and tell me whose that shall be which I hold in my hand?" The squire, discontented with the distribution, answered, saucily, "Whoever will may have it; what does it matter to me?" The old lady said, "Who will?" Then Amarin the shield-bearer named himself, and received for his share a table-napkin, neatly washed and folded. Sarron stood on the watch, expecting to receive the best; but he got nothing but a thumbstall from a leathern glove, and was much ridiculed by his companions.

The three fellow-travellers now went their way, took a cold leave, without appearing thankful for the charitable gifts or praising the liberality of the niggardly matron. After they had departed about the distance of a field, the sword-bearer, Andiol, began first to fret that they had not better bethought themselves in the Druid's cave. "Did you not hear, comrades," said he, "how the sorceress opened and shut chests, in her store-chamber,

to collect the rubbish with which she has befooled us? In her chests there was certainly abundance of riches. Had we been wise, we should have seized the enchanted rod, without which she would have had no power over us; we should have rushed into the store-closet, and should, according to the custom and plan of warriors, have obtained booty, without allowing ourselves to be mocked by an old woman." The discontented squire harangued yet longer in this tone, and concluded by drawing forth the rusty penny, and throwing it from him in scorn. Amarin followed the example of his companion, flourished the napkin around his head, and said, "What avails to me this rag, in these wilds where we have nothing to eat; if we find a well-furnished table, we shall not care for this!" He then abandoned it to the mournful winds, which wafted it to a neighbouring thorn, that held the love-token of the ancient lady fast on its sharp teeth. The far-sighted Sarron suspected something of concealed might in the despised gifts, and reproved the thoughtlessness of his playfellows, who, according to the common course of this world, only judged things from their outward appearance, without proving their internal worth; but he preached to deaf ears. However, he was not to be persuaded to relinquish his valueless thumbstall; on the contrary, he took occasion during his speech to make an experiment with it. He drew it on the thumb of his right hand without effect; hereupon he changed it to the left hand; and, during these experiments, he had loitered behind his companions. On a sudden Amarin stood still, and asked in astonishment, "Where is our friend Sarron?"—"Let him be; the covetous fellow seeks to recover what we have thrown away." Sarron heard these words in silent astonishment; a cold shudder ran through him, and he scarcely knew how to contain himself, in his joy, since the secret of the thumbstall was now disclosed to him. His comrades halted to wait for him; he, however, went forward quickly on his way, and, when he was fairly in advance of them, he cried out, "You daudles, why do you lag behind? How long shall I wait for you." Listening attentively, the two squires perceived the voice of their companion, whom they fancied behind, in front of them; they, therefore, redoubled their pace, and ran on before him without perceiving him. This pleased him still more, since he was now sure that the thumbstall imparted to him the gift of invisibility; and so he continued to deceive them, without betraying the cause of the deception, although they puzzled their heads sorely about it. They imagined their companion had slipped down from a rock into a deep valley, had broken his neck, and that his airy shadow hovered around them now, to say farewell to them. At length, tired of his game, Sarron made himself again visible, instructed his attentive companions in the qualities of the wonderful thumbstall, and reproved their thoughtlessness, so that they stood there quite stupified.

After they had recovered from their first astonishment, they ran back at full speed, to repossess themselves of the despised gifts of the old lady. Amarin huzzaed aloud when already, in the distance, he saw the table-napkin wave on the summit of the thorn-tree, which had preserved the property intrusted to it more carefully (although the four winds of heaven seemed to struggle for its possession) than many chests in which are deposited the inheritance of minors, though under judicial lock and key. It cost more trouble to recover the rusty penny out of the grass, yet eagerness to possess it, gave the eyes of Argus to the watchful owner, and served as a divining rod to lead his steps, and to point out the spot where the treasure lay concealed. A high leap and a loud cry of joy, announced the happy discovery of the rusty penny.

The company of travellers were much fatigued with their long walk, and sought the shadow of a tree, to shelter themselves from the oppressive heat of the sun; for it was now high noon, and they were hungry. The three adventurers were of good courage; their hearts beat high with joyous hope, and the two companions who had not yet proved the powers of their miraculous gifts made many attempts to discover them. Andiol collected his little cash, laid it with his copper penny, and began to count, forwards, backwards, towards the right, towards the left, from top to bottom, and from bottom to top, without perceiving the anticipated properties of a hatching penny. Amarin had gone to one side, looped the napkin very demurely through his button-hole, expecting nothing less than that a ready-roasted pigeon should fly into his mouth; but his proceeding was much too sinister for the magic table-napkin to act its part; so he returned to his companions, awaiting what destiny should disclose. The feeling of sharp hunger does not indeed improve a merry humour; but, when the elasticity of the soul is once disclosed, it does not sleep again at each little change of weather. On the return of Amarin, Sarron pulled the napkin out of his hand, in a merry manner, spread it on the turf under the tree, and cried, "Hither, comrades, the table is spread, let the power of the napkin now bestow on us a well-boiled ham upon it, with abundance of white bread. Scarcely had he spoken these words, when there rained down manchet loaves from the tree upon the cloth, and at the same moment stood there an ancient vase, in the form of an overgrown dish, with a boiled ham. Astonishment and greediness painted themselves in strange contrast in the faces of the hungry guests; however, the instinct of the stomach soon overcame the surprise, and with great eagerness they proceeded to satisfy their hunger. And now its troublesome twin-brother announced itself; besides which the taster, Sarron, had remarked that the ham had just a little too much salt. The impetuous Andiol first showed his discontent at the half-meal, as he called it; "Who

feeds me without giving me to drink," said he, "receives at my hand little thanks;" and he began to abuse yet more the defective qualities of the miraculous napkin. Amarin, who did not like his property to be run down, was offended at these remarks, seized the towel by the four corners, to remove it together with the dish; but, as soon as he began to fold it, dish and ham-bone had disappeared. "Brother," said he, to the rebellious critic, "if in future you will be my guest, then take willingly what my table offers, but for thy thirsty spleen seek a bubbling stream; as regards drink, that is another matter; where there is a bake-house, says the proverb, there is no room for a brewhouse."—"Well-spoken," answered the sly fellow, Sarron; but let us see to this other matter. He again took from him the table-napkin, and spread it to the left on the meadow, with the wish that the administering spirits should cause to appear some wine-flasks filled, in the absence of sack, with the best Malmsey. In a twinkling there stood a vase, apparently belonging to the same service, formed like a pitcher, and filled with the most beautiful Malmsey wine.

Now, in the enjoyment of the sweet nectar, the three joyous fellows would not have exchanged their condition for King Charles's throne; the wine immediately drove away all their past cares, and sparkled and foamed in the jack-cap which they used instead of a goblet. Even Andiol the spear-bearer now granted the power of the table-napkin, and, if its possessor had been willing to part with it, he would gladly have exchanged for it the rusty penny, with all its unknown properties. This became to him, however, much more valuable, and he kept feeling after it every minute to find whether it was still in its place. He drew it forth to look at the impression, but every trace of this had disappeared; then he turned it to look at the obverse; this was the right method to discover its powers. When he perceived here neither image nor inscription, and was going to put it by, he found under the wonderful penny a gold piece of equal size and thickness with it; he resumed the attempt several times, without being observed, to be sure of it, and found the result still the same. With the demonstrations of joy of the Syracusan philosopher, who, when he had discovered in the bath the water-gage of gold, trumpeted his "I have found it" through the streets, Andiol the sword-bearer arose from his turfy seat, jumped round the tree, leaping like a goat, and screamed with open mouth, "I have it, comrades, I have it!" upon which he concealed from them nothing of his alchemist's progress. In the first burst of his joyful enthusiasm, he proposed instantly to seek out again the beneficent Druidess, and, throwing themselves at her feet, to thank her for her gifts. A similar impulse inspired them all; they suddenly collected all their possessions, and pursued the way by which they came. But either their eyes were blinded, or the vapours of the wine led

them astray, or Mother Druid carefully concealed herself from them; suffice it to say they were unable to find the grotto again, although they traversed the Pyrenees industriously, and had already turned their backs on the strange mountains, and were on the high-road to Leon, before they perceived that they had gone astray. After a general consultation it was agreed to pursue this line of march, and to follow straight after their noses.

The happy trefoil of squires now perceived that they were in possession of three most desirable things, and that if they did not enjoy the greatest earthly happiness, at least, they had the groundwork for the gratification of every wish. The old leathern thumbstall, though not very sightly, had all the properties of the famed ring which Gyges once possessed; the rusty penny was as useful as the purse of Fortunatus; and the table-napkin was invested, also, with the same blessing as the famed miraculous flask of the holy Remigius. In order to assure to themselves the mutual enjoyment of these noble gifts on all occasions, the three companions entered into a compact never to separate, but to use their goods in common.

Meanwhile, each, according to the usual preference for one's own things, began to boast the superior excellence of his gift, till the wise Sarron demonstrated that his thumbstall united in itself the fulness of all the other miraculous gifts: "To me," said he, "both cellar and kitchen stand open in the house of epicures; I enjoy the privilege of the house-fly, to eat out of the same dish with the king, without his being able to prevent me; I may also empty the coffers of the rich, and it is even in my power to appropriate all the riches of Hindostan if the journey is not too irksome for me."

Amid such speeches they arrived at Astorga, where King Garsias of the Asturias held his court, with his daughter, the Princess Urraca, as famous for her beauty as for her coquetry. The court was splendid and the Princess seemed to be a living pattern of her dwelling, in whom, whatever vanity can contribute to the decoration of ladies, was united. In the Pyrenean wastes the desires and passions of the three wanderers had been very limited and moderate; they were satisfied with the gift of the table-napkin, spread it out when they came to a shady tree, and held an open table. Six meals a day were their minimum, and there was not a single delicacy which they did not cause it to serve to them. However, when they entered the capital, tumultuous passions arose in their breasts; they conceived great projects for advancing themselves by their talents, and for rising from the rank of squires to lordly dignities. Unluckily they saw the lovely Urraca, whose charms so enchanted them that they proposed to try their fortune with her. They no sooner perceived the same feelings in each other, than there arose in their hearts a

gnawing jealousy, the bond of union was broken, and as, in general, three happy people can with difficulty reside under one roof, since union is the daughter of mutual necessity, so it fell out with the partnership, the three united inheritors for life separated, only promising to each other not to betray the secret.

Andiol, in order to be beforehand with his rivals, immediately put his pocket coining-machine into operation, and shut himself up in a solitary chamber to twist his copper penny, in order to fill the purse with gold pieces. As soon as he had the necessary funds, he decked himself out as a stately knight, appeared at the court, obtained an appointment, and soon, by his splendour, drew the eyes of all Astorga on himself. The curious inquired his lineage, but he observed, on this point, a profound silence, and let the critics chatter; yet he did not contradict the report which called him a near connexion of Charlemagne's, and he named himself Childeric. The Princess, by means of her acuteness of sight, discovered this Brabanter, who followed in the vortex of her enchanting allurements, with pleasure, and delayed not to exercise her attractive powers on him;—and friend Andiol, to whom love in the highest circles was yet new and strange, swam with the current, which carried him away, like a light soap-bubble.

The coquetry of the lovely Urraca was not merely temperament, or pride in stringing hearts on the cords of her frivolity, to make a display with this dazzling garniture, which, in the eyes of ladies, is of great value. The amusement of pillaging her suitors, and the malicious pleasure of afterwards mocking them, had a great share in her plans. Her favour was now granted at the highest price which the importunate rivals could offer for it; as soon as an infatuated fool was quite despoiled of his wealth, he was dismissed with scorn and contempt. Of these victims to an unhappy passion, which embittered the honey of enjoyment with sad repentance, Mrs. Fame had had much to relate throughout the kingdom of the Asturias; notwithstanding this, there were not wanting foolhardy moths which flew to the fatal light, in whose flames they found their end.

As soon as Crœsus Andiol was scented out by this covetous lady, she proposed to herself to make use of him as an orange, which one peels to enjoy the sweet marrow. The report of his illustrious descent, and the great expenditure that he made, gave him so much weight and importance at the court, that even the most penetrating eyes did not discover the shield-bearer through this dazzling veil, although his blunt manners often betrayed his former company. These anomalies in polite manners passed at court rather for originality of mind and characteristics of great genius. He succeeded in obtaining the first place amid the favourites of the Princess, and spared neither trouble nor expense to retain it. He daily gave splendid fêtes, tournaments, games

of running at the ring, royal banquets, fished with golden nets, and would, like the squanderer Heliogabalus, have caused the Princess to sail on a lake of rose or lavender water, if she had studied the Roman history, or had herself conceived this ingenious fancy. Meanwhile similar ideas were not wanting. In a hunting-party which her new favourite had prepared, she expressed a wish to see the entire forest metamorphosed into a noble park, with grottoes, fish-ponds, cascades, springs, baths of parian marble, palaces, summer-houses, and colonnades; and the following day many thousand hands were occupied in carrying out the great plan, and, where it was possible, also improving upon the idea of the Princess. If this had lasted long the entire kingdom would have been transformed; where a mountain stood she would have had a plain, where the peasant ploughed she would have fished, and where gondolas floated she would have wished to ride. The copper penny was as little tired of hatching gold pieces, as the ingenious lady of spending them; her sole endeavour was to humble the obstinate spendthrift, to crush him in the dust and to get rid of him.

While Andiol shone in this brilliant manner at the court, the lazy Amarin fattened on the good deeds of his table-napkin; but envy and jealousy very soon impaired the relish of his table. One day he folded up his table-napkin, put it in his pocket, and went to walk in the market-place, just as the King's head-cook was publicly driven away, because, by a badly-prepared meal, he had given the monarch a severe fit of indigestion. When Amarin learned this news he was struck with it, and thought to himself, in a land where mistakes in cooking are so much thought of, without doubt, merit in cooking is well rewarded. He immediately entered the palace kitchen, announced himself as a travelling cook, who sought employment, and promised in an hour to give the proof which might be required of his skill. The kitchen department was at Astorga justly considered among the most important, since it had the strongest influence on the prosperity or troubles of the state. For the good or bad humour of the ruler and his ministers depends, in a great measure, on the good or bad digestion of the stomach, and it is a well-known truth that this may be assisted or hindered by the chemical operations of cooking. Thus there was a very reasonable cause for going more carefully to work in choosing a head-cook than in choosing a minister. Amarin, whose appearance did not recommend him (for he had quite the air of a vagrant), had to employ all his eloquence, that is the talent of boasting, in order to be admitted into the list of aspirants to the high office. Only the boldness and confidence with which he spoke of his skill, induced the purveyor to give him, as an essay, a particular dish, the dressing of which had often wrecked the arts of the most skilful cooks. When he had to ask for ingredients for this purpose, he

betrayed such perfect ignorance in the selection, that the whole company of cooks found it impossible to restrain their laughter. He did not trouble himself, however, about that, locked himself into a separate kitchen, kindled, for appearance sake, a large fire, opened out his table-napkin, and called for the desired specimen, prepared in a masterly manner. Instantly the savoury mess appeared in the usual old vase; he took it, placed it prettily in a silver dish, and gave it to be tried by the chief-taster, who took a little on his tongue with suspicion, lest he should injure the delicate organization of his palate by a spoiled dish. But, to his astonishment, he found it excellent, and acknowledged it as worthy to be placed on the King's table. The King showed, from his indisposition, little desire to eat, but scarcely did the odour of the noble dish reach him, when his brow smoothed, and its horizon indicated fair weather. He desired to taste it, emptied one plate after another, and would have consumed the whole had not a feeling of kindness to his spouse and her daughter prompted him to send some remains of it to them. The spirits of the monarch were so invigorated and excited, and their majesties were so cheerful after dinner, that they deigned to work with the minister, and even to undertake, of their own accord, the thorny affairs of their high seat. The great spring-wheel of this so happy revolution of affairs was not forgotten; the well-skilled Amarin was invested with splendid clothes, he was led from the kitchen before the throne, and, after a long exordium on his talents, was named the King's head-cook, with the rank of field-marshal. In a short time his fame reached its highest summit.

So resplendent a meteor in the kitchen horizon disturbed, beyond measure, the heart of the Princess. She had hitherto been able to do everything with her father, and held him in the leading-strings of her pleasure; but now she feared to lose her power and consequence through the unexpected favouritism. Since the kitchen revolution, which Amarin's table-napkin wrought, the culinary skill of the Princess lost its fame. She had sometimes had the daring to compete with the major domo, but always to her disadvantage; for, instead of triumphing over Amarin's dish, hers was commonly removed untouched, and became the perquisite of waiters and parasites. Her invention wearied in the preparation of costly viands; Amarin's skill could be surpassed only by itself. In this so critical a conjuncture the Lady Urraca made a resolution to venture an attack on the heart of the new favourite, in order to draw him into her interests through love. She called him in secret to her, and, through the all-persuasive power of her charms, easily induced him to grant her what she wished. He promised her, on the approaching birthday of the King, a dish which should surpass all that had ever previously flattered the sense of taste.

The two men now played the most conspicuous part in the

court of Astorga, and strutted about with unbounded pride. Although after their separation fate had again brought them so closely together, that they ate from the same dish—drank from the same goblet, and shared the favour of the lovely Urraca; they yet, according to their agreement, behaved to each other like perfect strangers, and allowed none of their previous acquaintanceship to be observed. Meanwhile neither of them could discover whither the wise Sarron had vanished. The latter had, by means of his thumbstall, preserved the strictest incognito, and enjoyed the privilege of it in a manner which was not, indeed, apparent; but, notwithstanding, assured to him the accomplishment of all his wishes. The sight of the lovely Urraca had made the same impression on him as on his companions; his wishes and intentions were the same, and as no ceremony was required for the fulfilment of them, he had, already, won a great advantage before his rivals suspected it in the least. Since their separation, the wise Sarron had hovered invisibly around his two companions, and now, as before, remained table and pocket companion of Amarin and Andiol—filled his stomach with the remains from the table of the one, and his purse from the superfluous money of the other.

His first care was to dress himself in a romantic manner, in order to carry out his plan, and to surprise the Princess in the retirement of her own chamber. He clad himself in cerulean blue satin, with a rose-coloured under-dress, like an Arcadian shepherd, who tends his flocks, in a masked ball; perfumed himself strongly, and entered, by the aid of his miraculous gift, into the room at her hour of the afternoon siesta. The sight of the reposing beauty struck him so much, that he could not refrain from an exclamation of delight and surprise, at the sound of which her slumbering attendant awoke, whose office it was to waft cool air to her lady, with a fly-fan of peacock's feathers, and to drive away the winged insects. The Princess likewise roused herself, and asked what stranger could have been in the chamber. The lady of the bed-chamber again set her fan in motion, as if she had not ceased her activity, declared that no third person was in the chamber; and added the assurance that it must be a pleasant dream which had deceived her highness. The Princess was not to be put off, and she commanded the attendant lady's-maid to make inquiries without in the antechamber of the guards. While she left her seat to obey the command, the fan began to agitate itself, and to waft to the Princess cool zephyrs, which breathed out fragrance of flowers and ambergris. At this sight horror and fright seized the fair Urraca; she sprang from her sofa, and would have fled, but felt herself restrained by an invisible power, and heard a voice which whispered to her these words:—"Lovely mortal, fear nothing, you are under the protection of the powerful king of the fairies, named Damogorgon. Your charms have attracted me

from the upper regions of the air, into the oppressive atmosphere of the earth, to do homage to your beauty." At these words the attendant entered the chamber to give a report of her commission, but she was immediately sent away with an excuse, since her presence appeared superfluous at this secret audience.

The lovely Urraca was naturally uncommonly flattered by such a supernatural lover; she put in action all the graces of the most practised coquetry, in order to dazzle the lord of the fairies by the variegated splendour of her charms, and to assure herself of so mighty a conquest. From the modest embarrassment which she at first affected, she changed to the warmest demonstrations of growing passion. The confiding tenderness of the lovers grew with every moment: the Princess only complained that her lover was invisible. "Know, lovely Princess," said the king of the fairies, "that it is quite in my power to corporealize myself, and to present myself before your eyes in the figure of man; but such a condescension is below my dignity!" The lovely Urraca did not, meanwhile, cease to crave this sacrifice so pressingly, that he could not withstand the desire of the lady. He agreed, apparently unwillingly,—and the fancy of the Princess presented to her the image of the handsomest man, whom she, with anxious expectation waited to behold. But what a contrast between the actual and the ideal! nothing appeared but a common every-day face—one of the ordinary men, whose physiognomy revealed neither the glance of genius, nor a feeling mind. The pretended fairy prince, in his Arcadian shepherd's costume, had quite the appearance of a Flemish peasant in one of Ostade's taverns. The Princess concealed her astonishment at this bizarre appearance, as well as she could, and consoled herself immediately with the idea, that the proud spirit of air had been willing to impose a little penitence on her senses, for her pertinacity in desiring him to assume a visible shape, and that, on another appearance, he would make himself as handsome as Adonis.

Perhaps he would have been happier without the gift of invisibility than with it. He followed the lady, incognito like her shadow, and could not thus fail to make discoveries not altogether pleasing to a lover. He found that the complaisant Princess granted her favours to others with equal liberality; and this fatal collision with his previous companions in arms, who were as well received as himself, created in his heart a torturing jealousy. He thought on some means of driving away his rivals, and, by chance, he found an opportunity of displaying his resentment against the blockhead Amarin. At a banquet at which the king and the whole court were feasted, there was placed on the table a covered dish, for which King Garsias reserved his excellent appetite; for although the table-napkin had produced it, it passed current under the firman of the Princess Urraca; and the head-cook loudly asserted, that the culinary skill of her highness, this time,

so far surpassed his own, that, in order not to venture his reputation, he had withheld his usual contribution to the cheer. This flattery was so acceptable to the Princess, that she repaid the major domo with the most tender intelligent glance, which cut to the heart the invisible watchful Sarron. "Very good," said he to himself, "you shall none of you taste that." When the chief carver raised the dish, and uncovered it, the concealed dainty had disappeared, to the astonishment of all the surrounding attendants, and the dish was empty and void. Great whispering and murmurs arose among the servants; the chief carver let his knife fall in his horror, and told it to the purveyor. He ran to the chief taster and told him the bad news; and the latter did not delay to whisper it in the ear of his chief; thereupon the major domo arose from his place with a grave official air, and whispered the sad news in the Princess's ear, who became as pale as a corpse. The King, meanwhile, awaited with great anxiety the cup-bearer, who should present him with the eagerly expected dainty. He looked first to the right, then to the left, for the plate which was to come; when, however, he perceived the confusion of the attendants, and how they all ran about in disorder, he asked what was the matter, and the Princess took heart and disclosed to him with melancholy gestures, that an accident had happened, and her dish could not be produced! At this unpleasant news the hungry monarch, as is easy to imagine, grew very angry —pushed away his chair in displeasure, and betook himself to his apartment, in which hasty withdrawal every body took care to keep out of his way. The Princess also did not remain long in the dining-hall, but betook herself to her chamber, there to break the staff over the poor Amarin.

Suddenly, she caused the confounded major domo, who had not yet recovered from his astonishment at the vanished dainty and the extreme anger of the King, to be summoned before her; and when he lay, sadly and submissively, at the feet of the scornful lady, she addressed him, emphatically, in these words: "Unthankful traitor! dost thou so little value my favours, that thou canst venture to excite against me the anger of the monarch, and expose me to the laughter of the whole court retinue? Is thy ambition so unlimited, that, for the highest favours, thou deniest me the little honour of adorning the King's table with a simple dish? Didst thou repent thy promise to allure thither, at my wish, the most excellent dish, that thou sufferedst it to disappear at the moment I expected to receive praises and applause? Disclose to me immediately the secret of thy art, or expect the recompense of magic at the stake, where to-morrow thou shalt roast at a slow fire!" This firm decision harrowed so much the timorous simpleton, that he saw no way of escaping but by an open revelation of the nature of his culinary art. Since now his prating tongue was in motion, and he besides wished to remove the

suspicion of the enraged lady that he had enviously caused the ragoût to disappear, he neither concealed the adventure in the Pyrenees, nor the gifts of Mother Druid. Through this true tale the Princess suddenly arrived at the long-desired knowledge of her three favourites, and immediately resolved to possess herself of their magic secrets.

As soon as the unguarded prattler ceased, and according to his idea had justified himself, she spoke, and said, with a contemptuous mien, "Miserable fool! dost thou hope to save thyself, and to deceive me with such a lame falsehood? Let me see the wonder of thy table-napkin, or fear my revenge!" Amarin was as willing as constrained to obey this command. He drew forth his table-napkin, spread it out, and asked what he should serve up. She desired a ripe nutmeg, in the husk. Amarin commanded the obedient spirit of the napkin; the vase appeared; and the ripe nutmeg in its husk appeared on a green twig, which Amarin, to Urraca's astonishment, offered respectfully to her, on his knees. But, instead of accepting it, she seized upon the magic table-napkin, and threw it into an open box, which she immediately locked. Fainting, the betrayed major domo sank to the earth, when he saw before his eyes the loss of all his temporary happiness; the cunning robber, however, gave a loud scream; and when her domestics entered, she said, "This man is afflicted with epilepsy; take care of him; but let him never again approach me, that he may not cause me a second fright." Stupidly enough, the clever Sarron, with all his cunning, had this time kept a bad look out, in thinking to play his companion a roguish trick. In the pleasure of mischief, he greedily gobbled up the pilfered dainty; and, thus occupied, he did not think, on this occasion, of accompanying the Queen into her chamber. She had, however, on the previous day, invited him to an entertainment in the evening, where he did not delay to present himself. The Queen was in an unusually good humour, and as tender and caressing as a Grace; so that friend Damogorgon was in a complete paroxysm of joy. In this rapture, the cunning deceiver offered him a goblet of nectar, which she first sipped, and the flavour of which soon wafted to him sweet slumbers; for a powerful opiate lay concealed therein. As soon as he began to snore aloud, the most crafty of thieves possessed herself of the thumbstall of invisibility, and caused the monarch of air to be carried forth by her servants, and laid in the open street, in a corner of the town, where he snored out the narcotic draught on the pavement. No sleep came to the eyes of the false Princess, for joy; her thoughts and invention were now only directed to obtaining also the third magic treasure.

Scarcely did the first morning-beam gild the roofs of the King's palace at Astorga, when the restless lady rang for her Abigails and said, "Send a messenger to Childeric, that he may accompany

me to mass, and repay this favour with a rich offering for the poor.

The pampered favourite of fortune and of the lovely Urraca yet lay stretched on his broad couch, yawned aloud when he received the honourable message, but caused himself to be dressed by his half-asleep attendants, and repaired to the court, where the High Chamberlain looked askance at him that he should again enjoy the honour of exercising his function on his behalf. With splendid pomp went the procession this time to the Cathedral, where the Archbishop, with his staff of Clergy, held a solemn festival. The people had already assembled in great numbers to stare at the noble cavalcade. The lovely Urraca, and yet more the rich train of her dress which was supported by six attendants, excited general astonishment. A crowd of unfortunate beggars, lame, blind, and halt, on crutches and stilts, surrounded the splendid Cathedral, impeded the way and supplicated alms, which Andiol distributed largely to the right and left. A blind old man distinguished himself by the activity with which he pushed himself forward, and by the anxious supplications with which he entreated benevolence before all the rest; he would not quit the side of the Princess, but held up his hat constantly, and begged for a trifle. Andiol from time to time threw him a gold-piece, but before the blind man found it, a thievish neighbour stole it from him, and he resumed his entreaty. The Princess appeared to compassionate this unhappy old man; she suddenly took the purse from her companion, and gave it into the hand of the blind beggar: "Take," said she, "good old man, the blessing which a noble knight bestows on thee, through me, and pray for the health of his soul."

Andiol was horrified to such a degree at this exercise of liberality at his expense, that he was quite confounded, and made a movement with his hand as if to recover the purse, at which apparent avarice the attentive suite broke forth into loud laughter. At this his emotion was only greater; yet he was so fearful of injuring his reputation, that he went with the Princess on his arm into the Cathedral, and concealed his deep grief as well as he could till the mass was sung. Afterwards he inquired industriously after the beggar, and promised great rewards for an old coin, which, according to his representation, was a rare cabinet-piece. But no one could tell him whither the beggar had disappeared; as soon as the purse was in his hands, he vanished, and was no more seen. The *seeing* blind man in fact could have been found only in the antechamber of the Princess Urraca, where he awaited her return; for he was her court buffoon, whom she had disguised as a blind beggar in order to obtain possession of the hatching penny, which to her great joy she found in the purse, which her agent faithfully made over to her:

The most crafty of women now found herself, through her arts, in possession of all the magic gifts of the three esquires, who

bemoaned and wept their loss inconsolably, and despairingly tore their hair and beards; she, however, proudly triumphed at the success of her cunning, and troubled herself no farther about the three unlucky wretches.

The first thing which she undertook, was to try whether the miraculous gifts would exercise their powers in the hand of a new possessor. Her trial succeeded to her wish; the table-napkin yielded its dish at her command, the copper penny produced ducats, and under the veil of the thumbstall she went unseen past the watch in the antechamber, into the apartments of her ladies.

With a joyously-beating heart she made projects for the most dazzling scenes, which she hoped to execute, and her darling wish was to change herself into a lovely fairy. She had the ingenuity to discover a new theory as to these puzzling ladies, even the accurate knowledge of whom is concealed from the beings of this world. What is a fairy, thought she, but the possessor of one or more magic secrets through which are wrought the wonders which appear to elevate them above the lot of mortals? And can I not, by the aid of this concealed power, qualify myself for one of the first of fairies? Her sole remaining wish was to possess a car drawn by dragons, or a team of butterflies, since the way through the air appeared yet closed to her. Still she flattered herself that this privilege would not be denied to her when she should be received into the community of fairies; she hoped easily to find an agreeable sister who would exchange with her such an airy equipage for one of her miraculous gifts. All night long she amused herself with agreeable castles in the air, to surprise handsome youths, to tease them invisibly, to drive them out of their wits, to plague them with the torments of love, and then to elude their grasp, &c. &c. Yet the new fairy felt a substantial want ere she could venture to go forth with a proper air on her adventures; she wanted first a well-furnished fairy wardrobe. With the earliest morning which followed a watchful night, in which her lively imagination had arranged the whole stock of fairy ornaments, from the flag-feather to the heel of the lowly shoe, the assembled company of tailors in Astorga was summoned, as if the first masquerade was to be opened, or as if the most capricious theatrical princesses were to be waited on for an Opera Seria. Yet before these preparations were completed, an event took place which astonished the whole kingdom of the Asturias, and especially the lovely Urraca.

The long exertions of her mind had one night at length sent the idealized Princess to sleep, when she was suddenly awakened by a martial voice, and an officer of the watch commanded her to follow him without delay. The terrified lady fell from the clouds, knew not what to say or think, but began to expostulate with the warrior, who, putting aside his present function, was indeed very

good-looking, for which reason also, in bygone times, the honour of being visited by the fairies was attributed to him. After a strong appeal made in vain, the Princess perceived that she was the weaker, and must obey. "The King's will is a command for me," said she; "I follow you." As she said this, she went to her box, in order, as she pretended, to fling over her a cloak as a protection against the night air, but in truth to perform the trick of the thumbstall, and to disappear suddenly. But the captain had strict orders, and was rude enough to refuse this little compliance to the lovely prisoner. Neither prayers nor tears had any effect on the hard-hearted soldier; he seized her in his muscular arms, and carried her nimbly out of the chamber, of which justice immediately took possession, and caused it to be bolted up. Below, at the outer gate, stood a sedan borne by two mules, in which the weeping lady, in the most careless *négligé*, must needs take her seat; and now their route went by torchlight, silently and sadly, like a midnight funeral, through the solitary streets and out at the gate, to a distance of twelve miles, to a sequestered convent well walled round, where the tearful prisoner was locked up in a frightful cell, forty fathoms below the earth.

King Garsias had, since the disagreeable feast-day, on which his food had disappeared from the dish, been so ill-humoured, that nothing could be done with him. One half of his ministers and attendants had incurred his displeasure, and the other half, fearing the same fate, sought most industriously to drive away this splenetic paroxysm. For this purpose, many expedients were proposed; among the rest a hunting-party, which had the preference, as a means of diversion. It did not effect, however, what was hoped from it. The King could not get over the disappearance of the *chef d'œuvre* of cookery, and hinted intelligibly his opinion that this vanishing had not happened in a lawful manner; nay, he even, contrary to his usual confidence, expressed a suspicion of the bad sin of magic against the Princess. Other suspicious circumstances, also, came to light, and as Urraca had at court a large party of enemies, they no sooner perceived in what point of view the King now appeared to view her, than the spirit of cabal delayed not to employ this opportunity for the destruction of her good name.

A court-commission was now unceasingly employed in hunting through the effects of this unhappy Princess, in order to discover proofs of magic—perhaps a talisman, with magic characters, or even a contract with the wicked enemy, or a copy of such a contract. All her jewels, and other valuables, as well as all the fairy preparations, were faithfully noted down; but notwithstanding all the trouble employed, weak-minded justice could discover nothing which appeared to have any connexion with enchantment. The actual "*corpus delicti*," the booty of Ro-

land's companions had so insignificant and unsuspicious an appearance, that they did not even deign to catalogue these magic treasures. The valuable napkin only served the unconscious secretary of justice as a cloth with which to wipe up the black stream from an overthrown inkstand; the miraculous thumbstall, — the noble vehicle of invisibility, — and the rich-making copper penny, were thrown aside as useless rubbish. What became of the fair Urraca, in the dismal cloister in which she was immured, if she was sentenced to a life-long penitence, or has ever again seen the light of day, as well as if the three magic secrets were destroyed by mould, rust, and decay, or were snatched by some fortunate hand from the rubbish and heaps of sweepings to which all the goods of the earth fall for preservation, on this subject the old legend preserves a profound silence. Fate ought properly to have caused the fruitful napkin, or the augmenting penny to fall into the hands of a starving virtuous man, languishing with a ravenous family on the profits of his hard labour, and having only tears when the young ravens cried for bread. And the gift of invisibility might well have been the portion of a pining grieving lover, whose maiden a father's tyranny, or a mother's despotism, had shut up in some strong castle, that he might deliver his beloved from her strait confinement, and unite himself inseparably with her. But such things, in the common course of this lower world, are not always to be expected.

After the loss of all the gifts of the generous Mother Druid, the plundered owners quietly departed from Astorga. Amarin, who, without his table-napkin, could not properly fill the office of head master of the kitchen, was the first to depart; Andiol followed him on foot. Since the great facility of acquiring his money had taught him the usual aversion to work of rich gluttons, he was too lazy to turn his penny in proportion to his expenses, but lived on credit, and was accustomed only to fill his coffers when the weather was bad, or when he had no party of pleasure. Now he was without the means of satisfying his creditors. He, however, changed his dress without delay, and disappeared from their sight. As soon as Sarron awoke from his death-like sleep, and perceived that he had ceased to play the Fairy King, he crept home despondingly, collected his old equipments, and took immediately the first straight road to the gate.

Chance so contrived it, that all Roland's squires again met in the high-road to Castile. Instead of annoying each other with useless reproaches, which could now in no wise better their condition, they bore their lot with resignation. Its similarity, and the unexpected meeting, immediately revived the old bond of companionship; and the wise Sarron made the remark, that the lot of friendship falls only to the golden mean, and is with difficulty united with great talents, or fortune.

Hereupon the three comrades unanimously agreed to go forth on their way, to return again to a course of honourable duty, in following their first profession under Castilian colours, and to avenge the death of Roland on the Saracens. They soon found themselves at the goal of their desires, their swords drank the Saracen's blood in the tumult of the battle-field. They led a long and honourable life of warfare, and, at last, crowned with the palms of victory, they died together the death of heroes.

LEGENDS OF RÜBEZAHL.

Legend the First.

UPON the summit of the oftimes, yet but indifferently, sung Giant Mountains, the Parnassus of Silesia, there dwelt in peaceful union with Apollo and his nine muses, the renowned mountain spirit Rübezahl, who, without doubt, has conferred upon these mountains more celebrity than all the Silesian poets put together.

This prince of gnomes, it is true, possessed but a small territory on the surface of the earth, its extent measuring in circumference only a few miles, shut in by a chain of hills: and even this small domain had to be shared by two other mighty monarchs, who did not condescend to own his sovereignty. A few fathoms, however, under ground, he reigned sole master, no one there being able to trench upon his dominion, which extended eight hundred and sixty miles into the depths of the earth, even to its very centre.

It sometimes pleased this subterranean prince to traverse his wide-spread domain in the dark abyss, that he might behold the inexhaustible treasure chambers of rocks and strata, observe how his subjects gnomes were getting on, and give them something to do; at times employing them in making dykes to stem the fire stream which flowed in the interior of the earth, or in bathing in metallic vapour the sterile stone, until it became transformed into noble ore. Then, freeing himself from the cares of his underworld government, at other times he would ascend, for relaxation, to his frontier castle, and there dwell on the Giant Mountains, and amuse himself with making sport of the children of men: like a mischievous merrymaker, who, in order to laugh, terrifies his neighbour to death.

For Rübezahl, it must be known, resembles a man of powerful genius, and is capricious, stormy, and singular; rude, rough, proud, vain, and changeable; to-day one of the warmest of friends, to-morrow cold and reserved. Sometimes good natured, noble, and feeling, but by and by contradicting himself: wise and foolish, soft one minute and hard in another, like an egg which falls into boiling water; roguish and honest, obstinate and yielding;—just according to the mood of his inward humour at the time when he happens to come across some person or thing.

In ancient times, before the posterity of Japheth had penetrated

so far northwards as to make the country habitable, Rübezahl, already stormed in the wild mountain, roused bears and buffaloes until they fought with each other, or frightened with dreadful uproar the timid deer, driving them down from the steep precipice into the deep valley. At length, wearied of this hunting, he again departed to the regions of the lower world, and rested there a few centuries, until the wish arose once more to lay himself down in the sun, and to enjoy the view of the upper world. What was his surprise, when, on one of these visits, and looking around from the snowy summit of the Giant Mountains, he beheld the whole landscape changed! The dim impervious forests were all hewn down and converted into fruitful fields, where the rich grain was ripening. Amidst orchards of fruit-trees, full of blossom, arose the straw-thatched roofs of thriving villages, and the curling smoke peacefully ascended from many a chimney; here and there on the declivity of a hill stood a solitary fastness, as the defence and protection of the place. In the flowery meadows sheep and oxen pastured, and in the verdant copse were heard the melodious tones of the pipe.

The novelty of the scene, and the agreeableness of its first appearance, delighted the astonished prince of the domain so much, that he had no desire to interrupt the occupation or existence of these self-constituted intruding planters, who were thus labouring here without his permission; so he allowed them quietly to rest in possession of their usurped property, as a kind householder permits the social swallow, or even the troublesome sparrow, to rest beneath his roof. It even came into his mind that he would make the acquaintance of men—that strange race, that mixture of animal and spirit; that he would mingle in their society, and examine their nature and manners. For this purpose he assumed the form of a stout countryman, and hired himself as a labourer to a most respectable farmer. Whatever he took in hand prospered, and Rips, the ploughman, was considered the best labourer in the village. But his master was a glutton and a drunkard, who squandered away the wages of his faithful servant, and gave him little thanks for his trouble and labour; Rips therefore left him, and went to his neighbour, who gave him his flock of sheep to take care of. He guarded them diligently, drove them to solitary places and steep hills, where the best grass grew. The flock throve and increased wonderfully: no sheep tumbled over the rocks, and none were torn to pieces by the wolf. However, this master turned out a miser, who did not reward his good servant as he deserved; he himself stole the best ram out of the flock, and then kept the value of it from the wages of the shepherd. Upon this, Rips took leave of the greedy fellow, and entered the service of the judge; became the scourge of the thief, and laboured most zealously in the cause of justice. But the judge was a wicked man; turned aside from what was just; judged according to

favour, and despised right. As Rips would not be the instrument of unrighteousness, he refused his services to the judge, and, in consequence, was thrown into prison, out of which, however, in the usual way of spirits, he easily made his escape by the key-hole.

It was impossible that this first attempt in the study of mankind could make a favourable impression upon him. He returned back in disgust to his rocky fortress, from thence beheld the smiling plain which human industry had made beautiful, and wondered that mother nature could lend her gifts to such a heartless brood. Notwithstanding this, he again ventured on a journey into the plain, to resume the study of humanity.

His next adventure was a love one. He became enamoured of the fair Princess Emma, the daughter of the King of Silesia, whom he once accidentally fell in with as she strolled about, among the woods and streams of her father's domain, with her attendant maidens. He forthwith determined upon an abduction, and one day, when the fair princess had wandered further than usual, and was reclining alone under the shade of a spreading tree, he carried her off, and had arrived with her in his subterraneous palace long before her attendants had discovered their loss. The affair caused great consternation and grief to her father and his whole court, but especially to the young Prince Ratibor, the betrothed of the fair Emma. Long and anxious were their searches after the lost one, but in vain.

Meantime the object of their anxiety was not so uncomfortable as might have been supposed. Her apartments in the gnome's palace were truly magnificent, and contained everything she could wish for, while the gnome himself, having taken the form of a handsome young man, knelt at her feet, and offered up to her his vows of ardent devotion.

Observing that his lovely idol languished for society, the obliging gnome presented her with a basket of fresh and full-grown turnips, giving her at the same time a silver wand, by means of which she metamorphosed these vegetables into well-dressed and well-bred courtiers. Enchanted with her imposing retinue, the Princess Emma would now roam through every crook and cranny of her subterraneous dwelling, and, when tired of exploring its numerous halls and chambers, pace every alley and shady walk of the spacious garden, throughout which reigned a perpetual spring.

But, alas! even in a fairy land it would appear that nothing is certain but change. It surpassed the art even of a courtier to conceal the ravages of a decay which too plainly advanced with rapid strides. The Princess, in fact, beheld her graceful retinue gradually sinking into a company of old and withered hags, with tottering feet and trembling arms; and, in a fit of high indignation, she ordered them all from her presence, and ran to lay her grievances

before her lover. The complaisant sprite explained to her, that as soon as the juice of the turnip was dried up, the vegetable became utterly worthless, and its functions extinct.

The fair Emma, finding that she was again to be doomed to solitude, first complained, and then wept; and so powerful are the tears of a lovely woman, that, not even a gnome could withstand them. He protested that he would explore every inch of his subterraneous domain in quest of another supply of turnips suited to her purpose; but his exertions were fruitless. Delicious fruits and fragrant flowers he found in abundance; but though he would willingly have exchanged a whole bushel of the golden apples of the Hesperides for a single turnip, not one could he procure. He then determined to ransack his dominions over-head; but what was his dismay, on emerging from below, to find the icy sceptre of winter extended over the whole earth, and not even a blade of grass penetrating through the deep masses of snow!

In this dilemma, there was nothing left for our dejected lover but to assume the appearance of a countryman, walk into the nearest village, and purchase a sackful of turnip-seed, which he laid at the feet of his beautiful tyrant. Provoked and disappointed, she now loaded him with reproaches, ridiculed the idea of his possessing such boasted power of transmutation, and cut him to the heart by sarcasms on his inability to perform what he had undertaken; in short, she raised such a storm as any one, save a lover, would have fled from. But the gnome stood his ground; and the lovely Emma at last consented to accompany him to the garden, to see him sow the seed from which her future happiness was to arise. The gnome set instantly to work, and in a few moments innumerable uprooted myrtles, hyacinths, and carnations strewed the ground. So eager indeed was Emma to forward the work of extermination, that she laid her dignity aside, and assisted her lover to tear up whole beds of her once-loved flowers, and to sow the much-valued substitutes in their place. To watch the progress of the turnip-field, was her occupation morning, noon, and night; and there at sunrise or sunset her lover never failed to find her. He rejoiced at it, for she never listened so complacently to his suit as when so engaged.

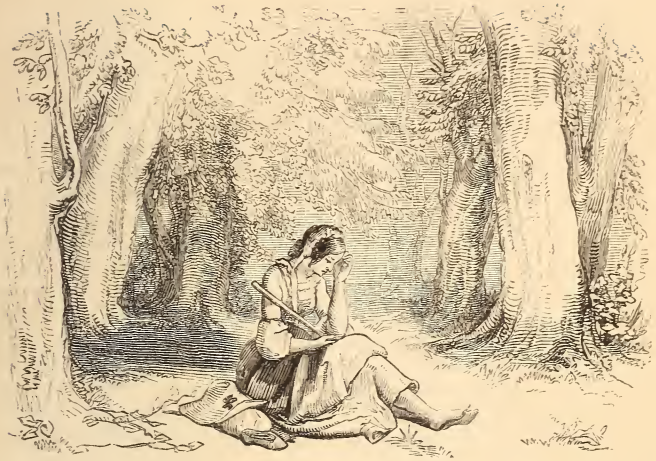
Gradually the young plants increased in size and beauty, and gradually the coldness and reserve of the princess began to give way, until at length she consented to be his—but on one condition. "My marriage," said she to her enraptured lover, "shall not be without witnesses; go, then, and count every turnip in the field; I shall animate every one of them; for take care that you count them correctly, for if you miss but one of them, my promise shall be withdrawn." So enchanted was the gnome, that he would not have scrupled to count the sands of the sea-shore. The counting of a field of turnips, therefore, appeared a small affair; and Emma having retired into the palace not to disturb his calcu-

lations, he immediately began his task. But this he soon found was no such easy matter. Hour after hour did our lover labour at his task; at length it was accomplished, and he hurried to the palace. There a dead silence reigned. "I shall find her in the garden, gathering flowers for the bridal wreath," said the gnome; but in vain did he make the groves resound with the loved name of Emma—echo alone answered him, as if in mockery. A sudden suspicion came across him; he darted upwards, and in another instant stood upon the surface of the earth. Unhappy sprite, what a heart-rending scene did he now behold! There was his loved Emma, mounted on a steed swifter than the wind, flying to her former lover, Prince Ratibor, who rapidly approached her. He now comprehended the whole extent of his misfortune. The deceitful Emma had abstracted one of the turnips, metamorphosed it into a fiery courser, and had nearly attained the boundary of his territory, beyond which he had no power. "Ah, traitress! you shall not escape me," exclaimed the indignant gnome, as he darted after the flying fair one. Furious the gnome laid hold of two clouds which were near him, dashed them with a hideous crash against each other, and sent after the fugitive a flash of lightning, which shivered in a thousand pieces a massive oak tree, which for ages had marked the boundary of his dominions. The boundary, however, the princess had luckily just passed, and beyond that Rübezahl was powerless.

The deserted spirit rent the air with his cries, and plunged down to his subterraneous dominions, there to bewail his disappointment, and to lament his ill-fortune. In his rage he stamped his feet, and in a moment the magic palace disappeared, while the gnome betook himself once more to his former solitary abode in the centre of the earth, with a heart still more embittered against the inhabitants of this upper earth.

The report of the strange adventure of the princess, and the ingenious device by which she effected her escape, was soon spread abroad throughout her father's kingdom, and in all the surrounding country, and it became a tradition, which descended from generation to generation, until at last the common people were accustomed to give the gnome, for want of a better, the name of *Rübezahl*, or the *Turnip Counter;* thus perpetuating in the most lasting manner the memory of his unlucky mishap.

Legend the Second.



P. 155.

THE displeased gnome had, as we have seen, left the upper world with the determination never again to behold the light of day; but beneficent Time gradually effaced the effects of his grief, although the tedious operation of healing his wound required not less than nine hundred and ninety-nine years. At length, when sadly oppressed by heaviness and ennui, and in a very bad humour, his favourite jester in the lower region—a merry frolicksome cobold—proposed one day a pleasure trip to the Giant Mountains, to which proposal his Highness most readily acceded. There needed no longer time than a minute, and the distant journey was accomplished. He found himself at once in the midst of his old pleasure grounds, to which he imparted its former appearance of verdure; invisible, however, to human eyes,—for the wanderers who crossed the mountains saw nothing but a gloomy wilderness. The sight of these objects, still viewed through the rosy light of his old love, renewed the whole remembrance of his bygone courtship; and his adventure with the beautiful Emma appeared as an event of yesterday; her image floated as vividly before his eyes as if she were indeed beside him. But, when he remembered how she had outwitted and deceived him, his wrath against the whole human race was again excited. "Miserable worms of the earth!" he exclaimed, as he looked up and beheld from the high mountains the steeples

of the churches and convents, the towns and villages; "you are still at your old work below, in the valley: greatly have ye teased me by your deceit and knavery, but now will I plague and torment you in such a way that the doings of the spirit of the Mountain shall make you quail."

Scarcely were these words pronounced, when he heard in the distance human voices. Three young journeymen were passing over the mountain, the boldest among them incessantly crying out, "Rübezahl, come down! Rübezahl, thou maiden stealer, come hither."

From time immemorial gossip had faithfully preserved, by oral tradition, the love adventure of the spirit of the Mountain; embellished, as is usual in such cases, with many lying additions, and the tale had become the subject with which all travellers amused themselves as they passed over the mountains. Innumerable were the dreadful stories of things which had never happened, yet were sufficient to frighten the timid; whilst the stronger-minded wits, and philosophers, who, in broad daylight and in company, had no faith whatever in spectres, and, indeed, ridiculed the idea, were in the habit, in order to prove their courage, of citing the spirit to appear; calling him in their folly by his nickname, and even at times abusing him. The peaceful Mountain Spirit had never been known to take any notice of such liberties; for, indeed, in the depths of his abode he had never heard one word of this audacious mockery. The more, therefore, was he astonished when he now heard the whole chronicle of his misfortunes thus briefly and convincingly shouted out.

As the storm wind he flew through the dark pine forest, with the intention of strangling the unhappy wight who, without meaning any harm, had amused himself at his expense. But it occurred all at once to the spirit that such a cruel revenge would excite much disturbance in the country, banish all visitors from the mountains, and deprive him of the opportunity of having his sport with them. He, therefore, permitted the trespasser and his companions to continue their way unmolested, reserving him for some marked and more appropriate punishment.

The offender parted with his friends at the next crossway, and reached, for the present, his native town, Hirschberg, with a whole skin. But Rübezahl had followed him unperceived to the inn, in order to know where again, at a convenient time, to find him. He now returned to his mountains, meditating how he best could avenge himself. By accident, he met on the road a rich Jew, whose steps were bent towards Hirschberg, and it struck him at once to make him the instrument of accomplishing his end. He took the form and dress of the merry fellow who had mocked him, entered into friendly conversation with the Jew, and imperceptibly led him into a bye-path, where he seized

him furiously by his beard, knocked him down, beat him, and robbed him of his purse, which contained a great deal of money and many jewels. After having kicked him with his feet, and beaten him with his hands by way of addition, he then left the poor plundered Jew half dead and despairing of life, in the midst of the bushes.

When the Israelite had somewhat recovered from his fright, and felt that life was still in him, he began to lament, and call loudly for assistance, fearing he would perish in the solitude. A very respectable-looking man now came up to him, a citizen apparently from one of the neighbouring towns; asked the reason of the clamour, and when he found him tied, loosened the bands from his hands and feet, and acted in every way the part of the Samaritan. He then led him to the high road, and accompanied him courteously until they reached Hirschberg; and at the door of an inn, the stranger parted with him, after giving him sufficient money to defray the expense of a meal. What was the astonishment of the Jew when he entered the parlour of the inn, and beheld the very person who had robbed him sitting at the table as free and easy as a person only can be who is unconscious of having done any evil. There stood before him a pint of the wine of the country, and he amused himself in all manner of ways with a few other merry companions beside him. Beside him was the identical wallet into which he had seen him thrust the stolen purse. The amazed Jew could scarcely trust his eyes; he withdrew into a corner, and took counsel with himself how to recover his lost property. It seemed impossible to be mistaken as to the person; he, therefore, quietly slipped out at the door, went to the magistrate, and offered his *thief-salutation*, (Diebesgruss).[1]

The Hirschberg magistrates and officials were at that time famed for their speedy administration of justice, when they were assured of their fees, and there was something to defray expenses; but, when they were to do their duty "ex officio," and no perquisites were to be had, here, as elsewhere, they went at a snail's pace. The experienced Israelite was well aware of this, and when he saw the magistrate hesitating to make out the warrant he alluded to the glittering "*corpus delicti*," and this golden hope soon expedited the matter. Policemen, armed with halberts and spears, surrounded the inn, seized the guiltless criminal, and brought him to the bar of justice, where the wise administrators had in the interim assembled.

"Who art thou?" asked the severe judge, when the defendant was brought in; "and from whence dost thou come?"

"I am an honest tailor by trade," answered the youth, freely, and undismayed: "my name is Benedix; I come from Liebenau and am now at work here with my master."

[1] An old law term for the legal information given of a robbery.

"Hast thou not murderously attacked this Jew in the wood; beaten, bound him, and robbed him of his purse?"

"I have never seen this Jew with my eyes," answered the tailor; "neither have I beaten him, bound him, or robbed him of his purse: I belong to an honest guild, and am no highwayman."

"How canst thou prove thy respectability?"

"By my passport, and the testimony of my good conscience."

"Bring forth thy passport."

Benedix cheerfully opened the wallet, well knowing that it contained nothing but what he had honestly earned. But as he emptied it, alas! underneath the trifles which fell out was heard the rattling of gold. The policemen quickly laid hold of it, and drew forth the heavy purse, which the Jew, with great delight, claimed as his own, "deductis deducendis;" that is, with the exception of what was to go into the pockets of the magistrate and other officials.

Poor Benedix stood as if thunderstruck, almost sinking with horror; his face became pale, his lips quivered, his knees shook; to speak was impossible. The judge's brow darkened; his threatening countenance foreboded a severe sentence.

"How now, criminal," thundered the high-bailiff; "art thou still daring enough to deny the robbery?"

"Be merciful, dread judge!" whined the unhappy culprit, on his knees, and with up-raised hands. "I take all the Saints to witness that I am innocent of the robbery; neither do I know how the purse of the Jew came into my wallet. Heaven only knows."

"Thou art convicted," resumed the judge; "the purse is sufficient proof; and now, in honour to God and to justice, confess openly the truth, before the torturer comes to wring it from your lips."

The terrified Benedix could do nothing except insist that he was innocent; but he preached to deaf ears. He was thought a hardened thief, who denied his crime in order to save his neck. Master Hammerling, the stern investigator of truth, was called in, to induce our poor tailor, by the eloquence of his iron argument, to confess, for the honour of God and the law, that he deserved death. The joyful support of a good conscience now entirely forsook the unfortunate youth, and he trembled before the torments which awaited him. As the torturer was on the point of applying the thumb-screw, he reflected that this operation would for ever incapacitate him from handling his needle with honour; and rather than be a mere quack in his trade all his life, he thought it would be as well to be done with it at once; and thus he confessed himself guilty of a horrible crime, of which his heart knew nothing. The trial was immediately brought to an end; the culprit condemned to be hanged; and the sentence to be

carried into execution early next morning, for the sake of rendering speedy justice as well as to spare the expense of keeping the prisoner.

All the spectators, who had been allured by the sittings of the high tribunal, found the sentence most wise and just; but none exceeded the merciful Samaritan in his applause, who had likewise found his way into the court. He seemed at a loss for words wherewith to extol the love of justice exhibited by the Lords of Hirschberg. In fact, no one had taken such deep interest in the affair as this friend of humanity, who had himself put the Jew's purse into the wallet of the journeyman, and was none other than our friend Rübezahl.

Early next morning he waited, in the shape of a raven, near the gallows, for the funeral procession which was to accompany the victim of his revenge. Already he felt the ravenous desire to pick out his eyes; but for this time he was disappointed. A worthy Monk who was employed to prepare Benedix for death, in order the better to effect his pious design, petitioned the court for three days' delay, and at length succeeded in obtaining it from the magistrate, though not without great trouble, and after many threats of excommunication. When Rübezahl heard this he flew to the mountains there to await the time of the execution.

In passing through the forests, as was his custom, he discovered a young girl resting underneath a shady tree. Her head supported by a snow-white arm, drooped heavily on her bosom; her dress was not rich, but neat, and in the fashion patronized by citizens' daughters. From time to time she wiped a tear from her cheek, and sighed deeply. The gnome had once before felt the mighty effect of a maiden's tears: even now he was so much touched by them that he deviated, for the first time, from the law he had laid down to himself, to annoy and torment all the children of Adam who came near the mountains. The softening feelings of compassion awakened in him the desire to comfort the distressed beauty. He again took the form of a respectable citizen; approached the young girl, and said, "Maiden, why dost thou mourn so lonely in this desolate place? Hide not thy grief from me, that I may know how thou canst be helped."

The maiden, absorbed in sadness, was startled at the sound of these words, and looked up. Her soft blue eyes, with their half-broken light, might have melted a heart of steel; clear tears shone in them like diamonds; her fair, pure, nunlike countenance, wore an expression of sorrow and grief which seemed to impart an additional charm to her natural loveliness. When she saw the respectable citizen standing before her, she opened her ruby lips, and said: "What is my grief to you, good sir, since nothing can help me? I am a wretch, a murderess; I have destroyed the one I most love, and must expiate my crime in tears and sorrow until death shall break my heart."

At this the honourable man was astonished. "Thou a murderess!" he exclaimed; "with such a heavenly face, does wickedness dwell in thy heart? Impossible! Mankind are, indeed, capable of all sorts of deceit and evil; but this is a riddle to me."

"I will solve it for you, if you wish," replied the disconsolate maiden.

"Do so," answered Rübezahl.

"From my early childhood I had a playfellow, the son of a virtuous widow, a neighbour of ours, who, when he grew up, wooed me for his bride. He was so good and kind, so faithful and true, his love so constant and pure, that he won my heart, and I vowed perpetual faith. Alas! the mind of the beloved youth I have poisoned, adder-like; I made him forget the virtuous precepts of his good mother, and have induced him to commit a crime for which he has forfeited his life."

The gnome exclaimed, emphatically, "Thou!"

"Yes," she replied, "I am his murderess; I have caused him to commit highway robbery; to plunder some knavish Jew: the Lords of Hirschberg have laid hold of him, tried him; and, alas! alas! to-morrow is the day appointed for his execution."

"And this has been caused by thee?" asked Rübezahl, wonderingly.

"Yes, sir; his young blood lies on my conscience."

"How so?"

"When his apprenticeship was done, in order to improve in his trade, he went over the mountains to visit the towns; at the hour of parting, when taking the last farewell, he said, 'Sweet love, be true to me. When the apple-tree shall blossom for the third time, and the swallow prepare its nest, I shall return from my wanderings, to bring thee home as my young bride.' And I faithfully promised to keep my vow. Now the apple-tree blossoms for the third time, the swallow is building its nest, and Benedix did return, reminded me of my promise, and sought to lead me to the altar. But I teazingly mocked him, as sometimes maidens do their lovers. I said, 'I cannot be thy bride, for thou hast neither house nor money; and my little chamber is too small for two. First get bright coins, and then come and ask again.' At these words the poor youth became very sad. 'Ah, Clara!' he sighed, with tears in his eyes, 'carest thou for nothing but riches and gold? then art thou no longer the faithful maiden thou wert wont to be! Didst thou not grasp this hand, and pledge thy word to be true and faithful? And what had I then more than this hand, wherewith to support thee? From what proceeds thy pride and vain desires? Alas, Clara! I understand; a richer wooer has turned thy heart away from me. Is it thus that thou rewardest me, thou faithless one! Three such years have I spent in tedious languor for this hour, when I was to come and claim thee as my bride! How were my steps winged with joy and hope as I came

over the mountains; and now thou rejectest me!' He earnestly entreated more and more; but I was firm in my determination.

"'My heart does not reject thee, Benedix,' I replied; 'it is only my hand which for the present I withhold. Away! make more money! and when thou hast been successful, return, and then I shall become thy wife.'

"'Well,' said he in anger, 'since this is thy will, I go into the world. I shall run, beg, borrow, become a miser, steal, or do any thing; so that thou shalt not again see me until I have obtained the vain price, without which I am not to have thee. Farewell! I go.'

"In this way did I bewilder the poor Benedix; he departed in wrath; his good angel left him; he did what was not right; and what his heart, I am certain, abhorred."

The worthy citizen shook his head at this speech; and after a pause, with a thoughtful look, he exclaimed, "Wonderful!" and turned towards the maiden. "But why," he asked, "dost thou fill the forest with thy lamentations, which can be of no avail either to thy lover or to thyself?"

"Good sir," she replied, "I was on my way to Hirschberg, but sorrow so oppressed me, that I was obliged to rest for a time under this tree."

"And what wilt thou do in Hirschberg?"

"I will fall at the feet of the judge, fill the town with my lamentations, and the daughters of the city will aid me in imploring the judge to be merciful, to have compassion, and spare the life of the innocent youth. Should I not succeed in saving my betrothed from ignominious death, then will I gladly die with him."

The spirit was so much touched by these words, that he forgot all at once his revenge, and resolved to give the young sorrowing girl her lover again. "Dry up thy tears," he said, with a look of sympathy, "and banish thy grief. Before the sun sinks to rest thy lover shall be free. To-morrow morning, when the first cock crows, be awake and watchful, and when a finger taps at thy window, open the door of thy little chamber, for it will be Benedix who stands there; but, beware of bewildering him again by thy folly: know, likewise, that he has not committed the crime of which thou believest him guilty, and thou, too, art free from sin, for thy wilfulness did not induce him to perpetrate so foul a deed."

The maiden, astonished at this speech, gazed earnestly at the speaker, but as his countenance bore neither the expression of deceit, nor of waggishness, she gained confidence, her clouded brow brightened up, and she said, with a kind of cheerful hesitation, "Good sir, if you do not mock me, and it be as you say, then must you be a seer, or the guardian angel of my poor lover, to know all this so well."

"His guardian angel!" said Rübezahl, somewhat confused, "truly I am not; but I may become so, and thou shalt hear how. I am a citizen of Hirschberg, and was one of the council when the poor fellow was convicted; but his innocence has been brought to light, and fear not for his life. I shall go and free him from his bonds, for I have much influence in the town. Be comforted, and return home in peace."

The maiden did as she was bidden, though fear and hope still struggled in her heart.

The pious Monk was just leaving the dungeon, and for the last time had wished the inconsolable criminal good night, when Rübezahl met him at the entrance, invisible of course, and still quite undecided how he should restore the poor tailor to liberty, without depriving the great ones of Hirschberg of the pleasure of exercising their ancient prerogatives of criminal jurisdiction; for the magistrates had won from Rübezahl golden opinions, by their prompt administration of justice. Suddenly, he hit upon a plan which was quite to his mind. He quietly followed the monk to his cloister, took a robe, and appeared again with a grey cassock at the door of the prison, which the jailer most respectfully opened to him.

"My anxiety for thy welfare," he began, "brings me once more here, though I had but scarcely left thee. Say on, my son, does there yet remain any thing burthening thy breast, for which I may be able to comfort thee? Dost thou still think of Clara? dost thou still love her as thy bride? If thou hast any message to send her before thy death, confide it to me."

Benedix was still more astonished when he heard that name. The memory of his love, which he had most conscientiously laboured to suppress, now rushed so impetuously into his heart, that he wept and sobbed aloud, and was utterly incapable of pronouncing a single word. This heart-rending sight excited the compassion of our kind monk to such a degree, that he was resolved to bring the matter at once to an end.

"Poor Benedix," he said, "be calm and undismayed; thou shalt not die. I have been informed that thou art guiltless of the robbery, and that thy hand is unsoiled by crime; I am, therefore, come to deliver thee from prison, and to free thee from thy chains." He then took a key from his pocket. "Let us see whether it can unlock these doors." The attempt was successful; the prisoner was unchained; the fetters had fallen from his hands and feet. The good-natured seeming Monk then exchanged dresses with him, and said, "Go, and walk through the crowd of jailers and turnkeys, and along the streets, demurely as a monk; then, when thou hast left the town and its jurisdiction behind thee, hasten towards the mountains, and do not rest until thou reachest Liebenau, and Clara's door: knock softly,—there thy bride anxiously awaits thy coming."

Our honest Benedix fancied it was all a dream; he rubbed his eyes, pinched his legs and arms, to see whether he was awake or asleep, and when he saw how matters really were, he embraced the knees of his deliverer, and rested in mute joy, for not a word could he say. The good-hearted monk forced him away, giving him, for his journey, a loaf of bread and a sausage. With tottering steps the youth passed the threshold of the melancholy prison, dreading every moment to be recognised.

Clara in the meanwhile sat sadly thinking in her little chamber, listening to every movement caused by the wind, and watching the footsteps of every passer by. It often seemed to her as if the window shutters were rattling, or as if she heard a knock; her heart beat; she looked out, but was disappointed.

The cocks in the neighbourhood already shook their feathers, and announced by their crowing the coming day. The bell of the monastery sounded for early matins, which was to her like a death-knell.

The watchman blew his horn for the last time to awaken the sleeping housemaids to their early day's work. Clara's lamp began to burn dimly, now deficient in oil; her anxiety increased every moment, and did not permit her to perceive the beautiful rose which, as a propitious omen, gleamed up from the glimmering wick. She sat on her bedstead, wept bitterly, and sighed, "Benedix, Benedix, what a sorrowful day for thee and for me is now dawning." She ran towards the window :—alas, blood-red seemed the sky in the direction of Hirschberg, and dark clouds like crape and mournful drapery floated over the horizon. She shuddered at this ominous sight, and fell into a gloomy reverie: the silence of death was around her.

From this she was aroused by three soft taps at the window; a shiver ran through her veins; she jumped up, gave a loud cry, for a voice whispered through the opening, "Dearest love, art thou awake?" "Ah, Benedix! is it thyself or thy spirit?" she exclaimed, rushing quickly to the door; but when she saw the friar, she sunk down, almost dying with horror. His faithful arm, however, soon raised her up, and the kiss of affection (that great remedy for all sorts of hysterics) brought her speedily back to life again.

When the surprise was over, and the first effusion of feeling had somewhat subsided, Benedix related his wonderful escape from the prison; but his tongue clove to his mouth from thirst and fatigue. Clara brought him some fresh water, after drinking which he felt hungry. She had nothing to give him, save the usual panacea of lovers, bread and salt, with which they at times too hastily make a vow to be contented and happy all the days of their life. Benedix now thought of his sausage, took it from his pocket, amazed to find it heavier than a horse's shoe. He broke it open, and behold pure gold pieces fell out of it, at which Clara

was much frightened, thinking it was a shameless relic of the shocking robbery of the Jew, and that Benedix, after all, was not so innocent as the respectable citizen, who met her on the mountain, had made her believe.

But when the honest fellow assured her that the good Monk had given him the secret treasure, probably as a marriage gift, she was satisfied.

Both blessed with grateful hearts their generous benefactor, left the place and went to Prague, where Master Benedix lived much respected with his wife Clara, and many sons and daughters.

The dread of punishment, however, had taken such deep root within him, that he always dealt fairly with his customers, and quite against the nature and the practice of his companions in the trade, he never clipped off the smallest piece of cloth entrusted to his care.

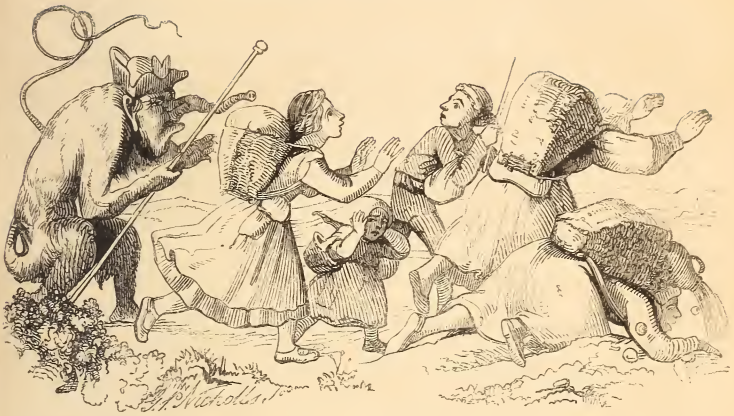
Early that same morning, when Clara shivering with joy, heard the knock of her lover at the window, a finger knocked likewise at the door of the jail at Hirschberg.

It was the worthy father himself, who came to accompany the criminal in his last hours. Rübezahl had undertaken to play the part of the culprit, and was determined to uphold that character throughout, in honour of the administration of justice.

And now the fatal sign was given, and Rübezahl subjected himself quietly to all the formalities which had to be gone through. By and by, however, he began to shake the rope about at such a rate that the executioner was frightened beyond measure; and the populace were becoming noisy, and some expressed a wish to stone him, for making the poor fellow suffer more than was needful. To prevent this, Rübezahl feigned to be dead. When the crowd had dispersed and only a few persons remained near to look on, the merry spirit began his play again, and terrified the beholders by making the most hideous grimaces. In consequence, a rumour was spread abroad towards evening that the criminal could not die, and was dancing on the place of execution.

The Senate was then induced to inquire into the matter, and early next morning commissioned a deputation for that purpose. When the commissioners arrived at the place of execution, they found nothing but a small bundle of straw covered with rags, such as people are wont to place in the fields or gardens to scare away dainty sparrows. At this, the officials of Hirschberg were greatly amazed; they thought it best, however, to burn the man of straw privately and bury his memory, at the same time spreading a report, that the strong wind during the night had blown the slender tailor far away over the boundaries of the town.

Legend the Third.



P. 161.

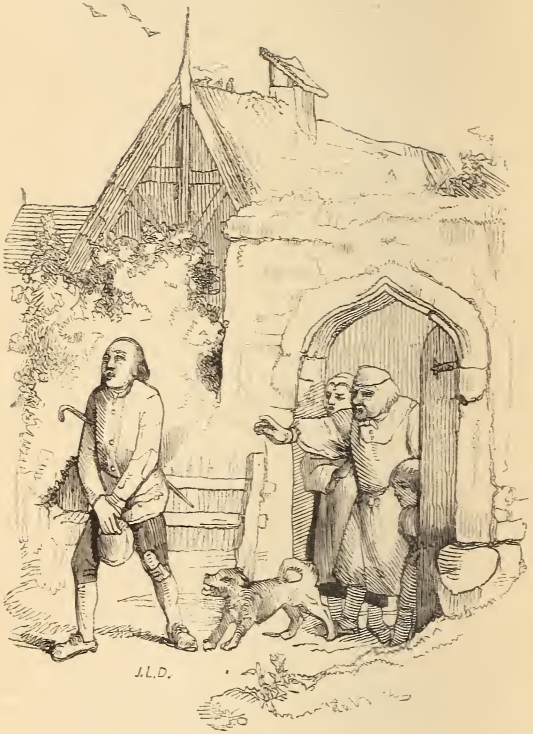
THE mountain spirit has not always been so ready to make amends to those upon whom he has played off his pranks, as in the case of honest Benedix: too often he has tormented the people with whom he came in contact, simply for the amusement of doing so, never heeding whether the poor sufferer were a worthy man or a rogue. Sometimes, in the garb of a peasant, he would join himself to a solitary traveller on his way, and, pretending to direct him the shortest way, would send him ever so far out of his road; and then, perhaps, like an ignis fatuus, leading him into a morass, he would reveal himself suddenly in his proper form and vanish, amidst a peal of laughter. Another favourite trick of his was to waylay the countrymen returning from market, and suddenly to appear before them, and chace them in the form of some frightful monster, till the poor creatures were almost terrified out of their wits. However, to the credit of Rübezahl, it may be said, that he was tolerably just in his dealings, and that when he inflicted punishment it was upon those who in reality deserved it.

But there was one crime which never failed to call down the vengeance of the Giant-lord, even if the culprit was in other respects ever so innocent and praiseworthy. This crime was no other than calling the Mountain Spirit by the name of Rübezahl, and there were, of course, good reasons why he had strictly forbidden

this cognomen. To have any chance, therefore, of being kindly treated by the gnome, it was necessary, above all things, to avoid this name, and to salute him respectfully as the "Lord of the Mountain."

Tradition tells, that there was once a physician who went to gather herbs on the Riesengebirg, and who was frequently joined by Rübezahl, sometimes in one guise, sometimes in another, and was very courteously assisted by him in his botanical researches. One day he appeared as a woodcutter, and began by professing to instruct the doctor in the properties and uses of various herbs, of which the latter had never before heard. The learned physician, however, did not quite relish the idea of a poor woodcutter knowing more of these subjects than himself, and he exclaimed, with some warmth, "Sirrah, do you pretend to teach a physician the knowledge of herbs? Well, now, since you are so wise, tell me whether came first—the oak or the acorn?" "The oak," answered the gnome, "for the fruit proceeds from the tree." "Fool," cried the physician, "how then came the first oak if not from an acorn, which is the germ of the tree?" "That," replied the woodcutter, very humbly, "is a question beyond me, and which I leave to wiser heads to resolve. But let me also put a question to you. Who is the proprietor of this piece of ground where we now are? The King of Silesia or the Lord of the Mountain?" "The ground," replied the doctor, "belongs of course to the King of Silesia. As to him you call the Lord of the Mountain, or, as I call him, Rübezahl, the Turnip Counter, there is, I assure you, no such person; he is a mere bugbear; a name to frighten children and ignorant people with, and nothing more." Scarcely had he spoken when the form of the woodcutter rose into gigantic proportions, and the redoubtable spirit himself appeared before the astonished physician, and roared in a furious tone, "Rübezahl! scoundrel—I'll teach thee to talk of Rübezahl;" and with this he laid hold of the unlucky doctor by the neck, shook him and beat him till life was hardly left in him, and then let him find his way home from the Giant Mountains as he best could. The poor fellow never fully recovered the effects of his drubbing, and as long as he lived he was never found botanizing again on the domains of the Lord of the Mountain.

We must give an instance, however, of the benevolent way in which the gnome could conduct himself when he chose. A countryman of Richenberg was once reduced from various causes to a state of great poverty, and even disposed of his farm and his flocks; and, to add to his distress, he had a wife and six children to support. "If we could contrive to borrow," said he one day to his disconsolate wife, "a hundred dollars, we might purchase another farm, and thus retrieve our circumstances. You have wealthy relations on the other side of the mountains, what if I should go to them and ask them for assistance;—perhaps they may



LEGENDS OF RUBEZAHL.

P. [illegible].

compassionate us, and lend us the money we need, to be repaid with interest."

The dejected wife assented to the proposal, because she knew of nothing better to be done. Whereupon Veit put a dry crust of bread into his pocket, and went his way. Worn and wearied by the heat of the day and the long journey, he reached, in the evening, the village, where the rich cousins dwelt, but none of them would acknowledge him; not one of them would receive him. With burning tears he related to them his misery; but the hard-hearted misers paid no heed to his words, and wounded the feelings of the poor man by reproaches and insulting proverbs. One said, "Young blood, spare your strength;" the second, "Pride comes before a fall;" the third, "Act well and you will fare well;" the fourth, "Every one forges his own fortune." In this manner they scorned and mocked him; called him a spendthrift and a lazy fellow, and at last drove him out of the house, sending the house dog after him. Such a reception from the rich relations of his wife, the poor cousin had never contemplated; confounded and sad, he slunk away, and as he had nothing to pay for a lodging at the inn, he was obliged to pass the night in a field upon a hay-rick. Here he sleeplessly awaited the return of day, to begin his homeward journey.

As he again approached the mountains, grief and sorrow so overcame him that he was on the brink of despair. Two days' wages lost, thought he to himself, languid and weakened by hunger and grief; without hope, without consolation! When you return home, and the six starving children stretch out their hands to you for bread, asking for food, when you have, instead, only a stone to offer; father-heart! father-heart! how wilt thou endure that? Break in two, poor heart, before thou feelest such anguish! Saying these words, he threw himself beneath a bush to indulge in his gloomy thoughts.

As the mind, however, at the moment of extremity, puts forth its most powerful energy, ransacking every corner of thought to find out some means of preservation, or to delay the coming evil; and as a sailor who sees his vessel fast sinking, quickly climbs the rope-ladder, seeking safety by the tall mast, or laying hold of plank or empty cask, in the hope of keeping himself afloat;—so it occurred to the unhappy Veit, in the midst of a thousand useless plans and projects, to turn for relief from his misery to the Spirit of the Mountain. He had heard many strange tales of him, how he had sometimes lured and tormented travellers, and done them much harm, yet, at the same time, how he had likewise shown kindness to others. It was well known to Veit that the spirit punished all those who called on him by his nickname; but he knew no other way of accosting him, so he therefore ventured at the risk of a cudgelling, and called out as loud as he could, "Rübezahl! Rübezahl!"

There immediately appeared at this call a form like that of a grim collier or charcoal burner, with a red beard reaching down to his waist, fiery, staring eyes, and armed with a huge cudgel like a weaver's beam, now raised in wrath to strike the daring scorner. "Your favour, Master Rübezahl," said Veit, quite undismayed, "pardon me if I do not give you your right title—only hear me, and then do whatever you like. This candid speech and the sorrowful appearance of the man, which betrayed neither insolence nor pertness, softened in some degree the anger of the spirit. "Earthworm," he said, "what tempts you to disturb me? Do you not know that you must pay for your rashness with your neck and skin?" "Sir," replied Veit, "it is trouble which compels me to this. I have a request to make, which you could easily grant. If you would lend me a hundred dollars I will repay them at the end of three years, with the usual interest, as sure as I am an honest man." "Fool!" said the spirit, "am I a Jew, or an usurer, to lend money upon interest? Away to your brother man and borrow there what you need, but leave *me* in peace." "Ah," replied Veit, "it is all over with brotherly kindness. There is no brotherhood in *mine* and *thine*." Upon this he related his story from the beginning, and painted his deep misery so touchingly, that the gnome could not refuse his petition. And even had the poor fellow been less deserving of compassion, there was something so novel and singular to the spirit in the idea of becoming a capitalist and lending out money, that he was inclined, for the sake of the confidence reposed in him, to grant the prayer of the man. "Come, follow me," he said, leading him through the wood to a remote valley, and stopping at a steep rock, whose base was hid by thick bushes.

When Veit, with no small trouble, had forced his way through the thicket, by the side of his conductor, they reached the mouth of a dark cave. The good Veit was not over-well pleased to be obliged thus to grope in the dark: one cold shiver after another run through him, and his hair stood on end. He very soon, however, saw, to his great joy, a blue flame flickering in the distance; the cavern became enlarged to the size of a spacious hall, the flame burned clear, and floated as a pendant lamp in the centre of the rocky chamber. Upon the floor he espied a brewer's copper, filled to the brim, with hard bright dollars. When Veit saw this treasure, all his fear fled, and his heart leapt for joy. "Take," said the spirit, "what you need, be it little or be it much, only give me an acknowledgment for the sum, provided you are skilled in the art of writing." The debtor assented, and counted out to himself, conscientiously, the hundred dollars, not one more, not one less. The spirit appeared to pay no attention to the counting out of the money, but turned himself away, and sought for his writing materials. Veit wrote the bond, and made it as binding as possible; the gnome then locked it up in an iron box,

and said to Veit, on parting, "Go hence, and with diligent hand, make use of the money. Forget not that thou art my debtor, and mark well the entrance into the dell, and the cleft in the rock. As soon as three years are past, pay me back the capital with the interest. I am a stern creditor, and should you break faith, I will come in fury and demand it." The honest Veit promised faithfully to pay on the very day, though without an oath, and without pledging his soul and happiness, as bad payers are accustomed to do, and then departed from his benefactor of the rock with a grateful heart, easily finding his way out of the cavern.

The hundred dollars had such a beneficial influence both on mind and body, that he needed no other strengthening; when he again saw the morning light, he felt as if he had inhaled the balsam of life whilst in the rocky cave. Joyful and strong he now stept towards his home, and entered the lonesome hut about nightfall; when the famishing children beheld him, they came all towards him, crying, "Bread, father! a morsel of bread! You have long let us want." The sad mother sat weeping in a corner, fearing the worst, according to the manner of thinking of the weak and timid, and expected her husband to begin a melancholy tale. He, however, shook hands cheerily, commanded a fire to be kindled on the hearth, as he had brought groats and millet from Reichenberg in his wallet, with which the good woman was to make pottage so thick that the spoon could stand in it. Afterwards he gave her an account of the happy consequences of his journey. Your cousins, said he, are excellent people; they did not upbraid me with my poverty, did not misapprehend me, or drive me shamefully from their door; but they kindly took me in, opened to me heart and hand, and counted out to me on the table a hundred dollars in cash, as a loan. Upon this the heavy weight was taken from the heart of the poor woman, which had long oppressed her. Had we applied sooner, she said, to the right smith we might have been spared much misery. She now boasted of the relationship, of which she had never known any good before, and became quite proud of her rich cousins.

Her husband willingly gave her this pleasure, so flattering to her vanity, after the many sorrows she had experienced. As she, however, never ceased speaking of her rich cousins, and passed many days in doing nothing else, Veit at last became worn out with the loud praises of the avaricious churls, and said to his wife, "When I was at the right forge, do you know what the master smith gave me as a piece of good advice?" "What?" asked his wife. "That every one was the smith of his own fortune; and we must strike the iron while it is hot; therefore, let us begin, and diligently set to work, and follow our occupation, so that from our earnings we may be able, in three years, to repay the loan with its interest, and be free from all debt." Veit then bought an

acre of land, and a hay-field, then another, and another, until at last he bought a hide of land. There was a blessing in Rübezahl's money, as if a *heek*[1] dollar were in it. Veit sowed and reaped, and was soon looked up to in the village as a well-doing man, and his purse enabled him, from his small capital, to extend his possessions. The third summer he had added to his fields an estate which brought him much increase: in short, he was one who prospered in all he did.

The day of payment now drew near, and Veit had saved so much, that he was able, without difficulty, to repay his debt. He laid down the money to be ready, and on the appointed day was early astir, awoke his wife, and all his children; ordered them to comb their hair, wash their faces, and put on their Sunday clothes; also their new shoes, and scarlet jackets, and kerchiefs, which they had never yet worn. He himself donned his best, and called out from the window, "Hans, put to the horses." "Husband, what are you about?" asked his wife; "to-day there is neither festival nor church-going; what has put you in such good spirits, that you are preparing us for a merrymaking; and where are you going to take us?" He answered, "I am going to the rich cousins on the other side of the mountain, to visit the creditor who helped me by his loan, and to repay my debt with interest, for this is the pay day." This pleased the lady very much; she adorned herself and the children in a stately manner, so that the rich cousins might have a good opinion of her circumstances, and that they might not be ashamed of her, she strung a row of crooked ducats round her neck.

Veit shook the heavy bag with the money, took care of it himself, and when all was ready, he set out with his wife and children. Hans whipped on the four steeds, and they drove merrily over the plain towards the Giant mountains.

Before a steep narrow pass, Veit ordered the rumbling vehicle to stop. He came out, and made the others do the same; then told the servant, Hans, to go slowly up the hill, and to wait for them above, under the three linden trees; saying, likewise, that should they be rather long in coming, not to trouble himself, but just to let the horses take breath, and crop a bit of grass, as he knew a footpath which, though somewhat longer, was pleasant to walk upon. He then took the lead of his wife and children through the wood and thick bushes, wandered backwards and forwards, until his wife thought her husband had lost his way, and exhorted him to turn back, and follow the common road. Veit, however, suddenly stood still, gathered his six children around him, and then said, "You fancy, dear wife, that we are on our way to visit your kinsfolk, but that is not my intention. Your rich cousins are niggards and rascals, who, when in my poverty I sought from

[1] A dollar, supposed to have the faculty of multiplying itself.

them comfort and support, ridiculed and scorned me, and drove me with insolence from them. Here dwells the rich cousin to whom we are indebted for our prosperity, and who lent me, on my word, the money which has increased so much in my hands. He appointed this day as the time when I was to return it with interest. Do you now know who our creditor is? The Prince of the Mountain, called Rübezahl!"

At these words his wife was violently affected, bent herself before a large cross, and the children trembled with terror and dread, lest their father should take them to Rübezahl. They had heard a great deal about him in the spinning-room, that he was a horrible giant, a destroyer of men, and so on. Veit related to them his whole adventure—how he had appeared at his call, in the form of a collier, and how he had acted towards him in the cave—praised his benevolence, with a grateful heart, and with such deep emotion, that the warm tears flowed down his sunburnt cheeks. "Wait here," he continued, "whilst I go into the cave to finish my business. Fear nothing; I shall not remain long away; and if I can prevail on the Mountain Spirit, I will bring him to see you. Shun not to shake hands heartily with your benefactor, though his hands should be black or sooty; he will do you no harm, and will certainly rejoice in his own good deeds, and in our gratitude. Only take courage, he will give you golden apples and spice-nuts."

Although the anxious wife endeavoured to dissuade him from his journey to the cave in the rock, and though the children, sobbing and weeping, strove to keep him back, by surrounding him, and taking hold of the folds of his coat, he nevertheless tore himself from them by force, went into the thicket, and soon reached the well-known rock. He drew forth the heavy bag of money, rattled the hard dollars, and called out as loudly as he could, "Spirit of the Mountain, come and take thine own!" But no Rübezahl appeared; nor, after the most diligent search, could Veit find the cave or the door by which he had formerly entered.

Thus the honest debtor was obliged to return back with his money-bag. As soon as his wife and children caught a glimpse of him, they hastened joyfully to meet him: he was out of humour and much distressed that he could not give the payment to the proper person, and sat down upon a bank to consider what was now to be done. His former venture again occurred to him. "I will call on the Spirit by his nickname. Should it displease him, he may cudgel me, and knock me as he has a mind; at all events, he will certainly hear the call." So he shouted with all his might, "Rübezahl! Rübezahl!" His anxious wife entreated him to be silent, and tried to shut his mouth; but Veit would not be controlled, and only called out the more. Suddenly, the youngest child rushed to its mother, screaming, "Ah! the black man!" Quite pleased, Veit asked where. "There—he lurks

behind that tree :" and all the children crept together, trembling with fear, and crying bitterly. The father looked round, but saw nothing; it was a delusion—a shadow only. In short, Rübezahl never made his appearance, and all Veit's shouting was in vain.

The family caravan now retraced its steps, and father Veit, sad and sorrowful, went towards the high road, which lay before them. A soft rustling sound among the trees came from the wood; the slender birches bent their heads, and the tremulous foliage of the aspen was gently stirred: the sound came nearer; the wind waved the far-spread branches of the oak, and drove before it the withered leaves, raising up on the road small clouds of dust, with which the children amused themselves; thinking no longer of Rübezahl, but chasing the dry leaves with which the wind sported. Among the withering foliage, a piece of paper was blown across their path, which the young spirit seer ran after. Just when about to catch it, the wind raised it up, and whirled it farther away, so that he could not lay hold of it. He, however, threw his hat after it, which at last covered it; it was a beautiful white sheet of paper, and as the economical father was accustomed to take care of the most trifling thing in his house, the child brought to him what he had found, in the hope of obtaining a little praise. When the paper was unrolled to see what it contained, it was found to be the bond which Veit had drawn up and given to the Spirit of the Mountain, torn in half, and underneath was written—*fully discharged.* When Veit perceived this, he was deeply affected, and exclaimed, in great joy, "Dear wife and children, rejoice with me; he has seen us, heard our thanks; our benefactor, who invisibly floats around us, knows that Veit is an honest man. I am now free from my promise, so let us return home with glad hearts." Parents and children wept many tears of joy and gratitude, until they again reached their conveyance. As the mother had a great desire to visit her relations, and to reprove them for their cruelty, they drove quickly down the mountain, and in the evening stopped at the same farm-house from which Veit had been driven away three years before. This time he knocked boldly at the door, and asked for the master. A person who was a total stranger and unknown to them appeared; from whom they learnt that the household of the rich cousins was broken up. The one was dead, the other ruined, and the third had left the place. Their places were no longer to be found in the community.

Veit and his companions remained over the night with the hospitable landlord, who detailed everything to them. The next day Veit returned home to his occupations, increased in wealth and in lands, and continued to be an upright, as well as a prosperous man all the days of his life.

Finis.