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# BERTHA:

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## THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR.

*An Historical Tale of the Eleventh Century.*

BY W. B. MACCABE.

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## BERTHA;

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CHAPTER I.

## THE RENCONTRE.

FOR a few moments the silvery tone of tinkling bells was heard, and the atmosphere around appeared to have been aroused from its peaceful stillness by the murmured accents of commingled prayers.

The bells ceased — the words of prayer were heard no more, and the solemn silence and the calm repose, which had before rested on the green banks and the smooth waters of the small river Aschaff, descended upon them anew as the maiden Beatrice sank back upon the silken cushions on which she had previously been reclining, and again cast from her hands, from time to time, a wild flower, and watched it, as the little rippling waves floated it slowly, and seemingly sadly, away from her sight.

“Lady! — Beatrice! dost thou not hear me? The Ave-Maria bell of evening has rung; and it is time that we returned to the castle. Wherefore dost thou so

intently, and yet so idly, watch those flowers, as they are borne from thee?"

"I am thinking," said she, who had been addressed as Beatrice, "I am thinking, my good Agatha, that I am myself like to those wild flowers. Like them, I know not why, God has been pleased to place me in the midst of these deep forests, and upon the banks of this river. Like them, I am unknown and disregarded — like them, I am of no use or benefit to my fellow-creatures — and, if some rude hand should sever me, as I do them, from this solitude, and cast me upon the waters, I know not what may befall me — I may wither away in the glare of the sunshine, or be overwhelmed by the rude tempest, or I may be cast upon some unknown shore, where nought grows but poisonous plants and foul weeds, and there expire, a poor and noisome thing in the sight of God and man. These are my thoughts, Agatha, — am I right in giving way to them?"

"Thou art not, Beatrice," said Agatha, "for thou dost not reason truly. These flowers, insensible as they are, perform strictly the functions for which they were formed. They beautify and enrich the soil from which they spring, and the skill of man can extract medicinal powers from them. In death as in life they have their uses. Thou art not like the flowers; for they live but for a day, and then fade and perish, whilst thou, if thou faithfully fulfil the duties which God has assigned thee, shalt bloom in immortal glory in the garden of heaven. Thou hast compared thyself to a fading flower clothed but with an evanescent beauty. Let the waters on which thou hast cast them be thy monitor. Our several duties in this life may be compared to the stream of the smooth Aschaff itself, now flowing through wild and beauteous



scenery, then through sweet and smiling lands ; now forcing its way over rugged rocks, and then down awful precipices, but still persevering, still resolute, still onward in its course, until at last it finds its repose and its reward in the Ocean-eternity of Divine Love, of which it then forms a part, and from which it is no longer distinguishable, but is all in all and one with God himself. On the other hand, the waters that are turned away from the stream, are but too often like to those faculties which we devote to temporal uses — they are stained with passions, and begrimed with the filth of pride, and become a stagnant pool, from which emanate pestilence, disease, and death. But come — I repeat to thee, the Ave-Maria has rung. It is evening time, and we should now be on our way back to the castle.”

Beatrice smiled — there was a calm and gentle melancholy in the smile — and then she said, —

“Look at me, Agatha, and tell me, if you can, what is at this moment occupying, not alone my thoughts, but my heart.”

Agatha did look, and beheld before her one of the fairest faces and most faultless forms that ever yet provoked the admiration of mankind. Beatrice was now fast verging on her seventeenth year ; her skin was of dazzling whiteness, except where a slight suffusion tinged, without actually giving a distinct color to the cheeks, and it came in strong contrast with the ripe and cherry redness of the lips, and still stronger with the full, large, dark eyes, and darker eyebrows, in both of which might be said to be placed that intellectuality of expression, and that spirit of character, which otherwise were not impressed upon her small, delicate, and feminine features ; whilst the neck was concealed, and the

shoulders were covered, by flowing masses of silken, light-brown hair, of a hue so indistinct, that when the rays of the sun shone upon it, they seemed to be converted into threads of burnished gold: the tiny foot that peeped forth from the loose robe, and the small hand that found its way out of the ample sleeve, testified as to the exquisite proportions of a form which the dresses of the period disguised, but in this case could not conceal.

“Look at me, Agatha,” said the fair and gentle girl to her faithful and aged attendant, “and tell me, if you can, what is at this moment most occupying my heart.”

“Thou art thinking that in a few weeks thou wilt be seventeen, and thou art hoping that with its arrival may come a cessation to that solitude in which thou hast so long pined.”

“Alas! no — my heart is not sad, because a gentle mother greets me with an ever-enduring smile — I am not sad, because I can walk daily in these gloomy forests and wild glens — I am not sad, because I can repose for hours and hours together on the banks of the gentle Aschaff — I am not sad, because I can bestow as many gifts as I please upon the hard-working and faithful serfs — I am not sad, because I can make the heart of many a poor slave joyful and happy — I am not sad, because I have you, my ever-true, and ever-fond, and ever-faithful Agatha, at all hours by my side. All these are matters in which I should rejoice, are benefits for which I should be thankful, and for the continuance of which I ought to pray. But young as I am, Agatha, I am not without knowledge — for you have been my teacher, and kindly nuns have been amongst my instructors — and with that knowledge I am sad — very sad, dearest

Agatha — for I see that my life is a mystery — that I am surrounded with a state, that should not be mine, unless I were the daughter of a duke ; with boundless riches that I could not possess unless I were the daughter of a count ; and still with as much watchfulness bestowed upon, and as many guards surrounding me, as if I were the daughter of the emperor himself : and yet, I know, and I see — nay, what is more — I feel that my father is none of these. He comes here always unexpectedly ; he leaves, without ever bidding us — at least me — farewell ; he wears not the garb of a knight, nor does he even bear the shield of a freeman ; there is about him, or around him, no emblem of authority. That he cannot be a serf, his riches show ; that he must be a man in some way illustrious, his look, his manners, his very bearing plainly indicate. I love him, because I am told he is my father ; but that he loves me, I doubt ; for I never yet caught his eye fixed upon me, that there was not mingled in his glance, far more of sadness than of affection. These are the things that occupy my heart — therefore am I sad ; but can you, dear Agatha, say aught that may aid me in unravelling this mystery ? ”

The attendant hemmed audibly, and coughed hysterically two or three times whilst the maiden was thus addressing her ; and, instead of answering the interrogatory thus put directly to her, she sought to evade it by putting another question : —

“ But tell me frankly, Beatrice — is there no other thing occupying your heart but what you have now said ? Does not your heart, or your memory, ever carry you back to other times and other persons ? ”

“ O, yes, ” replied Beatrice, with a face now flushed

with pleasure, and an eye brilliant with animation; “I do think — often think — O, how often! — of another sky, another land, and another clime than this — of a land which you have told me is the land of my birth — the ever-lovely, sweetly-smiling Italy. It may be a child’s fancy, but to me it seems as if such a land could alone be seen in a dream. I think of it — and I am back again upon the borders of the Lago Maggiore — and there I see upon the shore the clustering vines — the rose-embowered cottages — the green woods and the greener-leaved forests — and, upon the pellucid waters of the blue lake, reflecting back a still more purely blue sky, I see the light boats, and hear the joyful songs of happy fishermen; whilst far away in the lake I behold an island which is all one flower garden, whilst above it rise terrace over terrace, palaces of snow-white marble — and all these I see again in my dream, or my memory shows them as they appeared to me when a child; and then, too, I do think of one, for whom all these things seemed to have been made; but when I saw him I cannot now remember, whether on the land, or on the island, but in the midst of them I certainly did see *him*.”

“And who is *he* of whom thou speakest? Dost thou recollect his name?”

“I remember some one — a boy, with light blue eyes, and flaxen hair, and the heavenly smile of those young and innocent cherubs that are portrayed in my mother’s grand psalter as fluttering around the head of the Virgin. I remember him, and the thoughts of him are as dear to my heart as the thrilling strains of the nightingale, that fill, when all else is silent, the whole creation with melody. O, yes, I do think of him.”

“And dost thou not recollect his name?”

“I do.”

“What is it?”

“Alas! I know but too well why I hesitate to speak it aloud. It was Magnus.”

“Magnus — Magnus!” repeated Agatha, in a far louder tone than her mistress had originally pronounced the word; and as if taken completely by surprise at its utterance.

“*Who calls on Magnus?*” exclaimed a young man, apparently about twenty years of age, bounding from a boat upon the bank, and motioning to his four attendant rowers, as he did so, to push on to a creek at a few yards’ distance.

“*Who calls on Magnus?*” he repeated, in a higher tone, as the thick-growing trees prevented him for a moment from perceiving Beatrice and her attendant.

The tones of his well-known, long-remembered voice were at once recognized, and Beatrice stepped forward, saying, —

“I call upon Magnus — if it be the Magnus I knew when he was a boy.”

Magnus and Beatrice stood face to face with each other.

“Beatrice!” he said.

“Magnus!” was the only word she spoke.

They looked upon, but they could no longer recognize each other: the girl had become a woman; the boy had grown into a man. Her that he had rushed forward to kiss, he now feared to approach; him that she had hastened to meet, and with the intention to cast her arms around his neck, she now looked upon but for an instant, and then trembling cast her eyes upon the

ground. He beheld before him a woman of more surpassing loveliness than he had ever fancied could be discovered in his boyish dreams ; and she found placed before her, in the person of Magnus, all the graces of juvenile beauty, combined with the commanding stature, the strength, the dignity, and the majesty of manhood.

“ Alas ! ” said Beatrice, for she was the first to speak, although she had not dared to look a second time at him, “ we are both greatly changed.”

“ Yes — Beatrice,” he said, his gaze still fixed upon her, and seeing nought else in the world beside. “ Yes, Beatrice, we are both changed ; I for the worse, or you would not keep your eyes thus turned away from me ; and you — O, how much you are changed — I have always thought of you as an angel ; but now — I could kneel down and worship you.”

“ I pray your pardon, my lord,” said Agatha, here stepping between the youthful pair, “ I am the attendant — or, as she in her goodness calls me, the friend — of the Lady Beatrice. From her I never heard your name before. Neither has her mother ever spoken of you to me. The language you have now addressed to the Lady Beatrice should not be spoken to her, but with the permission of her parents. I cannot invite you to their castle ; but you know yourself if you would be welcome there. If you would, it is there and not in this wild wood you should see the Lady Beatrice ; if you would not, then the words you could not speak to her there, you should not give utterance to her here, where there are none to protect her, but an aged attendant like myself, and a few armed serfs that wait for us, in the adjoining valley.”

These words were apparently addressed by Agatha to Magnus ; but were really intended as a guidance to Beatrice for the conduct that should be adopted by her on this occasion ; but Agatha perceived that her admonition was poured into the ears of a man who was as if deaf. All the faculties of Magnus seemed to be absorbed in the contemplation of Beatrice ; he gazed as if sight could never fail in looking upon her, and he appeared to wait until she would speak, in order that his hearing might so be restored to him.

“ You say now, as you always speak,” observed Beatrice, “ justly and wisely, kind Agatha. It is in my father’s hall that Magnus should be received : it is there that seneschal, and groom, and page should wait upon him. Come, Magnus.”

“ I go, beloved Beatrice — dream of my boyhood — Beatrice — I go wherever you desire,” stammered forth Magnus.

“ Come — come quickly — dear Magnus,” answered Beatrice, now looking up in the face of her youthful friend, and a single, glowing glance of love, repaying him a thousand-fold for the tender expressions he had used. “ Come, my mother will be so happy to see you grown so tall, and so brave-looking, and so — so — much darker than you were when a boy ; for I remember often speaking of you to my mother, and once to my father — and — ah ! woe is me ! Why have I mentioned *his* name ? or why thought of these doleful circumstances — ”

“ And wherefore not ? Why stop, dearest Beatrice ? ” inquired Magnus, observing her pause in her hasty and onward career.

“ Alas ! Magnus, I remember upon one occasion,

speaking to my father, and telling him of my infantile dreams respecting the Lago Maggiore, and then speaking to him about you, and how much I then loved you, and I remember his then questioning my mother about who might be this Magnus, that I praised so much, and of her telling him who you were ; but I know not what she said —— ”

“ I,” remarked the young man, firmly, but still in no haughty spirit, and with no boastful manner, “ I am no poor tungin in a district, nor a mere graf in a county. I am of an ancient race. I am Magnus, Duke of Saxony.”

“ To me,” hastily observed Beatrice, “ you are not tungin, graf, nor duke ; you are simply Magnus, my kindly playmate on the bright lake of Lombardy, and, sad it is to tell, that whatever my mother may have told respecting you, and, until that day, she had never spoken of you but in strongest terms of endearment ; and, therefore, must have spoken in admiration of you to my father ; but, be it what it may, I must now add, that my father told me, if I would not bring down shame upon my own head, and curses upon his, never again to mention your name ; never again to think of you. From that day to this, I have strictly kept his commands. I have not spoken of you, even to my faithful Agatha. But, as to not thinking of you ! I could not there obey him ; a child’s first affections are a rich mould from which are ever springing thoughts of the loved and the absent. But then, there is my father’s prohibition respecting you. No, Magnus, I must not, cannot, dare not, bring you to the castle.”

“ But I, Beatrice,” replied the youth, “ shall go there, not now, not as a poor suppliant, not as your companion,



and bring down censure upon your head, nor in such a manner as to cause you to shed a single tear for my sake, *you*, a single tear of whom I would not exchange for the most precious diamond in the imperial crown. I shall go to your father's castle as becomes me, accompanied by my guardian, Otho of Bavaria, and attended by my knights, as seemeth my birth, my wealth, and my rank, and Beatrice, dearest Beatrice, I will go there to demand of your father your hand. I ask not, care not, what may be his rank in life ; if he were a king, I am his equal ; if he be a poor noble, which I think he is not, or a still poorer freeman, which I am sure he cannot be ; but still, if poor, I go to make him most rich by the marriage gift I shall bestow upon him : in exchange for the priceless treasure of your virgin hand. Yes, Beatrice, it is well, that here in this dark forest, and by this silent stream, we should part. Loved woods ! and dear waters ! that I, in boyish idleness, this day visited, little knowing that she, whose image has preserved me from all the vileness that youth and passion, and evil example might have otherwise suggested to me, that even she, always thought of, was to be found on the remote banks of the Aschaff. Here then, on this spot, where the pilgrim heart of a lover has, at last, found repose — here let us part — we cannot part but in sorrow, as we can never meet but in joy — but here we part — part in sorrow and in hope. Say then, Beatrice, but the sad word farewell, and the light boat that conveyed me hither shall, in a few hours, carry me back to my uncle Otho, who is now at Frankfort.”

Beatrice was silent. Contending thoughts, or rather conflicting emotions filled her heart ; joy commingled with sorrow ; hope saddened by fear : the truthfulness

of her lover, that lover first discovered in the boy that she had been forbidden to speak of; the disinterested gallantry, the noble bearing, the generous affection combined with the manly beauty of him who now stood by her side: these, and a thousand other ideas and feelings, until then unknown to her, all came upon her together: they could find no expression in words, and she wept — wept bitterly.

“My Lord,” said Agatha, “you have spoken as becomes you. You have spoken as a knight of whose homage an empress might be proud. You will do that which is your duty. I too must perform mine. I must mention, the moment I return to the castle, that this interview has taken place between you and the Lady Beatrice. I cannot tell it to her father; for he is now absent from the castle; but I shall mention it to her mother. By her advice, Beatrice, I am sure, will be guided; and that advice may be useful even to you; for the Lady Bianca must know the reason wherefore both she and her child have been forbidden to mention your name. My Lord Magnus, whatever be the cause for the father of Beatrice forbidding your name to be mentioned by her, be assured it cannot be a light one. It certainly cannot be from caprice, or sudden passion, or originating in a rude gust of temper; for he is ever loving and ever kind to her.”

“But why entertain a prejudice against one he has never seen? Why dislike the name of one who can have done him no wrong?”

“I have already told you,” said Agatha, that the father of Beatrice is now absent from the castle. His return may be expected momentarily — it may be to-day, to-morrow, or some day this week. Be here then, on

this spot, this day week. You shall be met here by Beatrice, if the answer be as we all desire. If it be otherwise, then it shall be my painful duty alone to communicate the purport of the message that is confided to me. And now, my lord, let us part; the shades of evening are fast falling around us, and it is time that we were on our way homeward."

"Yes, yes, let us part," sighed forth Magnus. "Let us part *here*, Beatrice, where I have first, for so many long years, seen thee, beneath this beech tree — here let me kneel — and here kiss — thy hand — it is all I ask of thee — my sweet one — my beloved — my only destined bride!"

Beatrice could not speak. She unfastened a thin chain of gold from her girdle, to which a small cross, set with rubies, was attached, and as Magnus knelt before her, she flung it over his neck. In doing so, her hand touched, but did not rest upon, his head; and, as it did so, she said, as if pronouncing a blessing:

"May all the angels guard my Magnus!" She then burst into tears; and, as a burning kiss was pressed upon her taper fingers, she sighed forth, "farewell!" and rushed hastily from the spot, where Magnus remained kneeling.

A few moments afterwards the neighing of horses, and the pawing of palfreys, were heard, intermingled with the clash of spears, borne by the armed men who acted as the escort of Beatrice and Agatha, and their female attendants.

With the sound of the first movements made by those departing from the forest to the castle, Magnus started from his knees. He remained standing and listening to the retreating tramp of horses and of men, and when

all had become silent, he walked back sadly and gravely to the creek in which his light boat lay, and then was carried swiftly away with the current of the stream.

All was now silent in the forest ; the glades were fast filling up with darkness, and the last gleams of twilight seemed to cluster around the old beech tree, which had witnessed the meeting and the parting of two youthful, innocent, pious, and virtuous lovers, when there appeared where they stood, a single man, as there appeared of old, in the garden of Paradise, an evil spirit who had witnessed virtue that he hated, and innocence that he loathed. This man could be observed first coming from out of the branches of the beech tree, and then gliding softly down by its trunk, until his feet touched the earth. This man was clothed from head to foot in green, and even though he believed himself to be alone in that dark, lonely forest, his face was covered either by a mask, or so colored as to give him the appearance of a negro.

Upon this stranger's feet touching the ground, he paused ; it might be for a minute or two. He then went cautiously round the trunk of the tree, examining all sides as he went ; so as to be sure that there was no one there to watch him. Having satisfied himself that he was not observed, he then placed his hands to his mouth, and a sound issued forth that precisely resembled the melancholy hooting of the owl. These sounds were twice repeated.

A pause of a few minutes occurred, and then there was heard across the waters the distant twittering of a swallow. Twice, too, were these notes heard, and then came the quick splashing of oars.

The movement of the oars ceased, and a man, whose

face was darkened, or who wore a mask, advanced to the beech tree, and these words were exchanged between the two strangers.

“Have I spoken truly, Werenher?”

“Most truly, Egen.”

“Is she not fair and beauteous to the eye?”

“In Franconia, in Swabia, in Lombardy, in Bohemia, in Hungary, and in Poland, there is not one to equal her. She is alone fitted for an emperor; but more important things are to be told than that there is a fair maiden in Aschaffenburg. Let the men row quickly.”

“They shall do so.”

The boat disappeared — and shortly afterwards, there was nought but darkness and solitude in the woods and streams of Aschaffenburg.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE ORATORY.

IN a small room — small in extent when compared with its great height — and this room so dimly lighted by a single lamp dependent from the roof, that alcove and doorway remained in darkness, there was to be seen a species of altar, that seemed to be but sufficient as a pediment for a large ivory figure of the Savior, resting upon a cross of wood so blackened by age that it appeared to be ebony. Before this altar, and with snow-white hands clasping the cross, and the ensanguined feet of the sacred image, was to be seen the bending figure

of a female, covered with a long, dark cloak, which falling over the head in front, and the feet behind, concealed face and person alike from the view; so that it might be surmised the folds had been thus arranged by the wearer, in order that, shutting out all objects from her sight, she might devote herself wholly, heart and soul, to meditation.

An hour had nearly passed away, and she who knelt might still be seen in the same attitude. There was no sound of prayer — not one syllable spoken beyond a single ejaculation — and that one, THE WORD which comprises in itself suffering on earth, and salvation in heaven — the name of Him before whose figure she knelt, and the contemplation of whose sufferings excited her devotion.

The silent and lonely oratory was at length shaken by the sharp and sudden ringing forth of a loud, clamorous bell; but still the attitude of the kneeling, praying female was not altered. The chamber door opened, and there crept in silently, slowly, and sadly, another female, who, kneeling gently down by her whose devotions still continued, for a few minutes bent her head in prayer, and then throwing her arms around the kneeling suppliant, exclaimed: —

“Bless me, and pray for me, mother, for I am very sad, and have none other in the world to comfort and console me but you.”

“God bless my Beatrice! my gentle daughter — my only child!” ejaculated the female, as she stood up, and cast back from her the dark cloak, which had previously covered her.

“God bless my child!” were the words now given utterance to by lips, so red, so fresh, and so beauteous,

and covering such dazzling white teeth, that they seemed to be those of a sister, not a mother. Regarded in the dim light of that obscure oratory, the mother and the daughter seemed to be so very like each other that it would be scarcely possible to mark the distinction of years between them. Both had the same superabundance of light-brown, golden shaded, silken hair ; both the same satiny snowy skin, both the same exquisitely moulded small, feminine features, and both had the same large, lustrous eyes, in which shone forth, as if they were diamond-sparkles from the pure soul within, glances of genius, of love, of truth, and of virtuous innocence. Regarded in the broad glare of day, perhaps one who knew both mother and daughter well, might from that knowledge be able to detect, in the eyes of the first the traces of many bitter tears, from which her youth and experience had preserved the latter. In all other respects they seemed the same ; for if care had been in the mother's heart, it had not, at least as yet, worked its way to the surface, nor deformed by a single wrinkle that fair face on which the youthful graces still seemed delighted to dwell. The figures of both seemed to be moulded in the same form ; and each alike was faultless. In Bianca was beheld the lovely woman not yet forgetful of her girlhood, and in Beatrice the girl surprised to find herself admired as a woman.

“ But what say you, my child,” inquired Bianca, “ of your being sad ? or, what can have caused your tears ? for I perceive you have been weeping.”

“ Alas ! mother, this has been an eventful day to me. I have seen him, whose name I have for years been forbidden to speak.”

“ Ah ! me, you need not tell me more, Beatrice. In

you," said Bianca, "I see myself revived. In you I behold my own sad destiny renewed. You love him, Beatrice — I see it all — and you are forbidden to love him by your father. Then think of him no more — nay, drive him from your thoughts, ay — even though your heart, and with yours, mine should break in the effort."

"O, mother — mother! — dearest mother, do not say such words as these. Do not drive me to despair — have pity on me — on my knees I beg of you to recall those cruel words — 'think of him no more!'"

And as Beatrice spoke, she knelt, and hid her now clay-cold face in her mother's robe.

"It is just, O, Lord! it is just," meekly ejaculated Bianca, "the sins of the parents should be visited on the children; for it is in *their* sorrows that *our* sins are most bitterly punished. Had I been a good and obedient child — had I done that which my father desired me to do, then, O, God! I had never seen this good and gentle girl — this pure and stainless essence of my sinful heart — I had never seen her — dearer to me than life — than all else in this world — I had never seen her — my daughter — my beloved — my Beatrice, prostrate here in grief before me — and for the same cause — O, Lord! for the same — the same — it is just — O, God — how very just, and how very bitter."

"Ah! mother — pardon me! — indeed I did not intend so to grieve you. Do not you weep, mother, and I shall feel sorrow no more. I will speak no more of Magnus — I will not think of — Ah! no — I cannot do that; but I shall mention his name no more, and — dearest mother — it will be no sin to die then, thinking of him, of you, of my Guardian Angel, of the Holy Virgin, and of God —"



Poor Beatrice could say no more — she fell prostrate at her mother's feet, and bedewed them with her tears.

Bianca knelt down on the floor beside her child — kissed her a thousand times — then folding her arms around her, she said —

“Come, Beatrice, rouse yourself — we must submit to the will of God, and not struggle against it. He sends us not a single sorrow that is not intended, if we make the proper use of it, for our sanctification. Our trials here shall be our glories hereafter, if we receive them as such from His all gracious, and ever compassionate hand. Come, my child, recline your form upon a couch, and rest your head on a mother's heart. You have, what I had not, a mother to advise you; and you shall have, what I could not have, happily for herself, a mother, whose sad tale shall be to her child, at the same time an example, a guide, and a warning. Listen to me, Beatrice,” continued Bianca; “for I am now about to address you in language, such as I never spoke to you before. Yesterday you were a girl — to-day you are a woman — for you have seen Magnus — I know that he has spoken to you of marriage — and you have in the boy you loved recognized the man to whom you would wish to devote your life. You have not told me this; but in your eyes, that have always been as truthful as your tongue, and in my own heart, I have read it all. You love the very man that your father has forbidden you to name.”

“Alas! it is so,” sighed forth Beatrice.

“Then, mark well what I say, my child. I too loved a man, whose name I was forbidden by my father to mention. This is my sad story, which must now be told to you for the first time. I am by birth one of the

noble and ancient family of Albani, and my first recollections are of a castle, high, perched upon an irregular mass of rock, looking proudly over the rich vineyards, smiling gardens, and sweet olive groves of Viterbo, in the Roman States. I have no recollection of my mother — I can but remember, that from the steep castle on the rock I found myself as a child — a mere infant in the midst of a large nunnery — that there I was treated with such tenderness, that I cannot now say who was most kind to me, the venerable mother superior, or the poorest lay-sister that waited upon me. My childhood and my girlhood were but as a single day — and that a day of unmingled happiness. From the convent I was taken back to my father's castle — and there I found one of whom I had never heard before — the youthful Eberhard. My father bade me love him as his friend, for in a recent visit paid by him to Rome, Eberhard had rescued my father from the hands of one of those bands of assassins, in the pay of the Cenci — the curse to the Roman people, the affliction of pilgrims, the disgrace to Rome, the persecutors of the Pontiffs. It seemed that my father, when poorly guarded, was attacked in the streets of Rome by one of the gangs in the pay of those robber nobles; and he declared that his liberty would have been lost, and most probably his life sacrificed, but for the timely aid afforded to him by Eberhard.

“About nineteen years ago, my dear child, you can have no adequate notion of what was the state of the city of Rome, and what peril the person encountered who ventured to visit it, either upon the affairs of this life, or for the purposes of devotion. It has been thus described to me by a good monk, who was there at the period that Gregory VI., of blessed memory, ascended

the papal throne. I use his very words in describing the then existing condition of things. He said, that with the exception of a few towns in the neighborhood of Rome, and the offerings of the faithful, the Pope himself had scarcely sufficient to subsist upon; that the lands and cities which lay at a distance from Rome, and that were the property of the church, had been taken possession of by robbers; that the public roads and the highways, not only in the Papal States, but throughout all Italy, were so beset, it might even be said thronged with thieves, that no pilgrim, unless protected by a large escort, could pass in safety along them; that there were to be found swarms of miscreants upon every pathway, and that the poor not less than the rich were their victims; whilst the city itself, which, for centuries, had been celebrated as the abode of holiness, was held by bands of knaves and assassins, who were not merely to be met with in the ancient forum, but who audaciously unsheathed their swords over the sacred altars, and the very bodies of the apostles; and the pious offerings which devout pilgrims had presented were torn away by those sacrilegious villains, and wasted by them in drunkenness and debauchery. It was at the very time that these things were occurring, and when the good Pope Gregory VI. complained, in the words of the Holy Scripture, that 'the house of God had been converted into a den of thieves,' that my father travelled to Rome, and that he declared he was indebted for his life to the bravery of Eberhard.

“I learned then to look upon Eberhard as the preserver of my father's life. Such a claim upon my gratitude made him find favor in my sight. Alas! his personal appearance, his graceful manners, and his mental

accomplishments soon ripened that sentiment into one of intense love. I did not feel that it was wrong to give way to it; and as I had never been thought to disguise my feelings, I suppose not only Eberhard, but my father became conscious of them. The former cherished, the latter never said a word in disapprobation of them.

“I shall not now dwell upon the three months of supreme felicity that thus passed away in the Castle of Viterbo. It is sufficient to say that they terminated forever by my father proposing a second journey to Rome, which a missive from the Pontiff, who was then occupied in putting down abuses in the city and states of Rome, required him to take. He asked Eberhard to accompany him, and the latter, as it appeared to me, unwillingly gave his assent to that proposal.

“They departed with a numerous retinue for Rome. Four weeks then elapsed, and at the end of that time, my father returned — *alone* !

“My father appeared to me to have become in those few weeks an aged man. Grief or care seemed to have cast upon him a premature old age, which his years might yet have spared him. He was at all times a silent — a reserved man — wholly absorbed in the performance of his daily devotions — spending most of his time in prayers, and only varying them by acts of charity, which he discharged not as feeling a pleasure in their performance, but as complying with what he considered to be an unavoidable and an irksome duty. To me he had always been gentle, but never kind — that is, he had never made me feel that I formed a portion of his happiness; but that as he was detached from this earth, by every other tie, so that love for his child did not bind him to it. As, upon his return, I knelt before him, to

receive his blessing, I was astonished to find him, for the first time since I was an infant, raise me from the earth, clasp me in his arms, burst into tears, and exclaim — ‘My child! my poor child! God bless thee, and strengthen thee, in thy grief.’

“Confused, panic-stricken, I may say, by this unlooked-for incident, and by such words as these, I could not speak to him.

“‘Bianca,’ he continued, ‘I must return to Rome this very day. His holiness the Pope, finding that his remonstrances are of no avail with the wretches who infest Rome, and who rob the pilgrims and travellers repairing to the city, has placed them under excommunication, and has confided to me the command of some troops for the purpose of cutting them off by the sword. It is a difficult and dangerous task; it is one which is full of peril, not merely the peril of battle, which I can joyfully meet, but still greater, the peril of treachery, from which I cannot protect myself; for I shall have to face soldiers in the field, and assassins in my chamber. The sword, the dagger, and the insidious gift of the poisoner alike await me; because the foes of the Pontiff are villains who have no faith in God, no pity for man, and no mercy even for children. I tell thee this, my child, because there is the chance that this may be our last meeting on this earth. For myself I care not; for if I should fall in such a contest as this, in battling for my God, my prince, and the church, then I look for my reward in heaven. But in such a case what is to become of thee? At once repair to the convent in which thou hast been educated, and there devote thyself to the service of heaven, there seek for that Spouse, who is all truth as He is all charity, with whom the heart-broken

find repose, and from whom the heavily-laden receive relief. I say this to thee, because I know the state of thy heart ; I say this to thee, because if I return living to Viterbo, I forbid thee ever to mention to me the name of Eberhard, and if it be otherwise, then I say to thee as thou wouldst prize a father's blessing in this world, and in the next, think no more of the man.'

"With these words, my father embraced me, and again quitted the castle."

"Alas ! mother, your situation was as doleful and as dreadful then, as mine is now," observed Beatrice.

"It was, my child ; but in this respect far different. I had no mother to advise me ; I had not even amongst my female attendants one like Agatha, to whom I could speak with the same confidence, and with the same reliance on her good sense, as if she were a mother : they were all but the wives and daughters of ignorant serfs. I was alone — alone in the Castle of Viterbo — alone in the wide world, with my inexperience, and my affections ; knowing nought of guilt myself, and never suspecting it could be practised by another.

"Beatrice, by your own grief at this moment, you can judge how sad was the state in which my father left me. The unavailing pangs of a vain sorrow are but rendered more bitter by their recapitulation, and I therefore shall not dwell on mine. My days were days of dull despair, my nights, nights of sleepless anguish. So I remained for some weeks, until at length intelligence reached the village of Viterbo, that the robber-hordes of Italy had received assistance from some of the troops of the German Emperor, that both confederated together had defeated the Papal soldiers commanded by my father, that in the conflict my father had

been slain, and that now the robber-bands, swelled into the greatness of an army, were laying waste the villages, and that a special body of them were, from revenge, marching upon Viterbo for the purpose of destroying my father's castle, seizing upon his wealth, and carrying me away as their prize.

“ It was when the village was filled with lamentations at this intelligence, and when the few soldiers left by my father at the castle were preparing for a vigorous and desperate defence, that the well-known face and figure of Eberhard were seen approaching the walls. He came, accompanied by a priest, and demanded instant admission to my presence.

“ I was comforted ; but yet not glad to see him ; for my thoughts were engrossed by the direful tidings of my father's death. Eberhard confirmed the truth of the rumors we had heard. He showed us that they were even worse than we had supposed ; that the convent to which my father had desired me to repair in case of his death, had been burned down by the robber-bands during the preceding night ; and he added that the main object those bands had in gaining possession of Viterbo was to seize upon me, in order that the daughter of the Pope's champion might be exposed to a dishonoring doom, worse than death itself : he represented that the only chance of saving the lives of the inhabitants of Viterbo, and of myself escaping, was by flying upon the instant with him — that as *his wife* I might pass through the enemies' lines, when there would be no possibility of saving me as the daughter of Albani ; that for this purpose, in case my father's chaplain was absent, he had brought with him a priest ; and that he had provided himself with a warrant bearing the seal of

the emperor, which even the rudest gang of footpads in Italy would not dare to disrespect.

“It was under those circumstances of grief, of terror, and of sudden surprise — and urged, too, on all sides by the retainers of my father, who knew nothing of Eberhard, but that they had always seen him in the castle treated and acknowledged as my accepted lover, and my destined bridegroom, but I, who knew well, and remembered well my father’s prohibition, did still violate that prohibition, and prepared for myself a life of endless sorrow, because of useless repentance; for I became the wife of Eberhard — of your father.”

“Of my father!” cried Beatrice, forgetting for the moment all her griefs, in the strange tale thus told by Bianca. “Of *my* father; but you do not now call him Eberhard.”

“Ah, my child,” said Bianca, “a parent’s solemn prohibition can never be lightly violated. It is certain to bring sorrow in this world upon whomsoever is its transgressor, although repentance may much mitigate the tremendous punishment that otherwise awaits it in the world to come.”

Bianca here wept for a few moments, and then proceeded: —

“It was in my father’s castle of Viterbo, and with my father’s prohibition in my ears, but by my father’s chaplain, and not the priest that Eberhard had brought with him, that I was there hastily united to him, and then hurried away from Viterbo, to that dwelling-place on the Lago Maggiore where you were born. There he cherished me — there he cared for me — there surrounded me with all the luxuries that wealth could command, or even caprice suggest. No lover could be more fond, no husband more attached to his bride; and yet with



all this, my child, I had ever before my conscience my father's prohibition, and I had ever present to my senses its daily punishment, for your father no longer called himself Eberhard — at the Lago Maggiore he was only known by the designation of Manfred."

"What! another name! and that, too, not only different from Eberhard, but also from that which he now bears, and which I alone remember to have heard him called," observed Beatrice, lost in astonishment at the disclosures of Bianca.

"Yes, yes, the marriage so hastily proposed, and so speedily accepted, has been followed by long years of mystery — the reason of which I cannot divine, and the motive for which I cannot solve. Had my husband," said Bianca, "been a peasant, and practised a deception upon me — the daughter of a noble — for the purpose of being married to him, still I must love him, as I do love him, despite of all this mystery; for *O, my child, believe me — that never yet did there live a better, a more kind, a more tender, or a more devoted husband than your father.*"

These last words, and *these last words only*, were heard by a person, who did not enter the room by the door, but appeared to emerge from a dark alcove at the back of the speakers. The movement made by him in entering was heard by Bianca, who observed, though she did not appear to notice, that he had *not* passed through the doorway.

"Alas!" thought Bianca, "still another secret with which I was not before acquainted."

She turned, however, suddenly round, and as if she were but continuing the discourse she had with her child, observed —

“ But *here*, Beatrice, is *your father*.”

“ Ah! my father!” shrieked Beatrice, as she fell fainting back upon the couch on which she had been resting.

The man trembled — it might be with fear, or terror, upon finding that the name of “*father*” had excited something like horror, when expressed by the lips of his own — his only child! For a moment that piercing shriek had unnerved him. He started back, and for an instant, there was what might be regarded as the wild glare of an infuriated maniac in his eyes; but it passed speedily away, as he perceived that his child remained still insensible, and that all the thoughts and cares of his wife were devoted to the endeavor of restoring animation to the now seemingly lifeless Beatrice.

This man, so strong in frame — so vigorous in years, whose sable locks and thick black beard were but intermingled with a few gray hairs, whose dark skin was flushed with the ruddy hue of health, and who appeared, with his high forehead, his finely-formed Grecian nose, well-rounded chin, and stalwart figure, a paladin of the army of Charlemagne, now knelt down upon the floor, and seizing the senseless hand of his child, he covered it with kisses, and wept — wept as if he were a poor, timid, weak, and helpless woman!

The cares bestowed by Bianca, and perchance, the warm tears shed by her father on her hand, at length restored Beatrice to perfect consciousness of what was passing around her.

“ My child,” said Bianca, “ you are now too agitated by the events of this day, to continue either your conversation with me, or to discuss with your father the subject to which we were referring when he entered the

oratory. Betake yourself now to your bed. Good night, my child ; good night."

"Good night, dearest mother," said Beatrice, clasping her mother in her arms, and kissing her fervently on both cheeks. "Good night, father," said Beatrice, kissing his hand, and without venturing, or perhaps wishing to look in his face, before she left the room.

The father marked the distinction in his child's manner to himself and to her mother, and again a slight shiver passed through his frame. He walked up and down the room for a few minutes, and then, as if perfect calmness had been restored to him, he said :

"Of what, Bianca, were you and our child talking when I entered the room ?"

"Of you, my husband, of myself, of herself. But may I speak to you on a subject that you have previously forbidden me ? or shall our faithful Agatha, on whom no such prohibition is laid, be your informant ?"

"Speak what you wish, Bianca — if it be good news, it will be more welcome from your lips than from any other's ; if it be bad, then the evil will be the less, for it will be told to me, in accents, to which I love at all times to listen."

"Then, husband, I have to speak to you of Magnus."

"Of Magnus ! Magnus ! what Magnus ?" asked her husband.

"Of what Magnus ! Is it possible you can ask that question, when you prohibited either me or my daughter ever again to mention his name," said Bianca, surprised at the strange forgetfulness of her husband.

"O, ay, I recollect now," said the man, smiling ; "Magnus was the name of some pretty boy — a pretty page, or puny baron, that Beatrice saw, when she was a

child, at the Lago Maggiore, and of whom the little wench spoke to me, one day, with all the enthusiasm of a love-sick maiden, although she could not then have been more than fourteen years of age. I forbade her to speak of him then, as I wished to frighten all such thoughts out of her head. I included you in that prohibition, as you too had seen him, and I was desirous that you should aid me in teaching her to forget him."

"Then, husband, if you thought it desirable to laugh such thoughts out of Beatrice's head, you adopted the worst course you possibly could have taken. Your prohibition gave a permanency to ideas that might otherwise have been dissipated. But how came you to make such a mistake about Magnus as to speak of him as a little page, or puny baron? Know then the facts, as Agatha told them to me, previous to Beatrice visiting me in my oratory. This very day, Magnus, who chanced to be on the Aschaff, saw Beatrice in that favored nook on its banks, to which she is so fond of resorting — he there declared his love for her, and there avowed his intention to come here and demand from you her hand in marriage."

"And what then is this Magnus, who thus so confidently speaks of demanding, as if he were entitled to receive my daughter's hand in marriage?" asked the husband of Bianca — and, as he did so, leaning with his right hand upon the altar-basement of the crucifix.

"He is," answered Bianca, not noticing the agitation and the attitude of her husband. "He is," she said, "Magnus, Duke of Saxony; and he spoke of bringing with him his guardian, Otho, Duke of Bavaria, and he speaks too of his attendants, and of his knights, and of — but good heavens! husband, what is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

These latter words were addressed to one who did not hear. The hair of the miserable man had risen upon his head in horror, as if each particular fibre of the insensate mass had been endowed with life — his teeth were set — his eyes, glassy and staring with terror, were fastened upon the ivory image of the Savior, which, in his rude, convulsive grasp, had been torn from the cross on which it had rested — and he stood thus facing it, and even looking defiance, and seeming to examine it, as if he could detect upon the fixed features a single line indicative of a triumph over *him*. It was an awful thing to behold this fiend-like outburst of living infuriated rage, and that inanimate semblance of meekness, of suffering, of patience, of agony, and of forgiveness. The man stood, as we might suppose, a desperate, agonized demon, to stand defying the immovable Godhead. He continued thus speechless, motionless, breathless, and then his rigid sinews relaxed — the figure of the Redeemer fell from his grasp; but was caught by the hands of Bianca, who reverently replaced it on the altar. He watched it, as it lay there, seemingly prostrate before him, and then exclaimed :

“ My God ! my God ! Thou hast abandoned me to perdition ! Must the punishment come in this world, as well as in the next ? Why afflict the innocent ? Why break the heart of the sinless ? Why doom to destruction, and why drive to despair those who have never offended Thee ? My saint-like Bianca — and now too the virgin — martyr, Beatrice ! They too are doomed ! And, what ! O, misery and despair ! the wide world must hear of them and me. The Duke of Bavaria comes to seek in marriage *my daughter* ! the daughter of — O, God ! if he should ever know *whose*

daughter he wished to wed — and why is all this? it is — accursed be the day that witnessed it — and accursed be my lips that pronounced it — it is because of my vow — THE VOW ——— ”

And with these words, he rushed from the oratory, and rode out of the castle as if a demon had seized possession of him, and was bearing him off, despite of himself, to destruction.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SERFS OF ASCHAFFENBURG.

THE morning following the events described in the preceding chapter was as fresh, as bright, as balmy, and as full of sweetness, as a May morning ever is in Franconia — earth, and air, and sky, and meadow land, and forest green, with the rippling Aschaff, and the silvery Maine, all combined together to make the heart of man glad; and if that heart were not thrilled by a contemplation of the beauties of nature, it was because it had made for itself an abode for vice, or because it was a victim to the vices of others.

In Aschaffenburg we have seen how, in the course of a few hours, one family was plunged into grief — and that apparently one endowed with all the blessings that this world can bestow upon her favorite children — how, despite of riches, and of health (and as far as *two* at least of them were concerned), of virtue and innocence, sorrow gnawed at their heart, and despair sat at their fireside.

Let us turn then, from the rich to the poor. It is necessary that we should do so in pursuing the progress of our tale. Let us leave not merely the mansions where luxury abounds, but let us betake ourselves to a hamlet, where the inhabitants are so very poor, and the time in which they live is not yet twenty years beyond the first half of the eleventh century — that even the name of “freedom” is unknown to them. Let us entreat our fair readers to accompany us to that very spot near which the charming town of Aschaffenburg is now situated. It is close to the place on which may be seen the confluence of the Aschaff and Maine. It is a hamlet of serfs, attached to the monastery which stands on the top of the high, steep hill that overlooks them, and that, with its thick walls and battlemented towers, seems at first sight to be a fortress — and so, in point of fact, for the purpose of defence, it is, as the times of which we treat, were such, that the wealth bestowed for the service of the church, and the benefit of the poor, was never so safely guarded as when it was known that there were good swords and strong partisans ready to repel its aggressors.

For the present, however, there was no semblance of any such spoliating forrays ever having been made. The hamlet of the serfs was in the enjoyment of perfect peace. The men and the women who dwelt in it had now, for some hours, descended from the abbey chapel, where they had all heard mass together — the men had then betaken themselves to the fields, or the forest, in pursuance of their daily occupations; and the hamlet was alone occupied by women and children. The women were (what all women nowadays in country villages are not) well and comfortably clothed, although

straw bonnets were then unknown, and cotton gowns an invention reserved for future centuries. In their ruddy cheeks, and round, smooth faces, were afforded the best proofs that they had abundance of wholesome food ; while the shouts of laughter that arose from the playing groups of children showed that they at least were preserved from the pangs and tortures which large cities and civilization have brought with them, in modern times, to unfed, uncared-for, or union-nurtured infancy. The serfs, the serfs' wives, and the serfs' children, were perfectly aware that, if their harvests failed, the granaries of the monastery were well stocked, and that, as surely as the monks were provided with a repast, they would not be left destitute of a dinner. The serfs, too, were assured that all they had to do was to provide the monastery with that certain quantity of produce from their lands, which they had stipulated to give, and all the surplus was their own — to change it if they liked into coin, or into golden ornaments for their wives, or rich garments for their daughters. They had not “ freedom,” to be sure ; but then they knew not want, nor cold, nor hunger, nor poverty ; and, we grieve to add, that, as far as they thought on the subject (which was but little) they did not even desire to be “ free men ; ” for they existed at a period of the world's history when their enjoyment of the blessings of this life, and the preservation of life itself were both far more secure for him, who could, as a serf, claim the protection of the Lord Abbot of Aschaffenburg monastery as his “ master,” than he who was poor, and, at the same time, “ free” and “ friendless.”

We must not marvel then if the hamlet of serfs, at such a time, and upon a fine morning, in the month of



May, was a scene of quiet happiness, and of contented toil, nor — that it should become a spectacle of joyous and bustling preparation when the serfs' wives and children remarked that the venerable Meginherr, their lord and abbot, was hobbling down the hill, evidently with the intention of paying them a visit. The moment this news got abroad, there was a fresh ablution of hands and of faces, and detachments of girls brought in, as prisoners of war, the struggling urchins, whose "plays" had rendered another scrubbing of their rosy features indispensable.

The Abbot Meginherr was now in his eightieth year. Of these eighty years, seventy had been passed in the monastery at the top of the hill, and the remaining, or rather the preceding ten, as a child in the very hamlet in which he now walked; for Meginherr had been the son of a serf. Having distinguished himself as a pupil in the monastery school by his abilities, and proving himself, by his piety, fitted for the priesthood, he had received his freedom from the former abbot, and then entering into holy orders, had served in all the offices of the monastery, until he was at last elected as its abbot. He had known the grandsires and the grandames of every man, woman, and child in Aschaffenburg, and therefore he, in the truest and purest sense of the word, regarded them *all* as "*his children*" — as his children to whom good food and good clothing should in the first place be supplied — as his children for whose education he should provide, and for whose spiritual welfare he should be solicitous, because he believed himself to be responsible to God for the immortal soul of every one amongst them. A profound scholar, a great divine, and in the days of his vigor, an almost inspired preacher, he

knew not, and thought not of any other place in the universe but Aschaffenburg, and the dependencies on its monastery. To him Aschaffenburg was every thing, for *there* was his allotted place in this world, and upon it he riveted his whole mind, and bestowed all his mental gifts; and labored, by all his acts, to show how a Christian should prepare to die.

This good old man now entered the serfs' hamlet, and as he passed along, women and children knelt down to receive his blessing. He proceeded onward, until he came to a large tree in the middle of the high road, beneath the spreading branches of which the serf-carpenter had constructed a species of rough, rustic arm chair, in which Meginherr seated himself. It was a favorite seat with him, and when he had been dead and gone many a year, was still regarded by the simple serfs with great reverence — as a species of relic of one, whom they believed to be a saint in heaven.

In this rude chair, the Abbot Meginherr seated himself, and there he remained silent for a few minutes, exhausted by the toil of his walk, before he addressed a word to the persons by whom he was accompanied — these were the prior of the monastery, two lay brothers, and a tall man wearing the white, coarse robe of a pilgrim. The Abbot Meginherr threw his cowl back from his head as he seated himself; but the prior, the lay brothers, and the pilgrim, all had their faces concealed by their deep hoods.

“Stranger,” said the abbot, first addressing himself to the pilgrim, “dost thou require at this moment, food, refreshment, or spiritual consolation?”

“No, good father, I require nought pressingly from thee — I can wait thy leisure.”

“Pardon me, for not asking thee the question before ; but an old man’s tongue is not more nimble than his limbs, and these are such a weary burden, that I have scarcely strength to drag them along. I cannot speak when I am afoot, and having met thee on my path, I brought thee here, because it is the first place in which I could put the question to thee.”

“I thank thee, father,” answered the pilgrim, “for thy kindness ; but what I have to say to thee can be as well told to-morrow as to-day.”

“Then in that case I shall make thee, meanwhile, witness of a joyful sight. Halloa ! where is my grandnephew — the little flaxen-haired Meginherr ? Come hither, sirrah ! Now, look at that urchin, Sir Pilgrim. Are not his cheeks shamefully red — and mark you how the rogue smiles. He is not more than eight years of age, and I grieve to say it, that he can say his *pater*, and *ave*, and *credo* in Latin, as perfectly as if he were a bishop — and sure I am, more acceptably to heaven, than if he were an abbot. See — the rogue’s cheeks are becoming more disgracefully red than they were before, because I praise him. Come hither, child, and kiss your poor old kinsman. And now, boy, take all the children of the village with you to the forest, and these two good brothers, who have got with them an enormous basket filled with snow-white new bread, and fresh butter, and jars of cream, and more dates, and plums, and dried grapes, than you and all your companions can devour between this and sunset. Away then with ye, boys and girls, all to the forest — but mind, I shall expect that one portion of your play shall be to gather the sweet wild flowers, and weave them into garlands, that you may bring them to the abbey church in the morn-

ing, and place them on the altar of the Virgin — I shall look upon every one of them as your little prayers for her intercession during this day, and to-morrow, and all the days of your lives. Away, Meginherr — away, boys — away, girls — away to the forest — have a merry day of it — be good, and you will be happy — away! away!”

“Away! away! to the forest” were the words that now rang sharply through the air, as they came forth, in the shrill, chirping joyous tones of childhood.

“Away! away! to the forest” were repeated in the deep base of the two lay brothers, as they hurried after the galloping groups of children, and scarcely able to disguise the joy they felt, in thinking of the happy day before them — that of promoting the sports of the children, and of protecting them from the possibility of any accident occurring to them.

The Abbot Meginherr listened with intense delight to those joyous sounds. He smiled to see the children laugh, and his eyes filled with tears of pleasure, when their merry, and to him most musical, huzzas! reached his ears. He turned his head in the direction which the children were taking, and in that attitude he remained as long as he could detect a single sound from the infantine band that had so lately clustered around him.

While he was thus occupied, there advanced towards where he sat, a tall, thin man, whose skin seemed to be, from constant exposure to the weather, of the same texture and hue as tanned leather. This man’s garments were composed of a leathern jerkin, over which were fastened, as if they were a robe, the skins of two wolves strongly stitched together, and confined at the waist by

a broad belt of leather, from which depended a short sword and a scrip, and in which was fastened a dagger; whilst at his back was a quiver of arrows, and in his right hand a stout bow. His feet were garnished with sandals, but he wore nothing on his head to protect him from the inclemency of the seasons. He advanced towards the abbot, for the purpose of addressing him, when he was intercepted by the prior, who said to him:

“Well, Bernhard, what brings thee, at this time of day, idling in the hamlet, when it is thy duty to be in the forest? Dost thou too wish to waste our means in playing the truant?”

“No, Sir Prior, I am no idler. My lord, the abbot, never called me so. I come hither, because I have been performing my duty as a forester.”

“I do not understand thee, Bernhard. How can thy duty in the forest bring thee here?”

“Because, Sir Prior, I have seen strange things in the forest; the knowledge of which I do not think should be confined to myself.”

“Ho! some idle tale, I warrant — some flimsy excuse which may impose upon the weakness of a poor, old, doting man.”

“I am, Sir Prior, the serf of the lord abbot — not thine. He shall judge my actions; and, if he is as harsh as thou art, I shall willingly submit to his sentence. It will, I know, be that of a father, who may, however kindly disposed, yet mistakenly, severely punish his child. With thy permission I shall speak to the abbot.”

So answered the sturdy forester to the prior, and then advancing to where the abbot still sat, he knelt down, and kissing his hand, said —

“Father Abbot, thy blessing upon thy unworthy child.”

“God bless thee, Bernhard,” replied the abbot, laying his hand upon the head of his serf; “for thou hast ever been a good and faithful servant. What news from the forest, my son?”

“Strange news, Father Abbot,” said Bernhard, standing up; “strange and curious news. Last night, whilst I was on the watch in the forest — I saw — descending from a tree — the beech tree, the branches of which overhang the Aschaff — you know the place I speak of, father?”

“I do, my son — proceed.”

“I saw there a man descending from the beech tree — I thought he was a thief, who had come to steal some of our venison, father, and I therefore kept a sharp eye upon him. That which appeared very strange to me, however, was that though his jerkin was of green, it was of the richest make; and what was still more curious, his face was blackened. He seemed to me to be waiting for some person. In that conjecture I was correct. In a short time one dressed precisely as himself, and also with blackened face, joined him. They spoke a few words; but what they said I could not hear, and then proceeded together to the creek, where a boat was in waiting for them. That boat I could perceive was manned by ten men, and no sooner had these strangers entered it, than it was rowed rapidly away, and soon disappeared from my sight. I have looked carefully round the forest this morning — I can find no traces of any snares having been set. Whatever has brought these strangers so near to the monastery, it certainly is not (and that I am sure of) in pursuit of game. I deemed

it then to be my duty to come here and tell thee what I had seen."

"Thou didst quite right, my child. Nay, it would have been wrong in thee to have concealed from me the knowledge of these things. They are, in truth, strange — passing strange — I cannot divine what they signify. What think you of them, Sir Prior?"

"I think, good father, that our *watchful* forester has fallen asleep, that he has had a strange dream, and that instead of stopping in the dull forest all this day, he has come to the hamlet to *amuse* us, and — *himself*, by narrating his vision," was the sarcastic answer of the prior.

"As I am a living and a walking man at this moment, so was I living and walking all last night in the forest, and saw all the things which I have this moment stated," said Bernhard.

"What thinkest thou, Sir Pilgrim?" asked the abbot. "One like thee, who has seen many strange lands, must better judge of such a wondrous tale than I can."

"I think," replied the pilgrim, "that the forester has told the truth. I think the intelligence he gives may be turned to good account; for those he has seen may be preparing not to despoil the monastery of a few deer, but its altars of their richest ornaments; and if I might venture to advise thee, I would say that not a moment should be lost in putting the monastery in a state of defence. These may be spies from a hostile army."

"But we have no intelligence of any foes being in our land. This is Franconia, and not Saxony. We all love and obey King Henry here; and we have not, like the Saxons, tumultuous serfs, who say they are freemen; nor rebellious nobles, who will not permit themselves to

be governed as the king chooses ; nor have we yet heard of a Franconian bishop presuming to speak, like the proud prelate of Halberstadt, of the rights and liberties of the church, as opposed to the privileges and prerogatives of the sovereign. Why then should we be apprehensive of danger ?” asked the prior.

“ For the same reason that the hen in the farm yard is apprehensive for the safety of her chickens, when she beholds the kite permitted, with impunity, to rifle the dovecot,” was the reply of the pilgrim. “ Ye may consider yourselves safe, because ye have not been attacked ; but calculate not upon the duration of any such safety, if it is dependent upon the opinion of those disposed to do evil, and who may regard you, not as strong, but so weak as to be contemptible. Ye may not have been oppressed as Saxony has been, because it may have been believed that your oppression was practicable at any moment. If ye would secure yourselves from danger, prove that you have the power of punishing those who do you wrong.”

“ The advice you give, Sir Pilgrim,” said the abbot, “ is that of an honest, a wise, and a brave man, and it shall be followed by me. Hasten, then, my dear brother and prior, to the monastery ; summon instantly all our armed retainers to our aid ; see that the walls be manned. We have provision enough within our granaries, and our foes shall find — but God forbid that we have any ! that the old walls, and the brave hearts of the monks and laymen in Aschaffenburg monastery can withstand not only a vigorous assault, but a lengthened siege. Go, Sir Prior — go at once, and heaven’s blessing go with thee.”

“ I go, Father Abbot,” replied the prior, muttering



as he went, "more wasteful and useless expenditure! What a consumption of our choice wine and our best viands upon these military retainers, as long as they garrison our monastery! And then, there is the loss of money upon military preparations! — money — money! — and *I* want it all — all — all. A plague upon this pilgrim — a plague too upon this old, undying abbot — spendthrift and wastepurse as he is!"

With such thoughts in his mind, rather than with such expressions in his mouth, the prior hastened up the hill towards the monastery.

The old abbot smiled, and thought to himself —

"A good man — a very good man is our prior; but too anxious for the mere temporal prosperity of the monastery. He is moved to that by an excellent motive, doubtless. Ah, yes! despite his rough nature, he is a truly pious man; and when he shall have to look upon all here as his children, as I do, I have little doubt he will be an excellent and even compassionate father to them. I was not as careful a prior as he is, and I am sure he will be a better abbot than I am. But I pray your pardon, Sir Pilgrim, for not being more attentive to thee. Thou seest how my time has been occupied by the various matters pertaining to my happiness, and the discharge of my duty as abbot. What, may I ask thee, is the last shrine thou hast visited?"

"The last shrine, Father Abbot, that I visited, is the greatest upon this earth — it is the land which may be regarded as all one shrine; for its soil, its waters, its hills, its groves, and its city, were the scenes of the birth, life, labors, sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Savior."

"What! then, thou hast been in the Holy Land?"

“I have, father.”

“O, happy — thrice happy man! And, O, how our temporal attachments cling to us! I would inquire of thee if in thy pilgrimage thou didst encounter a monk of mine, — a good youth he was, — Lambert, the monk of Aschaffenburg?” asked the abbot, eagerly.

“I did, father,” said the pilgrim; “he is living — he is well — and may be daily expected home. I knew him well, father; and have often heard him express his anxious desire to return, in the hope he may see you living and strong, and that you may, in your goodness, pronounce your pardon upon him for presuming to proceed on his pilgrimage without having first obtained your blessing.”

“Alas, poor Lambert!” said the old abbot, bursting into tears, “I have prayed daily for him since he departed. And now, good pilgrim, I pray of you, should I die before Lambert does return — that I accept through your lips his expressed intention of asking for my forgiveness; and that I now declare him absolved from the sin of disobedience — that I not only pardon him, but bestow upon him the kiss of peace, and pronounce a special blessing upon him. All this you will say to him, in case it should not please God, that I again see him in the body.”

“All this shall, if life be spared to me, be told to Lambert,” said the pilgrim.

“Wilt thou,” continued the abbot, “to this favor add another? Wilt thou not only pardon but gratify an old man’s curiosity, who, until now, has never spoken with any one who has visited Jerusalem?”

“Most willingly, father,” replied the pilgrim; “and as I believe it will increase thy pleasure if there be

other listeners than thyself, thou canst, if thou wishest it, have all the women in the hamlet around thee to hear the tale."

"Thanks," joyously exclaimed the abbot — "a thousand thanks, good pilgrim — thou dost indeed know the secret of the old abbot's heart — that he can have no real pleasure in this world, if it is not partaken by his children. All the women — sayest thou? Nay, we will have all the men of the hamlet too. Sound, honest Bernhard, thy horn — give forth the notes, by which the men may know they are on the instant to return to the hamlet."

Bernhard readily complied with such a command. The discordant notes of the horn speedily wakened up from their toil all the serfs; and in a few minutes afterwards they were to be seen running on all sides towards the place of their abode. Each man, as he arrived, knelt before the abbot, and received his benediction.

Meanwhile the women had brought out stools and benches, and tables; and there, seated around the abbot and the pilgrim, they patiently waited to hear, not "the latest news," but the first news that had ever been brought directly to them from Palestine.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RESCUE AND RECAPTURE.

It was a goodly sight to look upon — the face of that venerable, white-haired, feeble, octogenarian abbot, as

he sat in his rustic chair, shaded from the warm sunshine by the branches of the wide-spreading tree, and gazing upon the faces of his contented dependants, whose eyes were lighted up with love and reverence for him, and whose lively, noiseless attitudes demonstrated with what intense curiosity they awaited the tidings of that holy land, of which they had so often heard before, but never until now had hoped to see one by whom it had been visited.

“My children,” said the abbot, “before this good pilgrim begins the narrative, I wish you to bear in mind, that you are to be no losers, by so readily coming round me at my call. You are here in obedience to me; and therefore I intend, when I return to the monastery, to have it notified that you are all to be accounted as having done an entire day’s work for me, and you must each obtain the full reward for it. No thanks,—no thanks, my dear children, but say at your prayers to-night one additional *ave* on behalf of a weak and erring old man, who must speedily be removed from amongst you. And now, Sir Pilgrim, proceed with your narration of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.”

“I believe, Father Abbot,” said the pilgrim, “that there never was, since the first days that the blessed Boniface brought from England to Germany the glad tidings of salvation, such a magnificent sight beheld as that which the City of Mayence and its environs presented in the autumn of the year 1064.”

The pilgrim’s tale was here abruptly brought to a close, by loud, piercing shrieks that came from out of the depths of the forest, which, though distant, were so expressive of fear and horror, that the stoutest heart quailed at their sound.

The serfs started to their feet with terror, and looked in each other's faces, affrighted to find upon all the same expression of vague apprehension and dismay.

“Good Lord protect us!” said the Abbot Meginherr, who was the first to speak; “what can be the meaning of all this!”

“It means,” said the pilgrim, “that some scandalous outrage is committing, — that here, as elsewhere, the strong arm is oppressing the weak, — that brutal ruffianism, combined with power, is glutting its will in the agonies of its victims. I know the sounds well — I have often heard them before, and never did they reach my ear, that I did not thank my God that I was a Christian, a man, and a soldier. But this is not a time for surmises, but for deeds. Away, ye serfs, to your huts — seize your swords, or if you have not swords, any thing that has an edge and a point, for the head and heart of a villain. And you, Bernhard — you who can track the wolf, and front him boldly too, now hie thee to the forest, and bring us speedily intelligence where we may fight for virtue, and against villainy; and should the opportunity offer, hesitate not to bring us back the head of a human wolf.”

“No blood — no blood — I will have no blood of man shed, by serf of mine,” said the Abbot Meginherr.

“No, father,” answered the pilgrim, and assuming, in such a conjuncture as this, that which had plainly been his ancient habit of command in warfare; “no — not a single drop — not as much as an angry cat's claw would elicit from the chubby finger of a wanton, playsome urchin; except it be in defence of Christianity, the church, innocence, or morality — of the wives, the children, and the homes of your serfs. But, if the serpent

will attack you, and the wild beast fly at you — I care not whether he wear mottled skin, or iron-shelled jerkin, or appear before me with head of shaggy hair, or shining helmet — excuse me, father, if, in my own defence and yours — I maim or massacre him outright.”

“ Sir Pilgrim,” said the abbot, “ I perceive that thou art a soldier ; and if, as thou sayest, my peaceful people are unjustly attacked, I intrust their defence to thee. In the absence of my knights, I give to thee, on this occasion, the command over my serfs. God grant that I may have only to admire thy courage, without having to witness thy prowess ! ”

Such was the prayer of the Abbot Meginherr : but it was not destined to be fulfilled ; for, whilst he spoke, and even before the forester, Bernhard, could have proceeded a bowshot distance from the pilgrim, there was witnessed a scence which held abbot, and pilgrim, and Bernhard breathless.

Issuing out of the forest, and pushing her fleet and light-limbed palfrey up the steep hill towards the monastery, a young female appeared. She was followed by about twenty horsemen — all dressed in green, and all wearing helmets, undecorated with plumage or ornament of any description, but glistening as if they were composed of molten silver — all had light spears, shields, and short swords ; and the horses that they rode seemed to have been selected more from their speed than their strength. As long as the pursuers and the pursued were upon the level soil, the latter, either from the superior speed of her palfrey, or her better knowledge of the ground, had the advantage ; but of those advantages she was manifestly deprived when she began to ascend the acclivity.

“The female, whoever she is, is seeking sanctuary in the monastery,” observed the abbot.

“She is seeking protection for her innocence against ruffian violence,” remarked the pilgrim; “but that, her steed will never win for her. Her fate is inevitable. I know not who she may be; but I can tell her destiny.”

“Then thou art a magician!” remarked Bernhard, shrinking back from the side of the pilgrim, to which he had returned.

“No, Bernhard; but I am a man who has eyes to see, and ears to hear with, and who can reason upon what I both see and hear. I know these men by their helmets—they are the horsemen of Worms—those who call themselves the body-guards of King Henry—the panders to his vices, and the ready instruments of all his passions. This female, although I cannot recognize at this distance a feature in her face, is, I can tell thee, young and beautiful—as young, but not, I am sure, as beautiful as her of whom those golden-shaded hairs remind me—and she has had the misfortune of being seen and admired by King Henry himself, or by one of his myrmidons, and they are now in pursuit of her to capture a new victim for his brutality. But see—it is as I told you—they are before and behind her! And O!—look! she stops her steed in despair—and now,—good heavens! she is fainting—she will be killed by falling from her horse! Alas! alas! that such deeds should be done in the face of day—and that heaven can permit them, since man has neither the strength to prevent, nor the power to punish them.”

“Thou art wrong, Sir Pilgrim,” said Bernhard, “the lady has not fallen to the earth; she has been caught by two of the horsemen. And now, see, they have all

clustered in a body around her; they are, I suppose, consulting what they will do. They will not bring her to the monastery, that is certain; for the heads of all are turned away from it — and see, they are now guiding her in this direction. Observe them now arranging themselves like a squadron, four abreast; and as sure as I am a forester, they are conveying their captive hitherwards, and will march her straight through the hamlet.”

“And wherefore through the hamlet, Bernhard? Can they hope to be received here as friends?” inquired the pilgrim.

“No, no,” answered the forester. “We know naught here of the citizens of Worms, of their pranks, or their crimes; but they conduct her through this hamlet because it is the straight road to the river, where, if thou wilt turn thy eyes, thou mayest perceive there are several strange boats now lying.”

“Poor creature! poor innocent and unoffending victim!” exclaimed the pilgrim. “But one last, desperate effort can be made on thy behalf. Have I thy permission, Father Abbot, to make it, and to save thy territory from the reproach that so scandalous an outrage as this can be committed upon it, with impunity?”

“Thou hast my full permission, sanction, and authority,” said the abbot. “To rescue virtue from the fangs of vice is a duty imposed upon every Christian, and to shrink from performing it is to be guilty of a grievous sin. Whilst then thou usest the arm of the flesh, I will contend for thee by prayer — humble prayer, that God may be pleased to reward thy valor with victory — and that thy virtue may be crowned with glory both in this world and the next.”

And so saying the feeble old man arose — knelt down



before the chair on which he had previously been sitting — detached his crucifix from his girdle, and placing it erect before him on the chair, and clasped between his two hands, he was soon so lost in prayer and meditation, that every circumstance that subsequently occurred was alike unheard and unregarded by him.

“Bernhard,” said the pilgrim, “on thy coolness and steadiness, I place my main reliance for success in the coming struggle. Hast thou a quick eye and a firm nerve?”

“Since I was a boy, I never yet missed what I aimed at. I can wait for the wolf until he is within two yards of me,” was the brief answer of Bernhard.

“That is well,” said the pilgrim, “and now mark what I say to thee. Let this body of horsemen come within twenty yards of thee. There,” said he, pointing to a hut which advanced some distance into the road, and, with a projecting buttress upon the outer side, made the path at that spot more narrow and confined than in any other portion of the hamlet. “*There* — when the horseman, who rides in the centre of the group, and on the right hand of the female, reaches that spot, take aim at him, at whatever thou likest best, heart, visage, or helmet, but let it be such an aim as that thy arrow will be sure to unhorse him — do this when thou hearest me say, ‘the Lord have mercy on thy soul’ — count then three, slowly to thyself, and let thy arrow go. Whatever else occur, get thou quickly by my side, draw thy stout sword, fancy thou hast not men before thee, but wild beasts, *for they are wild beasts*, and cut them down as quickly as thou canst; be sure that the more of their blood thou sheddest, the less of foul crimes wilt thou leave upon the fair face of God’s earth.”

Bernhard disappeared from the side of the pilgrim, who saw himself now surrounded by all the men and women of the hamlet.

“Women,” said the pilgrim, “fly ye out of the hamlet. You can do no good here, and may occasion much harm, if the rude soldiers, who are about to pass here, should see your fair faces. It might cause you to be torn away from father, mother, husband, brother, lover, or children. Should you hear the sounds of a combat, do not appear, until there is no other cry coming forth than the sad wailing of wounded men. Then there ye will be wanted, and then only your presence can be useful to friend or foe. Away, then, and hide yourselves, where best you can, from the sight of a ribald soldiery.”

These orders were obeyed. The pilgrim then looked to see how his new soldiers were arrayed. He found that a few had swords, others hatchets, others forks, others spears, others reaping hooks, and that two or three stout young fellows had brought out ploughshares. These men he planted, some behind the walls of the projecting houses, so as not to be visible to the horsemen when advancing from the opposite side of the hamlet; and others he placed in the houses out of view, and to all he gave his commands, in these few brief words:

“My brave men of Aschaffenburg, I am sorry to place such stout soldiers as you are out of the view of an enemy, but the truth is, that badly equipped as you are, a thousand of you could not withstand, for two minutes, the solid charge of twenty experienced horsemen, armed with spears. Our only chance with them is for you to attack them unexpectedly from all sides, back and front, sides and rear; but mind, not a man of you is to stir until you see one of their men unhorsed.

The moment that occurs, rush at them; do not try to strike a man of them in the breast, for there you will only be hammering or probing at a cuirass; aim as well as you can at their faces, and if you are not tall enough for that, then at their stomachs, and if you cannot do that, try and hamstring their horses. You are not to strike a blow until you see one horseman down; but the instant you see that, then stab, hackle, cut, and slash away at them until you get them all down. And now away, for they are fast approaching us.”

The ready, lightsome, cheerful, and punctual spirit with which the pilgrim observed his orders were fulfilled, inspired him with an almost confident hope that the effort which he was about to make would be crowned with success.

In a few minutes he saw the horsemen entering the village, and he, at the same instant, perceived that not only the face, but nearly the figure of the female was completely concealed by a robe which, fashioned like a monk's habit, covered her face with its cowl, and disguised the garments worn beneath by its ample folds. His practised eye showed him, too, that the preparations he had been making for their reception had not altogether escaped the notice of the horsemen, for they advanced slowly and steadily, and in perfect order, and each man firmly grasping his spear, as if prepared to make a charge upon any body of persons that might be arrayed against them for the purpose of impeding their march.

The pilgrim, who stood in front of the abbot, so as to guard the venerable man, by his own person, from the possibility of any injury reaching him, here stepped forward so far into the high road as to attract upon himself

the attention of the horsemen. His doing so brought him in advance of the projecting huts, so as to be on a line with the spot to which he had directed the attention of Bernhard.

The unwonted silence of the hamlet evidently appalled the horsemen. Their loud talk, which was heard as they passed the first houses, became, as if by general consent, completely hushed, so that, by the time they had drawn near to where the pilgrim stood, not a sound was to be heard but the regular tramp of the horses' feet in the centre of the road. The horsemen looked at the pilgrim, but did not deem it necessary to bestow even a passing word upon him. The pilgrim waited until the central group was on the point of passing him, and then there was heard a word, pronounced in a voice so distinct and clear, that the hamlet rung again with the sound. It was the simple word — "*halt.*"

The word, as pronounced by the lips of the pilgrim, was involuntarily, almost unconsciously obeyed by the horsemen; for, soldiers as they were, they could not fail to recognize that it was given forth by one long accustomed to command in many a hard-fought field.

"Who bids *us* halt?" inquired the commander of the troop, recovering from the momentary surprise into which he had been cast.

"I do," said the pilgrim; "and it is to demand of thee and thy followers, in the name of the Lord Abbot of Aschaffenburg, within whose district thou now art, why and wherefore thou hast, without his sanction, first presumed to arrest this maiden, and then, having arrested her, why thou hast not brought the captive before him, in order that he might ascertain whether or not she can provide herself with compurgators, by which her inno-

cence of any charge alleged against her may be demonstrated."

"Sir Pilgrim," sneeringly answered the commander of the horsemen, "it may suffice the good Abbot of Aschaffenburg to know that we are soldiers of the loyal city of Worms; that we have banished our own bishop from our city, because he was not obedient to King Henry; and that we care as little for thy abbot; that we trample upon his authority; that we defy his power, and that we have arrested this female, not because we allege that she has done to others or to us aught of wrong, but because it is our pleasure to make her our captive. This is our sole answer to the question put to us by a wandering pilgrim, on behalf of the fasting, psalm-singing, discipline-using Abbot of Aschaffenburg."

"Then, as thy sole reply," said the pilgrim, advancing towards the troop, "I say to thee, miserable man, may the Lord have mercy on thy soul!"

The commander of the troop looked down with contempt upon the pilgrim, and then gazing direct before him, he pointed with his sword, and seemed about to pronounce the word "onward," when he was seen to fall seemingly lifeless to the earth, and at the same moment a crash was heard; but the fall seemed to precede the riving noise that was made as an arrow head tore its way through his polished helmet. At the same moment the sword of the fallen man was seized by the pilgrim, and, before the man's companion could recover from his surprise, a vigorous lunge with the same sword, now wielded by the pilgrim's hand, sent that companion senseless to the earth.

As the leader of the troop fell, a clamorous and raging crowd of armed serfs burst out upon all sides on

the horsemen. The horsemen, confused, and assailed without sufficient space to use their spears, had to draw their swords, and aiming as well as they could down upon the unguarded heads of the serfs, at length effected their escape, each man, however, bearing with him a wound, and leaving, as the result of this short and desperate conflict, three of their men dead in the hamlet, and finding that their female captive had been rescued from them.

The fugitive horsemen retreated back to that part of the hamlet by which they had first appeared, as it was the only place that they could perceive to be free from assailants. Here the men rallied, and recovering in a few minutes from the panic fear with which they had been first seized, they stanchd their bleeding wounds ; and as they did so, he who seemed to be the second in command, observed :

“ A sad day’s work this — four of our men killed in as many seconds.”

“ Nay, but three,” replied a soldier ; “ I noticed that our commander, Lieman, had no blood upon his face as he fell. The arrow that shot him down could have only stunned him ; but I warrant he will, from such a knock as that, have a headache for a week to come.”

“ I doubt it much, comrade,” said the second commander. “ Let us but return to the king, without that female, and neither Lieman, nor any man here, will this day week have a head upon his shoulders. Better the sledge hammer of a serf, than endure what, perchance, may be our own lot, a lingering death by torture under the practised hand of King Henry’s headsman. But mark ! something strange has occurred amongst our foes. They are all in dismay, clustering under a tree, and they

have left alone and in the middle of the road, that demon pilgrim, and our captive. Now then is the moment to make a charge upon them whilst they are in confusion. We have two things to choose between, death in the hamlet, or death on the scaffold. If we succeed we shall have full purses — if we fail we choose the easier death.”

“Charge, Egen, charge for your life,” said the commander Lieman, here running up to his men. “I have done something to distract the attention of the serfs. Soldiers! let the four in the first line set your lances all at the pilgrim — run him through on the spot — let the four next carry off the woman living or dead — and as to the remainder draw your swords, cut right and left until we get back to the river bank. I will meet you there as best I can — *charge*.”

The order was readily and promptly obeyed by desperate men, who felt that their only chance of saving their lives depended upon the success of the effort they were then about to make.

The pilgrim, the moment that he saw unhorsed the two leaders of the troop, caught hold of the female, who was absolutely senseless from terror, and lifting her from her palfrey, he bore her out of the thick of the *mêlée*, wheeling, as he did so, his sword around him, and inflicting a desperate gash upon every horse or horseman that came within its swing. He saw that his brave rustics did their work heartily — that the troop in one moment was in utter confusion, and in the next completely routed. He stepped, with as little sense of compassion for the fallen soldiers, over their blood-stained gashed bodies, as if they were so many logs of timber that lay in his path, and then gently setting the woman down,

that she might rest upon one of the benches that had been used by the serfs, whilst sitting and listening to his tale, he, with the intention of giving to the poor bewildered captive some air, removed the deep cowl, which up to that moment had concealed her features.

No sooner, however, did his eyes rest upon those delicate features, that snow-white skin, those pouting lips, and the long, inky, black eyelashes which concealed from him the full dark eyes, than he started back involuntarily, as if he had been the witness to some wondrous miracle, in which is exhibited at once the Almighty power, goodness, and mercy of the Creator.

“O, God! O, God! can this be true,” he exclaimed. “Is this not a dream?—a dream of years, and one that I could hardly hope would ever be realized. But can it be—that I see her now—see her at last,—and O, God!—she is dead—but no—no—to think that is to doubt of God’s goodness. It is but a swoon—water! good Bernhard!—hasten with water—as for me, I cannot venture to take my eyes from this face. Bernhard, some water, quickly.”

Bernhard did not hear the pilgrim. He was far away from him, beneath the spreading tree. It was the only order the pilgrim gave to him that day which was not, on the instant, obeyed by Bernhard.

The pilgrim continued to look on the beauteous creature that still lay senseless before him. At length she was heard to sigh—then gently moved, and then opened her eyes, but shrank back appalled from the pilgrim, for she perceived that he had seized one of her hands, and was covering it with kisses.

“Ah!” said the pilgrim, “I see thou canst not know me, concealed as I am beneath this strange garb. Dost thou not know me then?”



“Know *thee*,” said Beatrice, for it was she who had been thus rescued, and in whose speaking features were portrayed perplexity and surprise; “know *thee*, Sir Pilgrim — how is it possible I should know thee, since I have until this moment never before looked upon thee?”

“Not know me!” such were the words uttered by the pilgrim; but he was permitted to say no more. The rally of the horsemen outside the village — the movements of Lieman upon being restored to his senses — the agitation and the commotion of the serfs — the escape of Lieman — the return to the attack, of the horsemen, were alike unheeded once the unveiled features of Beatrice were looked upon by the pilgrim. They were as completely unnoticed, as the advance of the horsemen was unheard by him, when they came clattering and charging up the high road, and four horsemen ran at him full tilt, striking him at the same moment with their lances. Of the four lances that struck him, the shafts of three shivered to pieces, and the resistance to the fourth was so great that the trooper was unhorsed. The blows, however, were well aimed, for having carried the pilgrim onward for a short distance, they flung him to the earth, with the blood gushing from his mouth. As he fell — for there was none other in all that hamlet who now raised a sword in her behalf — the shrieking Beatrice was again seized on, and carried off to the river. She was swept away by her ravishers as unheeded by the serfs of Aschaffenburg, as if they had but plucked from the soil some noxious weed, and bore it to the water’s edge.

And why, it may be asked, were those, who had but a few minutes before perilled life and limb to rescue

Beatrice from the hands of the ruffian soldiers of Worms, now so utterly forgetful of her? For the same reason that has ever made mankind selfish in the midst of an overwhelming calamity: because, when the heart is smitten by some awful and astounding grief, it appears to be deprived of the capability of compassionating the sorrow of another, which, though as great as its own to the sufferer, is unlike to it, in its nature and degree.

The serfs of Aschaffenburg thought not of fighting in defence of Beatrice, for the hamlet in which they dwelt had been polluted by a sacrilegious murder!

No sooner had the perfidious Lieman recovered his senses from the blow which had stricken him to the earth, and perceived that his troop had been completely routed, and the attention of the pilgrim engaged with Beatrice, than he snatched from the ground the arrow that had felled him, and rushed at the abbot, who was still on his knees, and engaged in prayer; and, instigated by the fell spirit of the new sect, "the Paterini," of which he was a member, he experienced a malignant pleasure in directing the weapon with such a fearful aim into the back of his victim, that the arrow head went right through the heart, and, at length, caught in the wood of the crucifix which was, in the momentary pang of death, drawn closely up to the good old man's breast.

And thus was the venerable Abbot Meginherr discovered by his serfs — dead, in the attitude of prayer — and with his own crucifix nailed to his heart — his pure blood oozing out on the image of his Savior, to whose service he had devoted the eighty years of his stainless, ever-loving, ever-pure, and ever-faithful life!

To gaze, horror-stricken, upon such a sight as this,

was the grief of griefs to the poor serfs of Aschaffenburg, and they had neither hearts to feel nor thoughts to give to the misfortunes of another — and that too, a stranger, who could never be as afflicted as they were for the death of the abbot; for they had been *his serfs*. He had been their lord, their master, their father, their protector, their friend, their adviser, their consoler. There was not a hand there that he had not enriched by his bounty; there was not a tongue there that had not blessed him for his thoughtfulness and his affection; there was not an ear there that had not heard from him the sweet words of consolation in this world, and of hope for the world to come. To them he had been all in all, and yet, almost in their presence, he had been brutally massacred!

All — men, women, and children, knelt down and prayed around the dead body of Meginherr, the Lord Abbot of Aschaffenburg.

Bernhard, the forester, recognized in the dead body of the abbot his own arrow — he remembered too the face of him whose life he had spared in the battle.

Bernhard, the forester, knelt with the other serfs; but he did not pray — *he made a vow* — and that was a vow that he would have, by fair means if he could, and if not, by foul — ay, foul as the deed itself — and with the same arrow too — the life of his lord's assassin.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE WOUNDED PILGRIM.

THE clamor of battle had been succeeded by the sobs of men, and the piercing shrieks of women and children. Both noises had reached the inhabitants of the monastery, on the topmost point of the hill, and they were speedily seen descending its declivity, priests and monks as they were, and hurrying to the hamlet of the serfs, hopeful that by their presence they might bring spiritual consolation to the dying and help to the wounded.

With such intentions they came, and those amongst them who were practised in surgery (and not a few of them were so), soon found employment for their skill on the wounded heads, gashed arms, and dislocated shoulders of the serfs — others betook themselves, with tears, to the care of the mortal remains of the slain Meginherr, whilst a few raised from the earth the apparently lifeless body of the pilgrim. To their surprise they found him breathing, although still senseless. They removed his habit, for the purpose of seeing where he had been wounded; and then, to their astonishment, they discovered that the pilgrim's body was covered with a coat of mail, worn close to the skin, and without leathern doublet beneath it.

“He is even now recovering; and in a few minutes his senses will be restored to him. He has,” said a young monk, “received four bruises. The spear points could not break through this thick and skilfully twisted coat of mail. The force, however, with which they were driven has caused severe contusions, and to these

is to be added a bad fall, by which one of the small blood vessels has been injured. Quick — brothers !” he shouted aloud to his fellow-monks — “ this pilgrim must be carried to our infirmary. We must have the best leeches in the monastery to attend him. In three weeks I hope to see him restored to perfect health.”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CAPTIVE ON THE RIVER MAINE.

THE barge in which Beatrice was conveyed from Aschaffenburg was one that appeared to have been constructed for the double purposes of luxury and security ; for, between its centre and its stern there had been elevated what might be called an apartment, rather than a cabin, composed of wood, so solidly constructed, and the matting outside kept in such a constant state of moisture, that the noonday heat was not felt by those enclosed within its precincts. On the inside, it was covered with the richest silks, and its floor strewed with soft cushions and ottomans, whilst attached to one of its walls was a table, on which lay, in vessels of gold, the most tempting fruits and viands, with the richest and most cooling wines. To this apartment there were no windows, so that the person enclosed could neither see what was passing outside, nor could any prying eye from without behold what was going on in the cabin. Abundance of light and air were admitted through the roof, which was covered with a species of lattice-work, that

could be turned, either from within or without, so as to keep the apartment constantly shaded from the rays of the midday sun.

At the stern of the boat there was a space left for three persons — a helmsman and two others, and in front of the cabin were the seats for the rowers, and for those who might be in personal attendance upon the master of the vessel.

This barge was, upon the present occasion, preceded by a large boat, and followed by two others, and all of them filled with soldiers, who were armed with short pikes, swords, bows, and arrows.

It was thus escorted that Beatrice was carried away from Aschaffenburg, and, aided by the current and the sturdy strokes of the rowers, she was wafted swiftly along the water of the Maine.

Poor Beatrice! she, whose life it might be said had passed away, until the last forty-eight hours, in one unbroken course of tranquillity, who had unconsciously risen from infancy to girlhood, and from girlhood to womanhood, and who had no recollection of ever encountering, in the face of any one who looked upon her, any other than loving glances, now found herself, well knowing she had never offended a human being, seized upon by the ruffian hands of utter strangers, arrested as a malefactor, and carried away a captive she knew not whither. Bewildered by the sudden pursuit of her by armed men, when peacefully riding through the forest; horrified at the frightful conflict in which she saw herself involved; addressed too as she had been by the stranger pilgrim, who called upon her as if he had a rightful claim to recognition by her; and then his brutal murder, as she fancied, by those who were her unpro-

voked persecutors, followed by her recapture ; and, last of all, the mysterious prison in which she was confined, and the rapidity with which it was moving through the waters — all these circumstances, combined together, came rushing upon her brain, and whilst they deprived her of the power of thought, yet left her a prey to the most fearful agony.

Hour passed away after hour, and yet Beatrice remained in the same position, apparently senseless, moveless, voiceless, tearless ; with parched lips, aching head, and trembling hands, stretched upon the cushions that strewed the floor of that luxurious cabin, which seemed to be constructed for a Sybarite.

Thus lay she who never before knew what real sorrow had been ; and who, even yet, was unconscious how much of vice, and sin, and wickedness may be found in this world. Had she any idea of these things, or of the fate that was destined for her, perchance she would have thought more of herself ; but as it was, her greatest grief was occasioned by the thoughts of her mother — of her mother, who, perhaps, even up to that moment was not conscious of what had become of her (as she had ridden out unaccompanied by Agatha, for the purpose merely of bestowing in charity a piece of gold upon the sick wife of a serf) — of her mother, who would wait, perhaps, all day, expecting her return every moment — of her mother, who, when the shades of evening began to fall, would feel convinced, and not till then, that some calamity had befallen her, and then — she thought how her mother would feel when she was told of all the scenes that had occurred in the hamlet of Aschaffenburg !

Thus lay poor Beatrice for hours, a prey far more to

despair than grief, when suddenly, and most unexpectedly, there came to her ears, and as if borne to her from a distance over the waters, the tones of a voice which thrilled to her heart. The words spoken were these :

“ I tell thee, Magnus, there is no use of thy toiling in troubled waters ; if there be any fish in the net, the number of the captors are so many as to affright others from following it.”

“ Nay,” replied the voice of him who had been addressed as Magnus, “ I tell thee, Dedi, it must be a very stupid fish if it does not catch at the bait we use. I can assure thee that if there be any fish in the river, I know how to discover it.”

It was the voice of Magnus ! of *her* Magnus, that Beatrice listened to ! The moment she heard his name pronounced, she started to her feet, and, when she heard his words, she listened, as if each syllable was far more precious to her existence than the air she breathed ; and when his words had ceased, she replied to them in a voice that was now weak and hoarse, and the accents of which, it seemed to her, could scarcely be heard even by herself —

“ Magnus ! Magnus ! — help ! help ! — rescue ! — It is I — Beatrice — thy beloved — thy betrothed, calls upon thee ! Rescue ! dearest Magnus ! — Rescue ! rescue ! ”

“ Halloa ! ” cried out the voice of some one, so close to her ear, that the person seemed to stand at her side. “ Halloa ! what means all this ? Strike up, men, one of your Paterini hymns, we must drown by our noise this wench’s squalling.”

The command was instantly obeyed. Beatrice heard the noise made by the singers, but not the blasphemous words that were now chanted forth by the boatmen.



She listened, watchfully, in the hope of hearing these joyous notes interrupted by the rough shouts of men engaged in conflict — such as she had heard a few hours before in the hamlet of Aschaffenburg.

She listened in vain: the song of the boatmen suddenly ceased. The silence with which she appeared before to have been surrounded on all sides was resumed. She beheld herself again left alone and helpless, in that solitary and splendid chamber, and no sound now reached her ears but the rippling of the waters and the stroke of the oars, as the barge hurried onward.

Beatrice, however, had heard *again* the voice of Magnus. Its loved tones had come to her, at the very moment when she appeared to have been shut out from the sympathy, and cut off from the aid of every creature on this earth. *The Beatrice*, therefore, who now stood up in that prison-cabin, was no longer the same poor, helpless, despairing girl that had lain there for hours lost in wretchedness, and motionless from despair. She was still most miserable, but there was a gleam of hope that such misery would have an end, she knew not how, or by what means; but her whole soul was now filled with a complete confidence in the mercy and the protection of God. The voice of Magnus had forewarned her to prayer, and to prayer she betook herself; casting herself upon her knees, she gave up her whole thoughts to her devotions — and there, from that sin-blotted apartment, in which vice had so often revelled, and debauchery had begrimed itself with the most hideous deeds, there arose up to heaven, out of a pure and stainless soul, supplications sweeter than incense, because impregnated with the purest aspirations of heartfelt piety. .

And so prayed Beatrice, until the barge bore her down the Maine, and was drawn close up to the pathway that led from the bank to the grim fortress of Frankfort.

So intently engaged were the commanders of the barge, Count Werenher, Lieman, and Egen, in conversation — so much excited was the cupidity of the count, and the avarice of his associates in crime, that they did not remark that a bend in the river had brought them within view of a large hawking party on its banks, and that they had been for some time the subject of speculation and of comment. That which they could not hear we may be permitted to state to the reader.

The leading personages in the party, who were engaged in the sport of hawking, and that the pursuit of game had brought to the banks of the river, were the youthful Magnus ; his cousin and his friend, Dedi the younger ; the father of the latter, Count Dedi of Saxony ; and his wife, the Countess Adela.

The countess was the first to perceive the barge, and the boats of armed men that followed it.

“Ho ! husband,” she cried, “come hither. What means this strange craft in the Maine ? I never saw barge built like that before.”

The Count Dedi looked, and then turning to his wife, said —

“Alas ! Adela, the sight of that barge is proof, if proof we wanted, that the king, Henry, remains unchanged, and, I fear, unchangeable, in his despotic disposition and the indulgence in his vices. That barge contains a prisoner — you see that it is preceded and followed by armed men — but whether the victim confined in it be man or woman, I cannot tell.”

“Then I can,” observed Magnus. “If the prisoner in the barge were a man, there would be several soldiers on board ; but with the rowers, there are only three individuals, there must be either no prisoner at all, or that prisoner is a woman.”

“Shrewdly guessed, boy,” said the Countess Adela ; “but I may tell thee there is a prisoner on board ; for, if there were not, the boats would not proceed in that regular manner, prepared for an attack either before or behind. Besides, thou mayest perceive that in the boat that precedes the barge, as well as in those that follow it, the soldiers are fully armed, and prepared for any attack that may be made upon them. And, good God ! it is a woman ! One of our daughters, or of our sisters, or nieces, who may be thus treated. O, if I were but a warrior, I would not sit tamely down under the perpetration of such brutalities.”

“Patience, good Adela,” said the elder Dedi.

“Patience ! forsooth, with such a spectacle of abomination as this placed before the eyes of an honest woman — of a mother, too — patience ! Shame upon the lips that can say patience, when the hand of every man — of every one deserving the name of man, should be raised to prevent such a crime — a crime like that which we now look upon.”

“Patience ! I repeat the phrase,” replied the Count Dedi, “for it is alone applicable to the circumstances in which we are placed, even if our worst suspicions were confirmed. Yes, Adela, I repeat it — patience — supposing this to be the last of the abominations of Henry — especially as we do not at this moment know whether there be any truth at all in our suspicions ; and whether, in point of fact, there is even a single prisoner — woman or man, within the barge.”

“That is a fact,” said Magnus, “of which I shall take care we shall not long remain in ignorance. Mark, count,” he said, “that point about half a mile distance from this. You see that the Maine there runs between such closely-joining banks, that any persons on board can hear the voice of a speaker across the water — your son and I will repair thither, and you may rest assured that, if there be a prisoner on board, he or she shall hear our words — and, if not gagged, nor a willing prisoner — we must hear them in return.”

“Thou art a good youth, Magnus,” said the Countess Adela, “and I have no doubt thou wilt yet prove thyself not only a stout soldier, but a skilful general.”

“Yes,” said Count Dedi, “too good, too noble, and too exalted, and his life far too precious, to be risked in a mad enterprise, or lost in a vain exploit. Magnus, I will consent to thy making the trial on one condition.”

“Name it,” said Magnus, as he prepared to give a loose rein to his steed.

“It is to require of thee,” replied the elder Dedi, “supposing the voice that answers thee — that is, if any should respond to thy call — should be that of some one known to thee — thou wilt, instead of madly plunging into the river, to be drowned, or shot to death with arrows, return to me, as the good and brave soldier returns to his commander when he has discovered the enemy, instead of stopping to fight with him. Wilt thou so obey me?”

“I will,” answered Magnus. “Though it were the voice of my own mother I heard, I will return to thee. I see perfectly well that we are helpless — that we, on land and unarmed, can do nought against armed men in boats, and hence, I consider that I am bound to return

to thee, and report what I may hear, in order that thou mayest divine the means for baffling the enemy."

"I repeat my wife's words — thou art a good youth, Magnus," said the elder Dedi. "My son knows something of the devices of war, and will tell thee how thou mayest so speak, as to escape exciting the instant suspicion and attention of the enemy — for it is an enemy — the enemy of virtue, of religion, of morality; of knightly truth, manly rectitude, and female honor. Remember that, and also, that you can endanger all these by rashness. And now both have my permission to go. Go — I say — and a father's blessing go with you."

"And a woman's prayers," added the Countess Adela.

Half an hour had not passed away until Magnus and his cousin were by the side of the Countess Adela and her husband.

The hawking party of Count Dedi were observed travelling at a rapid pace towards Frankfort.

They were so observed by the soldiers in the last of the boats that followed as an escort upon the barge in which Beatrice was a prisoner.

Men practised in the ways of vice are ever suspicious. The same base impulse that makes them practise evil themselves induces them to believe that all other men are animated with a spirit like their own in wickedness, in impurity, in dishonesty, in avarice, or in sordid selfishness. Such are all bad men at all times; but if there be any particular moment in which, more than another, they are suspicious and watchful, it is when they are engaged in doing some action, the utter baseness of which they conceal from their own hearts.

Such was the case with Count Werenher and his two associates, Egen and Lieman, in the execution of their

foul abduction of Beatrice. Although the words spoken by Magnus and Dedi the younger were not heard by them, still the manner in which they had been responded to by Beatrice excited their suspicions, and the consequence was, the order given to the soldiers in the rear-most boat to fall behind and watch the hawking party collected on the banks.

No sooner had these soldiers reported the appearance of the young Dedi and Magnus as coming from that point of the river where the voices had been heard; of their joining the count, and his wife Adela; and the whole party starting at full speed, in the direction of Frankfort, than Count Werenher gave orders that the men should be prepared for an instant attack upon them; and, sending the first boat considerably in advance, with directions to give alarm on the slightest appearance of danger, the small fleet proceeded at a slower speed down the river than had previously marked its progress.

No event occurred during the remainder of the voyage to justify the precautions that had been adopted by Count Werenher. Nought was to be seen in field or in forest, as the boats sailed onward — but their usual occupants — the birds, the beasts, and the hardworking serfs — the last so occupied that they seldom raised their eyes to gaze upon the passing barge and its attendant boats.

Meanwhile Count Werenher sat again alone and musing.

“Dedi the younger,” thought he. “It is the first time *he* has crossed my path, and yet I cannot tell why it is that now, and for the first time, his name shakes my heart with the same dread that I suppose the condemned criminal feels, when he looks for the first time on the headsman assigned to slay him. I do not hate the

man — *I fear him* : and wherefore ? There is nought in common between us. I do not intend to injure him ; I can have no interest in doing so. I am his superior in rank, in wealth, in power. He never can be my rival, for neither he nor one of his family will accept, much less seek a favor from Henry. Why then do I — *for I do* — fear him ? Wherefore have an apprehension about him ? the more annoying, because it is indefinable and inexplicable, and yet have not the slightest feeling of the same description towards Duke Magnus ? my superior in all things but in the love that Henry bears me — and upon whom I am at this very moment inflicting an unprovoked and irreparable wrong. It is strange, most strange, that I should dread my inferior, and have no fear as respects my superior ; dread the man I despise, and disregard the man I ought most to dread. This is an inexplicable superstition — but I cannot shake it off. It is a sensation, I feel, that clings to me, as the shroud clings to the decaying corpse.

“ But what means this ? ” said Werenher, starting up, as he saw the high towers and frowning battlements of Frankfort before him. “ Wherefore are there such crowds of Saxon serfs drawn up around our landing place. A rescue may be contemplated. Lieman, do you take charge of the soldiers. Before the female is disembarked form a double line of them from the barge to the postern. Egen, to you is confided the charge of conveying our captive from the barge in safety. I shall remain behind, disguised as I hitherto have been : as it is the king’s especial command I should not openly appear in this affair.”

The orders given by Werenher were, up to a certain point, strictly executed. The vast crowd collected on

the bank willingly fell back to enable the soldiers to form a clear path for the captive.

Lieman walked along the vacant space, and saw that the soldiers formed two compact lines. He then called out :

“ Comrade, bring forth the king’s prisoner.”

The crowd — curious it might be — but apparently nothing more, saw carried out of the boat a female, whose form and face were so completely concealed by her habit and hood, that it was impossible for any one to guess what might be her age or appearance. She was borne thus, rather than led, by Egen, through the files of soldiers, until she had got about half way, when one of those forward movements took place in the crowd, which seemingly, involuntarily, never occurs without being felt to be irresistible by those who attempt a momentary opposition to it. Without a word or a cry, or the manifestation of the slightest excitement, the well-formed line of the soldiers, that seemed so compact a moment before, was broken! snapped as noiselessly and as surely as if it had been formed of friable thread — and in an instant, that which was before a vacant space was trodden upon by human beings: the inbursting tide of the population had as completely concealed that vacant place from observation, as the advancing sea wave, in its flow onwards, covers that portion of the shore which the ebbing waters had previously left exposed.

In this sudden push of the crowd and break-up of the line, the only one that was injured was Egen, who was not knocked, but, as it seemed to himself, dragged, by some hand from beneath, down to the earth, and there trodden upon. He was thus, for an instant, separated from Beatrice. His loud cry for help excited alarm ;



and it was instantly followed by a command from Lieman to the soldiers — “to use their swords, and cut down the serfs, if they did not make way for the prisoner.” Almost at the same moment, he snatched her from the hands of an old Saxon female serf, who seemed to be whispering in her ear, and then gathering the soldiers around him, he was astonished at finding the mob dispersing with such rapidity that in a moment they were all beyond his reach. He, therefore, experienced no difficulty in conveying his captive to her destined prison — the fortress — and there placing her in safety.

He congratulated himself upon his success; and so did those who were opposed to him, for they had accomplished all they intended to effect.

During the few brief moments that Egen had been separated from Beatrice by the crowd, and before Lieman could recover possession of her, the Countess Adela, in the disguise of an ancient Saxon female serf, had spoken these words in the ear of the captive: —

“Magnus watches over thee. Be careful not to touch any food but what is given to thee by a Saxon female. Place confidence in any one who mentions to thee the name of ‘Adela.’ Such come from me — the Countess Dedi. God protect thee!”

Whilst these words were spoken — there were two others in that dense crowd that conversed, for the first time, together.

As the Count Werenher, disguised beneath an ample cloak, and his face covered from public view by its large deep hood, was advancing up the open pathway between the two lines of soldiers, he was utterly bewildered at finding the line so noiselessly broken, and, before he

could recover from his surprise, he was indignant at perceiving the strong hand of a stout young Saxon serf tear off his hood with such violence as to rend it from the garment to which it had been previously attached. The proud count thus saw that he was left bareheaded in the midst of a mob of gaping, laughing Saxon serfs. He turned upon his assailant, and his anger so far overmastered his prudence, that he at once exclaimed —

“Ha! I know thee, sir. Thou wearest a gear that well befits thee. Dedi, the younger, descends to his proper position when he assumes the garb of a Saxon serf.”

“Be it so,” said Dedi. “I had rather live and die a Saxon serf, than be the gilded, titled, disguised, and skulking, Frankish pander of a king. Thou knowest me, thou sayest. Well — I know thee too — Count Werenher — and bear this knowledge with thee also — that I despise thee — loathe thee — spit upon thee — as a disgrace to manhood; as a dishonor to knighthood; as a blot upon the nobility of the empire. And, thing that thou art, I will not strike thee with a sword, for a knight’s sword should never be sheathed in carrion — I will not strike thee with my hand, for the hand of an honest man should never touch a villain even in anger; but I strike thee, with what most befits thee — that which is foul, because it has come in contact with thee — the disguise thou didst use to conceal thee in thy dishonor. There,” said he, dashing the hood in the face of the count — “take that, and hang it upon thy shield, and write beneath it, as a motto — ‘*eternal infamy.*’”

With these words, the tall, athletic Dedi stood looking down upon his antagonist, who seemed to shrink

back in terror from him. For a moment—and it was but a moment that the gallant youth thus looked—a feeling, akin to pity, touched him when he perceived that fear had really taken possession of Count Werenher. Convinced of this, he did not fix his eyes a second time upon the face of the count, but walked from the spot, commiserating the weakness of a wretch he could not avoid loathing.

Count Werenher stood as if transfixed to the earth; his cheek still tingling from the blow he had received, and his hand convulsively grasping the hood.

“This then,” said he, “is the cause—the unknown cause that made me, I know not why, tremble at the name of Dedi the younger. *I am dishonored—forever, too . . .* It is true—and though I dip this hood in his heart’s blood—and *I will do so*—still the words and the blow must remain! Eternal infamy! . . . Woe to this day, that thus brought us in conflict! Woe to thee, young man! and woe—ay, a thousand woes and curses on myself!”

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## CHAPTER VII.

HENRY IV., KING OF GERMANY.

THERE sat in an apartment, lofty, magnificently furnished, yet gloomy, for it was lighted but by two long, narrow slits in a thick wall, three men, as different in their appearance, as they were in years, from each other. The first was a meagre, frail-looking old man, with white hairs, with thin nose, peaked chin, and, in his small

gray eyes, that anxious, wavering look, which denoted that he was eager for the acquisition of wealth, and of a timid disposition. This old man wore the magnificent vestments of a Prince-Archbishop. He sat before a table on which there were rich wines, and a profusion of dried fruits; but his goblet, filled to the brim, and the fruits that lay heaped before him, showed that he had not yet partaken of any portion of the feast, to which he had been invited as a guest. At the table, and sitting opposite to him, was a man about five and forty years of age, low-sized, thick-set, with huge, broad shoulders, and a hand so large that the capacious goblet he held seemed to be hidden within the cavity of the palm, rather than grasped by him. The low forehead, and the short, flat nose, as well as the gaping mouth, were scarcely discernible amid the mass of fiery red hair that covered his face, and gave him the semblance more of a wild beast than of a human being. He sat and fed, or rather munched, like a hog, and swallowed fast, one after the other, large goblets of the odorous old Rhenish wine.

Between these two men sat, and with his back turned to the window, so that the beams of the red setting sun seemed to bestow upon his features, whenever he turned to his guests, a roseate hue, a young man, richly endowed with all the graces of youth. His hair, which was of the color of the finest yellow flax, and of the polished smoothness of satin, fell in long ringlets upon his shoulders. His forehead was fair, broad, and majestic; his eyes, a violet blue, seemed to beam with softness and the most tender affection — his nose straight — his chin round — his cheeks still bearing that peachy delicacy that comes with boyhood, and that always disappears in

the first few years of manhood — his mouth, shaded by a slight moustache, and decorated by pearly teeth, might, from its rich and coral lips, be mistaken for that of a woman, but that sometimes when it was intended to express a smile, it was seen, and as if in despite of himself, to curl into a sneer — the malice of which was unmistakable. To this face was to be added all the advantages of a commanding person — so tall, and yet so graceful, as to render that young man, even in the midst of the tall men of Germany, one remarkable for his height and dignity.

This noble, this handsome, this truly royal-looking young man was Henry IV., King of Germany, the son of the Emperor Henry III., and of the Empress Agnes, the daughter of William, Duke of Aquitaine. The old man, who sat at his right hand, was Sigefrid, Archbishop of Mayence; and the middle-aged man, on his left, Count Diedrich of Treves.

Those three individuals, assembled, as they appeared to be, for a luxurious banquet, sat silent for a few moments. Diedrich seemed to have no thought but for eating or drinking, and the very silence that now prevailed appeared to be an additional ingredient to his animal enjoyments. The archbishop, although mute, sat uneasily in his chair, and twisted and shifted about like one who has paid a visit he would, if he could, have avoided, and was wishing for some excuse by which he might bring it to a speedy termination; whilst Henry sat watching the bearing of his guests, and amused by the contrast it presented.

A pause had taken place in the conversation, as frequently happens when men are engaged in matters of

serious import, and something has been said calculated to excite reflection in the hearers.

The first to resume the conversation was Henry, who, turning to the Archbishop of Mayence, said, —

“And so the busy, meddling Anno has been again interfering in my affairs. He has, you say, written to Rome.”

“Yes,” replied the prelate. “I have a friend in the monastery of St. Pantaleon, who assures me that he has seen the letters addressed by Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, to the Archdeacon Hildebrand.”

“I know Hildebrand,” said Henry. “He makes and unmakes popes. I think I must some day or other imitate his example, and fashion one of my own bishops or archbishops into a pope. What say you, most reverend Sigefrid? You would be a very good, pious, humble pope yourself.”

“Your Majesty is pleased to jest with me,” replied Sigefrid. “I am willing to do much — perchance, much more than I ought, to please you; but to oppose myself to the Church and to the Pope, to whom I have bound myself in obedience, I must, once for all, declare — if your Majesty should not mean what you have said in jest — I cannot do.”

“I did but jest, most pious Sigefrid,” said Henry. “I promise you, that *you* at least shall never be asked by me to be a German pope.”

These words were accompanied by a sneer, which, though it might have escaped the attention of Sigefrid, was noted by Diedrich.

As Henry spoke these words, sneeringly, a new thought seemed for the first time to rise up in his mind;

for he became suddenly silent, and remained for some time lost, apparently, in his own reflections. At last he looked up, smiling blandly upon Sigefrid, and thus continuing the conversation with him:—

“But your friend, you say, saw the letters addressed by Anno to Hildebrand, and read them?”

“He did, every word of them,” replied the archbishop, losing all his usual caution in the cheering smile of his sovereign.

“Then tell me the purport of them; for I am perfectly conscious that your friend did not keep their contents a secret from you,” exclaimed Henry, laughing at the surprise and embarrassment he saw portrayed in the features of the timid archbishop.

“Your Majesty!” stammered forth Sigefrid. “Your Majesty assuredly will not ask of me to betray the secrets of another person.”

“Nor do I,” replied Henry. “I only ask as a favor, what I am sure you will not refuse to tell me, namely, that which is *the secret*. You know you can tell me what Anno wrote to Hildebrand. You are possessed of the secret—it may be useful to me to know it.”

“It may be far more for your Majesty’s peace of mind not to know it,” was the whispered observation of Sigefrid.

“What!” cried Henry, starting up, and grasping the golden-handled dagger in his girdle, whilst a dark frown gathered on his brow, and gave to his face of manly beauty the same malignant scowl which a painter might assign to the pictured likeness of a fallen angel. “What! is there a traitorous correspondence carried on with Rome, and I am to be told that I am not to know it, because a timid priest is paltering with his own con-

science? Sigefrid, Prince Archbishop of Mayence — I tell you I *must* know what Anno wrote to Hildebrand. Tell it now — and I may thank you — refuse to tell it, and I swear to you that you shall never leave this room a living man.”

The Count Diedrich said nothing, but he drew his broad dagger from his girdle — and with a slight movement that seemed to cost him not the exertion of a single muscle, drove the point an inch into the table; and then the trembling handle oscillated above the flashing steel, as if it feared the hand that had touched it.

Diedrich, having performed this feat, went on munching his food, and gorging himself with wine, as if he were the chance witness of a scene in which he took not the slightest interest.

The old prelate gasped with agony as he witnessed the pantomimic action of the bristly savage that sat opposite to him.

“Sire,” he said, “I swear to you, by all that I hold most sacred, that you mistake, grievously mistake, in supposing that Anno has written any treason of you to Rome. When I said it was better for you not to know what he had written, I merely meant that Anno, having been the friend of your father, the tutor of your youth, has written of you in terms I do not like to repeat, because the repetition of his phrases would be more painful for me to utter than even for you to hear.”

“Does Anno prefer any complaint to Rome against me as a monarch? That,” said Henry, “is a plain question. Give it a plain and direct answer.”

“No,” replied Sigefrid. “Anno writes as a friend to a friend, deploring the vices — your Majesty will excuse the word — of one for whom he feels the tender-



ness of a father, and begging that heaven may be besieged with prayers on your behalf."

"The hypocrite!—the old, ill-natured hypocrite—how I hate him—ay, from my very childhood I hated him," said Henry, throwing into these expressions all the vindictive energy of his character. "But come, my good Sigefrid," he continued, in a soothing tone of voice, to the trembling old man, "you are always too charitable in your construction of the motives and actions of your fellow-man—especially if that fellow-man be a priest, and above all—*an archbishop!*" (And then, that which was intended for a smile upon the lip of the monarch, became wrinkled into a sneer.) "You say that what Anno has written respecting me is not treason; I must be a better judge than you of such a fact. I may detect the poison of a malicious intention in those words, which appear to you to breathe nought but the sentiments of the purest charity. Come then, tell me, as well as your memory will serve you—and I know that it is retentive; for I can boast in my court no man so learned as Sigefrid—tell me, I repeat, word for word, what Anno has written of me."

"But, my liege," said Sigefrid, who heard with horror this proposition, "his words are harsh and severe, and —"

"And they are so, because you yourself think them to be true," interrupted Henry. "I shall, however, cast no blame on the narrator, because he has told me an unpleasant tale, which I insisted upon hearing. If you had here the letters of Anno, and presented them to me for perusal, I should thank you for showing them to me, no matter how unpleasing might be their import. And so it is now, in listening to you, whilst narrating their con-

tents, I shall fancy, not that I hear the voice of Sigefrid, but, that I hear recited the words of Anno.”

“ But, your Majesty, I do not know how to pronounce these words — ” said Sigefrid.

Henry impatiently stamped his foot ; and, in the instant, Diedrich wrenched his dagger from the table, and placing it by the side of his goblet, looked at the archbishop, and in a voice, loud as the roar of a lion, gave utterance to the single word —

“ *Talk!* ”

The archbishop started as if he had received an electric shock. Henry smiled to see the effect which the fear of his brute guest had produced upon the prelate, and then in a voice, soft and sweet as that of a love-sick maiden, he said —

“ Honest Diedrich, do not interrupt the pious archbishop ; when he speaks he does not like to hear the voice of another. And now, good Sigefrid, as you were saying, ‘ Anno of Cologne thus wrote to Hildebrand of Rome, greeting, and begging the benefit of his pious prayers,’ and then proceeded thus — You see I have given you the commencement of his letter. Let us now hear the remainder. No further preface, I pray you. I repeat, I feel that I am listening to his words, and not to yours. Go on, I say ; for his very words, I tell you, I *will* have.”

“ *Talk,* ” grunted Diedrich, as if he were addressing himself to his broad-bladed dagger, and not to the dismayed prelate.

Sigefrid felt that he could not with safety any longer refuse ; that his very life now depended on his candor, and whilst his words purported to be spoken alone to Henry, his eyes remained, as if fascinated, by the

slightest movement of the fierce man who sat opposite to him.

“Then,” said the archbishop, “since your Majesty insists upon it, I must tell you that Anno, in writing to Hildebrand, deploras that, notwithstanding all the pains he had taken in your education, he yet greatly fears nothing but a miracle from heaven can save you from perdition — that you, the son of a saintly father, and of a virtuous mother, have abandoned yourself to the grossest debaucheries and the most flagrant vices — that being married to a most kind, amiable, and tender wife, you have exchanged her society for that of the vilest of her sex — but,” continued the Archbishop of Mayence, starting up in terror, and casting himself on the earth before Henry, “save, O, save me, from the dagger of that dreadful man.”

“Sheathe your dagger, honest Diedrich, it is not wanted here,” said Henry, feeling a malignant pleasure in witnessing the fright of the old man who clung to his knees. “Arouse yourself, Sigefrid. When Count Diedrich clutched his dagger, as if about to disembowel an enemy, he had no thought of injuring even a single hair of so venerable, so good, so pious, and so clever an archbishop as you. He knows — for he is very shrewd, even though no orator, as you are — that you did but faithfully repeat the unkind expressions of another, and not your own sentiments. He knows — for I have told him so — that you are one of my surest, best, and tenderest friends; that you love your king, almost as much as he does; and therefore, though he does not say it, nor even look it, he has a most tender regard for you. There, rouse yourself, Sigefrid, and take your place again at the board. There now — see how Diedrich

smiles on you. *It* is a smile, I can tell you, though it looks so like a frown. And now listen to him. Diedrich, do you not love this archbishop ?”

“*Much*,” growled Diedrich, as he crunched some dates.

“There now, Sigfrid, be content, for there is in that little ‘much’ of Count Diedrich far more of genuine charity, brotherly love, tender affection, and softness of disposition than could be discovered in an hour’s sermon from the lips of Anno, Archbishop of Cologne. O, it is a ‘much’ that means far more than you, Sigfrid, with all your book learning, can divine : it means, among other things, this — that I, Diedrich, Count of the brave city of Treves, and my trusty friend, Henry of Germany, are obliged, but not flattered by your faithful narrative of the unkind words spoken of us by that arch-hypocrite, Anno of Cologne ; for —” and Henry’s sneering, gibing tones, hitherto used in speaking to the Archbishop of Mayence, here suddenly changed to those of a man whose violence of passion rendered his voice husky, “For,” he continued, “Anno is, I swear to you, an arch-hypocrite, a morose, abominable, envious hypocrite, who hates in others the enjoyment of those pleasures which he has denied himself, because to gratify his insatiable lust for power, he considers it necessary that the vulgar herd of mankind should regard him as a saint. Ay, a base and artful hypocrite, who to spite me in my childhood, converted my days of young enjoyment into long, long hours of tears and stripes — ay, even stripes and mortifications.”

“Your Majesty surprises me — I did not know, until this moment, that Anno of Cologne had ever done you personal wrong,” said Sigfrid.

“Then listen — and see by what a base device he

lured me from my mother's side, when I was but a mere boy," continued Henry. "Anno was my father's confessor, and so cruel was he to that good, weak man, that he has been known to impose upon him — upon his sovereign — the emperor — so harsh and brutal a penance as the discipline — I vow to you that he has actually compelled the emperor, before he placed upon his shoulders the imperial robes, to have his flesh bruised and mangled by the torturing whip of the discipline, as if he were a malefactor. My father was sometimes so pious, that he forgot he was an emperor; but Anno never was so forgetful. He always remembered that he was confessor to the emperor, and he won fame for himself at my father's cost; for the same man who insisted that the emperor should thus misuse his royal person, if he had but expressed a single word in anger, would, if his penitent were a poor man, be content with giving him absolution on the condition of saying a few prayers. And so Anno made himself loved by the mob — and that, too, as a priest who was a foe to the rich, and a friend to the poor. Artful, designing, scheming hypocrite that he is, and fully as ambitious as he is artful. Upon discovering that my father's death deprived him of the power he had hitherto exercised — that all the influence of the state was in the hands of my mother, because she had the personal charge of me, the infant King of Germany, he resolved upon snatching me away from her; and, as he could not make the attempt by open force, he resolved upon accomplishing it by means of a foul and cunning device.

"My good mother! tender, and kind, and pious as she is, always bore in mind that, though an infant, I was still a king — that, as a king, I had a right to have my

wishes consulted, and that on no account was I to be thwarted. Thus was I passing my childhood, when, one day, as I was amusing myself on St. Swibert's isle, in the Rhine, I was visited by Anno, the archbishop, Otho, the Duke of Bavaria, and three other conspirators — villains, whose audacious deed has left a hot and burning brand within my memory — never to be effaced, never to be appeased — never — not even by their blood. What say you, Diedrich, for in such a case you are a better judge than an archbishop. Should such an offence be pardoned?"

"*Never,*" growled Diedrich, as the wild beast growls when it scents from a distance the blood of its destined prey.

"*Never — never,*" continued Henry. "But observe how this old hypocrite of Cologne can gild over, with sweet smiles and honeyed words, the most malignant designs. I was a child, amusing myself with companions of my own age, and attended by my mother, and guarded by our military retainers. I was so amusing myself on the island, when Anno of Cologne, and Otho, the Duke of Bavaria, landed there. They were hospitably received — and, when the feast was over, Anno prayed of me to come on board and inspect a magnificent barge, recently constructed for him. I did so. I perceived that he had waiting at the water's edge a vessel, that seemed to be formed, on the outside, of one enormous sea shell, and its interior lined with mother-of-pearl; that the seats were composed of silver — and the oars, of burnished gold, were handled by men who wore the helmets and armor of the ancient Romans, whilst sounds of ravishing music came from beneath the decks, and filled the island, the river, and the Rhine-

land around with a melodious harmony. Entranced by the vision of this gorgeous barge, I bounded into it with Anno and Otho, and, the moment I did so, it moved off unexpectedly from the island. It was whilst I was engaged in examining its structure and parts, that I became terrified upon beholding that the vigorous oarsmen had pushed us off more than a mile from the island; and there sprung, as if by magic, out of all parts of the boat, bands of armed and ferocious-looking men.

“And thus was I — a king — a boy — entrapped and carried off from the empress my mother, and that, too, by means of the artful wiles of an archbishop — of my father’s confessor! If, then, Anno now accuses me of treachery, of deceit, of perfidy, let it rest upon his conscience that the successful practice of such vices was first acquired from his own example — the pious, good man, that he is!

“When I recovered the complete use of reason, I saw Anno kneeling by my side, and — the hypocrite! — weeping. He assured me that, however distasteful it might be, what he had done was solely for my own benefit; that under my mother’s tutelage my morals and my education were so utterly neglected, that if I were to grow up to be a man, indulged as I had been, and so ignorant, that I would be absolutely unfitted to rule over others, both by temper and by want of knowledge; that I might be deprived of my crown; and, that the reason he had seized upon my person was, to correct my evil habits and improve my mind. Such were, at the time, the pretexts put forward by him for the gratification of his ambition, and thus depriving me of the pleasures I had until then enjoyed. According to his own account, now given of me to Hildebrand, my evil

habits have not been corrected ; whilst, as to my ignorance, it was, I admit, removed — curses on his hand — *by the scourge* — with the fear of which he forced me to learn — to read, to write, to study. Ay — he did force harshly into my hand one powerful weapon — knowledge. Let *him* and *his* now beware how I use it ; he shall not descend to his grave without bitterly lamenting that he bestowed it ; he shall shed ten tears for every one that I did, as a boy, in acquiring that knowledge.”

The thoughts of his fancied wrongs as a boy had excited Henry. He started up from his chair, and paced up and down the room.

“ My good, my faithful friend, Sigefrid, I wish to know how goes on the collection of the tithes claimed by you in Thuringia and in Saxony ? ”

This question, put by the king, produced an instantaneous change in the countenance of the archbishop ; all traces of fear vanished, and every symptom of repulsion disappeared, when the prelate found that a question was addressed to him, by the sovereign, upon a subject which he had set his whole heart and soul upon.

“ Alas ! my liege,” replied the archbishop, “ the answer given to me by Thuringians and Saxons is the same. They will pay me no tithes.”

“ And wherefore ? ” asked Henry. “ Assuredly the Archbishop of Mayence would demand nothing but what the church sanctions ? ”

“ God forbid it should be otherwise ! ” answered the archbishop. “ I demand tithes from districts that lie within my archiepiscopal principality. The Thuringians and Saxons alone refuse to pay tithes ; and they allege, as the reason for their refusal, that the claim is one, till now, unheard of, and therefore one to the enforcement



of which they will not submit. They say they will not collect tithes for me to expend the produce in Mayence, far away from them; that where there is a monastery, which gives back to the poor the tithes gathered from rich and poor, they will pay them, and nowhere else; that where there are not bishops required, nor priests wanted, they will pay no tithes to an archbishop; that, in short, they hold their lands tithe-free, and will not pay them to noble, prince, king, nor archbishop; that such is the custom of the Saxon race, as sanctioned by their conqueror, Charlemagne, and they will die sooner than submit to be deprived of their ancient rights and immunities."

"O, this is but the brawling of a mob of serfs," observed Henry, "and merely worthy of the scoff of a court jester. Why not send your knights and military retainers amongst them, and force them, by the edge of the sword, to pay what you demand?"

"I have done so," replied Sigefrid; "and I regret to say that wherever my armed men appeared, the whole country rose in insurrection against them. Many of my forces were killed, and the others, by a speedy retreat, with difficulty saved themselves from annihilation. I have failed—utterly failed. They have despised the prayers of my messengers, and broken the swords of my retainers; and now, I am not only defrauded of my rights, but I am contemned for demanding what I had not the power of exacting."

"This is serious news, indeed, Sigefrid. It seems to me that you must have more opponents in Thuringia and Saxony, to your claims, than the mere dull tillers of the fields," remarked Henry.

"Alas! I have," replied the archbishop. "The Sax-

on nobles, who ought to make common cause with me, are arrayed against me. Their leader is Otho, Duke of Bavaria."

"What! my old persecutor — he who kidnapped me on the Rhine," interrupted Henry.

"It is the same; and with him, and as instigators, I am told, of this opposition, are the Count Dedi, his wife Adela, Dedi the younger, and the young Duke Magnus," continued Sigefrid.

As Sigefrid gave utterance to these words, there came, suddenly rushing into the chamber, that confused murmur of sounds which always arises from a great multitude of persons, however quiescent, when densely pressed together, and which seems like the surging of a mighty sea, if its peaceful onward course is impeded, though it cannot be interrupted, by some temporary obstacle; and whilst this confused din continued, and, as it appeared, filled the air, it was broken, but only for an instant, by a sudden clash of arms, followed by one or two cries, and then the sound appeared to disperse, as quickly and as unexpectedly as it had arisen.

As the first murmur penetrated the chamber, Diedrich started from the seat on which he had been reposing, and, as if his ear were as sure a guide to him as his sense of smelling is to the blood-hound, an instant's watchful listening appeared to apprise him that no exertion on his part, as a warrior, would be required, and therefore he sunk back again into his half-recumbent, half-sitting attitude. It was not so with the archbishop, who, clasping Henry's left hand between both his own, seemed to listen to those distant sounds in an agony of terror. Henry looked to Diedrich, and perceiving the manner in which he treated this unexpected incident, re-

mained himself unmoved. He was about to assure Sigefrid that no danger need be apprehended, when he perceived that some one had entered the room, and had noiselessly knelt down and kissed his knee. He looked at the courtier who bent his head before him, and then gazed in his face, and as the eyes of king and courtier met, Henry started up from his chair, and exclaimed :

“ Good heavens ! Werenher, what has befallen you ? — your limbs totter, your lips tremble, your face is pallid as that of a corpse, except that upon your forehead and right cheek there is a trace of red — so red, that I would almost swear some one had spurted blood upon you. Is it so ? ”

“ I felt suddenly ill as I entered the fortress,” replied Werenher ; “ but still I deemed it to be my duty to apprise your Majesty at once, that I have succeeded in my enterprise — fully, and I trust to your satisfaction. I would not, however, for that alone have intruded on your Majesty’s presence at this moment ; but that I have intelligence for you that will not brook delay.”

“ And what may that be, which even in your estimation can be more important than the accomplishment of the command I confided to you ? ” inquired Henry, somewhat irritated upon finding that, in the opinion of his servants and courtiers, any thing could possibly be of more consequence than the execution of an order that he had given.

“ It is, that Magnus, the Duke of Saxony ; Otho, Duke of Bavaria ; the Dedis, father and son ; with the Countess Adela, are at this moment in Frankfort.”

“ In Frankfort ! ” exclaimed Henry and the archbishop in one breath, and quite taken by surprise.

“ Yes, and I believe for some treasonable purpose,”

said Werenher, "for I myself recognized, as I entered the portal, the younger Dedi, disguised as a Saxon serf. As to Magnus, I am aware that he has pretensions that run counter to the desires of your Majesty."

"*He!* — pretensions! — opposed to *me!*" exclaimed Henry, his face flushing with scorn and indignation.

"Yes," continued Werenher, "but so purely personal and boyish, that they are more worthy of your mirth than of your anger. The nature of them I can alone confide to your Majesty in private."

"If he place himself," said Henry, "but for an instant — ay, a single instant — in my path, he must be ——"

As he spoke these words, he perceived that Diedrich had placed his hand upon his sword. The action reminded Henry that he ought to be more cautious, especially in the presence of the archbishop, and he continued, by saying :

"He must be — *watched*. Thanks, Diedrich, this is not a case in which your services will be required. I need not tell you, my reverend archbishop, of that which must have reached you by rumor — the foul hag that sits at the palace gates of kings, and trumpets forth to the world their slightest misdeeds — I need not admit that my youth has not been, and is not even now, free from the practice of those sins, which keep pace with the juvenile years of most men. I admit that I do, with justice, bear the reputation of being a bad husband ; and yet, I may say, in my own vindication, that I am not as wicked as I appear to be. I was not more than fifteen years of age, when motives of policy induced those who had care of me as a king, to force upon me a marriage with the Italian maiden, Bertha. It was a mar-

riage — not a union — then most odious, as it has, ever since, been most repugnant to me.

“I admit to you, as I am prepared to avow to the world, that Bertha is deserving of the respect of all persons — that she is amiable, excellent, charitable — and all that man could desire to see of virtue in a female; but still she is now, and ever has been, so personally odious to me, that I never could, and never can, treat her, or consider her as my wife: I seek then to be separated from my maiden wife, who has ever lived with me, as the saintly Cunigunda lived with the blessed Emperor Henry — totally and absolutely separated from her husband.

“I wish to be divorced from Bertha, in order that, choosing some dame for my wife, who can win my love and secure my affections, I may cease to live, as I confess I have been, in a state of sin.

“Let the church but free her champion from this marriage, and then, with a safe conscience, I can prosecute the war against the Saxons for tithes. The church can, if she will, pronounce such a divorce; and if Sigefrid, the Archbishop of Mayence, declares that he is favorable to a divorce, there are few prelates in Germany, I am conscious, who will presume to array themselves against his opinion, or dispute his judgment. What say you, Sigefrid?”

“That your Majesty,” replied Sigefrid, musing, “submits to my consideration a very nice and difficult point. Taking, as I am bound to do, that all your Majesty now states to me, is a fact, which can be proved upon oath; and, especially, that you and Queen Bertha have been, in name, but man and wife; then I can hold out the hope to you of a successful issue to your suit; and

taking, as I say, that this is capable of proof, I will struggle to promote the divorce. I will, I say, labor with each of the prelates in private, to induce them to adopt my views, and to act in coincidence with your wishes."

"But how soon shall all this be done? How many months or years may be wasted in useless negotiations?" inquired Henry, somewhat impatiently.

"Within three weeks of this time, I trust," said Sigefrid. "I will summon a synod in Frankfort, for to-morrow three weeks, and I shall labor, meanwhile, to have it as fully attended as I can, by those who adopt my views. If others should be there who may differ from us, I may deplore, but I cannot prevent it; for once a synod is convoked by me, all the bishops will be entitled to a voice in its deliberations. In such a task as this, not a moment is to be lost. I shall, therefore, this very night travel to Mayence, and commence, at the earliest dawn, to toil for you."

"O that all who adhere to me were like my trusty Diedrich," said the king, when alone; "a wolf-dog, that can think and act, and never trouble me with his scruples. Then, indeed, the battle could be but a short one between the imperial crown and the tiara — a good sword, and a sure dagger, would bring it to a successful termination.

"It is not so, and therefore I must play the hypocrite — speak false words to false men, who know that the words are false, and yet seek to quiet their consciences by pretending to believe them true. Base wretches as they are, I loathe them all, and the more loathe them, when I compare them with Diedrich."

"I pray your Majesty's pardon, if I have disturbed

you," said Egen, here entering the chamber; "I was told that you commanded my attendance."

"I did, Egen," answered Henry. "I wish to know how fares the lady you admire so much."

"She is still oppressed with grief at the sudden removal from her family," said Egen. "At present she is totally unconscious of the honor your Majesty has conferred upon her, in deigning to direct she should be conveyed to one of your castles. Your Majesty's desire of her being received in her chamber by two of your female attendants, dressed in the garb of nuns, and especially by hearing one of them, who calls herself 'the Sister Adclaide,' directing that sentinels should be placed at her door, night and day, to guard her from intrusion, have tended to tranquillize her mind."

"I rejoice to hear it," observed Henry. "There is nothing more hateful to my sight than a weeping woman. I detest Queen Bertha, because she is always in tears. A woman should never presume to appear in the presence of a monarch unless her face be decked with smiles. *Tears are so selfish* — they prove that a woman is thinking of herself and not of *me*. But enough of this new toy. Come, Egen, with me to my bed-chamber. I shall there disclose to you a project, in the execution of which, there will be required, on your part, as much wit as boldness."

"My life is your Majesty's — dispose of it as you will. If I lose it in serving you, then it will be well employed for so kind and so generous a master," answered Egen.

"I know well your fidelity, Egen; but I know not how I can adequately reward it," said Henry, with his constant, sweet, dubious smile upon his rosy lips.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE CAPTIVE AND THE JAILER.

BEATRICE was a prisoner in the Castle of Frankfort, which, from its strength of position, thickness of wall, and number of defenders, might be regarded as a fortress; but, from its vastness, richness, and magnificence, was more generally designated as the palace of the German kings, in this portion of their wide-spread dominions. The apartment in which Beatrice was confined was a square chamber, the sides of which were covered with magnificent tapestry, worked in gold and brilliant colors, and proving to what a degree of perfection the art of embroidery had then been carried. Ornaments of gold, and silver, and bronze, were to be seen strewed about; and some of them, especially the small statues, were moulded with such exquisite grace, that it was plain they had descended to the German king as heirlooms of that Roman Empire, of which he assumed to be the representative. The centre of the room was lighted by what would now be called a small window, and which showed to the occupant of the chamber that it constituted the recess between two projecting towers on both sides, and that it was not only overlooked by them, but that, in case of necessity, the room itself could be commanded by the arrow shots of the towers that looked into it. This room, which seemed to have been fitted up for the care of any prisoners on whom it might be desirable to exhibit, at the same time, every desire for their convenience and their careful keeping, looked down upon the smooth waters of the river Maine, as they glided over



that eventful ford, which, in the year 783, had been pointed out to the flying *Franks*, by a timid deer, at a moment when, but for that discovery, they must have fallen victims to the unrelenting vengeance of Wittikind, and the undying hatred of the remorseless Saxons.

It was at the window of this apartment that Beatrice sat, gazing listlessly upon the Ford-of-the-Franks. She was worn out with want of sleep and of food; for she had carefully attended to the words of the countess—she “neither ate nor drank”—she had not even moistened her lips with a single drop of water. It was thus she sat, with aching head and saddened heart, all her feelings engrossed with the one thought—the agonizing despair of her mother upon discovering her abduction. With the first dawn of the coming day she had taken her seat at that window, and the day had advanced about five hours, when, she knew not why, she found her eye attracted to what appeared to her to be a little white banner, that fluttered upon one of the towers of the cathedral, at some distance from her, and all communication with which was cut off by the interfluent stream of the Maine. Her eye had observed this long before her mind had attended to it. She could not tell when she had first noticed it, nor why she now thought there was any thing strange in its appearance. She was only certain of this, that when she first looked upon the cathedral the white flag was not there, and now, so confused were her faculties, by her sleepless grief, that she was as little certain whether it had been there a minute or an hour before it first induced her to watch its tremulous movements. The sight of that flag inspired her with hope. It was the emblem of peace and of purity; and, as it was upon the church of God, it was significant of hope; and it seemed to bid her place

all her confidence in Him to whose honor and glory that very edifice had been erected by the greatest hero of Christianity — Charlemagne. A senseless, mindless thing it was, that white little fluttering flag ; and Beatrice knew it was so. Yet, since she had last seen her home, it was the only thing that denoted aught of good to her. As such she regarded it — as such it comforted her ; and, for the first time since she had been a captive, as she gazed upon it, a gush of tears came to her eyes, which relieved and soothed her heart. For the first time in her life she felt that there was a consolation in tears — for the first time she experienced the truth of what had been so often told to her, by her mother, and the honest Agatha — that it is good to weep, if we can be but conscious that our tears are shed, not in a repining, but a submissive spirit, to whatever evils or trials God may choose to subject us.

So was Beatrice weeping, and gaining fresh strength for new trials as she wept, when a young and beautiful woman, arrayed in the garb of a nun, entered the room, and started back, almost with dismay, when she perceived how changed had become, in the course of a few hours, the appearance of Beatrice.

“ My child,” she said, “ if you persist in this despairing grief but three days longer you will certainly kill yourself. Why, you have neither eaten, nor drank, nor slept, since you came here.”

“ Nor will I do so, so long as I am a prisoner here,” replied Beatrice, “ unless the request I made last night be complied with — that of having, as an attendant, one of those poor Saxon women that I saw upon landing, and who manifested so much sympathy for an unknown captive.”

“ But in case I comply with your request,” said the

woman, who called herself Sister Adelaide, "will you promise to perform for me that which I shall ask?"

"Certainly, Sister Adelaide," answered Beatrice; "for one in your holy garb could make no improper request."

"It is," replied Sister Adelaide, "that you will cast away from you those soiled habiliments in which you have travelled, and array yourself in the robes of a novice: I ask no more."

"And that I consent to do," was the answer of Beatrice.

In a few minutes afterwards, Sister Adelaide led into the room a tall, gawky-looking Saxon girl — one so thin in figure, and so juvenile in face, and so fresh in complexion, that she did not appear to be more than sixteen years of age, and in whose big, dull, gray eyes there did not seem to be a spark of intelligence.

"Here," said the sister Adelaide, "is the first Saxon maiden I could find. She was standing at the fortress portal, and endeavoring to persuade the guards stationed there to become the purchasers of some of the wild flowers which she has gathered in the adjoining forest, when I had her called before you. She is well known, the guards assured me, for her innocence and simplicity, and is generally denominated, amongst her people, by the familiar name of Gretchen."

"And that is the name of an honest girl — it is no false name," drawled out the Saxon maiden.

"I fear," observed the sister Adelaide, "she will be but an awkward tirewoman."

"Not at all — not at all," replied Gretchen, with somewhat more animation. "There is no one in the village can equal Gretchen in decorating the hair with flowers. In two minutes I can weave a wreath of *Mag-*

*nus* primroses and wisdom honeysuckles, which even *Adela*, the great Countess Dedi, would not be ashamed to wear."

"I pray you, Sister Adelaide, let this poor, innocent, half-witted maiden remain with me. I am quite prepared to excuse any awkwardness she may exhibit, for the sake of listening to her innocent prattle. Its very incoherency may be a distraction to my grief."

Gretchen had a large basket filled with wild flowers on her arm, and the moment that the sister Adelaide quitted the room, she seated herself on the floor, and commenced, as if the matter on which she was employed was one of vital importance, to take the several flowers, one by one, from the basket, and in so doing, to ask Beatrice if she knew the name of each, and if she did, to tell it to her. Beatrice answered all her questions, and as she did so, Gretchen laughed, not boisterously, but still so loudly that the idiotic sounds of her mirth might be heard by any one, who purposely, or by chance, was listening to their conversation. As the name of each flower was told to her, Gretchen carefully placed it on the floor, so as that all the flowers of the same species were accurately sorted from the rest.

"And now, lady, here is a flower that is never known to grow but beneath a tree that shades the banks of the Maine. Can you tell me what it is called?"

Beatrice, instead of answering her question, said:

"I cannot; and even if I could, instead of answering your question, I would ask you, how you came, when you entered this room, to mention the names of *Magnus* and of *Adela*."

"What a stupid fool I am," said Gretchen, "in coming here to make a wreath, without having things to bind

them together. It will be hard if I do not find what I want in this grand chamber. Here, lady, whilst I search for it, I pray you to look at my cross; it is hollow, and has such a fine relic inside of it. You may examine it, lady, whilst I am seeking something that is still wanting to complete my wreath."

There was a look of intelligence in the large gray eye of Gretchen that startled Beatrice, as she received in her hand the small, plain, black wood cross, which Gretchen had removed from the folds of the coarse gown that covered her bosom. Beatrice opened the cross, and she saw inscribed on a minute piece of parchment, these two words, "*Magnus — Adela!*" They sufficed to prove to her that the seemingly idiotic maiden was a confidential messenger, from those who had already proved themselves to be her sincere friends.

Gretchen's examination seemed to give her satisfaction, for upon its conclusion, she ran over to the window, at which Beatrice still sat, and eagerly asked:

"Have you eaten or drank any thing since you came here?"

"I have tasted nothing — not even water," said Beatrice.

"Thank God! thank God!" said Gretchen, falling on her knees.

"Then here is something for you — it is food such as I take myself; plain, brown, coarse bread, and pure fresh milk. I would have carried with me something more dainty, but that I was fearful my basket might be examined, and suspicion excited if I had with me any thing but what we poor serfs are accustomed to live upon. Here, then, eat, for you must be exhausted for want of some refreshment; and, whilst you eat, I will tell you

whatever you may desire to know. But before you ask me a question, let me assure you that I am, as the cross will have shown you, a messenger from the Countess Adela and Duke Magnus ; that they bid me apprise you, that there is not a portion of this fortress on which a Saxon does not watch from the outside ; that the white flag which you may see fluttering on yonder church, was raised this morning by the hands of Magnus ; that it is planted there to prove to you, that in that tower there is always an eye fixed upon this chamber, and that if you should at any time find yourself pressed by a great danger, you have but to appear at this window, and raise your right hand high in the air ; or, if you can learn that you are about to be removed from this place, that you will rest both your hands on the sill. If you can find the opportunity for doing either of these things, then you may feel secure, whatever be the hazard of the attempt, that assistance will be sought to be given to you ; or, that to whatever place you are conveyed, you will be followed, and there, as here, the attempt made to rescue you."

As Gretchen spoke, her appearance seemed to alter ; the large, dull, gray eye was now flashing with intellect, the gawky figure became graceful in all its movements, and the simpleton countenance of the seeming girl was changed to that of a grave, earnest, though very young, woman.

"But eat and drink, now, I pray you," continued Gretchen, "and whilst you do so, I shall weave a garland for you. We must, if possible, not provoke the watchful suspicion of those by whom you are surrounded."

"I feel grateful to you, Gretchen, for what you say," replied Beatrice. "But tell me, I pray, why I have been seized upon by armed men, and carried away to this

castle, or prison, as if I had been guilty of some crime. Why am I so treated? or, why is my dear mother compelled to suffer on my account such grief? and then my poor father! and good Agatha! Alas! Gretchen, I knew no one else in the world but these and Magnus. How then can I have offended any one, that I should be so misused? Can you explain this to me, Gretchen?"

"I can," answered Gretchen, her face flushing with indignation as she spoke. "I can tell you the cause of all this. It is that Germany is now ruled by a miscreant, and not a king. It is because a base villain disgraces the crown, which the second Henry sanctified, and the third Henry glorified by his piety — it is because a wretch, who has the power of a sovereign, uses that power for the degradation and dishonor of his subjects. I have but to look at you, and I can at once tell for what offences you are confined here. Your crimes consist in your beauty, your youth, and your innocence; and you are brought here, that you may curse your beauty, that your youth may be deplored with tears, and that your innocence may be forever lost. Had heaven made you less fair, had age overtaken you, or had it been supposed that sin had found refuge in your heart, then you would be as free to-day as you were forty-eight hours ago. Henry the Fourth would not have deemed you fitted to be one of his victims.

"Never, lady, did there live so vile a king as ours; no family is safe from his brutal contamination; the daughter of the nobleman, and the wife of the serf, are alike perilled, if he but chance to hear that they are remarkable, in their respective classes of life, for their personal charms, or their great virtues. No tears, no prayers, no resistance can protect them from him; for he seems to feel, as the

devil himself did, when, as we are told, he gained admission, as a serpent, into the garden of paradise — and never rested until he had covered it with the slime of sin, and made those guilty, who, before then, had been innocent. He has wiles for the weak, and brute force for the resolute. With you he has employed both; he has torn you from your parents by his vile hirelings, the infidel Paterini of Worms, and he has had you received here by some of the worst of his associates — his female attendants — one of whom you have just seen, disguised as a nun; but who is no more a nun than I am a simpleton. He feels no shame in resorting to a worse profanation of holy things; to effect his purposes, he pretends, sometimes, to marry his victims, and has the ceremony performed by a false priest, or a real priest — in either case the ceremony being alike invalid — an imposture, if performed by a person who is not a priest — a delusion, if a real priest is cajoled into the administration of such a sacrament, because King Henry is already married. Nay, to such an extent is his profaneness carried, that it is very generally believed he has fitted up in one part of his dominions a gorgeous palace, to which he occasionally resorts with some of his favorites, men as well as women, and that their days are passed in the same frightful debaucheries as were practised by the Roman emperors before they became Christians — debaucheries so awful, that it is said, a person could not even know them, or be told of them, without sin.”

“But how am I to know this terrible man, if I should ever have the misfortune to see him?” inquired Beatrice.

“It is hard to conjecture whether he will appear before you as the king, or disguised as one of his sub-



jects," answered Gretchen; "but in any case, there are three points about him, which he never can conceal — his great height, his violet blue eyes, and his mouth, which is generally smiling, and the smile always distorting itself into a sneer. Watch Henry as he speaks, and you must thus be able to recognize him. And now, lady, permit me to array you in the garb of a novice, and to place upon your fair brow this wreath of wild flowers. May each of them rest as a blessing from heaven on your head, and be as a safeguard to your innocence!"

Beatrice, dismayed with the intelligence she had received, and learning, it might be said, for the first time, what wickedness there is in this world, how powerful is sin, and how weak is virtue, sat confounded with horror, as Gretchen decorated her person, and removed, as well as she could, the outward traces of that grief which had for so many hours oppressed her heart, and that still festered there.

"And now, lady," said Gretchen, when she had completed her task, "whenever the false sister Adelaide returns, she will suppose that I have employed all my time in attending upon you. I know not how soon I may be required to depart. Is there any message that you would desire to send to the countess and Magnus?"

"Yes — my thanks — my tearful, grateful thanks to both — and the request, that if it be possible, information may be sent to my mother, as to all that has befallen me. Perchance, my father may be able to induce King Henry to set me free. If wealth can buy my liberty, I know my father superabounds in it, and will not grudge to give whatever may be demanded."

"Wealth can do much with King Henry," said

Gretchen, "for he is as sordid as he is vile. If you do not provoke his hatred — if you do not excite his enmity against you, then there is a chance that he will sacrifice a caprice to obtain gold. But if he loves you, or dislikes you, then those stronger passions in his heart will overmaster that strong passion — avarice. Be cautious with Henry, and place your confidence in God. But — lo ! I hear the door opened gently — and now to deceive the deceivers."

As Gretchen said this, her manner, but not her voice, changed as she spoke :

"And now, lady, I pray you cry no more — weeping makes the eyes look so red and so nasty, just like a naughty red flowering weed popping up its ugly face in a bed of white roses."

"I thank you, Gretchen," said the sister Adelaide, here advancing into the apartment. "You have done much for the lady during my absence. I pray you now to leave the room, as there is one who wishes to speak with the lady Beatrice."

"And, good Sister Adelaide, may I not bring more flowers to this nice little girl. No one cries long with the fresh scents of the forest about them," said Gretchen.

"Yes, Gretchen. This evening or to-morrow you can return. All I now ask of you is to leave us for the present," replied Adelaide.

Gretchen carefully picked up all the flowers that she had strewn about the room, arranged them in her basket, and without once looking either at Adelaide or Beatrice, left the room, seemingly deeply engaged in humming to herself the words of a nursery song.

The sister Adelaide watched with great interest all

the proceedings of Gretchen, and perceiving that she had departed, apparently absorbed in the collection of her flowers and the words of her ballad, all suspicion, if any had for a moment found a resting-place in her mind, vanished utterly and completely. No sooner were the sounds of Gretchen's voice lost in the distant passages, than Adelaide turned with a smile upon her face, and said to Beatrice —

“This, child, has been a strange handmaiden for you ; and yet she has done her work neatly ; for never did I, in my life, behold a novice so beautiful as yourself. You are, in sooth, now fitted to appear before the great man who craves permission to see you.”

“A captive,” replied Beatrice, “cannot refuse permission to the jailer to enter his own cell. I permit nothing, I refuse nothing, I am compelled to submit to every thing. Such is the will of God, and I accept that which he ordains.”

“Wherefore, child, thus repine, when you know not whether you have cause for joy or sorrow?” inquired Adelaide.

“Wherefore !” said Beatrice, starting up, and standing erect, as she faced the questioner. “Wherefore repine? *you* ask me? Wherefore does the lamb bleat mournfully when the butcher's hand has torn it from the fold in which its mother still remains — even though it knows not that the knife is already sharpened for its throat. Wherefore does the young lark die with grief in the gilded cage of the captor, but because it has been removed from beneath its mother's fostering wing? Wherefore does a daughter repine when bands of ruffians drag her from her mother's home, and place her in a sumptuous prison? Yet such is the question asked me

by one who wears the garb of religion. O, God! my God! have mercy on this world, if such a question can be really asked me by one who has made her vows at thy altar."

The handsome features of Adelaide were wrinkled with a frown, and her face became ghastly pale, as she said:

"I have observed, lady, that you do not any longer address me as sister. Why do you suppose that I am aught otherwise than what I seem?"

"God alone knows the heart, man judges by appearances," answered Beatrice. "I replied, as a Christian maiden to a question that I could not think would, under such circumstances, be asked me by one, who had renounced sin and all its pomps. If I have offended you, I pray you to pardon me. 'This is to me a strange world; and as yet I can only judge of it by what I have been taught, and not by what I have known.'"

"I forgive you, child," said Adelaide, in accents that trembled with emotion; "but he who seeks admission will brook no longer delay."

In a few minutes afterwards, Adelaide returned to the room, leading by the hand one, that Beatrice recognized from Gretchen's description of him, to be King Henry.

"This," said Adelaide, "is his majesty's prime favorite and minister, *the Count Werenher*. He prays a few moments' audience with you, and alone."

Beatrice looked Adelaide full in the face, when she heard the false name pronounced; but the latter glanced scornfully upon her, as if she deemed the assumption of her now pretended character necessary no longer. Adelaide did not deign to give her an explanation; but whispered a single word in the ear of the king, and

then passed hastily from the chamber, closing fast the door as she passed outside.

The moment that Beatrice heard the door close, she knelt down, and before Henry could utter a word, she thus addressed him :

“My lord — my king, one of the poorest, weakest, and most helpless of your thousands upon thousands of subjects, now kneels before you, and implores your pity, if you have compassion — your pardon, if you have mercy — your protection, if you have generosity in your heart.

“I am, my lord and my king, unpractised in the manners of courts ; and in my ignorance, I may, unintentionally, offend you. I am alone in the midst of strangers — I have none to help me, none to pity me, none to console me. I appeal then to you — to you, as to my sovereign lord — to you, who have the sword of justice to punish the wicked, and the sceptre of power to protect the weak. I appeal to you, whose crown is radiant with jewels, because those costly jewels are intended to represent the heavenly gifts of courage, chastity, beneficence, magnanimity, and charity : gifts that render the heart of a good king a temple in which the virtues most willingly take up their abode.”

“Maiden, pardon me,” said Henry, with one of his sweetest and most affectionate smiles. “You were told that *I* was Count Werenher ; how came you to address me as the king ?”

“And what say *you*, is *your* name ?” asked Beatrice ; “but ere you answer that question, pause for an instant before you reply. I will not kneel to a Count Werenher, nor to any one who bears that title — but better to die as I kneel here, than learn that the ‘king,’ the

‘sovereign,’ whom I have prayed for in my infancy, is a dastard, who, contemplating a base deed, skulks beneath the mask of a villain to perpetrate it!”

“You are right, Beatrice,” said Henry, somewhat moved by this unexpected appeal. “It is not fitting in a king to conceal his deeds, whatever they may be. He should have the courage to do, and to defend them, in the close chamber, as in the broad field of battle. Rise, Beatrice; your king prays of you to rise and be seated.”

Beatrice obeyed; and as she did so, she said —

“I have appealed to your Majesty’s generosity; for I know that I am in your power — and having done so, I now beseech your Majesty to tell me why and wherefore I have been torn from my home, and conveyed here as a prisoner?”

“You have recommended your king to be very candid,” said Henry, with a cold, malignant sneer; “and you shall soon discover that he can be so. I have sent for you — somewhat rudely, mayhap, considering how tenderly you have been nurtured, for more purposes than one. I now address myself to the first of these. It is a very simple question. I pray of you to give it a plain and simple answer. It is this: what is the rank in life of your father?”

“I know not,” answered Beatrice.

“What! you know not? The daughter of a serf knows that her father cannot move from the land on which she is born, without his lord’s permission; the daughter of a freeman feels an honest pride in looking upon the sword and shield of her sire; the daughter of a nobleman boasts of her birth; and the fair, the accomplished, the lovely Beatrice — she, who, if she had been born a slave, might, like another Fredegonda, be ele-

vated to the throne of a queen for her beauty, cannot tell her king what is the rank in life of her father. This is strange!”

“It may be so, my liege; but still it is true. To me it never appeared strange; for my life was always the same, and I never heard any allusion made to my father’s rank,” was the answer given by Beatrice.

“And his name?” inquired the king.

“I never heard him called by any other than that of Ruebert,” said Beatrice, slightly blushing, as her mother’s conversation, then, for the first time, flashed across her memory.

Henry knew not the cause of her emotion, or of her fear; but perceiving that these questions gave him an advantage over his destined victim, he determined upon proceeding with them.

“Is your father Ruebert a constant resident at Aschaffenburg?” he asked.

“No, he is not,” replied Beatrice. “His coming and his going are unlike uncertain. Sometimes he remains a day — sometimes a week — sometimes for months together; and his absence is as uncertain — sometimes it is for a brief, sometimes for a long period.”

“And know you how he is employed when he is absent?”

“No, my liege; and, until you put the question, the idea never occurred to me. All I know is this, that he is very rich — that he entertains a very great respect for your Majesty; that he told me to pray every night and morning for your health, happiness, and triumph over your enemies; and I am quite sure, that jewels, and gold would be gladly placed by him in your hands, if I were restored to him safe and uninjured.”

“This is most strange!” exclaimed Henry, rather speaking to himself, than addressing his observations to Beatrice; for her answer had completely bewildered him.

“What is most strange, my liege?” asked Beatrice.

“The account,” replied Henry, “that you give me of your father. Here is a man, possessing unheard-of wealth, engaged in some mysterious occupation, of unknown rank, living as if he were a prince of the empire, and possessing a daughter that seems to be born to a throne, and yet that daughter knows no more of her father than that she has always heard him called Ruebert! You have recommended me, Beatrice, to be candid. Have you,” said Henry, with his withering tone, “practised the lesson, maiden, you would yourself so earnestly enforce?”

“I have, my liege,” said Beatrice, looking with her large, dark, truthful eyes up to the admiring countenance of the king. “I have told you the truth — the simple truth — a truth which every inquiry you may choose to make will fully confirm.”

“It is well,” said Henry. “It is more than I expected to hear: it is as much as I desire to know. And now listen to me, Beatrice. I shall be perfectly candid with you. I am, as you are aware, the King of the ancient empire of Germany. I am responsible to no man for my actions, and yet, so beneficent is my disposition, that I desire to give offence to as few powerful enemies as possible. I believe that, as king, I have a right to all in my dominions that is most rich, most rare, and most beautiful, whether it be the red gold, the sparkling and precious diamonds, or maidens, whose loveliness and whose virtues render them, in my eyes, more valuable than gold, and more dear to my heart than the most costly ornaments.



“I believe, I only exercise my right, when I claim any of these for myself. I tell you, Beatrice, there are wise, grave jurists who maintain that these are amongst the rights that may not only be claimed, but exercised by one, who in his person represents the Roman Emperors.

“I do not mean to forego any of those rights. It was in the exercise of them, that one of my purveyors, the faithful Egen, saw you in the forest of Aschaffenburg, and brought to me such an account of your marvellous beauty, and I sent him, and with him, the Count Werenher, and twenty of my faithful soldiers of Worms, with command to arrest and bring you here, provided that Werenher deemed you to be as beautiful as Egen had described you. Upon the last day that you sat upon the banks of the Aschaff, Werenher was concealed in the tree beneath which you reposed, and heard your conversation with Agatha, as well as with the boy Magnus. You see, Beatrice, I know more than you, in your candor, have thought it wise or fitting to tell me.

“And now, Beatrice, I offer you the warm heart, and the ardent affections, of a youthful king, if you will but smile upon me. Bid me but hope that I may be loved by you, and I shall be content to wait until your affections for me be awakened by the hourly proofs of my admiration and of my devotion to you.”

“And this is your Majesty’s answer to the appeal I have made to you,” said Beatrice, with a sickening feeling of despair for herself, and of loathing for the king, as she listened to the shameless avowal of his profligacy.

“I cannot look on such transcendent charms, and return any other reply,” observed Henry. “It would be my answer to you, if you were the daughter of the

Duke of Bavaria ; it must be my answer to you, as you are but the child of some obscure man — it would be my answer to him, though he offered for your release, a mine of rubies.”

“ Then God have mercy on me ! ” said Beatrice, rushing to the window, and raising her right hand as high as she could in the air.

“ What mean you, Beatrice ? ” said Henry, mistaking the motive for what she had done. “ I have dealt openly — candidly — with you, remember that ; and also remember that here I am omnipotent — that here you can find no protector but myself.”

As he spoke these words, he attempted to clasp the hand of Beatrice.

Beatrice shrank, with a shiver of horror, from his grasp ; and, falling upon her knees as he attempted to approach her, she drew forth, from the folds of her dress, the little black, rough cross of Gretchen, and held it up before his eyes, saying : —

“ O, yes ! there is here — even in your strong castle — a protector more powerful than you : it is *He*, of whose sufferings on this earth *this* is the emblem.”

As she spoke these words, she turned slowly round on her knees, so as to look, with her bright dark eyes, up into the cloudless blue sky ; and, seemingly absorbed in her devotion, she poured forth this prayer in the ears of the profligate king :

“ My God — my God ! have compassion on my weakness, and take pity on me in my desolation ; for I am forsaken by man, and am but a frail and helpless woman, and I have no hope but in thy strength — the strength of thy mercy, and the might of thy charity. And thou, O, Holy Virgin, mother of God, intercede for me.

Thou, who art most pure, save from contamination a sinner who invokes thee — a maiden who has ever prayed that thou mightest intercede for her to thy Beloved Son. O, beg that He may now save me in this fearful strait — this impending danger. O, let thy tender arms embrace me, that sin may not approach me, and that impurity may shrink now, as it has ever done, from thy presence.”

The strength of faith was stronger than the power of the passions! The prayer of purity found an echo even in the rank heart of the cynical voluptuary! It did so, and yet no miracle was performed when the selfish and the unrelenting Henry, who never yet had practised a restraint upon his worst desires, shrank back abashed in the presence, and appalled by the accents, of that poor, young, helpless girl, in the lonely chamber of one of the strongest towers in his kingly fortress!

A prayer that, perchance, might now be sneered at, and words that, in these days of indifferentism and infidelity, might be scoffed, had a *power* at one period in this world's history — and, especially, at the very epoch of which we treat, when men did the work of demons, and yet had the faith of demons: for they practised whatever hell suggested to their hearts; and, like the imps of hell, they “trembled” when that name was pronounced — in which, as nominal Christians, they placed all their hopes of future salvation.

Henry IV. of Germany was not an exception to the princes, or the great men of his time. Although as bad, as vile, and as treacherous a man as ever existed, he was not an unbeliever. He believed in God, although he violated the laws of God — he believed in all the church taught, although he trampled upon its command-

ments, trafficked in its dignities, and would make it the footstool of his selfish and griping ambition. He was worse than most men of his age ; but was like them in this particular — he was a great sinner, and yet was not infidel.

Henry's generosity, manliness, and honor had been appealed to by Beatrice in vain ; and now he heard her appealing to heaven *against him*, and his craven-heart trembled, lest one, whom he could not but regard as an angel, should bring down upon him the instant vengeance of an offended God. That which he fancied he never should behold — unshrinking piety, and unfaltering purity — was there before him, kneeling, and praying to God, to be preserved from *him* as from a fiend wearing the form of a man !

As this thought crossed his mind, he shuddered — it was a passing, momentary sting of conscience — at the reflection of what he really was : and whilst he was under its influence, he interrupted Beatrice, who was engaged in prayer, by saying to her :

“ Lady Beatrice, your prayer is heard. I shall not molest you. I shall not harm you. I shall not approach you, nearer than I am this moment, until I have first obtained your permission to do so.

“ Your prayer has convinced me that there is no dignity on this earth that you could not illustrate by your virtues, and honor by your piety. Beatrice, I care not who may be your father, nor how humble may be his rank in life : for, by yourself, alone, and by these marvellous gifts of soul and body, with which heaven has endowed you, I deem you, of all women, the only one I ever saw who was worthy to be queen now, and empress hereafter, of Germany.

“Nay, start not, Beatrice, as if you thought I was speaking to you but mere words of flattery, or making professions to you that I did not fully intend to carry into effect. When I say to you, that I think you worthy of wearing a crown in Germany, I mean that you shall do so — as the wife — the queen of Henry — every knee shall bend before you, and the proudest dames shall feel that they are honored if you address but a single word to them.

“What I now say to you, Beatrice, shall, before a month has passed away, be fulfilled. Within less than three weeks a synod shall be held in Frankfort, at which the prelates of Germany will pronounce that my marriage with Bertha has, from the first, been invalid. This divorce I sought for before I saw you, both for the sake of Bertha and myself; and the moment that the church pronounces me to be free — free as if the hateful bond that now ties me to Bertha had never been contracted; then, that moment, Beatrice, your king shall claim you in the face of the world as his bride. Meanwhile, you shall be removed from the palace in which I am, to the strongest fortress I possess in Saxony — to the fortress of ——”

“My liege — my liege — your presence is required, on the instant, in your council chamber,” said Lieman, here rushing, pale and almost breathless, into the room. “From all parts of the fortress the sentinels send the same reports, that large bodies of the Saxon serfs were approaching the walls, as if an attack upon it were contemplated, and messengers from the town state, that there is a movement amongst the slaves, as if they were about to commit some outrage.”

“I trust that the intelligence may prove true,” ex-

claimed Henry. "I long to exterminate the vile race of Saxons, and care not where I may begin — better here, perhaps, than elsewhere. Come, Lieman, my helmet, shield, and haubergeon instantly. Beatrice, farewell. We meet in Saxony."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE EMPRESS AGNES AND QUEEN BERTHA.

Two females had entered the apartment of Beatrice, noiselessly, and unperceived by her, and were evidently in the very highest rank of life, even though the dark dress of the elder, in its sombre hue, and plainness of texture, resembled the garb of a nun, and the lighter fashioned robes of her youthful companion were not, in any way, adorned by embroidery. Both were, however, it could be perceived, of exalted station, and possessed, at least, of great wealth; for, on the breast of the elder there hung, attached by what was an almost imperceptible thread of gold, a cross, composed of sparkling brilliants, and around the dark tresses of the younger, there ran, in the fashion of an imperial circlet, a band, composed of diamonds.

The elder female was the Empress Agnes, the mother of King Henry.

Her companion was young — very young — it would be difficult to decide, upon first looking at her, whether she was sixteen or twenty years of age; for her figure was so slight, and at the same time so much beneath the

middle-size of women, that one would long hesitate to say that she could, by possibility, be older than sixteen, if there were not in the chastened eye, the grave look, and the pensive gesture of her movements, somewhat to demonstrate that more than the sorrows that vex the heart of a girl of sixteen had found a resting-place in her bosom. She was of Italy ; and there was no mistaking the place of her birth, in her rich brown skin, her pearly teeth, her pouting mouth, her Roman nose, her jet-black eyes, and her hair, that, in the intensity of its blackness, gave forth a bluish hue. This beautiful and this delicate young creature, on whose arm the empress leaned, now looked at Beatrice, with an interest — an excess of interest, which none but a wife can feel when gazing on a female who has unwillingly won, or unconsciously attracted, the admiration of a husband. It was Queen Bertha, the wife of Henry, who knew that the lovely Beatrice was an unwilling captive in the power of her husband. Her features expressed what was passing in her heart — profound pity, and irrepressible admiration — the first for the situation of Beatrice, the other for her beauty.

Beatrice was conscious that she stood in the presence of one, at least, her superior in rank, and she suspected, of two.

“ I know not, lady,” she said, “ who you are, but I am sure I do not err, when, in presence of this august female, who seems to be a mother, I beg you to exercise the power you are plainly possessed of here, by commanding that a daughter may be instantly restored to the arms of an anguished parent.”

“ Alas, that I could but exercise that power you suppose me to have,” answered Bertha. “ But know, that

by your presence here, an outrage is done to you, and an injury inflicted on me ; for I am the unloved wife of King Henry."

"And I, my dear child — the unhappy mother of the same Henry — bless thee, the last of his victims — and pray that thou mayest long live to offer thy prayers to heaven to pardon him for this and his other manifold sins." And as the empress spoke these words, she laid her hand upon the head of Beatrice, as if pronouncing a benediction over her. She then stretched forth her hand to Beatrice, and said — "Whatever be thy condition in life, an injury to both, perpetrated by the same hand, has placed us on an equality with each other."

Beatrice kissed the hand of the empress, and then said, —

"By what fortunate chance is it, that one so humble as myself, should be honored by a visit from your majesties, who now appear before me, as my guardian-angels?"

"If our presence here can confer upon thee aught of good, thou art indebted for it to the information conveyed to us by the Countess Dedi, who has also apprised us that thou art the betrothed of Duke Magnus, and that thou hast been conveyed hither in thine own despite. Poor girl! from my soul I pity thee ; and rest assured that Bertha and I will aid thee, if it be possible for us to do so."

"But, mother, you have not asked her if she has seen the king," said Bertha, with deep emotion.

"I have," answered Beatrice, "and it much interests your Majesty to know what he said to me. I will not offend your ears by some words he said ; but this you should know ; that he spoke to me of being speedily divorced from your majesty."



“Divorced!” exclaimed Bertha, “divorced! are you sure he said divorced?”

“Most certain, madam, and even by the words he used he led me to suppose that a divorce was as necessary for your happiness, as his own,” answered Beatrice.

Bertha stood motionless as these words reached her ear. They seemed to penetrate to her brain, and to have transfixed her for some minutes to the spot. She could not speak — she looked at Beatrice, as the dying and despairing sinner looks upon the physician who tells him that his moments in this world are few in number. Then turning to her companion, she flung her arms wildly around the neck of the empress, and clasping her convulsively to her bosom, she sobbed out, as if each word would burst her heart:

“*Divorced!* O, mother, mother! do you not pity me?”

The empress had been for years accustomed to grief. It had not hardened her heart, nor rendered, in the slightest degree, her feelings callous; but it had so strengthened her will, that she could command her emotions. She was, in sorrow, what the veteran is in the field of battle; and the wound, that might be mortal, was, when inflicted, received and regarded as of no more consequence than one that could impose but a passing pain, or bring with it no more than a temporary inconvenience.

“Bertha, my child, God was pleased to place a heavy burden upon you, when *He* permitted your marriage with my son,” was the observation of Agnes.

“But then, mother, to be divorced! — divorced from *him!* — divorced from Henry! — who before now ever heard of two young persons, who loved each other once

so truly — for I am sure, mother, he did love me once — who, I ask, ever heard of a Christian wife and husband being divorced from each other?" asked Bertha, in her distraction and despair.

"True — true, my child," replied Agnes, "it is monstrous, and would be incredible, but that I may also ask another question — who before now ever heard of so reckless a man as Henry?"

"I have never seen nor spoken with his Majesty until this day," observed Beatrice, "and therefore cannot tell when he speaks in seriousness or in jest, or whether it was his real intention to wrong one of your Majesty's exalted rank, or to degrade a helpless maiden like myself; but this I may add, as proving his fixed resolution to do the one and the other, that he voluntarily declared that he would never again appear before me until he had been divorced from you — a divorce, which, he said, would be pronounced within the course of a few weeks; and, pending the time for its being pronounced, he said that he would have me removed to a fortress in Saxony."

Whilst Beatrice spoke, there was such truth, such sincerity in her words, and such conviction brought home to the heart, by the earnestness and solemnity of her manner, that Bertha clung closer to Agnes, and seemed to feel, whilst she clasped the empress within her arms, as if the voice of Henry was thundering in her ear, announcing his approaching separation from her. Her attitude portrayed the fear and dismay that shook her whole being.

"O!" cried Bertha, "that the holy father did but know all."

"Bertha — my child — he shall know all. Fortunately the Pope is much nearer to the borders of the

German dominions than Henry wots of. This very night a trusty messenger, bearing my declarations and yours, and showing that you are, whatever may be the affirmations to the contrary, the true and lawful wife of Henry, shall be forwarded to his holiness, and thus your husband be saved from a worse crime, if that be possible, than any of which he has yet been guilty."

"My innocent, my lovely, and my unwilling rival," said Bertha, "I cannot look upon you, without feeling that you are my superior in all those attractions likely to win the admiration, and to secure the affections of a man, who has, from boyhood, rendered himself the slave of female beauty. If I were not married to Henry — if I were like you, a maiden, and he stood this moment before us, bound by no vow, pronounced in presence of God's holy altar, I could not blame — nay, I must approve his judgment, if, looking upon us both, he preferred you, and rejected me. It is not so. God has ordained it otherwise. He is my husband: I am his wife, until death parts us. He unfortunately has, in abandoning me, violated the laws of God; and your innocence, your beauty, and your virtues, have been as sins in his path, and urged him onward to be guilty of a greater crime against me, against you, and against heaven. In all this you are, like myself, an unoffending and a helpless victim. He would unrighteously take from me this royal circlet, the emblem of my dignity, and bestow it upon you. If you accepted it from his hands, you would participate in his sin; but receiving it from mine, it shall ever remain a testimony of the love, and a proof of the affection entertained for you, by Bertha — your queen and your friend."

As Bertha spoke, she unloosed the sparkling diadem from her dark hair, and tendered it to Beatrice.

Beatrice, instead of stretching forth her hand to receive the costly gift — precious as the ransom of a duke, bent her knee to Bertha, as a subject to a sovereign, and said, in words that were as sweet as music to the ear of the desolate wife :

“I pray your Majesty to pardon a poor ignorant girl, who knows not the manners of the great ones of this earth, if I presume to decline receiving that gorgeous ornament. If I were to accept it, I would seem to you — at least, I think so — as if I felt that I had done that which was worthy of commendation, because I had preferred death to dishonor.

“Pardon me, then, lady, when I say, I cannot, must not, will not accept the diadem that you tender to me.”

The empress stooped down to Beatrice, as she knelt, and kissing her on the forehead exclaimed :

“God bless thee, maiden ! for amongst thy other graces, thou art, I perceive, richly endowed with that most precious of virtues — perfect humility.

“And now, my dearest children,” continued the empress, clasping, at the same time, a hand of Bertha and of Beatrice, “let us part, I trust to meet again in this world. As to Beatrice — although this palace is a den of iniquity — and not only men, but even women, are to be found in it, ready to do the work of demons, still there are even here a few honest, good, faithful, and pious persons. These shall have strict orders to watch over thee, whilst thou remain, and to follow thy footsteps wheresoever thou mayest be conveyed. Conceal this cross of brilliants, and whenever thy hand touches it, think of me — of the empress, as a friend ; and pray for her — as a sinner !

“Come, Bertha.”

Bertha spoke not a word ; but hastily quitting the side of the empress, as both were on the point of retiring from the apartment, she hurried back to Beatrice, and kissing her, long and ardently, she merely murmured, or rather whispered, as if it were an ejaculation, into her ear :

“ Pray for me, also, dearest Beatrice, and — *for yourself.*”

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE CAMP-FOLLOWER.

BEATRICE had been travelling for two days, under the escort of the Count Diedrich, as she understood, for he had never once spoken to her ; but he had allowed her all the consolation, that, under such circumstances, it was in her power to possess, the undisturbed companionship of Gretchen. The latter joined Beatrice at the fortress gate, as she was quitting Frankfort, and, upon showing to Diedrich an order from the empress, for her to accompany her charge as a female attendant, he made no objection to such an arrangement, but merely said to her —

“ *Go — but don't talk.*”

Gretchen assured her new mistress that there was not a step of the road they were travelling that was not tracked by her friends — by Magnus, or some of his knights, or else by some of the adherents of the empress. She even assured her that she had herself seen, if it were not fancy, a white and blue banner upon a distant hill ; but as Beatrice was not able to discern the same object

at so great a distance, Gretchen admitted that she might be mistaken; but still persisted in thinking that she was not.

It was the noon of the third day from the time they had left Frankfort, when Beatrice and Gretchen were thus conversing. Both sat in a greenswarded ravine, so narrow in breadth, that the deep foliage from the trees on both sides prevented the sun's rays from reaching them, whilst high over their heads there toppled rocks upon rocks, that rose up in one place as steep and as precipitous as a wall, and beneath which lay a grassy, rounded mound of earth, covered here and there by bushes, the deep inclination of which terminated at the precise spot where Beatrice and Gretchen now sat.

In the mind of Beatrice there seemed, at this time, to be but thoughts for three persons; for her mother, for Magnus, and her father. It can therefore excite no surprise that her conversation with Gretchen should be, not commenced, but in this manner, resumed:

“And so, Gretchen, you think that the empress will be so kind as to send intelligence to my poor mother, as to the sad fate that has befallen me, and of her majesty watching over me ——”

Gretchen did not answer this question. She looked, as Beatrice saw, *towards* her, and yet not *at* her, but at something beyond her; and as she did so her eye dilated with terror, and her right hand slowly slid inside the folds of her garments, and remained firmly fixed there, as if she were clutching some weapon.

Beatrice turned her face in the direction in which she saw that Gretchen was gazing. At first nothing presented itself to the view calculated to excite alarm; but at last she saw two large, dazzling, diamond-sparkling

eyes, fixed upon herself, and watching her so closely and fixedly, that the action of Gretchen had not been remarked:

“Ah!” shrieked Beatrice, starting to her feet, “there is a wolf concealed in the bushes!”

At the same instant a person in the garb of a soldier, darted up from the earth, and was at the moment confronted by Gretchen, who now showed that her right hand grasped a long dagger. Another moment passed, and the stranger had wrested the dagger from the hand of Gretchen, and then laughing deridingly at her, presented it back to her, saying:

“No wolf, my pretty dame, but a woman, like yourself. Here, girl, take back your dagger; learn to use it before you present its point at an old soldier like me.”

“In heaven’s name! who or what are you?” asked Beatrice of the strange personage who stood before her — a woman apparently about thirty years of age, on whose head was a soldier’s helmet, from which fell long, rough, curling black hair, that served to cover a neck, that was like the skin of her face, not merely brown, but almost blackened from constant exposure to the sun, whilst a thick, downy moustache of black hair on the upper lip, gave her the appearance of a man. And for such, she might, by her brawny arms and large hands, be readily mistaken, if the ample folds of a woman’s short-dress did not show that she belonged to the female sex. By this extraordinary personage Beatrice’s question was thus answered:

“I am, I have already told you, a woman. As to *what* I am, it may suffice to tell you, that I am the favorite camp-follower of Count Diedrich.”

“Then why lie concealed there?” asked Gretchen.

“Another would tell you a lie. I will tell you the truth. I was lying there to listen to your conversation. I was doing duty as a spy. Diedrich reckons me one of the best spies in the king’s army. Here, Gretchen, hand me that wine. Neither of you like wine. I do.”

So speaking, the sturdy camp-follower seized a large goblet filled with wine, and swallowed it off at a single draught.

“But why become a spy upon us?” inquired Gretchen.

“Diedrich,” said the camp-follower, “wished to know if you were contemplating any plan of escape from him. He sent me to ascertain the fact. I have been listening to you at every place where you stopped for refreshment and repose; and, excuse my bluntness, but I must report to Diedrich, that never in my life did I listen to long conversations so spiritless and stupid. It has all been about a fusty empress, a noodle queen, a nobody of a mother, and the truth is, you would both have set me to sleep over and over again, if it had not been for your allusions to a white and blue flag, and one Magnus. I want to find out who that fellow is. Let Diedrich get but within a league of him, and you shall see his white-blue flag turned into a red one, with the best blood that warms his heart. More wine, Gretchen, if you please—it is the pure old Rhenish wine, that Diedrich loves so much.”

Beatrice’s heart sickened, when she heard the probable murder of Magnus so lightly and so unfeelingly referred to, by the terrible woman who stood before her.

“Here,” said she, “here, my good woman, is a piece of gold for you. It is the only one I possess: take it, and do not mention the name of Magnus to Count Diedrich.”



The camp-follower held out her brawny, broad, black hand for the piece of gold, and as Beatrice's hand touched hers, she clapped down her strong thumb upon it, so as to hold the hand of Beatrice attached to her own, and fixed as firmly to hers as if it were held within an iron clasp.

“Ho! ho!” she exclaimed, with a laugh half expressive of derision, and half of wonder, as she gazed upon the snow-white, rosy-tipped, thin fingers and fairy-like hand of Beatrice, that seemed to be still smaller in contrast with the swarthy palm to which it was fastened. “Ho! ho! ho!” she continued, “so this is the sort of hand that King Henry admires — a little waxy thing, that is neither good for washing, scouring, nor fighting — why, I would make a hand like this any day, out of a little curdled milk, and a rose leaf. Augh! a child of five years of age ought to be ashamed of it. Put your fingers in gloves, child, and when they are the size of a woman's, say you are a woman, but never until then. And now, as to the piece of gold you have given me, I am much obliged to you; but I cannot earn it in the way you wish. I am a soldier, doing duty as a spy, and I must tell my commander that you gave me a piece of gold, not to mention to him the name of Magnus. Honor above all things, child; and before all things: a soldier without honor is like a flask without wine — worth nothing, and deserves only to be kicked out of every one's way.”

“For mercy's sake!” said Beatrice, bursting into tears.

“Mercy! psha! who ever heard of mercy being shown to a spy?” observed the camp-follower. “Now, mark me, if that Magnus, of whom you are always speaking, intends to attack Diedrich as a soldier, well and good;

he will be treated as a soldier, if he should be defeated and taken prisoner. There will be the general's best wine for him at his meals, and his misfortunes will be respected; but if, on the other hand, he be found lurking about our encampment as a spy — I know Diedrich well, the higher his rank the greater his tortures — his will not be the death of a man, nor of a soldier; but, out of hell itself, there will be no tortures like to those that will be inflicted."

"O, my God! why then mention his name to that frightful wretch, Diedrich?" asked Beatrice, trembling with terror.

"Diedrich is no wretch, young pert miss; but as brave a soldier as ever yet faced a foeman," answered his favorite. "He cares little for his own life, and nought for the life of any one else. I tell you, I must mention to him that you had been speaking of a person called Magnus. That is all I have to say of him; but cheer up, that means next to nothing, and perhaps Diedrich will give me a grim look for pestering him with such a trifle. But come now, deal candidly with me, and I pledge you my honor as a soldier and a woman, that if I can help you I will. Only mind this — if you are aware that Magnus means to attack the force under Diedrich's command, say nothing to me; for if you do, I must mention it. Any thing short of that you may tell me, and I will not repeat it. Thus cautioning you, I ask you — wherefore is it that you suppose that Magnus is following the escort of Diedrich?"

"I am betrothed to Magnus — I have been torn away from him, and from my parents," replied Beatrice; "and Magnus is now following the soldiers, for the purpose of ascertaining whither Diedrich is conducting us."

The camp-follower clapped her hands with glee, when she heard this statement, made in doleful accents by Beatrice.

“What! another love story—a little fairy like you is run away with by my great giant of a Diedrich, and Magnus is a king’s son, not hastening to fight with him, but to find the road he is taking, and then, when he has discovered it, to go and sit down at the castle gate, and blubber like a boy, because he cannot get in and you cannot get out. O, that is excellent. Why, what a pair of young fools you must both be! But—no matter! tiny doll, I remember I was a little girl myself once, and therefore, I have pity on you. I can tell you—and I do tell you, because it is not secret: every groom in the camp is aware of it—the place where we are going to, is the strongest fortress in Saxony—it is the fortress of Erzegebirge. If Magnus were here I would tell it to him, this instant. It might save him from trouble, and you from care. In what direction do you fancy he may be discovered? If it be no great distance I will go and tell himself: I feel quite a curiosity to look at any one, in the shape of a man, that can be in love with such a poor little thing as you are. On which side, think you, is Magnus lurking?”

Beatrice hesitated to answer this question; she feared for Magnus, and she did not know but that this strange and ferocious-looking woman might be seeking for his life.

“Alas,” said she, “if you should tell Diedrich where he is!”

“Me!” exclaimed the woman—half-drawing the short sword that hung by her side. “Why, girl, you are the first that ever thought, for one moment, that

Gertraud would act dishonorably to friend or foe, man or woman, much less a child like you. In the field I am a soldier—in the camp I am a woman. I know what it is to shed human blood; and, when my rage is excited by the noise of battle, I have not spared the life of man; but yet I never struck an unfair blow. If you choose, I will try and find out Magnus—I shall go to meet him alone. Do you think so poorly of him as to suppose he can be afraid of me? Besides, remember this—if I see him, he is safe—if any other person in the pay of Diedrich discover his lurking-place, he is not merely sure to die, but he will die the death of a spy. What say you now, maiden?”

“That I pray your pardon, Gertraud, since that is the name you bear,” answered Beatrice. “I not only place confidence in you, but I ask of you to tell Magnus, from me, that it is my entreaty, now knowing whither we are going, he will follow us no farther—and that he will repair to my father’s castle, and there state what has befallen me.”

“Very well—and very sensible,” said Gertraud. “And now in what direction may I seek him?”

“In that,” said Gretchen, pointing back upon the road over which they had travelled. “I imagine he is about five miles’ distance.”

“And what is his appearance?” said Gertraud.

“He is very tall, very fair, and very handsome,” answered Beatrice.

“Phew! so are all men who are not very short, very dark, and very ugly,” replied Gertraud. “The description is too general to be accurate; but never mind, it will do for one who is used to the devices of war.”

So saying, she bounded in amongst the bushes, and

then darted behind a clump of trees, from whence she again appeared, mounted on a strong-limbed black horse, that she rode as if she were a man.

“And now,” said she, as she patted the neck of her steed, and looking proudly down upon the two young girls, “I am sure to be back here again before the order is given for you to march; for a dark deed is to be done in this very spot to-day, which I am better pleased not to witness. Did either of you ever see a human being slain?”

“Never — thank God! never,” cried Beatrice and Gretchen, in one voice.

“It is a horrid sight!” observed Gertraud, “unless it be in fair and open warfare; for then it is life against life, and he who slays, only does so to save himself from being slain; but a cold-blooded, contemplated murder, and that, too, the murder of a bishop —”

“O heavens! what say you, Gertraud?” cried Beatrice, terrified. “Assuredly you speak in jest, and only make use of these words to terrify us.”

“Girl,” said Gertraud, in a voice that became, from deep emotion, guttural in its tones; “one like me, who have seen many men die in agony, cannot jest about murder — a horrid, base, cowardly, unmanly murder such as now is contemplated against a pious and a holy bishop. Poor Diedrich! he has promised to do it, and if hell lay between him and the performance of his promise, he would yet jump into it, although every fiery flame of the bottomless pit were a devil opposed to him. Jest, indeed! why have you been permitted to remain here for hours, and it may be for days, yet. It is, because Diedrich is lying in wait here for the Bishop of Osnabruck — for *here* he must pass, with his small

escort, on his way to his diocese — and here, in obedience to King Henry's command, will he be slain by Diedrich. *Here* — I say — is the very spot on which the murder will be committed. As a priest, as a prelate, Diedrich cannot touch him with spear, sword, or dagger, but he will slay him notwithstanding; from that very precipice which now hangs over your head the bishop will be thrown, and his body dashed from rock to rock; he never can reach the earth a living man. This is the place of his death which Diedrich has determined upon. He told me so himself. You will not be permitted, I imagine, to be witnesses to such a horrid death — that is, if Diedrich thinks of you, or of having you removed. Poor Diedrich! he is so annoyed at the idea of having to murder the bishop, that he has done nothing for the last two days but eat, drink, and sleep. The only words I have heard him utter for forty-eight hours, are, 'more food — more wine!' Poor Diedrich! if it were two men he alone had to encounter in combat, he would be as merry as a child; but to waylay and murder a bishop! it is a horrid business, and I only wish it may happen whilst I am away. On my return, I hope to hear that the bishop's soul is in heaven, and his mangled body in the grave. Poor Diedrich! O, what a precious villain that King Henry must be to make prelate butchers of his best soldiers and bravest generals. And now, fair lady, to meet with, if I can, that strange young man — *your admirer.*"

So saying, Gertraud shouted the word "Away!" to her horse, and before either Beatrice or Gretchen could speak another word to her, she had vanished from their sight.

The horrible secret which had thus been disclosed to

them, rendered both these poor young girls motionless for some minutes, and when they recovered in some degree from their terror, they cast their arms around each other, as if, in thus clinging together, they could mutually communicate a courage that neither possessed. They both at the same instant looked up to the high precipice, and regarded it with as much terror and horror, as if it had been already made the scene of that sacrilegious murder for which they had been just told it was to be used.

The perfect stillness that prevailed on all sides around them, first brought consolation and hope to their hearts — consolation, that the crime had not yet been committed — hope, that the bishop, with his escort, might not pass that way, and thus escape from the toils that his enemies had set for him.

Both prayed that this might be the case ; but neither had strength nor courage to address her companion. They were two lone, helpless females, in the midst of a wilderness — the prisoners of a band of armed villains, who were watching to execute a murder — which, if it did happen, must occur in their sight ; and that, too, the murder of a bishop — one of those, who, being elevated to a high position in the church, seemed to be forever secured from the blood-stained hands of miscreants.

Speechless with horror — tearless from terror — and with all their senses absorbed in that of hearing, two hours had passed away, when the rapid movement of a horse behind them made them both shriek — it was a long shriek of anguish and dismay ; and, in their apprehensive fears, or in their excitement, or from the keenness to which the sense of hearing had been excited,

both supposed that they heard that shriek echoed back to them from a distant part of the ravine. Both thought this, but neither said so to her companion; for they were, at the same instant, addressed by Gertraud, who, jumping from her steed, said:

“What cowards you are! why, your shrieks are worse to hear than the groans of a wounded horse when dying in battle. Has any thing occurred since I left you?”

“There has not been the slightest stir or movement any where,” said Gretchen. “I would suppose that the soldiers have left us to ourselves. I have not seen one of them, nor heard the voice of a sentinel.”

“O, there are no men like to ours for an ambuscade,” said Gertraud, proudly. “I defy an enemy to discover where they are until the sword of one of them is in his back. That is the way we act when we have recourse to ambuscades. You say you have not seen nor heard one of them for the two hours that are now passed away? Let me see if I cannot discover them.”

Gertraud, as she spoke, withdrew behind a tree—gave a gentle, low chirrup with her lips, as if it came from a bird—and it was replied to, from various points, by sounds similar to that which she had emitted.

“Ah!” said she, stepping again forward, and joining Beatrice and Gretchen, “if the poor Bishop of Osnabruck stood in the same spot that you now occupy, he would have five arrows shot through him before he would have time to bless himself.”

“O, horrible! horrible!” ejaculated Beatrice. “But do you not think there is a chance of the bishop escaping?”

“Escaping! and Diedrich lying in ambush for him—impossible, unless he is a saint or a magician; unless he



can fly up to heaven, or change himself into a bird — but hist!” exclaimed Gertraud. “I told you so — *he has been discovered*. Our men are in pursuit of his retinue. There is rich plunder for us. I must have my share. As to you — do what you can for him. Upon your knees, girls, and say — ‘May the Lord have mercy on his soul!’”

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## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SPY.

THE time fixed for holding the Diet of Frankfort, as well as the assembling of the German bishops in synod, was now fast approaching. By Henry it was wished for with a confidence that was darkened with but few apprehensions; whilst, by his hapless wife, Bertha, it was waited for with a fear that was lighted up but with scanty and evanescent gleams of hope. Her only chance rested upon accidents — that Dedi should safely reach the court of the pontiff; that the pontiff would consider her case required his interference; and would it be prudent for one so weak in temporal power as the pope, for the sake of a single, friendless woman, to place himself in direct hostility to the most powerful, despotic, and unscrupulous monarch in Europe; and, supposing all these apprehended dangers were overcome, whether there was the possibility of the pope’s legate obtaining admission into Frankfort, if he arrived in time to preside over the deliberations of the synod — and, last of all, if she could hope, that, by

any lucky circumstance, the legate could be in Frankfort, with the papal decision, at that precise moment when his presence might save her from the shame and dishonor with which her husband was anxious to overwhelm her.

“This is a gallant and a glorious sight for a king to see,” said Henry, to his followers, as his heart swelled with pride, in beholding the number of men that were clustering from all sides beneath him, and each of whom was regarded, not so much as a subject, that he was bound to protect, as the ready tool of his absolute will. “There is not a man there that I do not regard as a soldier for my war in Saxony.”

“All are so,” observed Egen, “except those few that you see yonder—that hold themselves closely by the banner of Otho, and of Dedi, and that keep aloof from the throng, as if they stood already condemned by the ban of the empire.”

“They are few, indeed,” remarked Lieman; “but I have been close up to their lines, and I can assure you, that there is not one of them but has been in battle. It is a little army of veterans.”

“Do you account Dedi the younger as amongst the veterans?” asked Count Werenher.

“I do not,” answered Lieman; “nor did I allude to him as being amongst those veterans, and for a sufficient reason—he is not with that little band.”

“What say you, Lieman?” asked King Henry. “Are you sure that the younger Dedi is not at the head of his father’s soldiers in Frankfort?”

“I am certain he is not,” answered Lieman. “No man is better known in Frankfort than Dedi the younger; and I can assure you that he is neither in the city nor in the encampment.”

“What means this?” asked Henry, in an indignant tone. “Am I to suppose it possible, that the son of Count Dedi will presume not to appear and tender me homage at my court in Frankfort? This looks as if a rebellion were contemplated.”

“The time for requiring him to appear, or to receive a valid excuse for his absence is not yet come,” remarked Werenher; “but this I feel assured of, that nothing but a matter of vital importance to himself, or against your Majesty, could induce the younger Dedi to absent himself from such a military array as we now look upon.”

“Count Werenher,” said Henry, somewhat pettishly, “I warned you, some time since, to surround the Dedis and Otho with spies, so that we might be informed betimes of their entire proceedings. How ill you have performed your task we have now the proof; for you knew not of the absence of the younger Dedi until Lie-man told you of it; and now, instead of facts, you can only supply me with your guesses, and your suspicions. How am I to know that the absence of Dedi may not be connected with some plot that affects my happiness, or even my life?”

“It is quite true,” answered Werenher, “that your Majesty did so warn me; but if you will be pleased to recollect, I also at the same time apprised you, that it was almost impossible to induce a Saxon to betray the secrets of the Dedis, or of Otho. I paid men as spies, and they have misled me. It is not an hour since I saw one of them, who assured me that young Dedi is in Frankfort. I gave him a piece of gold, and ordered him to be abundantly supplied with food and wine. Perchance, the villain is still in the palace, and acting as a spy upon us, even whilst partaking of your Majesty’s

hospitality. Have I your Majesty's permission to seek for him?"

"Assuredly," said Henry, "if the villain has deceived you, I shall, with my own eyes, see him seethed alive."

"Believe me," observed Egen, "that if the Saxon slave has resolved upon deceiving you, no threats, that you may use, will terrify, nor any tortures, however exquisite, extort from him the truth. These Saxons are a dogged, desperate, obstinate and malignant race of men."

"We shall see — we shall see," said Henry, chafing at the notion that any living man should dare openly to defy him. "But here he comes — a pretty fellow, forsooth, to set a king at defiance. Come hither, sirrah," he said to a man apparently about five and twenty years of age, with short, sandy hair, an enormous, bushy beard, a red face, and a strong muscular body, although somewhat below the middle size of men of his race. "Come hither, sirrah! kneel down there before me."

The man knelt as he had been directed, and looked up at the king with a stupid, vacant stare, as if he did not well understand what was said to him, or that terror had deprived him of all his faculties.

"Now, slave," said Henry, "know that you are permitted to kneel in presence of your king; that you are suspected of having deceived the sovereign through the misinformation you gave to his faithful friend, Count Werenher — a crime, for which, it is most probable, I shall content myself with simply having you hanged. Whether you shall be tortured to death or not depends upon the truth with which you answer me. Do you understand what I am now saying to you?"

A ray of intelligence shot forth from the eyes of the man. He gazed steadfastly at Henry, as if for the pur-

pose of ascertaining whether he spoke in seriousness or was merely seeking to terrify him by a jesting threat; but the contracted frown of the king, the flush on the cheek, and the fire of vengeance in the eye, showed to him that his death was determined upon. He next looked in the faces of the courtiers; but there he saw imprinted upon every feature a passive, or utter indifference to him; showing, that in none of them could he look for a pitying and merciful intercession on his behalf. He looked behind him, and saw the dark towers rising up to enclose him, whilst there stood as a guard between him and the ramparts, four men — the king and Werenher incensed against him; Lieman and Egen ready, if directed, to slaughter him. A shudder passed through the strong man. He bent down to the earth, kissed it fervently, and said:

“The will of God be done!”

He then looked up to the king, and said:

“What your Majesty has said to me, I understand perfectly.”

“Very well,” said Henry, “now observe: answer me candidly — if I find you falter in the slightest degree, I will have every morsel of skin that covers your body torn away from you, an inch at the end of every hour!”

“O, mercy! mercy!” exclaimed the man, shuddering.

“Not a particle — if you tell me a falsehood. And now, fellow, what is your name?”

“Bruin,” answered the man.

“Bruin — Bruin! I have heard that name before,” remarked Lieman. “Of whom are you the serf?”

“I am no serf,” replied Bruin, “I am a freeman and a soldier. I was born a serf; but the good Duke Otho made me free.”

“Then you are a spy?” remarked the king.

“I am,” answered Bruin.

“A spy upon me!” said the king.

“Yes,” said Bruin.

“And for Duke Otho, or Count Dedi, I warrant,” remarked Egen.

“No,” was the answer of Bruin.

“Then I am sure for Dedi the younger,” suggested Werenher.

“For none of them,” said Bruin. “I am a spy on my own account. I became so, without the knowledge of any one; but with the determination, that, if I discovered aught that might be useful for my master to know, he should be informed of it, and that, too, without telling him how the intelligence had been gained.”

“Wretch and villain,” said Henry, “for this, if I spare your life — and I do not think I shall — it can be only on condition of having your eyes and tongue torn out, and your hair and beard shorn off.”

“Mercy! mercy!” cried Bruin.

“None — O, none,” said Henry. “And so — having determined to become a spy upon me — your king — remember that, traitor — you accepted the gold of Werenher, promising him that you would act as a spy upon the Dedis for me.”

“I did,” said Bruin.

“And doing this, you intended to deceive and mislead Werenher,” observed Henry.

“I did,” said Bruin.

“And you have deceived and misled him,” said Henry, whose passion was becoming excited by the cool and resolute answers of Bruin.

“I have, most effectually,” said Bruin.

“There is not a tooth in your head that I will not see drawn out,” said Henry, now foaming with passion.

“O, mercy — mercy!” piteously exclaimed Bruin.

“Silence — slave!” exclaimed Henry; “then it is not the truth that Dedi is now in Frankfort?”

“It is the very opposite of the truth,” answered Bruin, calmly.

“How long is he absent from Frankfort?” asked Henry.

“I will not tell,” said Bruin.

“What! will not tell?” cried Henry, in amazement.

“No,” answered Bruin, “I will not tell, although I say to you, at the same time, with perfect candor, that I do not know why he is absent. I only refuse to tell, because I believe it would be of advantage to his enemies to know the fact.”

“Then where is he gone to?” asked Henry.

Bruin did not answer this question as readily as all the others that had preceded it. He appeared to reflect as to the reply he ought to give.

“Why do you hesitate?” continued Henry.

“I was thinking,” said Bruin, “what answer I ought to give you; and the only answer that I will give is — he *may have* gone to Cologne.”

“Remember, I can have you tortured to death!” said Henry, clinching his hand in the face of the unhappy man.

“I do,” he replied, “and therefore, it is that I so answer you — he *may have* gone to Cologne: I do not say that *he has*: search for him there — and, perchance, you may find him.”

“I have done with you, wretch: and now know my sentence upon you. It is, that you be taken and put in

a large caldron — that caldron then placed on a roaring fire — and that you be thus boiled to death. It is thus they punish great criminals in Flanders, and I mean to make the first experiment of such a death upon your worthless carcass. It will, I think, be a sufficient torture for all your crimes.”

Bruin bent his head — kissed the earth — made the sign of the cross on his forehead — and then, without uttering a word, he shot up, as it seemed, with one bounding motion from the earth, striking his head full in the face of the king, and prostrating him with the shock, and at the same instant he was on the battlements, making a desperate springing plunge, that brought him clear beyond the trench outside the walls, from whence, he was observed running direct across the fields towards the encampment of Otho. He was safe from pursuit. Not even an arrow was discharged after him ; for the few soldiers that were on the ramparts had withdrawn from the place where the king and his friends had been conversing ; and the first intimation they had of any thing unusual having occurred, was seeing the king lying on his back, perfectly senseless, and his face covered with blood. Those who saw a man running across the plain, never, for an instant, supposed that the circumstance could have any connection with what had befallen their sovereign on the fortress wall.

Henry's first words were :

“ Is the villain alive ? ”

“ He is,” answered Werenher.

“ And unharmed ? ” asked Henry.

“ Yes,” said Werenher.

“ Thank heaven ! ” cried Henry. “ Now, count, take especial care, that he be strictly, cautiously, and even tenderly guarded.”



“Guarded!” exclaimed Werenher, much embarrassed, “I am sorry to tell your Majesty that he has escaped.”

“Escaped!” said Henry, who hitherto had been reclining on a seat, weak, and exhausted by the loss of blood. “Escaped!” he repeated, as he started up, driven, by rage, almost to madness. “Escaped! How? where? when? In my own palace — on the ramparts — in the face of thousands of soldiers — in the presence of my subjects — within an arm’s length of my friends — I — the king — the imperial ruler of Germany — am struck — struck even to the very earth, by a serf’s son — by a base, double-dealing spy, and yet, I am told, that he who did this has escaped! Escaped! then he must have vanished into air. I have been contending with a phantom, and not a man. Say so to me, and I can believe you; for that itself would be more credible, than to assure me that the wretch who knelt there but a few minutes before, and who has dishonored me, can have escaped living from the swords of my friends, and the arrows of my soldiers. O, but to have the villain living within my grasp. The weight of his head in gold for him, if living; but not dead: no — no common death for him. A death — O, a clever, ingenious, cruel, awful death — a death, that a king must pity, for him who has shed the blood of a king. It must be this. Either such a death as that, or none at all. Attend to this, Werenher: I will not have him killed. I must have him an uninjured, living man, to look upon. If he dies in any other way, then — he has done that which you say — *he has really escaped!*”

“At present, my liege, he is not within the precincts of the palace,” said Egen. “As soon as the bird that has flown from the cage has been coaxed or captured back again into it, your Majesty shall be informed.”

“I will,” said Henry, “think no more of him, until I see him again before me, and then I shall propose a prize to the man who can devise the most shocking tortures for him. It adds to my desire of vengeance, against such a caitiff, that he should be able to occupy so much of my thoughts, when matters of higher importance, and of greater interest to myself should engage my attention. But this villain has assaulted me,” continued Henry, in despite of himself, exhibiting the impotency of his rage, in the harsh epithets he used; “this miscreant said that the younger Dedi may, at this moment, be in Cologne. What think you, Werenher?”

“That because he said so, it is not the truth,” answered Werenher.

“I know not that,” said Lieman. “He said many things that were true, also — as, for instance, that he had completely cajoled, and successfully deluded you, count.”

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CONTEST FOR PRECEDENCY.

“I HAVE,” said the Prior Croft, upon being introduced to King Henry, “a favor to demand of your Majesty; it is that you will be pleased to accept from the most devoted and most loving of your subjects this diamond cross.”

“This!” exclaimed Henry, examining the gift with the eye not merely of a connoisseur, but of a consummate judge in such matters. “Why this is the richest

present that ever yet was made to me. This is the true Byzantine workmanship — these are as pure diamonds as ever came from the East. What an enormous sum they must have cost you !”

“ They cost me no more than the bestowal of freedom upon a single serf ; and the cross, as you see it, was for that purpose bestowed upon me, by the pilgrim who was wounded in Aschaffenburg, when resisting some of your soldiers in carrying off a maiden.”

“ Indeed !” said Henry, “ and know you who this wealthy pilgrim may be ? ”

“ No,” replied the prior, “ he appeared to me to be a man whose mind had become crazed by being always fixed upon some one idea, whatever that might be. That he is not in full possession of his senses is proved by the enormous price he paid for a single slave.”

“ No pilgrim, but a man of noble rank and of great wealth, could be possessed of a treasure like this. I wish I may meet with him. I should like to have the rifling of his scrip. But, good Prior Croft, tell me what I can do for you ? Do you wish for the vacant mitre of Abbot Meginherr ?” asked Henry.

“ I do not,” answered the prior. “ I have had the management of his wealth for many years ; and I have left the monastery so poor that it is now only fitted for the reception of some one that your Majesty may desire to mortify by bestowing it upon him. I have thought of your Majesty, and how much more usefully its money could be dispensed by you, than if left to rust in the treasure-chamber of Aschaffenburg. I have, in addition to this cross, brought with me a large sum in coins of gold, and with these, some magnificently covered Bibles, thick with gems, and every leaf of which is illuminated

with paintings in the richest colors, and letters of gold and silver.”

“O, most wise, prudent, and loyal prior,” cried Henry, whose eyes sparkled with joy, when he heard of these rich gifts. “What can I bestow upon you in exchange for them?”

“The bishopric of Hildesheim,” answered Croft.

“The bishopric of Hildesheim! would that I could confer it upon you,” said Henry. “It is not yet vacant. The bishop is still living.”

“The bishop was living two days ago,” observed Croft, “but he has long been ailing—and I have had a sure friend in attendance upon him, from whom I heard last night that he had expired the day before. It is a rich diocese—it will enable me to save much more wealth for your Majesty than I possibly could do in the poor Abbacy of Aschaffenburg; and that wealth, whatever it be, shall be all yours whenever an archiepiscopal mitre becomes vacant.”

“Prior Croft, the moment that the crosier and ring of the dead bishop are placed in my hands, they shall be consigned to your care,” said Henry. “You are the man most suited to be a bishop of mine. It is a pleasure and a profit to me to promote men like you; for there is no whining hypocrisy about you—no paltry squeamishness; no pretence of doing that for piety’s sake which you really do for your own. Croft—*Bishop Croft*, believe me, when I say that I love you, and henceforward shall regard you, like your cousin Werenher, as amongst my most trusty councillors.”

“I thank your Majesty for your goodness,” said Croft, “and, if the constant gifts of gold can be regarded as proofs of my affection, rest assured that the

people of Hildesheim shall be made to feel that I am a diligent worker in the service of my sovereign."

"Enough of professions, and even of thanks, cousin Croft," said Werenher. "I have spoken much of your talents to his Majesty, and now, mayhap, you may give him a proof of them. It is a matter of the utmost importance, that as many of the bishops and abbots as possible may be prevented from attending the approaching synod, or even taking part in the diet. Can you devise the means for carrying into effect the wish of his Majesty? To prove to you its importance, it may suffice to say, that King Henry has despatched Lieman to Cologne for the sole purpose of creating such a disturbance there as will render it impossible for Anno to leave his diocese."

"Let me see — let me see," said Croft, walking up and down the room for two or three minutes, and seemingly buried in profound thought. As he walked, he threw out his arms wildly, as if seeking to grasp, in the air, for something which he might cling to for support. Henry and Werenher ran to him, and catching hold of him, as he was about falling to the earth, they placed him upon a seat, and were shocked upon perceiving that his features were convulsed, that all his face became of a purple hue, and that this color suddenly disappeared, and was succeeded by the awful pallor of death. He gazed distractedly at both, and then, placing his hand before his eyes, he remained in that attitude for a minute; and then, starting suddenly up, he walked about the apartment again as if nothing had occurred, and said, in a cheerful tone of voice: "I pray your Majesty's pardon. It is a slight illness, which sometimes affects me when I give up my mind to the intense contempla-

tion of any subject in which I feel deeply and personally interested. Such has been now the case with me; but it is an attack cheaply purchased, if it should serve to promote your Majesty's wishes. I think I have devised a good scheme, if your Majesty can answer one question in the manner that I suppose you are enabled to do. How stands Widerad, the Abbot of Fulda, affected to your Majesty?"

"As much opposed to me as a subject dare be to the king he dislikes," answered Henry.

"It is as I supposed," replied Croft. "I know well many of his monks, and I am aware, through them, of the hatred entertained against him; for he is one of those fanatics, who, under the pretence of reforming the church abuses, is seeking to deprive the monks of their little indulgences, and compelling them to adhere to the hard, harsh rules of the ancient discipline. I think I shall find work for him to do in Fulda, as Lieman is to procure home-occupation for the rigid Anno. That will be the smallest benefit derived from my scheme. Your Majesty may remember that, when celebrating the festival of Christmas at Goslar, a dispute for precedency took place between Heccelon, the late Bishop of Hildesheim, and Widerad, the Abbot of Fulda — namely, as to which of them had the right to have his seat placed next to that of the Archbishop of Mayence. In that dispute, a consideration for the antiquity of the Abbacy of Fulda, backed by the abbot's knights, secured the victory to Widerad. Have it now publicly proclaimed that I am nominated the Bishop of Hildesheim: depend upon it, I shall revive that dispute in such a manner, that no bishop will venture to remain in Frankfort but such as shall feel himself secure under the protection of your

Majesty. For this purpose, however, Werenher and his soldiers must assist me."

"Excellent man! wise and prudent councillor! True and trusty Bishop of Hildesheim. All shall be done as you command," said Henry.

"And all shall succeed as your Majesty wishes," replied Croft. "The sun shall not set until my plan is carried into execution."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PARLIAMENT IN FRANKFORT.

THE diet or parliament that had been convoked by Henry, at Frankfort, for the especial, although unavowed, purpose of destroying Otho, Duke of Bavaria, was one remarkable for its magnificence. There Henry was to be seen, high-throned above all others, wearing, as if it were the day of his coronation as emperor, the imperial robes, beneath which was his military tunic of linen, made tight to the waist with a belt of pure gold; and to that belt was attached a sword in a sheath of burnished gold, and having a hilt that was refulgent with sparkling jewels. He wore on his head a king's crown, and not the massive, imperial crown of Charlemagne, set with rough diamonds; and about him were the grand officers of the empire, by virtue of their rank, as well as their office, having on their heads dazzling coronets, and robes that were stiff with gold. These were the mareschal, or groom—the truchsess, or carver—the

mundschenk, or cupbearer — the kammerer, or chamberlain — the kuchenmeister, or master of the kitchen — the hausmeier, or master of the household — and with these, were to be seen, but all in gorgeous armor, the great crown vassals or counts, with the dukes of various principalities; and arranged close to the king, the Archbishop of Mayence, the bishops, and high abbots of the empire, and all with mitres, crosiers, in their richest vestments of state; whilst around the church, in which the assembly was held, and outside the walls, and guarding every avenue, were the red-clothed, strongly-armed *schaaren*, or mercenary troops, in the especial pay of the sovereign.

Such a spectacle was one in which Henry took especial delight; for he not merely desired to have power, but he wished the world to be convinced, by such an exhibition as this, that he could exercise it. On the present occasion he believed there were none present but those who were his steadfast friends; for, as he had taken care to terrify, by a deed of blood, the bishops hostile to him, from being in attendance, so had he also taken care that few briefs should be addressed to any but his adherents, of the dukes or counts of the empire, inviting them to this assembly, to afford to him their “advice and assistance.” He had, to use a modern phrase, that the malignity and perversity of men have rendered but too familiar, “*packed*” his parliament, or diet, as he had “*packed*” the synod of the bishops; and he calculated upon obtaining from both “a verdict contrary to the evidence.”

The proceedings, on this occasion, were commenced by Henry, who thus addressed his hearers:

“Princes, dukes, archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts



of the empire, we have unwillingly, but yet, perforce, felt ourselves compelled, to summon you to a colloquy with us this day. We have done so unwillingly ; for we well know that it is a grievous burden upon most of you to have to travel such a distance upon affairs which can but remotely, as individuals, concern you ; and yet we have done so, because as members of the German empire, it is of vital consequence to you, that no treason of any one individual should tend to diminish, and, mayhap, destroy that empire, which we, when taking the oath of emperor, are bound to swear that we shall augment.

“ We have done so, perforce, because the occasion has arisen, when we felt ourselves compelled to call our princes together, in order that we might have, as it is our right to have, their advice, and, if need be, their assistance and support. We wish, in your presence, to be consoled by the proof of your loyalty ; and we desire, by your wise counsels, to be directed how we may act with prudence and with justice.

“ Hence it is, dearest friends, and loving subjects, that we have summoned you to attend us here this day, so that we may with you consult how we may best provide for the peace of the land, the honor of the church, the due respect to be paid to princes, and the fitting happiness of the people.

“ None of these things are attainable, if treason remain unpunished, or perjury continue unchastised.

“ Of all treasons, none can be considered worse than that which seeks the murder of the king — of your superior lord — and none can be more base than such a treason, when the king’s death is sought to be accomplished by the corruption of a servant, in whom the king has ever placed the greatest confidence.

“Of such treason — of such baseness, combined with treason, stands accused, one of the highest rank amongst yourselves — Otho, Duke of Bavaria; and, to answer that treason, Otho has been summoned here by his accuser, Egen — my faithful servant — and though not the equal in rank of Duke Otho, yet a free-born man, and whose claim to credit on his oath none of our *scabini* would venture to reject.

“It is to aid me in coming to a proper decision upon this cause, I have summoned you; and the necessity for doing this is the greater, as the alleged treason is affirmed to be connected with that spirit of insubordination which now rages in Saxony, and which has already manifested itself in the refusal to pay tithes to our most reverend, exalted, and pious friend, the Prince Archbishop of Mayence.”

The Archbishop of Mayence smiled when he heard these words. They served to convince him that Henry only waited for the divorce to be pronounced, to commence collecting his tithes at the point of the sword.

Henry continued: —

“Egen, the accuser, is now here in person, and prepared to sustain his charge — he will do so, by his oath, or he is ready to prove the justice of his accusation at the peril of his life, if Otho will do battle with him. He has summoned the accused to this place. Is Otho, Duke of Saxony, present?”

“I am here to answer for Otho, Duke of Saxony — to defend him, if it be necessary — and to account for his absence, if required,” said Count Dedi, advancing, and placing himself in front of the throne of Henry, so as to be visible to all parts of the assembly.

“Count Dedi is a very ardent friend,” said Henry,

sneeringly ; “but the time, perhaps, is not far distant when he may himself stand in need of a champion.”

“When Count Dedi,” replied the fearless old man, “ceases to prove himself a friend to those he honors, he is unworthy to live ; and he never can want a champion as long as he is able to wield the sword which hangs by his side, and that has already saved him from greater dangers than a king’s sneer or a *judge’s* gibe.”

Henry turned pale with anger at this public reproach to himself, in forgetting that, in the office which he was then exercising, he was bound to exhibit the demeanor, if he had none of the spirit, that should characterize the supreme president of a judicial tribunal. He restrained himself, however, from giving expression to his feelings, and, in as calm a voice as he could assume, he said, addressing himself to Dedi :

“Wherefore does Otho refuse to appear before his assembled peers ?”

“Otho, Duke of Bavaria,” replied Dedi, “does not refuse to appear before his assembled peers — he is willing that his cause should be tried by them ; but by them only, and by them all ; and not by a selection made from them, in which he recognizes, and I now see, many of his enemies, and few, if any, of those either disposed to be friendly towards him, or to judge indifferently between him and his accusers. Otho, like other men illustrious by their rank, famous by their deeds, and conspicuous by their riches, is well aware that there are many who are his enemies, because they desire to deprive him of the first, to obscure the second, and to despoil him of the third. He well knows that some desire to possess themselves of his dukedom ; others to tarnish his glory, which they feel is a reproach to their own

infamy ; and a vast number to plunder his property, and to enrich themselves by the robbery of himself, his wife, and their dependants. Otho does not refuse to be judged by a fair and impartial tribunal — by the princes of the empire, assembled in a full and solemn diet at Goslar. Let your Majesty grant him a safe conduct, and then he will appear ; and then, upon such conditions as the princes, his equals, may impose, he pledges himself to refute, to their satisfaction, fully, completely, and thoroughly, the infamous charges that are now preferred against him.”

“But wherefore,” asked Henry, “refuse the single combat with Egen ? In such a battle the judgment of God, and not the prejudices of man, to which you refer, must be the supreme arbiter, and either convict him of guilt, or vindicate his innocence.”

“Otho, Duke of Bavaria, refuses the proposed monomachy with Egen,” replied Dedi, “upon my advice, and the counsel of other high and illustrious knights and nobles ; and he refuses it, not because Egen is his inferior in rank — that which might be a valid objection, if he did not know that on one occasion King Louis d’Outremer tendered single combat to his inferior in rank, Hugh the Great ; and if he had not in our own land the example of Dietmar, brother of Bernhard, Duke of Saxony, upon an accusation similar to that now preferred by Egen, engaging in single combat with his own vassal, Arnold. Otho refuses to cross his sword with Egen upon this ground, and this only ; namely, that it is not equitable, it is not just, it is not right, it is not proper, it is not becoming, it is not even decent, to require of a man like Otho, one of the most illustrious in the empire by birth, and by rank, and still more illustrious by

his personal virtues—a man of spotless fame and unblemished honor, to place himself on a level and to engage hand-in-hand with one who is notoriously a base and infamous wretch—a villain, who, though it is admitted, is a free-born man, is still one who has degraded himself by his vices, and upon whom, if justice had been done, the hangman's grip should long since have been laid, for his thefts, his robberies, and his career of crime, into which he is so fallen, that he has become a pander even to the lusts of others. With such a wretch as Egen, it is deemed by Otho, and it is declared by his friends, that it would be an infamy for any man, under any circumstances, to recognize in him an equal either in the sight of God, or of man. This is Otho's answer at this time, in this place, and before such a tribunal, as I now see assembled, to the challenge of Egen."

As these words rung through the assembly, there arose a loud murmur of indignation amongst all the armed nobles present; for the bold speech of Dedi was a reproach to them as an unfairly constituted assembly, and yet there were few of them, who, in their hearts, did not approve of Otho's reasons for refusing the single combat to Egen. It was felt by all to be a just refusal; but when men are heated by passion they are blind to what is justice, and will shut their ears even to the voice of truth, if both stand in the way of the gratification of their revenge. Some of the armed counts were so enraged, by the address of Dedi, that they convulsively grasped their swords, and the rattle was heard for a moment, as if the iron scabbards had been shaken.

Such sounds were familiar to the practised ear of the veteran warrior, Dedi, and the instant they reached him, he seized the scabbard of his own sword with the left

hand, but without touching the hilt with his right, he glanced proudly, and defyingly on the entire assembly, seeming to run his eye from rank to rank, as if endeavoring to detect who amongst them was the man that would prominently put himself forward as *his* antagonist.

Dedi stood in this attitude for about a minute, and as he did so, a breathless silence fell upon all. The rattling of steel ceased, and the murmurs of voices were heard no more.

The first to break this silence was Henry, who said:

“Is there any one in this assembly — a freeman — who will, with Count Dedi, maintain the innocence of Otho, Duke of Bavaria?”

“I am here to do so,” exclaimed a voice that appeared to come from the door-way of the church, where a vast multitude was collected, that the pikes of the red *schaa-ren* prevented from pressing into the church in such numbers as to inconvenience those who were there assembled.

“Permit that man, whoever he may be,” observed Henry, “to advance to the foot of the throne, so that all may hear what he has to allege on behalf of Otho, Duke of Bavaria.”

The crowd gave way, and there stood forth from the midst of them, the hardy forester, Bernhard, who walked silently up the long aisle of the church, even until he reached the foot of Henry’s throne, and there stood, unabashed by the multitude of rich men he saw around him, and unshrinking even before the flushed brow and the angry eye of the king.

“Who art thou, fellow,” said Henry, impatiently, when he saw the meanly clad Bernhard before him,

“that thus intrudest thyself upon the quarrels of other men?”

“I am Bernhard, the forester of Aschaffenburg,” answered the companion of the pilgrim.

“Well,” observed Henry, with his malignant sneer, “and what can the forester in Aschaffenburg know of any dealings between Otho of Bavaria and my servant Egen?”

“I know this,” replied Bernhard, “that Otho, Duke of Bavaria, is alike incapable of treason to your Majesty, and of the base means of effecting it, wherewith he is charged by Egen; and this I am ready to prove by my body and my sword; I know also that your servant Egen is a villain — a base villain — I know, for I have been a witness to what I now state, that he, with an armed band of ruffians, was guilty of the forcible abduction of a maiden of surpassing beauty, she who was known by the name only of ‘the white rose of Aschaffenburg;’ I know that the miscreant who was guilty of such a crime is capable of committing the lesser crime of perjury — and these things I am prepared to prove by my oath, by my body, and by my sword, and hence that single combat which Otho will not give to Egen, I now tender to Egen, and here, in the presence of your Majesty, and of this diet, I brand him as a recreant, if he will dare to refuse it.”

There were facts referred to in this speech of Bernhard, of which it would be difficult to say what one amongst them was the most annoying to Henry to hear mentioned in that assembly. He found that even there, in that public assemblage, he was mixed up, (although not named) with the criminalities of Egen, and so unexpectedly did this exposure come upon him, that he was

incapable of making an observation upon the challenge now publicly delivered against his confidant by Bernhard.

“Well—my lords and princes,” said Dedi, “what say you—what can you reply to the challenge of Bernhard? If you deem Otho not justified in refusing the duel with Egen—how can you sanction Egen’s refusal to fight with Bernhard?”

“I claim the right of forbidding it,” answered Croft, the new Bishop of Hildesheim, “and I do so on the ground that the cases of Egen and of Bernhard are not at all similar. Egen is justified, by precedent, in claiming the right as a free-born man, in a charge of high treason, of proving that charge by single combat against one, even though his superior in rank. Bernhard claims a similar right, but he is not enabled to obtain it, and that upon two grounds; first, Bernhard is not the equal, by birth, of Egen, for Bernhard is not a free-born man—he is a serf by birth—a serf of the monastery of Aschaffenburg, a man upon whom I myself bestowed his freedom; and secondly, even supposing that objection could be waived, and I deem that it is not possible to do so, then I refer to the hundred and thirteenth section of the Code of Bamberg, to show that except in the charge of high treason against the king (that which Bernhard does not allege against Egen,) the latter is justified in refusing the duel with him, and he may, if Bernhard were to persist in his accusation, clear himself of the charge by the oaths of sworn, credible, and responsible compurgators. Does your Majesty,” said Croft, turning to Henry, “think that I have interpreted rightly and justly the customs and laws of the empire?”

“Most rightfully, most justly, and most wisely,” answered the king, bestowing a most gracious smile upon



the new titular Bishop of Hildesheim ; “ and sustained by your interpretation, I regard the accusation of Bernhard, the forester, as nought. Begone, fellow,” said the king to Bernhard, “ thou art treated with more mercy than thou dost merit, when thou art permitted to depart without punishment for thus calumniating my servant Egen.”

Bernhard gazed steadily at Henry while he was thus rebuked by him as his sovereign. As soon as Henry ceased to speak, Bernhard bowed his head, and was turning to depart, when Dedi seized hold of him, and spoke to him, in a tone of voice to be heard by all present :

“ Bernhard — henceforth my friend Bernhard — stir not, for your life, out of this assembly unprotected by me and my followers. Here, neither you nor I have aught more to do ; the manner in which your accusation has been disposed of, proves to me how Otho’s appeal for justice will be received. Have I,” said Dedi, in the same tone of voice, and addressing the king, “ your Majesty’s permission to depart ? ”

“ Answer me, Count Dedi,” said Henry, with a frowning brow, “ but one question more, and then you are free to go.”

“ Let your Majesty put your question in what form you please,” observed Dedi, “ my answer shall be as truly spoken as if the next moment were my last.”

“ Am I,” said Henry, “ to understand that you speak fully and distinctly the determination of Duke Otho of Bavaria, not to appear before the assembly as it is now constituted, and to decline the proof by single combat tendered by Egen ? that Otho will, in fact, not condescend to defend himself except before a tribunal of his own choosing ? ”

“This is the answer of Otho to your Majesty’s questions,” replied Dedi. “I give that answer as coming from his own lips, and in listening to my voice, you hear his words. Otho says this: he chooses no tribunal for himself—the accused, like the accuser, should have no choice as to those by whom they are tried; and he objects to appear before this assembly, because it is, as he believes, a tribunal, not merely chosen, but culled out for his condemnation, by those who are his enemies. In appealing from such a convocation to a general assembly or diet, he but exercises a right that is vested in him as a duke charged with high treason. He refuses to combat with Egen, because he conceives, no sentence—no judgment—no condemnation that might be pronounced against him, would entail upon him such a loss of honor, as that of demeaning himself for a moment in such a manner as to treat Egen on an equality with himself. Otho, Duke of Bavaria, despairs of receiving justice here—Otho, Duke of Bavaria, has no hope of mercy from your Majesty, if he were once to place himself in your hands, and therefore he prefers defending his own life and lands with arms in his hands, rather than be basely butchered and unresistingly robbed, if he cast away from him, by coming here, such means of defence as heaven has still left to him.

“This is Otho’s answer to your Majesty—it is his declaration to this assembly—and having now delivered myself of both, I take my leave of you.

“Come, Bernhard—and mark, as you go along, how little of honesty, and how scanty a share of virtue, may, at times, be found associated with coronets of diamonds and rich robes of gold.”

So speaking, the proud Count Dedi, and the humble

forester, Bernhard, walked out from the midst of that hostile assemblage, not only unscathed, but without as much as a single word of insult pronounced against them.

The rage of Henry, which had been so long suppressed, burst forth, as those two companions of Otho disappeared. It was, therefore, in a manner far different from that grave, judicial tone that he had assumed at the commencement of these proceedings, that he now addressed his hearers.

“Thus, my lords, princes, archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts, have ye all been outraged, and I insulted, by a traitor; for that Otho, Duke of Bavaria, is a traitor, I am now fully warranted in declaring — he who contumaciously refuses to defend himself before a properly constituted tribunal, when charged with a grave crime, must be regarded as self-convicted; and he whose treason is ready to be proved by single combat, yet shrinks from the test of battle, must be considered as much a traitor as if he had accepted the combat, and had been defeated by his adversary. If it were otherwise, the proud traitor never could be convicted, and the coward traitor never be condemned. To you, then, I appeal for that justice which you are bound to render against the man thus self-convicted of treason against me, as well as of basely attempting to effect that treason, by seeking to corrupt my faithful servant, so that he might have the means of depriving me of life.

“If other evidence beyond these facts — the contumacy and the cowardice of Otho — now within the knowledge of each and all of you, be required, Egen is ready to produce it, and, among the rest, the sword of Attila, once the property of Otho, bestowed, by him, on Egen, and now in the possession of Count Rutger.”

The king ceased speaking. The nobles rose in a body, and retired from the church. They were absent for about a quarter of an hour, and then the king's master of the household, with his golden wand of office in his right hand, arose, and said :—

“This is the doom of the nobles, princes, and counts of the empire. We condemn Otho, Duke of Bavaria, as one plainly, clearly, and openly convicted of high treason — for that treason we condemn him to death — and to death we consign him whenever, wheresoever, or by whomsoever he is apprehended. This is our doom, and we pray your Majesty to sanction and enforce it.”

“I approve it, and I will enforce it,” said Henry. “I declare Otho, from this moment, deprived of the dukedom of Bavaria; and I authorize all who hear me, to waste, with fire and sword, the lands belonging to him, and the persons who acknowledge him as their superior lord.”

At this moment, and before the opportunity was afforded to Henry of giving utterance to another word, there burst forth a shout of joy, so loud, so vehement, and so sudden, that the painted windows of the church seemed to tremble in their soldered frames from the concussion. To those who sat within the walls of the church, it appeared as if every inhabitant of Frankfort, and the thousands in the tents around it, had uplifted, at the same instant, their voices in one united acclamation, and that all combined together, came like a thunderclap of exultation upon their ears. It was a shout of joy, in which there appeared to be no pause, and to which there never again would be a cessation, for as it was prolonged, it seemed to increase in vehemence, making the nerves of the hearers tremble, and com-

elling them, by the contagion of excitement, to join in it! Onward it came, swelling with a louder roar, as if that which had first provoked it, was approaching nearer and nearer to the building in which the king held his parliament.

King Henry, the archbishop, bishops, and nobles, with every one in the assembly, started to their feet, as they heard this tremendous shout, and all remained riveted to the spot on which they stood, as if astounded by so vehement an outburst of popular joy and popular enthusiasm. There was no cry to indicate to them wherefore it had risen, or on whose behalf it was produced; but onward, onward still it came to them, increasing in noise, and more awful in its dizzying sound, and then—it ceased as suddenly as it began—and there was a silence as of death, as the door-way was cleared, and the multitude outside were seen with bended knees, and faces upturned with joy.

“Alack! alack!” exclaimed the Archbishop of Mayence, imitating the attitude of those who stood outside—“I see it all—I know now *the cause* of this tumult. We are lost, King Henry.”

“Good heavens! what is it? What can it be?” inquired the king.

“It is *the papal legate!* The shouts were for joy at seeing him—the silence has ensued upon his descending to the ground. See, the people are crossing themselves. The legate is bestowing upon them his benediction.

“To your knees,” said the Archbishop of Mayence, “king, prelates, nobles, Christians—to your knees, in order that our first greeting from Rome may be a benediction from his holiness. God grant we may all

receive it with a humble and contrite heart. Kneel — kneel, all of ye. See, he comes.”

“The papal legate!” muttered Henry. “Curses fall on whomsoever has brought him.”

“Then curse Dedi the younger,” whispered Werenher in the ear of the king.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE RECONCILIATION.

ONE of the most remarkable men of the eleventh century was the papal legate, whose unexpected and unlooked-for appearance on this occasion, at Frankfort, produced so much terror to the court, and excited such emotion in the parliament convoked by Henry. This papal legate was the Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia, Peter Damian — a poet, a philosopher, a profound scholar; an author, whose works are still read with admiration — a man whose benevolence was boundless, and his charity so great, that he had been known to part even with his pontifical ring, when all his other means were exhausted, to procure money and food for the poor — a man who was most respected and most feared by his contemporaries, on account of his unceasing and uncompromising efforts as a *Church Reformer* — a man so stern in his principles, that he declared all ecclesiastics to be guilty of manifold simony, who served princes, or flattered them for the sake of obtaining ecclesiastical preferments.

The great vice of the age, in which Peter Damian lived, was the simony which infected churchmen, and that prevailed to such an extent, that it had become a universal practice in Milan, that bishops were paid for bestowing ordination upon those who sought to be admitted to holy orders. Against this sin of simony, which overspread the church as a leprosy, and that brought with it many other sins and enormities, Peter Damian arrayed himself. He denounced it as "a heresy," and backed by the power of his superiors, he suppressed it completely in Milan, checked it in France, aided in extirpating it from all parts of Italy, and struggled against it in Germany.

The vehemence of language that Peter Damian used in denouncing a sin destructive to Christianity, and yet much favored by men of the highest rank in church and state, who profited by it, contrasted strongly with his own great humility, with his belief in his own unworthiness, with his severe fasts, and with the bitter mortifications that he imposed upon himself, as a punishment for what he believed to be his own sins ; for it is stated of him by his biographers, that the ordinary course of his life, when not employed in discharging the duty of "Reforming the Church," so frequently confided to him, by those who had authority over him, was as follows :—

"He lived," say his biographers, "shut up in his cell as in a prison—fasted every day, except festivals—and allowed himself no other subsistence than coarse bread, bran, herbs, and water, and this he never drank fresh, but what he had kept from the day before. He tortured his body with iron girdles, and frequent disciplines, to render it more obedient to the spirit. He

passed the three first days of every Lent and Advent without taking any kind of nourishment whatsoever; and often, for forty days together, lived only on raw herbs and fruits, or on pulse steeped in cold water, without touching even bread, or any thing which had passed the fire. A mat, spread on the floor, was his bed. He used to make wooden spoons, and such like useful mean things, to exercise himself at certain hours in manual labor."

Such then was the man — so pious — so "poor in spirit," — so great in learning — so ardent in zeal — so meek with the humble — so gentle with the contrite — and so harsh with the reprobate — that now appeared to the horror of Sigefrid, the worldly Archbishop of Mayence, and to the dismay of Henry, the mighty and the great King of Germany, in the midst of their assistant prelates and proud nobles, collected together in the parliament of Frankfort.

The Bishop Cardinal of Ostia had bestowed his benediction upon the vast multitude assembled outside the walls of the church, and then, arrayed in the sumptuous robes of a "Bishop-Cardinal," the feeble old man, now in the seventy-ninth year of his age, was seen entering the church, preceded by acolytes, by priests in white vestments — by the bearer of a great silver cross, and having but one man in armor in his train — that warrior was at once recognized by all present to be the youthful, gallant, and high-spirited son of Count Dedi.

The bishop-cardinal passed up the centre of the church — now so still and silent, and lately so agitated by vehement passions, that the men who now lowly bent to receive his blessing, appeared not to be the same vindictive, rash, and angry individuals that were ready to



throw themselves, a short time before, sword in hand, upon Count Dedi, and cut him to pieces, for daring to reproach them with their subserviency to King Henry.

The benediction of the papal legate was bestowed, and then all arose ; and, as they did so, Peter Damian, touching with his aged, pale, and withered cheek, the blooming, fresh-colored cheek of the youthful monarch, bestowed upon him, that which, in the language of churchmen, is designated “the kiss of peace.”

A strange sight it was to behold them thus — even though it were but for a single instant — brought in immediate and direct contact with each other — so great a saint and so great a sinner, as Peter Damian and Henry. The one had passed from youth to age, and now stood upon the verge of the grave, so chastising his body, and so checking and controlling all his passions and his inclinations, that he was, even whilst on earth, an almost spritualized being ; whilst the other, indulged by others from infancy, and yielding himself a prey to every caprice, had become, even though still young, an animal in his passions, and worse than an animal, because to gratify those passions he employed the devices, and resorted to the practices, of a clever and an unscrupulous man.

“Your Majesty will perceive, by the rescript I have now the honor of placing in your hands, that all the reasons you have alleged for desiring to put an end to the marriage with the Queen Bertha, have been fully, deliberately, and anxiously, considered, by his holiness. These, I believe,” said Peter Damian, handing a parchment to King Henry, “contain all the facts and all the arguments on which you rely, for the dissolution of your marriage. I have some reason for supposing they are

those upon which the Prince Archbishop of Mayence intended to rely, in pronouncing a judgment in favor of your Majesty. He could not, I believe, put them in a stronger light than they are here set forth."

Henry and the Archbishop of Mayence, at the same moment, fixed their eyes on the papal legate, in the hope they might discover in his countenance some indication of *his* feelings upon a point in which both were so deeply interested. They looked in vain, for the face of the old man was as pale, as passive, and as free from every emotion as if it were that of a marble statue. They then examined the parchment that had been placed in their hands. Henry's face flushed with joy as he read it, and the archbishop felt delighted as he perused.

"My reasons," whispered the archbishop to Henry, "could not have been placed in a stronger light than they are here set down. I cannot understand how it is; but, most assuredly, this document has anticipated all that I could have said."

"And it contains," whispered Henry to the archbishop, "all that I wished to have said." And he muttered involuntarily, to himself, "And it contains, too, much more than I could have proved."

The legate waited patiently — absolutely unmoved, until the document had been carefully conned over. He then said —

"Does any new fact or argument occur to you, that your Majesty would desire to have added to what is there set down for you?"

"No — none," replied Henry. "I am perfectly content with it, and I am sure that upon such a case I shall have a just, fair, and impartial decision made by his holiness."

“Of that your Majesty may well feel assured,” replied the legate, “for his holiness feels as anxious for your temporal and eternal happiness as if you were his son — his love for you is greater than that of a father for his child; for he is well aware that your Majesty has it in your power to confer innumerable blessings upon that Christendom of which he is, on this earth, the spiritual father.”

“And the holy father may henceforth reckon upon me as the most devoted of his kingly sons. In the document I have now read, I have the proof he has considered and attached their due weight to all those conscientious scruples that influence me in seeking a divorce from her who has been but in name my wife.”

“The holy father has done so, for he considers himself in this case responsible for your immortal soul to God,” answered Peter Damian. “He has deemed the facts you state to be so important, that he has instituted a rigid inquiry into them.”

“What!” exclaimed Henry, “inquired into the validity of facts alleged by me to be true?”

“Yes,” answered Peter Damian, in the same unmoved attitude, and the same calm tone of voice; “for he is aware that kings are but men — that as men they are liable to be mistaken; and that *as men* they will be judged hereafter. He has examined into the facts, and he has found them disproved, every one, by the clearest evidence — and, among the rest, by the evidence of the Empress Agnes, your mother, and of Queen Bertha, your wife. Here are the facts as set forth by you, with the proofs that they are directly contradicted by the oaths of those who had the opportunity of having full cognizance of the truth.”

So speaking, Peter Damian handed another parchment to Henry and the Archbishop of Mayence. The first merely glanced through it — the latter read it attentively, and, as he did so, he was seen to tremble, as if he were shaken with an ague-fit.

“Then what, may I ask,” said Henry, impatiently, “is the decision to which the pontiff has come?”

“His Majesty, King Henry of Germany,” observed Peter Damian, here raising his voice, and addressing himself to the entire assembly, “is pleased to demand of me what is the decision of his holiness with respect to his Majesty’s demand that the marriage contract between him and the Princess Bertha, of Italy, be dissolved. His Majesty admits that the reasons in support of, and in opposition to his demand have been fully and maturely considered, and I have now, in the name, and on behalf of the supreme pontiff, to pronounce publicly, as I am so directed by his holiness, the judgment in this case.

“The pontiff considers that a marriage has been legally, fully, and rightfully solemnized between his Majesty King Henry and the Queen Bertha — that it is a marriage in every way unimpeachable, and therefore indissoluble; and that to seek for the dissolution of such a marriage, or to permit it to be dissolved, would be pernicious, contrary to morality, and an act worthy of execration by every man who bears the name of a Christian.

“The pontiff, moreover, in giving this decision, publicly appeals to King Henry, that, supposing he was to set the laws of man at defiance, and to trample upon the canons of the church, by putting an end to a lawful marriage, he should at least have some regard for the

estimation in which he is to be held now, and his fame in all future time; and this, too, lest the evil example, of seeking divorces, thus given by a king, should be hereafter imitated, and Christendom contaminated with a new crime, of which he should stand forever accursed as the inventor and the originator.

“The pontiff, in conclusion, declares that he never will with his hands bestow consecration as an emperor upon King Henry — if Henry as king should, by persisting in a divorce from his wife, so far betray the faith that binds him as a Christian, and thus afford so pestilent an example to others.

“This is the judgment of the pontiff in your Majesty’s cause — this the pontiff’s appeal to you — this the pontiff’s declaration of the course he will himself adopt, supposing that you should contemn his judgment, and pay no regard to his appeal.

“With the declaration and expounding of the judgment of his holiness, I am instructed also to say, that my functions as a pontifical legate cease.

“Having discharged myself of that duty — I no longer stand before your Majesty the representative of a sovereign prince; but I pray that you will forget that I am a cardinal — that I am a bishop — that I am any thing more than a humble and an obscure monk, who has been ordered by his superior for a few days to quit his cell, and who has reluctantly, although readily, obeyed that order, to be the bearer of a message to the mightiest and the greatest king in the world.

“I pray, then, of your Majesty to deign to listen to the words of a humble monk of the desert hermitage of Font-Avellano — of Peter Damian, who now kneels at the feet of your Majesty,” — (and, as he spoke these

words, the feeble old man knelt before the proud sovereign) — “and who does so to seek for no favor from you, but this — that you will have compassion on — *yourself*; that, discarding your inclinations, and mortifying your propensities, you will permit your conscience to be heard, and religion to pour her saving counsels into your ear — that you will yield obedience to the church, which tells you that you must cleave to your own wife, and that those whom God has joined *no man* can put asunder.

“Receive — O, receive again to your heart, your true, fond, faithful, and devoted wife, Bertha — restore her to your affections, and deem all others of her sex as undeserving of a moment’s contemplation; for she alone is your wife; and he who is a husband, should esteem all other women but as his mother, his sister, or his daughter.

“This is my prayer to you — it is but the prayer of an old man — but remember it is the prayer of one, from whose sight this world is fast disappearing; of one, upon whom it can bestow no reward, and to whom it can offer no temptation — that it is the prayer of one, who may be regarded as speaking from his grave; for a grave is all that even you — potent prince as you are — could now bestow upon the poor, feeble, aged Peter Damian.

“My only prayer to your Majesty is, that you obey the church, in becoming reconciled to your wife Bertha.

“And ye, O, brother-bishops, fellow-priests, and mighty dukes, counts, and nobles, I beseech of you to imitate my example. Cast yourselves with me at the feet of your sovereign, and pray of him that, for the good of mankind, whom his example must influence,

and for his soul's sake, that should be more dear to him than his kingly crown, that he will comply with your request, as well as mine, by becoming openly and cordially reconciled with your queen — the good and virtuous Bertha.”

The times that we are attempting to describe were times, as we have already intimated, in which there were great vices; but they were also times in which there was great faith — times in which an appeal, coming from an old man (famous for his personal virtues, and of whose disinterestedness no one ever entertained a doubt), could not be made without being responded to. Hence it happened, that no sooner had Peter Damian ceased to speak, than all the members of the diet were seen prostrate before the throne of Henry, and all exclaiming, as if with one voice :

“Amen! amen! to the prayer of the bishop-cardinal. We beseech the king to be reconciled to Queen Bertha.”

These words were as the points of daggers in the flesh of Henry, they came upon him at a moment when he felt assured of the full success of that divorce which he had passed years in concocting; and they now rushed upon him as the hurricane does upon the frail cane-constructed cottage, shivering it into atoms, and rendering all chance of its re-erection with the same materials an utter impossibility.

Henry, in his despair, when he heard himself so addressed by those whom he knew to be his surest friends, because in all matters his most compliant adherents, threw himself back in his throne, covered his face with his imperial robes, and wept — wept those bitter tears which wicked men shed when they find that their plots are baffled, and their passions thwarted — tears, that as

they fall bring no relief to the heart, but seem as drops of fire, from which spring forth the hell-born demons, hatred, malice, and vengeance, against all, and upon all, who have contributed to their defeat and disappointment.

Henry rose from his throne, and with the voice and manner of a man who has been told unpleasant tidings, and has determined to bear them with patience, he said —

“I pray of you, most reverend Cardinal, and Bishop of Ostia, to rise from your knees — it is not fitting that one so old should bow down before one so young as I am — it is not becoming that one so pious should kneel to one so frail — and you, too, my reverend prelates and loving subjects, I pray you all to resume your places, and listen to the words of your sovereign.

“It would be hypocrisy in me, if I were to say that the decision which Rome has come to, with respect to the divorce I sought, is not only a grievous disappointment, but a severe trial to my feelings. I admit — I avow that it is so. If it were not, there would be little merit in my compliance with the prayer you have made to me.

“With that request it is my intention to comply. I will comply with it, not merely outwardly, but thoroughly. You have asked me to become reconciled to my queen. I shall do so; for it is, I conceive, the duty of a king to yield assent to the prayers of his loyal, loving, and devoted subjects — even though his so doing may be the cause of much affliction to himself.

“In asking me to be reconciled to Bertha, you place a heavy yoke upon my shoulders; but I submit to it, and will bear it as best I can. You yourselves shall be



the witnesses how perfect that reconciliation can be made.

“In obedience to my orders, Queen Bertha now awaits, in the oratory, the decision of the bishops. I desire that my trusty vassal, Dedi the younger, may conduct her from thence into the church. I send to her one, who will, I am sure, be *most welcome to her*.”

An almost imperceptible smile curled the lip of Henry, as he accented these words. It was not perceived by any other than the keen eye of Peter Damian. It induced the papal legate to approach Henry, and to whisper in his ear these words —

“I pray your Majesty’s pardon ; but I feel bound to tell you, that I fear you are not acting with that sincerity you profess. Remember, that you stand in the church of God, and that of all sinners those who have the least chance of ever attaining to the grace of sincere repentance, are those who would mock heaven with hypocrisy. For your own sake beware ; better defy the church openly, than, by seeking to delude it, deliver yourself over irrevocably to perdition. It is not in reproach, but in pure love to you, I say this.”

“Most excellent man !” replied the smiling, and apparently grateful Henry, “I know not how to thank you for the anxious care you have for my salvation. I feel assured that it is in the purest charity you speak to me ; but be you now yourself the judge of my sincerity. Here comes our Queen Bertha — see, if there be aught to censure in my demeanor towards her. If there be, I am sure you will point out the error ; and I, for my part, shall endeavor to amend it.”

As Henry spoke thus he descended the steps of the throne, and proceeded to meet Bertha, as she advanced,

with trembling steps, and, from sheer weakness and emotion, clung for support to the arm of her conductor, the younger Dedi.

Bertha, clothed in a robe of black, destitute of every ornament, and her head covered with a thick black veil, ascended the steps of the throne, aided by her husband. As soon as both had reached the topmost steps, he placed the queen on the throne which he had so lately occupied, whilst he himself remained standing by her side.

There was complete silence in the church whilst all this was passing ; and there was terror in the hearts of those who knew Henry best, lest this silence should be but a prelude to some scene of horror.

The silence was so chilling, that it appeared terrible even to those who might be regarded as indifferent spectators. What, then, must have been its effect upon the poor queen, who was alone, in that multitude of terrified men, and who found all eyes fixed upon her !

Henry beckoned the Archbishop of Mayence, and then Werenher to his side, and whispered a few words in the ear of each. The last was seen to leave the church ; the archbishop, it was remarked, brought from the high altar a rich coronet, composed of amethysts.

The silence still continued unbroken ; but when the archbishop had returned to the side of Henry, the latter thus addressed the assembly :

“ My loving friends and faithful subjects, you are all now aware that I made an appeal to the church with respect to my doubts as to the validity of my marriage with the Princess Bertha of Italy ; and expecting that the decision upon that appeal would be publicly delivered this day, I desired that her Majesty should be

here, in order that both might yield obedience to it, whatever it might be. Had the church decided for my divorce, I would have called upon her Majesty to submit to it; and I am well aware that, so great is her piety, and so paramount to all other considerations her child-like obedience to the church, that she would have done so.

“I have now, my loving friends and faithful subjects, to give you the proof that what in the one case I expected from her Majesty, I have now, in the other, myself to perform. The church has declared that my scruples are vain — that my marriage is valid, and that it is my duty to become publicly reconciled to my wife.

“She is here that I may do so. With my own hands I have placed her on my own throne — and doing so, I acknowledge that if virtue unimpeachable, morality that is unquestioned, purity that would become a convent, and goodness that is unchangeable, could bring happiness to a crown, and joy to a married king, Bertha possesses all those qualifications in a preëminent degree.

“In your presence, and before all the world, I acknowledge her as my queen, and as my wife, and I now bid you all to repeat the words wherewith I greet her: — God save Queen Bertha, the wife of Henry IV., King of Germany!”

For the first time, the solemn and mournful silence that had prevailed in the church was broken by the cheer that now burst out from all sides, as each one present repeated, and apparently with a hearty good will, the words —

“God save Queen Bertha, the wife of Henry IV., King of Germany!”

“And now,” continued Henry, “it is not fitting that

she, whom the brave and warlike race of Germans acknowledge as their queen, should conceal her countenance from them. It is right that they should behold that beautiful face, which is henceforth to reward the best deeds of their gallant knights with a gracious smile."

As Henry spoke these words, he removed the thick dark veil which had, up to this moment, shaded the features of Bertha; and, as he did so, all (but Henry) were shocked at beholding the bloodless, corpse-like face of the queen — rendered still more pale and ghastly by the ebony ringlets that shaded it, and by the expression of terror and of fear that was in the eye, and on her trembling lips. But why was Queen Bertha, at such a moment, a spectacle for men to commiserate, when it might be supposed that her brilliant dark eyes would have sparkled with pleasure at being thus publicly recognized as the rightful wife and lawful queen of Henry? It is a matter easy of explanation. Bertha, as the wife of Henry, knew him well. Whilst his words were pleasant to the ear of others, and his voice full of those sweet tones that seemed to be the echo of truthfulness and candor, Bertha had looked into his eyes, and she saw that there was not in them one single sparkle of returning affection for her — that her husband was but acting a part — and that he actually exposed her face to the view of his subjects, at that moment, for the mere purpose of impressing their minds with the notion of her being an ill-favored woman, and thus entitling himself to greater admiration and respect, for consenting, in obedience to the commands of the church, to take her back, and treat her as his wife.

Such were the reflections that passed through the

mind of Bertha, or rather, such were the feelings that oppressed her heart; that sent such an icy chill, like that of death, through every limb; and that deprived her, for the moment, of all those personal charms with which nature had gifted her.

Henry rejoiced to behold her look so unlike herself, and, determined to add to her embarrassment, he took the amethyst coronet from the Archbishop of Mayence, and again addressed the assembly:

“I rejoice to find the wife, and the queen, that our holy mother, the church, has thus, in its goodness, bestowed upon me so cordially greeted, and so loyally hailed by my loving friends and faithful subjects. Her Majesty, in her humility, and awaiting the decision of the church, has, I perceive, with her own hands, disarrayed herself of that diamond circlet that denoted her royal rank. Given back to the king by religion, it is but fitting that religion should supply her with a crown, and that her husband’s hands should place that crown upon her fair, meek, and gentle brow.”

So speaking, Henry placed upon the queen the coronet of amethyst, a species of jewelry that he well knew Bertha disliked, as one most unsuited to her naturally dark skin; but which now, shining out from her jet black hair, and contrasting with her corpse-like complexion, assumed the appearance of dark drops of blood that were oozing from her brain.

The effect was far different from that which Henry had intended. He had thus purposed to make his wife look ugly; but there was such suffering, such sorrow, and such grief displayed in every feature; and those so truly typified by the coronet he had bestowed upon her, and she appeared beneath his hand so truly that

which she was — a young, faithful, and virtuous wife, made a martyr by her husband — that an unrestrainable burst of pity, and of admiration for her, saluted his ears from all parts of the church.

Henry looked again at Bertha. He at once discovered the mistake he had made ; for he perceived that he had converted the hateful form of his wife into the living image of one of the young female martyrs, in the early ages of the church, before whom even the devout might kneel, and beg the intercession of her prayers. Henry determined, if it were possible, to remove this impression, or to convert it, if he could, to his own advantage, and he therefore continued to address the assembly : —

“I have now fulfilled the directions of the church. I have openly acknowledged Bertha as my queen — I have become publicly reconciled to her as my wife — but I have not, as yet, indulged my own feelings, by showing how readily, how willingly, and how heartily I submit to that decision. It was upon a scruple of conscience I alone separated from her : that scruple is now removed, and, be ye all now witnesses, with what tender love, and with what devoted affection I now receive her back, to treat her with all the love, tenderness, devotion, and affection that a fond husband should ever show for a true-hearted, tender, and virtuous wife.”

As Henry spoke these words, he stooped down, and kissed the hands, the cheeks, and the lips of his still trembling wife. No sooner did those assembled behold Henry thus embracing, with such seeming affection, his queen, than there arose a hearty, joyous cheer from all, with the cry :

“Long life and happiness to our good King Henry and the virtuous Queen Bertha.”

“King Henry,” said Peter Damian, “I must now take my leave of you. I have fulfilled my mission. I am bound to state to his holiness that you have strictly and literally complied with his judgment — that you have, as a king and as a husband, given that example which becomes your exalted rank and high position in this world, by restoring your wife to a throne, which she adorns with the virtues of a saint. Love her as a wife, and as a friend, and I can predict to you a life of honor, and the death-bed of the just. I will not warn you, as to what, not only may, but certainly will befall you, if you act otherwise ; because to do so, would be to suppose that you would condescend to deceive a weak, old man like me, and such devoted subjects as I see before me. I give to you, to your wife, and to all present, the apostolical benediction ; and in doing so, I venture to suggest, that all here present should, with myself, depart, so that you and the queen may, alone, and before the high altar of this church, renew your marriage vow ; that you there bind yourselves each to the other, to ‘love, honor, and cherish,’ the wife the husband and the husband his wife, so that the days of both may be days of peace and virtue, and the last hours of both be crowned with the blessing of immortality.

“Farewell,” said Peter Damian. “Farewell to your Majesties, and to all. As to you, Prince Archbishop of Mayence, it is necessary I should speak with you in private. I am now repairing to the mansion of Count Dedi. Will you do me the favor of accompanying me ?”

“I obey your wish as if it were a command,” replied Sigefrid.

When the cardinal legate and the Archbishop of Mayence had, with their attendants, quitted the church,

Henry turned to the prelates and the nobles who remained, and said :

“That which the holy bishop-cardinal has suggested is just. Queen Bertha and I will remain here. As to you, my friends, you may depart each to his own home ; for I desire that you, bishops as well as nobles, should meet me this day month at Goslar. A rebellion is about to break forth in Saxony, which it will require all the military strength of the empire to suppress.

“Farewell, then, until we meet at Goslar, when I shall require that each man will bring with him all the knights and warriors wherewith he is bound to appear before his king, when engaged in an enterprise pregnant with danger and beset with difficulty. Farewell.”

In a few minutes afterwards the crowded church was cleared, and where numbers had before been seated or stood, not one was visible.

The great door of the church was then closed, and the soldiers of the king stood around it, on the outside, as guards, so that no stranger might, unquestioned, approach its walls.

In the church there was no one but King Henry and Queen Bertha. They were alone — quite alone !

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SEPARATION.

HENRY and Bertha were quite alone. Beneath the eyes of both were the deserted benches so lately occu-



pied by prelates and princes, and around them, on every side, the various chapels of different saints, with their marble altars, their rich ornaments, and their gilded pictures ; with here and there a statue of a martyr ; whilst in front of them was the high altar, dazzling from the precious stones that covered its tabernacle, and before which the burning lamps demonstrated that it contained that which is more precious than all the kingdoms, crowns, and principalities of this world. To the believers of those times that burning lamp, before the tabernacle, was an indication that they were in the presence of One before whom every human passion should be hushed, to whom the repentant sinner might flee with confidence and hope, and by whom the whole race of mankind shall yet be judged.

Such was the faith of Bertha, the wife of Henry — such, too, was his faith, but with this distinction between them, that her faith guided her conduct, and he buried his faith beneath his passions.

The first act of both on this occasion proved how differently their faith influenced them. No sooner had the great door of the church been closed, and the solemn silence that ensued convinced Henry and Bertha that they were perfectly alone, than she rose from the throne in which she had, until that moment, remained seated, and descending the steps, she advanced in front of the altar, and then, fixing her eyes upon the tabernacle, she spoke a prayer that was not heard on this earth, but that ascended as a song of triumph to heaven ; for it was the prayer of one, who accepted her trials with humility, and who devoutly submitted to all the sufferings she might endure as offerings, which it was the divine will she should make, and that she readily tendered, because it was in

the order of Providence that they should be undergone. Despised and even mocked at by her husband, she declared, in her prayer, that she would still struggle to win him back to herself, and to virtue; and, should misfortune overtake him, and the world abandon him, then prove to him, that she — the repudiated wife — was his steadiest supporter, his only consoler, and his most devoted friend.

Bertha lived to know that a portion of the prayer she then made was permitted to be realized, as far as she herself was concerned.

Henry, the moment that the church was given up to perfect solitude, and that he knew there was none but God to witness the interview between him and Bertha, flung himself down upon the throne-like seat that had been erected for his friend the Archbishop of Mayence. Galled by disappointment, heated and fatigued by the exertion he had made to conceal the bitterness of his spirit, and disgusted even with himself for his hypocrisy, and the falseness that there had been, both in his words and actions, when human eyes were looking at him, there came over his spirit, and over his body, that sickening feeling of all-absorbing lassitude that frequently besets the popular actor, when he has over-excited himself in some great histrionic performance. His hopes of a divorce from Bertha, and of a marriage with Beatrice, were, he saw, forever blasted; and they were so, through the instrumentality, he perceived, of his mother, of Bertha, of Dedi the younger, and of Rome. There was no joy left for him but that of vengeance — and vengeance he swore he would have upon them all. The daily affliction in his power to cause his mother and his wife, he resolved should become a life-long punish-

ment to both ; the life of the younger Dedi he resolved upon taking ; whilst, as to Rome — as to the Pope of Rome, he believed that, in Croft, the new Bishop of Hildesheim, he had discovered the ready and the fitting instrument for carrying out his revenge.

Such were the desperate projects that were passing confusedly, and in a semi-diaphanous form, through the brain of Henry ; bearing with them, though not yet distinctly traced out, tears, afflictions, blood, and misery to those he detested ; because his wishes had been thwarted, and his schemes baffled by them. In his parching thirst for vengeance he forgot the place in which he stood, and that his wife was by his side. He was aroused from his reverie, by feeling her hands — cold as the marble on which she had been so lately kneeling — clasping one of his, by hearing her voice, and by perceiving her meek eyes looking up to him.

“ Well, Bertha,” he said, snatching his hand rudely from her grasp, as if there was contamination in her touch, “ you have succeeded — you have triumphed over, and you have punished me.”

“ Punished you, Henry ! I know not what you mean,” said Bertha.

“ Ay ! punished me,” observed Henry ; “ visited me with a punishment far more severe than any other that earth, heaven, or hell could afflict me with — the punishment of having to acknowledge you as my wife.”

“ O, Henry, Henry !” piteously exclaimed Bertha.

“ Nay, worse than that,” continued the remorseless king ; “ condemned me — the church has condemned me — to live as a husband *with you*.”

“ Listen to me, Henry, listen to me calmly ; for I will not give you back taunt for taunt. Remember these

three things : that you are a king, that you are a knight, that you are a man ; that as a king you have sworn an oath that you would be the protector of your subjects. I am the first of these subjects : be then my protector. Remember that, as the head of the Swabian knighthood, you are bound to permit no man who bears a shield, sword, or spear, to injure a woman, be she maiden, or wife, or widow. And, O, bear in mind you have wooed me as a maiden ; and that though your wife, I have, even in your palace, passed my days in the desolation of widowhood. As a knight of Swabia I appeal to you, against yourself. And O, Henry, remember that you are a man, and I, who now stand by your side, am your wife — a stranger in a land of strangers. Protect me, then, Henry ; or, if you will not do so, spare me your taunts, for I dare not retort upon you ; and do not cast upon me your reproaches, for I have not deserved them.”

“ What ! not deserved them ! ” exclaimed Henry, making now no disguise of the furious rage that inflamed him. “ Have you not appealed to the pontiff against my claim for a divorce ? ”

“ I did so,” meekly answered Bertha, “ because I could not in conscience consent to see you do that which would have involved the commission of many sins.”

“ O, your conscience,” sneeringly remarked Henry, “ would not permit you to see yourself divested of the state, pomp, and dignity of a queen, even though you knew that, as my wife, you were most odious to me.”

“ You wrong me, Henry,” replied Bertha. “ How little I care for the state and dignity of a queen I have already shown ; for, from the first moment that I heard you contemplated a divorce, I divested myself of every

vestige of royalty, and I have since lived in the humble garb of a religious — the life to which I would have devoted myself, had your suit been successful. I opposed the divorce for your sake, and for my own; for your sake, because it could only be obtained by perjury — an awful sin — in the guilt of which, you know, I would be as completely involved, by a criminal silence, as by a criminal assent. I opposed the divorce, then, on that ground; and next, because I was aware that, if obtained, it would have led you to other, and greater sins — a sacrilegious marriage and a life of adultery with the pure and incomparable Beatrice.”

Henry started, when he heard that name pronounced by the lips of Bertha. He made no observation, however; and Bertha proceeded.

“I opposed the divorce, also, on my own account — as necessary to prove that I, a princess of a royal race, was unimpeachable in my conduct both as a maiden and as a wife. This much, at least, I owed to the parents who gave me life; and this much I owed to God, who had permitted me to be baptized a member of his church. You say, that I am odious to you as a wife. Wherefore? If it be that I am divested of personal beauty, I cannot but approve your judgment — but that I am now, such as I was when you accepted me as your wife, and when you vowed before God and man to ‘love’ me. And, Henry, dear Henry! I know you did love me once — but, O, it was for too brief a period. And pardon, Henry, a woman’s vanity; but I cannot avoid saying that I have seen more than one of these wicked women on whom you have bestowed your affections, that even I could not conceal from myself were

as far my inferiors, in personal charms, as they were in virtue.”

“ Ah ! there it is,” cried the brutal Henry. “ It is that very virtue of which you boast that renders you odious to me. Why is it that you now approach me — that you seek to clasp my hand — that you would, if I permitted it, fondle upon me — not because you love me, as those women, you allude to, love me — *for myself*. You do all these things, because *your virtue*, of which you boast, urges you to do it — because it is, you conceive, *your duty* — because *religion* commands it. As a king, and as a man, I am hateful to you — as odious to you, as you are to me — but as *your husband*, you will perform the part of *a wife*, and all this in cold obedience to the commands of the church. Therefore, I repeat it again — as a wife you are odious to me.”

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE CARDINAL.

“ BROTHER of Mayence,” said Peter Damian, when he and Sigefrid were alone, “ I have already stated that the special mission on which I was so hastily sent to Frankfort has been fulfilled ; but still I cannot depart from Germany without communing with you, upon the deplorable state to which our holy religion is described as being reduced by the ambition and the avarice of churchmen. Brother, if that which is stated to his

holiness be true, he bids me warn you that you are but a slothful shepherd, for, either seeing the crimes of your brethren, you wink at them, or by your tepidity neglect them.

“I need not tell one of your learning what the crime of simony is — that it consists in placing, as it were, that which is a temporal advantage in the same balance with that which is wholly a divine thing ; that it regards the one as an equivalent for the other ; that it bestows the one to obtain the other, as if wealth were a compensation for a spiritual gift. To do this, you must declare, with me, to be a profanation.”

“Assuredly,” said Sigefrid, “no one can accuse me of simony — no one can ever say of me, that I have received money for bestowing any offices in the church.”

“No,” replied Peter Damian, “no such charge is preferred against you. No one has accused you of a direct participation in such a sin ; but this is obvious — this is notorious to the world — this cannot be denied by you — that you hold one of the highest offices in the church of Germany, and yet, I ask you, what is the state of that church over which you may be said to preside ? You possess great influence with the king. I ask you, how you have employed it ? Have you tendered the slightest remonstrance to his Majesty, who has robbed the church to reward his military followers ? And then I ask you — who has been appointed as the successor of Meginward ? Is it not the Abbot of Bamberg — the notorious ‘Robert the Rich ?’ And how did he obtain that appointment ? was it not by paying into the king’s treasury a thousand pounds in pure silver ?

“Simony, the crime of this age, is the sin of the rich

against the poor — it is the robbery of the poor by the rich — of the most poor by the most rich — of the most humble by the most exalted — of the meanest in rank by the highest — of the slave by the king! So feels the Pope — so feel the people.

“Look, I say, to the state of the church in Germany, of which you are a prince and an archbishop. See the evils which one wicked man alone, Robert the Rich, has been able to effect; how he has corrupted, dishonored, and vitiated what was formerly, and might still be, the holy and angelic lives of monks; how, owing to his pestilent example, monks are no longer esteemed in Germany by their great virtues, but by their great wealth; and that, in the choice of abbots, the inquiry is not, ‘Who is the most worthy,’ but ‘Who is the most rich,’ and ‘Who can pay the highest price for the mitre!’ Is it not, and I blush to be obliged to ask you the question, is it not a matter of public notoriety, that the office of abbot is set up for sale in the king’s palace, and bestowed upon him who can pay the most money for it? I tell you, brother, this is a sin that must be suppressed, and a scandal that must be reformed; and the pontiff has resolved upon exterminating it utterly out of the bosom of the church, and woe to those who oppose him! and woe to you, Sigefrid, Archbishop of Mayence, if you decline to aid, or shrink from coöperating with him.”

“I thank you, brother, I thank you heartily,” said Sigefrid, deeply moved by the appeal thus made to him. “I admit that I have been remiss — that I have not had that zeal that should have animated one holding my position, and invested with the great privileges that have been confided to me. In this case, believe me, my sin



has been that of omission, and not of commission. But then, brother, look with compassion upon the frailties of another — frailties that in my case arise from a natural timidity of disposition; a timidity that unfits me from denouncing the sins of the great, and of condemning the crimes of those I am in the habit of associating with.”

“That is, in point of fact,” observed Peter Damian, “telling me that you think you could save your soul in a cloister, but that there is every certainty you will lose it as Archbishop of Mayence.”

“I fear that you give but a proper interpretation to my words,” said Sigefrid.

“Then why continue Archbishop of Mayence; why not choose the life of a monk, where you believe salvation awaits you?” asked Peter Damian.

“Ay — why not!” said the archbishop, animated for the moment with an ardent zeal. “Why not think of my eternal salvation! Why not prefer it to all the fleeting grandeur, and evanescent greatness of this world!”

“Ay — why not, indeed?” whispered Peter Damian.

“Why not,” continued Sigefrid, “why not leave behind me the reputation of a saint? Why not be thought of as one who, born to noble rank, and possessed of the greatest office in the church, next to that of the Pope — yet turned away from a palace, with all its luxuries — from a cathedral rich with countless treasures — from trains of knights and a nation of dependent serfs — why not be remembered with reverence by mankind, for abandoning all those things to become a bare-footed, meanly-clad, ill-fed monk! Why not at once do this!”

“Alas!” sighed Peter Damian, as he noticed what were the motives that were influencing Sigefrid to descend to the condition of a monk.

“Why not,” exclaimed Sigefrid, still enthusiastically, “why not fly from the vices, and the temptations of this world, and bury one’s self far away from them in the quiet and repose of a convent! in some monastery of Italy — some monastery that is not exposed to the burning heats of summer, nor the chilling frosts of winter, but where there are green trees, and fresh flowing waters, and where the rules are not too rigid for an old man, so delicately nurtured as I have been, to conform to. Yes, I will go to a monastery; but not to your monastery of Font-Avellano, brother Peter Damian; for there, I am told, the austerities practised are almost beyond the limits of human endurance.”

“Alas, alas!” exclaimed Peter Damian, “you admit yourself to be unfitted for discharging the onerous duties that belong to the Archbishopric of Mayence, and you are, I fear, as much unsuited for a monastery.”

“How say you,” said Sigefrid, “unsuited for a monastery! Wherefore? I pray you, brother; tell me wherefore, when I declare to you, that I, though a prince and an archbishop, am this very moment desirous to become a humble monk.”

“Permit me to look at your crosier,” said Peter Damian.

Sigefrid placed his crosier in the hands of the poor cardinal legate. It was a wonderful piece of workmanship; one of those rich articles in which the costliness of the materials is surpassed by the skill of those who have devoted a lifetime to its embellishment; in which diamonds, rubies, amethysts, and amber, are converted into portions of subjects illustrative of the designs of the artists that use them. Valuable from the intrinsic worth of the jewelry and gold encrusted upon it, it was of priceless

value as a complete artistic gem, that from one end to the other pictured forth the life and death of the first Archbishop of Mayence — the saint and martyr, Boniface.

Peter Damian appeared to examine it with great interest and curiosity, and as he did so, a glow of pleasure warmed the breast of Sigefrid.

“I remember to have read,” said Peter Damian, “I think it was in the works of Saint Gregory of Tours, of a foolish practice that prevailed in his day, of young persons, who being desirous of manifesting their attachment and regard for one another, did so by sending as gifts the shoes that they wore. A worthless present, but still esteemed, because demonstrative of a sincere feeling. If you love me, and respect me, I would wish you to make me some such donation.”

“Willingly, dear brother,” cried Sigefrid, “name what you please, and I will bestow it on you.”

“When the holy abbot, Saint Benedict,” continued Peter Damian, “desired to show his love and esteem for any particular person or religious, he sent him as a gift, his crosier, or pastoral staff. Do you the same. Give me this crosier.”

“That crosier!” cried Sigefrid, turning pale at such a proposition. “Truly, brother, you have so given up your thoughts to spiritual things, that you do not know the value that attaches to temporal goods. That crosier is the richest and the most costly that ever yet was formed. Constantine, amid the many treasures he bestowed upon Pope Sylvester, gave him no one thing in itself worth one tithe of that crosier. I had that crosier made for myself, as Archbishop of Mayence; it is only suitable for an Archbishop of Mayence to bear, for it is devoted solely to the illustration of the glorious labors of our patron,

Saint Boniface. I have, from my own means, crowded the cathedral of Mayence with crosses of gold, with chalices, candelabras, thurifers, all of the purest metal — I have covered its tabernacles with precious stones — I have filled its library with books that are richly illuminated, and still more richly bound — I have deposited in its vestry vestments of matchless splendor — and all this I have done, intending to bequeath each and all those things to my successors in the archbishopric ; but beyond them all, because greater and richer than all, will be esteemed as the grandest heirloom of each coming future Archbishop of Mayence, that very crosier. With that intention I had it made ; and for that purpose I had it constructed. Ask me, then, for any thing but that crosier, for that I cannot give to you.”

“ Alas, brother,” said Peter Damian, “ you have answered me as I expected, and as I feared. Your reply shows me that you are not suited to a monastery, or that if you, in a sudden gush of rash zeal, were to enter within the monastic walls, you would but remain there a very few days, and this because your heart still clings to the dross of this world. I will not say that I put this question to you merely to test your sincerity ; for I candidly tell you, that if you had answered my question, not as I feared, but as I wished, then I would have accepted the crosier from your hands, and knowing its value well — to the golden crown, I dare say as well as you do — yet, once it was mine, I would have tried your patience sorely, for I would, with a common hatchet, and before your own eyes, have taken and broken it to pieces.”

“ What, broken up this crosier ! ” cried Sigefrid, clasping it to his heart, “ broken up this precious, this invaluable, this exquisite, this matchless piece of art ! ”

“I would have done so,” replied Peter Damian; “for precious as it is, I regard it but as filth, when compared to the value of one immortal soul. I would have broken it up, and having done so, I would have restored the fragments to your hands, that you might sell them, and whatever the proceeds might have been, desired you to bestow them upon the poor, in order that they might pray that your spirit might be freed from an attachment to the vanities of this world. Ah, brother, it is not to do honor to the meek and humble Saint Boniface that you have emblazoned his acts in gold and jewelry upon this crosier — it is to do honor to yourself; for whilst seeming to venerate his virtues, you have been but a self-idolater — seeking to perpetuate your name, not in heaven, by good deeds done in secret, but amongst men — amongst generations that pass away, and that, as they pass, are too much absorbed in their own vices, to remember those who have passed before them, and especially those who have fixed their fame in the accumulation of riches. The thief that steals this crosier, will bear away with him the fleeting glory for which Sigefrid, the wealthy Archbishop of Mayence, lost heaven!”

“Brother — brother — you astonish me,” exclaimed Sigefrid, in amazement. “Can it be, that you, who have passed your life on the steps of the sanctuary — disapprove of what I have done — of bestowing all my wealth upon the enrichment and the adornment of the altars?”

“Alas! you misapprehend me,” replied Peter Damian, “because you do not know yourself. Why is it that the church approves of the adornment and the enrichment of the altar? It is because that men should offer up to him, who is the giver of all things, that which is in their eyes the most rich and the most costly of his gifts: that what

might be an incitement to vanity, may thus become an inducement to piety: that God should be most honored in that place which he has himself selected as his favorite dwelling amongst mortals; and that whilst our eyes are dazzled by seeing the glory that invests him here on earth, our thoughts may be elevated to the greater glories that surround him in heaven, and of which we shall be participators, if, whilst on earth, we endeavor to imitate his example. The lapidaries fancifully ascribe to different stones different qualities; that is, they regard those stones as emblematic of various virtues, and even so a diamond cross, a jewelled tabernacle, may become a worthy subject of meditation, and may incite us to chastity, to temperance, to meekness, to humility, to charity. The adornment of the altar, by gifts of great value, is, in itself, a pious act. As such, I approve of it; but in your case, I do not approve of the motive; for it is vanity—it is a craving desire after the praise of men—not a pure desire for the honor and glory of God alone.”

“Then,” said Sigefrid, somewhat impatiently, “what would you say to me if I devoted that wealth, which I now consecrate to the church—to the enrichment of my own family, or to the indulgence of my own appetites.”

“I would,” replied Peter Damian, “declare you to be a flagrant, an abominable, and a sacrilegious sinner—a Judas, who betrayed his trust—I would denounce you to the pontiff, and I would do my utmost to have you excommunicated—I would treat you, as I mean to treat Robert the Rich.”

“And I would deserve it,” despondingly remarked Sigefrid. “It may be, that in what I have been doing, I have been deceiving myself—that in performing what I knew to be right, I have not guarded myself from per-

mitting it to be mixed up with no human, and no selfish motive. I shall endeavor to amend this fault."

"Endeavor too, I beseech you," said Peter Damian, "endeavor to amend a still greater fault — that of lukewarmness in the cause of religion. Power and authority have been given to you — exercise them, for the future, in the protection of the poor and the weak, and in opposition to the wicked, the powerful, and the great. Dare not, if you would not incur the penalties of eternal damnation, to lay your hands in consecration upon the head of any man, of whose purity, in every respect, and of whose fitness for the priesthood you have not, first by a searching and diligent inquiry, been thoroughly assured. Stop, thus, at the fountain head, those corrupting waters that have overspread, and almost submerged, religion, in so many parts of Germany. Do this, and though your name may be forgotten by mankind, as that of the rich Archbishop of Mayence, yet be assured that the good you thus do will be remembered when this world is annihilated — and those only shall be living, whose virtues have saved them from eternal death."

"Yes — yes — this I will do, at least. I promise to do this," said Sigefrid, whose zeal was again fired by the words of Peter Damian. "And then, as to becoming a monk —"

"Promise only what you can perform," remarked Damian. "You can refuse consecration to all unworthy postulants. You would not permit a leper to sit at the same table with yourself. Do not allow a notorious leper to become a *truchsess*, or carver, at the table of the Lord; for if you do, *you* will be responsible for the poison that he will distribute to the laity, in place of the manna with which they should be nourished."

“As a Christian — as a priest — as an archbishop, I promise, dear brother, to fulfil your injunctions in this respect,” said Sigefrid.

“Let no threat of man induce you to break this promise,” exclaimed Peter Damian.

“It shall not,” answered Sigefrid.

“Let no temptation move you to swerve from it,” added Peter Damian. “Be your answer that of the Prince of the Apostles, ‘Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.’”

“This, too, I promise to say,” replied Sigefrid.

A barefooted monk here entered the apartment, and said, in addressing himself to the cardinal :

“A pilgrim, who states that he is from Italy, presses earnestly for an interview with you, and alone.”

“I shall leave you,” said Sigefrid, breathing somewhat more freely upon perceiving that there was a chance of this interview being brought to a close.

“I will not detain you longer, brother,” answered Peter Damian. “I am much consoled by the promise you have given me. Bear it ever in mind ; for the words that we have spoken in secret, have been heard by him, before whom you and I shall yet stand as culprits. Remember, that there is not a word that either of us has here spoken, that will not be recalled back to us, as we gave utterance to it, as well as *the intention* with which each syllable had been pronounced. God grant that the inquiry may tend to the salvation of both ! And now, brother, let us part with the kiss of peace — never, I feel confident, to meet again as living men in this world — and certain to be confronted with each other in the world to come.”



## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE FORTRESS OF ERZEGBIRGE.

MORE than three weeks had now passed away, and Beatrice found herself still a prisoner in the hands of Diedrich, confined by him in the seemingly inaccessible fortress of Erzegebirge. During all that period, sorrow, sickness, and horror had confined her to her couch; and it was with reluctance that she assented to the prayer of Gretchen, and ascended to the battlements of the tower in which she was confined, for the purpose of inhaling the fresh air. She looked out upon a wide and extensive mountain scenery, in which were every where visible the labors of the husbandman, and the rich rewards that heaven bestows upon man in cultivating the earth. Drove of cattle were discernible in one place, herds of swine in another, and around them were fields that promised, in their due season, an abundant harvest; whilst close to the foot of the high, steep, rocky hill, on which the fortress had been erected, but yet separated and self-protected by a wide trench, and a strong stone wall, was a hamlet, or rather village, with some hundreds of inhabitants, and having, in the centre of that which appeared to be their widest street, a large church. The village, as seen from the fortress, seemed to be rather a pictured than a real domicile of human beings, for, though persons were discernible in it, engaged in their different avocations, still they were removed to such a distance, that no sound that came from them reached the ears of the spectator, and the stillness of the air was as unbroken as if the fortress had been planted in a wilderness.

Beatrice, upon mounting to the battlements, gazed, without a feeling of the slightest interest, upon the scene that presented itself to her view, until her eye rested upon this village. She looked long and attentively towards it — seemed to be amused, as if she were a child, in watching the movements of the silent little figures beneath her — she rested against the battlements, and clasping a small broken fragment of one of the huge parapets in her tiny hand, she exclaimed :

“ I would, Gretchen, that I could be transformed into this puny pebble, and that thou couldst fling me from this battlement into the midst of that peaceful hamlet.”

“ And wherefore,” said Gretchen, smiling, “ wish for two things that are alike impossible ? ”

“ Because, I believe, that it is only among the poor that true peace and real virtue are to be found,” answered Beatrice. “ O, I am sick — sick to death of this life, and if it were the will of God, would gladly give up existence this very moment. I have, whilst lying on my bed of suffering, reviewed in thought the few years I have passed in this world, and what have I seen ? a mother, the very model of perfection, yet a martyr to some unknown and undiscoverable grief — a father, for whom it would be hard to say whether I love or fear him ; whether I do not fear him too much to love him, or rather, I know not why, I fear to love him — a childhood passed in riches, in pomp, and in mystery : and then the last month of my existence, where, in addition to my own sufferings, my undeserved sufferings, caused by the caprice of a wicked monarch, I have looked upon virtue, united first to an imperial, and then to a regal crown, and yet, because of its exalted rank, doomed to

years of ceaseless weeping, and of hopeless grief: and then, last of all — worst of all — the death of the bishop —— ”

“ I pray of you not to permit your mind to rest upon that scene,” interrupted Gretchen. “ Think of Duke Magnus — think of your destined husband.”

“ Words — vain, unmeaning words,” continued Beatrice. “ I cannot think of Magnus but with love — the love I ever have felt for him as a child — the love I ever shall feel for him as a woman. But as my husband — my destined husband — I have ceased to think of him, since I witnessed the martyrdom of the bishop.”

“ I do not understand you,” said Gretchen. “ What had the cruel and bloody murder of the venerable bishop to do with the pure love and devoted affections of Duke Magnus ? ”

“ Much — much — very much,” answered Beatrice. “ I have been too weak, and too ill since that dreadful day to speak of it ; but circumstances occurred of which you are, until this moment, unconscious. It is not necessary for me to bid you remember the speechless agony in which Gertraud left us, when she bade us pray to God for mercy on the soul of one who was then living, and who had never given cause of offence to man. O, God ! who can paint our agony, when we heard the voices overhead, upon the accursed precipice ; and when a long yelling shriek was followed by our finding that the body of the bishop had rolled down to our very feet. You insisted, after a brief examination, that the bishop was still living, despite of his desperate fall, and ran to seek for water. It was during your absence, the occurrence, which I am now about to narrate, took place.

“I was kneeling, weeping, and my hot tears were falling upon the face of the dead, as I supposed, when the mangled bishop heaved a sigh, and suddenly opened his eyes, and gazed on me, and seemed to gather slowly the meaning of the words I uttered, and that they were prayers for him. A gentle smile, such a smile as beams around the lips of martyrs, lighted up his features for a moment, as he said: —

“‘I give thee thanks, O, God, who thus permittest thy unworthy servant to pass into thy presence, aided with the prayers of a holy maiden!

“‘My child,’ he continued, ‘my words must be few; for I feel that life is momentarily leaving me. I bear about with me the Blessed Sacrament. It must be saved from the hand of infidels. ‘Take it,’ he said, unloosening a small locket of gold, enriched with precious stones, and that hung from his neck by a thin golden chain. ‘Take it, my child, I permit you to conceal it in your bosom; there let it rest in that locket until you have the opportunity of giving it safely to a priest. In thus requiring you to take charge of it — and which nothing but the circumstances in which I am placed would justify, for I know my garments will be searched, when dead, and that it would fall into the hands of my murderers, the unbelieving Paterini — I ask of you, whose person will thus become consecrated by such a charge, to devote yourself, if it be possible, to the service of that spouse, of whom you now have the sacred care. None but virginal hands should ever approach it; and the hands that have once come in contact with it, should remain forever after employed in the service of the Lord.

“‘Such is the last prayer — such the sole request of one, who, though a sinner, God has been pleased to

make a martyr of. To him be praise and glory forever, and ——' As he spoke these words, his voice was interrupted by a gush of blood. I felt that the warm glow was on my face, on my hands, on my neck! 'Talk then, Gretchen, to me no more of Magnus, as my husband. I am consecrated to God in the blood of a martyr. I remember no more; for I fainted as I felt the blood of the bishop upon me."

"Alas! I know it but too well," said Gretchen, "for I despaired of your life for many days afterwards. But, tell me, lady, do I understand you right, when you say that you bear that awful locket still upon you?"

"I do," replied Beatrice; "I bear it about me with fear and trembling. Here it is."

So saying, she undid the robe that covered her neck and throat, and Gretchen beheld, resting on the snow-white skin, a dazzling locket. The moment she saw it, she went down upon her knees, and fixing her eyes upon it, gave utterance to a pious prayer. Beatrice remained moveless as Gretchen prayed; and, when she saw her making the sign of the cross, she fastened up her dress again, and said:—

"I scarcely need tell you, Gretchen, that I have been very careful that my hands should not touch that locket. I have removed it solely by the chain that is attached to it; and I long for the moment when I can deposit it with a priest. The sight of the church in yonder hamlet reminded me of it, and made me wish that I could fly down and disburden myself of this awful—this most sacred charge. Alas! here, where kingly power has erected one of its strongest fortresses, there is neither truth, virtue, nor honor, to be found."

"Say not so, pretty maiden," said Gertraud, here

stepping up on the battlements ; “say not so of the stout fortress of Erzegebirge, as long as you, and I, and Diedrich make of it our abode ; for I am truth, you are virtue, and Diedrich is honor. I never told a lie, therefore I am truth ; you do not as yet know what it is to be vicious, and, therefore, you are virtue ; whilst, as to honest Diedrich, who would as soon think of injuring the king, or any one he had sworn fealty to, as the mastiff would of biting the hand that fed him, he is honor from the crest on his helmet to the spur on his heel.”

“And yet,” remarked Gretchen, “this man of honor murdered a good and unoffending bishop.”

“If your mistress,” said Gertraud, “desired you, upon the peril of disobedience, to cut off her golden hair, would you not do it, even though you disapproved of the act itself?”

“Most certainly I would,” answered Gretchen ; “and I may add, that even though censured by others for what I had done, yet would I hold myself not only excused, but justified, because it was in pursuance of an order which I had no right to disobey.”

“Then, what a silly girl you are,” said Gertraud, laughing, “to censure acts which you do not comprehend ! Think you, that my brave Diedrich does not know, as well as you do the duties of a tiring woman, the duties of a knight to his king, of a soldier to his officer, of a vassal to his lord ? It was not he who murdered the Bishop of Osnabruck—it was King Henry ; Diedrich only executed orders he was bound to obey. It is not the sword that kills, but the hand that compels it to thrust and slash. Diedrich had sworn to obey the king’s commands : it would be dishonorable in him to violate his oath ; and the more disagreeable

to himself the order that may be given, the more honorable in him literally to fulfil it. Your mistress may pride herself in her virtue, as I boast of my sincerity; but of this I am quite certain, there is more real, pure honor in the heart of Diedrich, than there is of virtue in her, or truth in me. Why should you dislike Diedrich? Has he not acted most honorably towards you both? He was desired to treat you with every respect, and to render your lives as happy as was consistent with your complete security. Well knowing that you hate the sight of him — that you have an abhorrence of him — since he slew the bishop, has he not most honorably refrained from appearing before your mistress?"

"Ay, but not appearing before us," remarked Gretchen; "this honorable man employed you as a spy, to watch over us when we were travelling hither."

"Certainly," said Gertraud, perfectly unabashed. "In so doing, he only acted upon the desire that no accident should occur to prevent his honorable fulfilment of the order given to him — to keep you in safe custody — so that no attempt at escape should be made by you. With that intention, and not caring to know one word that you may say, that does not bear upon such project, he appointed me as a spy upon you, when you were travelling; and now that you are able to walk about, he has again reappointed me to act as a spy upon you two. It was with that intention I came here — and it is with that intention I mean to watch every word you say, and every thing you do. I am acting as a spy this very moment; and, if you knew a little more of the stratagems of war, you would perceive I was so conducting myself, without my telling you."

"As you are so candid, and so very truthful," re-

marked Gretchen, "I would wish to know why you have not approached us for three weeks, and wherefore it is that you now place yourself by our side as a spy? We are now, as we were then, prisoners. We are the same to-day that we were this day three weeks."

"You are not the same to-day that you were this day three weeks," replied Gertraud. "No one is. I more than doubt if any one is the same person to-day that he was yesterday. We are always in a constant state of change, though we see it not; the infant falls into the grave an old man, and yet he has changed from day to day, and thought that each night he slept produced no change in him! Ye are three weeks older than you were three weeks ago: the world, too, is three weeks older since then: and this I know, that many a brave man, who this day three weeks went to bed in his peaceful home, now reposes forever in his blood-stained grave; many a woman who this day three weeks had no other anxiety on her mind than whether the kine had been cared for, or the swine returned safe from the forest, or that her children had been well nursed, is now husbandless, childless, homeless; for our valiant King Henry has been wasting the lands of the Saxons. No sooner did he break up his Parliament in Frankfort, which had declared Otho, Duke of Bavaria, a traitor ——"

"What! the uncle of Magnus declared a traitor!" said Beatrice, shocked at the intelligence that thus unexpectedly reached her.

"He has been declared a traitor," continued Gertraud. "His treason consisted in his great wealth and his high office; and Henry wanted the one for himself, and the other for a friend—and as Otho would not



yield them for the asking, Henry determined upon taking them—and, therefore, he had Otho declared a traitor. He is an astute man, our King Henry; for the moment that he had Otho denounced as in a state of war against himself, he had also ready provided and prepared the means of rendering Otho incapable of resisting him. The doom of the Frankfort Parliament was instantly followed by swarms of soldiers pouring in on all sides on the principality of Otho. The orders given to these soldiers were to lay every thing waste with fire and sword, and those words they have literally fulfilled. They have torn, or they have burned down houses and growing crops—carried off the cattle, or destroyed what they could not carry off; and all the cultivators of the fields, wherever they have met with them, they have mutilated, so as to render them incapable of toil for the future, or they have cut off their hands, or hung them upon trees. Even the churches have been broken into, their altars spoliated, and then the edifices themselves set on fire. The Castle of Hanenstein, which attempted to resist the king's soldiers, has been captured, and all the defenders, because they dared to oppose themselves to the king, put to the sword. Otho's great fortress of Tesenberg, which was deemed to be impregnable, has, by the cowardice of its soldiers, yielded without striking a blow, and it is now garrisoned by the king's schaaeren. In addition to this, the lands, the houses, the churches, and the gorgeous villas and estates of Duke Otho's wife, have been all set on fire, and the women and boys found in them massacred—and this in revenge for the flight of the men, who, to save their lives, fled to the shelter of the marshes and the dark recesses of the forests; and who, in doing

so, supposed that no soldier would injure innocent women and unoffending children. And no real soldier would, I am sure, do so, unless he had positive orders to kill screeching women and yelping boys. I will answer for it, stout Diedrich would sooner eat a piece of his sword, then sheathe it in the heart of a woman or a puling boy—but, *if ordered to do so*, that is another thing. You know a soldier must obey orders. It is a very unpleasant duty; but it is sometimes necessary, as in this instance, where it was deemed requisite to force an entire people into a state of rebellion. For such an object nothing is ever more successful than the massacre of women and children. King Henry is too well versed in statesmanship not to know *that*, and accordingly, he gave his orders, and his soldiers obeyed, and now his desires have been accomplished. All Saxony is in open rebellion. We slaughter the Saxons when we like, and they kill us when *they* can. If you remain upon these walls but an hour longer, you will witness as fine a piece of military skill as any soldier would wish to witness.”

“I trust you do not mean to tell us,” said Beatrice, ‘that I shall be again doomed to behold any more of the barbarities of the terrible man who unjustly retains me here as a captive.’”

“Ho! ho!” exclaimed Gertraud, “my brave Diedrich—a terrible man! What, the brave Diedrich terrible! I can assure you, young lady, that Diedrich is as mild as a lamb—meek and gentle as a dove, when he has the wine cup in his hand. He never did a cruel thing in his life for the sake of inflicting pain on another. He is a soldier—it is his profession to kill—it is his duty to destroy the king’s enemies, and he

only puts them to death as the butcher kills cattle — for the general benefit of the community! Even now, he does not bear the slightest malice to any individual in that hamlet you see below, and yet, before the sun sets, he has contrived a project, which, if carried into full effect, will result in not leaving alive a man in that hamlet who is able to bear arms. O, Diedrich is a most able general — a true soldier — and, as I have told you before, unequalled in an ambuscade.”

“O, Heavens!” said Beatrice; “how can these poor people have offended Diedrich?”

“They have done him grievous wrong, lady,” answered Gertraud. “Two of the soldiers under his command descended into the hamlet a few days ago: they did so without permission. It is not improbable that they misconducted themselves there — that is, that they wished to take away something that did not belong to them, or perhaps kissed some Saxon maiden, or wife; for our soldiers, when they do drink, are very apt to be rude, and to fancy they have a right, especially in time of war, to whatever they set their eyes upon. However, what may have been the cause we know not, but the people were offended, and instead of arresting those soldiers, and bringing them before Diedrich, who would have punished them if they deserved it, the rustics thought fit to avenge their own wrong, set upon the soldiers, murdered them, and hung their bodies on trees outside their wall. There they have been discovered; and Diedrich has resolved upon punishing their murderers. Villains, no doubt they were — but they were his soldiers — slain whilst under his command, not in battle, but by the hands of citizens, and he is resolved to have a life for every hair of their heads. O, he is a good

general, and he loves his soldiers as if they were his own children. Wait now here, but a short time longer, and you will see a fine device of war."

"When, O, when shall these horrors cease!" cried Beatrice.

"Horrors!" cried Gertraud, amazed at an expression that was new to her, and as applied to a profession she so much admired. "Horrors, forsooth! why, what are the materials of which fame and glory are composed, but those very things that you, lady, designate as horrors? What was Alexander the Great? What was Cæsar? What was Charlemagne himself, but a Diedrich with a crown on his head? Take away from these all the blood that they shed — all the widows they made, and all the orphans they have left desolate — all the homesteads they have wasted, and the crops they have destroyed, and where is their glory? Let us fancy they had never done any one of these things, and then we should never have known of them. I dare to say that my own brave Diedrich has, with his own hand, in fair, open fight, and with his good sword, put to death more than any one of them, in all his life, personally encountered. Their fame, then, does not consist in their mere personal prowess alone — their fame consists in the accumulation of 'horrors,' which they had the power of inflicting during their lifetime upon their fellow-creatures. You weep over the fate of a single hamlet, and yet you have been taught to marvel at the achievements of an Alexander and a Cæsar, and to reverence a Charlemagne. *I admire them* — and I do so, because I love Diedrich; and when I am told what victories they won, and what battles they gained, I believe that I am a sharer in both, because I know they never could have been accom-

plished, if those famous heroes had not hundreds of men like Diedrich under their command. But I pray your pardon, lady, I was about to tell you of the success of Henry's policy in ordering the massacre of women and children on the estate of the wife of Duke Otho. It is a subject in which I know you must feel interested, as it will compel me to tell you something of the young Duke Magnus."

"O, proceed — proceed," said Beatrice; "for you mention a name which, my poor trembling heart tells me, binds me still too strongly and too closely to this world."

"No sooner, then," continued Gertraud, "had Otho received intelligence of the barbarities thus committed by the king's soldiers, than he grasped his sword, summoned his knights and vassals around him, and made an incursion into Thuringia; and such mischief as had been inflicted upon himself, he did to the king; pouncing down upon all the farms and villas of the enemy, burning and wasting, and carrying off spoil wherever he went, and thus impoverishing the sovereign as he himself had been impoverished. He swept away, in his victorious career, every opponent, until he at length came to Henschenwege, where Count Rutger, at the head of a large army, was drawn up to encounter, and, it was hoped, to annihilate him. There Otho was joined by the Duke Magnus, at the head of a large body of horsemen. This battle took place but a few days ago — if that can be called a battle, in which, from the first moment that Duke Magnus with his horsemen dashed down upon the soldiers, the caitiff, Count Rutger, the compurgator of Egen, and the cause of Duke Otho's being declared a traitor, gave, by his own base cowardice, the

signal for flight to our men. Before an arrow could reach him, Rutger ran from the field ; and the battle, in a single moment afterwards, became a carnage, in which the fugitives, as they fled, were cut down by their victorious pursuers. The king, we are told, lost hundreds of men ; Duke Otho, but two : and now, whilst the Saxons are collecting all their forces for the purpose of attacking Henry, he is concentrating a grand army around Goslar ; he has proclaimed an *arriere-ban*, in all parts of the empire, and Swabians, Bohemians, Bavarians, and even the Italians, are hastening to his aid. Yes ; we are sure to have a great and decisive battle very speedily. I trust that my valiant Diedrich, instead of being left here, in the inglorious occupation of watching two poor girls, will be recalled by the king, and that I, with him, may be permitted to see a grand engagement between the whole of the Saxons — nobles and people (for all are in full insurrection), and the other nations of the empire. The Saxons are brave, and are sure to fight well. Meanwhile, our spies tell us, that Duke Magnus has been detached from the camp of Otho towards the borders of Bohemia. It is suspected that he is coming here with the intention of rescuing you."

"Of rescuing me !" exclaimed Beatrice. "O, heavens, why endanger his life for one so worthless as I am ?"

"Why ?" cried Gertraud, her dark eyes flashing with indignation, "because he would himself be most worthless if he did not do so. He is betrothed to you — he is bound to protect you ; and if he shrunk from fulfilling such a duty, he would be unworthy of the shield of a knight, the sword of a soldier, or the name of a man. It is calculated that he is as brave as he is young, and

therefore am I here acting as a spy upon you, so that you may have no communication with him, the knowledge of which shall not be instantly forwarded to Die-drich."

As Gertraud spoke these words, a twang, and then a whizzing noise was heard, as if an arrow had been shot from a bow drawn by a strong hand. The practised eye of Gertraud showed her that the arrow must have been shot from a clump of trees that lay at the base of the fortress, from the side opposite to that on which the hamlet lay. She then watched the rapid flight of the arrow ; — she observed that it mounted high in the air, and then turning, was coming point downwards, in a direct line, on the very tower on which she and the other maidens stood. She instantly removed the helmet from her head, and watching the descent of the arrow, thus intercepted it before it could reach the ground.

"A good bowman!" exclaimed Gertraud. "He measured the distance well ; but, in this instance, he has not hit what he aimed at."

As she said this, she detached from the arrow a piece of parchment, and, as she read the lines inscribed on it, there was a flush of joy in her face.

"I will thank you, lady," said Gertraud, "to permit me to look at your veil for a moment."

Beatrice handed the snow-white veil to Gertraud, who, instead of looking at it, stepped, as she was, bareheaded, forth upon the battlements, and then, waving the veil three times in the air, above her head, again retired behind a parapet, so as not to be visible to any one, looking from beneath, up at the tower.

"What means all this?" asked Beatrice.

"I will tell you the signification of it presently,"

answered Gertraud. "But, whilst waiting for the explanation, I pray you to look out beyond the hamlet, and see if you can discern there any thing that is strange."

"O, yes!" exclaimed Beatrice; "I behold there — far away — I suppose it is two miles distance, that houses have been set on fire — and see! there is a dark smoke rising up from some of the fields, as if there were a smouldering fire amongst the crops! Who can be the perpetrators of such gross and wanton mischief?"

"Our own brave soldiers — do you mark them there, with blazing torches in their hands?" said Gertraud. "See — there is not more than twenty of them. Observe how they keep in a close, dark body together; and, as they gather round the huts of the husbandmen, and the cottages of the shepherds, a flame bursts forth; and the fields over which they pass, fume up. O, they know their profession well. Diedrich chose them as the most accomplished devastators in the fortress."

"And this is war! *glorious* war!" cried Beatrice, shuddering.

"This, war! I pity you, girl, for your ignorance," said Gertraud, smiling. "This is but one of the preliminaries to, or the consequences of war. This is simply mischief — not war: and here it is intended as a provocation to war. And, O, rare! O, most excellent! as such it is accepted in this instance. Ah! what an admirable captain is my brave Diedrich! Look now into the hamlet — mark the running to and fro of men, and of women. See how the latter clap their hands in grief, and how the men arm themselves as best they can — and now — see — the gate is thrown open, and they go tumbling out in crowds, with swords, and spears, and shields, and arrows, and scythes, and whatever else they can



think of — poor fellows! they little know what awaits them, or they would not be in such a hurry.”

“What!” cried Gretchen, “would you expect them to remain calm lookers-on at the wanton destruction of their property by some twenty miscreants, and not annihilate such villains? In less than half an hour, I hope to see them return with the heads of those wretches.”

“Excellent! most excellent!” replied Gertraud; “that is brave Diedrich’s calculation, as to what the people of the hamlet would say. His plot, now, I perceive, is certain of success. See — the men are all pouring out still — there must be three hundred of them, at the least — shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, butchers. Ha! what is this? They have left a few to watch the gate. That is the most sensible thing they have done as yet. There is then a chance that the hamlet will not be destroyed. But, mark now, Gretchen, what I say to you. There is not one man in ten from the hamlet, that crosses the small stream you see below there, that looks from this like a thin thread of silver — no, not even one in twenty who fords it now, will ever return, living, to the hamlet; and only they have had the precaution to set a guard upon the gate, not one man — nay, not even a woman or a child in that hamlet, would live to see to-morrow’s sunrise. See, the villagers are scattering themselves in all directions over the fields, lest, by any chance, the small troop of horsemen should escape them. Mark! how those horsemen seem to be unconscious of all this commotion, and still keep burning homesteads and crops! O, these are true veteran warriors! These are the men that make kings famous in story.”

It was with a breathless attention, but with far differ-

ent feelings, that the three women now looked from the battlements of the castle, upon the scene below. Beatrice regarded what was passing with horror, and with fear for the lives of those few soldiers who were perpetrating such wanton mischief. Gretchen, with all the intense feelings of nationality burning in her heart, and all her sympathies absorbed in the fate of her countrymen, and in the welfare of her nation, looked down eagerly, thirsting for the blood of every one of those oppressors that she saw thus laying waste the land, and destroying the property, of unoffending husbandmen — of *Saxons*, too, and, therefore, loved by her as her brothers. In her desire for vengeance upon them, she did not heed the words of Gertraud, and only wished that she were a man, and out in the fields, with the inhabitants of the village in pursuit of the spoilers. Gertraud gazed upon the same scene calmly — unmoved, unshaken, but still interested — as if she were but looking on soldiers practising a mimic engagement, and not occupied in a real action. She regarded with the eye of a connoisseur what was passing, and prepared to bestow praise or blame, with equal impartiality, on which ever side she saw courage displayed, or cowardice exhibited.

Thus watched these three women, for some time, and such attention did they bestow upon the movements of the villagers on the one side, and of the few soldiers on the other, that not a word was spoken. At last they perceived the soldiers, who had been engaged in the work of devastation, pause, at the very moment that they appeared to be on the point of being surrounded by the villagers, and then to start off at a quick gallop, with all the men of the village in pursuit.

“The cowards!” exclaimed Gretchen. “It is as I

expected, they would never venture to cross sword with the Saxon."

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when there was seen to emerge from a small wood that lay on the other side of the streamlet, a band of about one hundred horsemen, who instantly darted off in pursuit of the villagers.

"Excellent!" cried Gertraud. "That is the device managed by my gallant Diedrich — see now — how the horsemen charge down on the villagers. There, they have come up with them, and now begins the work of blood. The villagers seek to hold fast together; but they never can stand against the weight of men, and horse, and point of spear. No! — down they go, as the ripe corn falls before the sickle of the reaper. See, now they are broken. They are slashed down with the sword — they are transfixed by the lance. They fight well too; but they fall fighting. See, where they stood together there are but mangled heaps of corpses, and now they run — they have thrown down their shields to enable them to fly the quicker; but the horses are after them, and on them, wherever they go. See, now they lie on all sides — some run for safety to the wood, where the horsemen hid themselves — and look, it is now as I told you, not one in twenty will ever live to cross that streamlet — O, brave Diedrich — victory! victory."

"Demon! or woman! whichever you are!" cried the infuriated Gretchen, "cease your babbling; and, if you have a spark of feeling in your heart, help me to bear the Lady Beatrice to her chamber. Look! she has fainted. You might have perceived it long since, if you did not delight so much in the sight of inhuman butchery."

"Alack!" answered Gertraud, with as little sympathy for the cause of Beatrice's fainting as the veteran

sailor feels for the landsman when enduring the agony of sea-sickness. "Alack! I forgot the delicate young lady had never before seen men battling with each other — life against life. It is a fine thing, however, although tender-reared women don't like to look at it. Come, Gretchen, I will not merely help you, but I will relieve you of the burden altogether. I will carry her myself, unaided by you."

So speaking, the muscular Gertraud raised Beatrice in her arms, and bore her from the ramparts to her chamber, and there, placing the still senseless form on a couch, she turned to Gretchen, and said:

"Girl, as you care for your own life and that of your mistress, let neither of you venture, during the coming night, to stir a step outside this chamber. Mind — that you are to remain here, no matter what noises you may hear, or however boisterous may be the clamor around you. In saying this to you, I only express the wish of Magnus."

"And how know you," asked Gretchen, "the wishes of Magnus?"

"They are written here," replied Gertraud, showing the small piece of parchment, which she had detached from the arrow that had alighted on the tower whilst they were conversing together. "His words are few, but very intelligible. I shall read them for you, as it is probable you are not as well educated as if you had fled from a convent-school to a camp. They are these: —

"This night an attempt will be made to rescue you. Do not stir from your chamber. Wave your veil to show that this has reached the tower. M."

"O, woman, woman!" cried the indignant Gretchen; "and it was for the purpose of betraying Magnus, that you asked for the veil of Beatrice."

“By no means,” replied the unshaken Gertraud. “I only waved the veil to show that his missive had reached the tower. As to the attempt at rescue, the waving of the veil had nothing to do with it. That attempt will be made, though your mistress never wore a veil. When it is made, Magnus entreats that she may remain in her chamber. Very well — let her do so. She now knows the wishes of Magnus, and may comply with them.”

“But why, if treachery be not intended, not tell her at once the purport of the message sent by Magnus?” asked Gretchen.

“Because,” replied Gertraud, “she is such a poor, weak, nervous, timid girl, that I doubt if even you, who know his wishes, will communicate them to her; because, I think, that you will deem it to be more prudent to induce her to remain quiet, without telling her the reason for so doing, until the danger is over, than, by explaining the cause, add to her apprehensions, and uselessly excite her fears. These were the reasons for my silence. I marvel if they will not induce you to be silent also.”

“Circumstances must guide my conduct,” said Gretchen. “Leave me the missive, in order that if I should deem it prudent, I may show it to the Lady Beatrice.”

“I cannot do that,” answered Gertraud, “for I have to show these lines to Diedrich.”

“To Diedrich! O, heavens! then we are destroyed. You mean to betray us to Diedrich,” cried Gretchen.

“Betray you! nonsense!” answered Gertraud. — “What confidence have you reposed in me that I am about to betray? I told you fairly that I was a spy upon you; and the object with which I joined you. I have now attained that object. I have discovered that Mag-

nus intends to rescue Beatrice this night. He does right in making such an attempt. It is the duty of Diedrich to render that attempt abortive, and it is my duty, as the spy of Diedrich, to give him such information, as may enable him to fulfil the task he undertook, when the care of Beatrice was confided to him. I am but performing my duty. Do you yours, by taking better care of your mistress, and not leaving her so long untended, and she in a fainting fit."

"O, this is terrible, most terrible!" cried Gretchen, wringing her hands in agony. "The Duke Magnus will be slain, and we have not the means of warning him of his danger."

"There is no use in those tears," said Gertraud. "No man can die more beseemingly than with a sword in his hand, and facing an enemy. I have seen Magnus—I like him, and in communicating this intelligence to Diedrich, I intend to beg of him, as he loves me, not to kill Magnus—*if he possibly can avoid doing so*. Let that thought console you. It is all I can say to you, or do for you. And now," said Gertraud, as she quitted the chamber, "I go with all speed to Diedrich, the bravest soldier and the best captain in the army of King Henry."

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE NIGHT ATTACK.

Two persons sat side by side at a table in a richly furnished apartment in the fortress of Erzegebirge. Before

them were large flasks and golden goblets filled with wine, which ever and anon were raised to their lips. One of these was Diedrich; the other Gertraud. He seemed to be lost in thought, and Gertraud, absorbed in the contemplation of his hideous features. Both were silent, for he had not, as yet, acknowledged her presence since she had entered the room; but, by nodding his head, and pointing to a seat and the wine cup, which she was aware — from long habit — were to be construed into an intimation that it was his pleasure she should sit beside him, and drink with him.

The silence was, at length, broken by Diedrich, who having, at one draught, swallowed down a pint of wine, said, without looking at her:

“Any news?”

Gertraud replied to the question, not in words, but by placing in his hand the missive from Magnus, which she had intercepted.

Diedrich read it over word for word deliberately — so deliberately, that he took as long a time in spelling through each word, as a modern reader would in running his eye over a page of a book. Having thus read it over — he held it in his hand — filled out another large goblet of wine — tossed it down his throat — then paused for a few minutes. Again unfolded the piece of parchment — and, having again re-perused it, he tossed it back in the direction in which Gertraud was sitting, and gave utterance to the single word —

“Good!”

He then drew forth his dagger, and began drawing lines with it on the table — marking carefully, by indentations on the knob of the hilt, the spaces between the different lines — he rested his two elbows on the

table, and placing his head between his hands, and fixing his eyes on those lines, he commenced studying them with as much attention as if there had been proposed to him, for the first time, the solution of a difficult problem in Euclid. Had he thought of Gertraud—had he looked up at her, whilst he was thus occupied, even he could not but be surprised to perceive, with what reverential admiration her eyes were fixed upon him.

His thoughts, however, were not for her—they were all taken up with his calculations; and, until he had concluded them, he never again raised his eyes from the table. At length, his hand stretched out mechanically to the wine cup, and without looking at it, he placed it to his lips. It was empty.

“Bad!” growled Diedrich, at the disappointment; and his eye fell angrily on Gertraud.

“I feared to disturb you, by moving,” said Gertraud, “otherwise I should have poured out wine for you.”

Diedrich made no answer, but held out the goblet, and Gertraud filled it with wine. He drank off the wine, and then looked up at her, as if wishing to know if she had any thing to say to him.

“May I now speak to you?” asked Gertraud.

Diedrich nodded his head.

“I suppose that Magnus hopes to take the castle by surprise, when he says that he will rescue Beatrice to-night.”

Diedrich again nodded.

“You have now been devising the means, whereby not only his attack will be defeated, but the assailants destroyed.”

Diedrich’s nod again intimated his assent.



“Have you taken into your calculation that the hamlet, which this day’s doings rendered hostile to you, will serve as a sure place of retreat to Magnus and his friends when defeated by you?”

Diedrich’s assenting nod followed those words.

“Very well, then,” said Gertraud, “I consider their defeat now as certain as if I saw them already beaten back from the walls; but, in the coming engagement, there is one favor I have to ask of you, which I hope you will grant me, especially, as I can show you that it is for your interest not to refuse it—that doing as I suggest, will win you the respect and gratitude of the king.”

Diedrich stared in amazement at Gertraud, but said nothing.

“Magnus comes here as a soldier, to attack you, a soldier. Betrothed to Beatrice, he wishes to rescue her from the grasp of the king. He bears no animosity to you—he merely seeks to take from you that which is *his*, but the safe custody of which has been intrusted to you by another, and which you therefore are bound to guard. Respect Magnus, then, as discharging his duty. If you meet him in combat, try to make him your prisoner: do not, I beseech you, unless it be to save your own life, take his. Spare Magnus——”

“Spare Magnus!” exclaimed Diedrich, in utter astonishment, and departing from his usual taciturnity at the strange proposition made to him, that he should show any mercy to a member of a family whom he knew Henry was anxious to destroy.

“Yes—I repeat it—spare Magnus; for Magnus, once killed, his corpse is as worthless as that of the poorest, meanest, and most contemptible wretch slain

this day by your soldiers ; but Magnus living — a prisoner in your hands — is a captive duke, whose person may be valued at the price of a principality, and whose liberty cannot be bought but with a countless treasure. Make him captive — place him a prisoner in the hands of the king, and you bestow upon your sovereign the means of exacting submission even from Otho, the uncle of Magnus, who is now at the head of the Saxon rebels.”

“Humph!” grunted Diedrich, as he rose from the table, and grasped a huge battle-axe in his hand.

“And now,” said Gertraud, “tell me what you desire me to do when the fortress is attacked. Where shall I station myself?”

“With the other women,” answered Diedrich. “Go to bed.”

And uttering these words, he quitted the room.

“Even in the midst of his cares as a captain,” said Gertraud, looking with wonder and admiration upon Diedrich, “he can be jocose! What a wag! Go to bed — to *listen* to the clashing of sword and shield! No — Diedrich — that is an order which you gave to me *as a woman*. But I have also to perform my part *as a soldier*; and amongst other things I have to do, is — to watch that no harm may befall you.”

She hastened, as she spoke, in the direction towards which she had seen Diedrich proceeding.

The missive, that Gertraud had so unfortunately intercepted, told the truth.

No sooner had Magnus ascertained that the place destined for the detention of Beatrice was the fortress of Erzgebirge, than he returned to his uncle, the Duke of Bavaria, for the purpose of procuring an armed force,

sufficient, by its numbers, to secure the conquest of any fortress, no matter how strongly it might be defended by nature, or by the bravery of its garrison. The hopes of Magnus in this respect were doomed to disappointment; for the proceedings of the king, in having Otho declared a traitor, and next in invading his lands, compelled both the uncle and nephew to engage in a defensive war, which was at last crowned with success by the decisive victory of Henschenwege. The first use that Otho and Magnus made of that victory, was to send a detachment, commanded by the latter, to Erzegebirge, and it was the anxiety of Magnus to save Beatrice from any personal danger in the attempt to storm the fortress, that induced him to warn her, in the manner already described, of the contemplated attack. From the manner in which his message was responded to, he calculated that no one was apprised of the dangerous enterprise, in which he risked his life, but Beatrice and her attendant. He had just reason for supposing that such was the case; for, although the fortress was watched on all sides by his spies, as long as there was the light of day to assist them in their observations, there was no stir and no movement upon the battlements to indicate that any additional preparations were making for defence, or that any suspicion was entertained by the commander, Diedrich, that there was a large body of his foes collected in his immediate neighborhood.

Bernhard, who had proved his skill as a bowman, in sending the arrow to the tower on which he had seen Beatrice, assured Magnus that the scarf, which, a moment before, was worn by Beatrice, had been waved in return, not by her, but by a dark-haired woman, and therefore there could be no doubt but the message had been read,

when it was so promptly and punctually responded to. Magnus, who did not know the appearance of Gretchen, concluded that "the dark-haired woman" was the attendant upon Beatrice, and therefore had no fears for the safety of his beloved. It was, then, with feelings of impatience he saw the hours of the day pass so slowly away, and as darkness fell upon the earth, he mustered the men under his command—in all, three thousand Saxons, who were to act as the assailing party; whilst he retained, as a reserve, on the level ground, five hundred horse, who were ordered, in case he was killed, and the infantry driven back, to come to their rescue; and then, having saved them, to make good their retreat to the hamlet.

Having thus made his arrangements, as a general, Magnus resolved, for the remainder of the night, to perform the part of the soldier, and to be, if it were possible, the very first to climb the wall of the garrison, and to gain possession of so important a stronghold for his countrymen.

The time fixed by Magnus for the commencement of the attack, was the hour of midnight. At the same moment, and in pursuance of his directions, the three thousand Saxons commenced climbing up the precipitous and rocky sides of the steep hill, on which the fortress was erected. Silently, but slowly, they crept up, step by step, holding fast to each projecting point by their right hands, whilst, in their left, they carried the arms with which they meant to assail the garrison. Amid this little army of climbing men there was but one thought—that they might have the opportunity of attacking, and taking desperate vengeance upon those who had that day slaughtered their countrymen. As they

mounted, they rejoiced to perceive that there was perfect stillness in the place they were on the point of assailing. All, at length, reached the top of the hill, and stood fronting the wall of the fortress, from which they were only separated by a narrow fosse, which surrounded the castle on all sides.

Magnus here placed them in line, and had given them directions to make a charge, with the words, "God and the Saxon land," when there shot suddenly forth, from all the battlements, javelins, with blazing lights attached to them, and which, at the same time, struck down several men, and served to show to the defenders the numbers and precise positions occupied by the assailants. A few groans had been uttered by the wounded, when there came pouring down upon the heads of the Saxons enormous stones, discharged by machines of war, and flights of spears, whilst the whole wall itself seemed to open; the rugged surface being, as it were, split with innumerable *arballisteria* for the cross-bowmen, and *archeria* for the archers; and then came, darting direct at the faces, or at the bodies of the Saxons, the *ballota*, or leaden bullets, the thick arrows from cross-bows, with javelins, and small stones, and thin darts, which left a deadly wound in every man they touched. No helmet, no hauberk, and no shield, availed here, for such was the strength and force with which all things, discharged by the balearic machines, were sent, that they not merely wounded, but they crushed down to the earth, a mangled mass, the person upon whom they fell, or they bore him and all, to the rearmost rank, from their position, and sent them tumbling down the precipice behind them, deprived of life, long before their bodies could reach the level earth.

At one moment was seen the sky, lighted up by burning darts, and then followed, as it were, a shower of stones, arrows, and other missiles, rattling heavily against shields, helmets, and cuirasses; and then shrieks of agony, and of horror; and, in a moment afterwards, the platform was, with one or two exceptions, cleared of the men who had so recently stood there, full of life and courage, but who were now swept away, despite of themselves, by this outburst of destruction, which they could no more resist than the weak and fragile dam, erected to restrain the summer stream, can withstand the rush of water that the rains of winter have swelled into an impetuous and overflowing river.

Of all the Saxons, thus whirled down the precipitous steeps they had but a few moments before ascended, two alone stood in safety fronting the wall. These were Magnus and Bernhard.

“Well!” said Bernhard, “it is plain that your mis- sive must have fallen into wrong hands.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Magnus, “for my brave Saxons Do you, Bernhard, escape, if you can — as to me, I will stay here to be shot down. My men are slain, I will not outlive them.”

Scarcely had he uttered these words when he found Diedrich, Gertraud, and a hundred men from the garrison before him. His words were interrupted by the loud voice of Diedrich giving the command.

“Down the hill after them. Slay all you overtake. Show no mercy. Make no prisoners.”

“Ah!” said Magnus, “thank Heaven, I shall not die unavenged. Come, Bernhard, let us both strike at once at this merciless villain — do you aim at his heart — I will strike at his head.”

As Magnus spoke these words, Diedrich perceived him and his companion. Diedrich's soldiers, in pursuance of his command, had left him; and he now stood alone with the camp-follower, Gertraud, by his side.

"He, with the helmet of burnished gold, is Magnus," said Gertraud.

Diedrich had not time to answer her, when the rush upon him was made by Magnus and Bernhard. He surmised the intention of both, and, at the same instant, parried the blow of Magnus with his sword, and received the thrust of Bernhard on his shield. The blow of the latter was replied to by Gertraud, who, striking Bernhard heavily with her sword on the helmet, sent him reeling back a couple of yards from Diedrich.

Diedrich perceived that the blow of Gertraud had disembarassed him of a second assailant. Instead, however, of striking at Magnus, he dropped the point of his sword to the ground, and said —

"A moment's truce — you are, I believe, Duke Magnus."

"I am," answered the youth.

"Then yield yourself a prisoner. I promise to spare your life."

"Never," said Magnus, "shall I be in your power."

With these words Magnus again raised his sword, and waiting until Diedrich had crossed blade with blade, he said —

"Now — butcher of King Henry, defend yourself. I want your life, take mine if you can."

"*Boy!*" exclaimed Diedrich. "You are my prisoner;" and, as he pronounced the word "boy," he ran his sword, with the rapidity of lightning, and with such tremendous force, down upon the hilt of Magnus's

sword, that it crushed the muscles of his opponent's hand, and sent the sword itself from his grasp with a shivering thrill of agony, so that Magnus felt the iron gripe of Diedrich was upon his left hand, and in an instant afterwards, that his arms were tied behind him.

“You are now my prisoner,” said Diedrich. “I spare your life, because I believe the king wishes me to do so. Say that you yield, and I will at once unbind you ; for I do not desire to dishonor one of your rank with these gyves.”

“I yield,” said Magnus. “I cannot avoid doing so ; and though I would prefer death to captivity, still I submit with patience to that hard trial which God has ordained I should submit to.”

“Good !” said Diedrich, at once unbinding his prisoner, and looking round to see what had become of Gertraud and her opponent.

Meanwhile, Gertraud having by a single blow driven back Bernhard, she, for the purpose of leaving Diedrich free to carry on his conflict with Magnus, followed Bernhard, intending, if she possibly could, to despatch him. With this object she again rushed upon him, and aimed a second blow at his head — it was met by the shield of Bernhard, who, at the same instant, came with his own sword upon the helmet of Gertraud with such force, that the blow felled her to the earth, and her helmet tumbling off, her dark, curling hair fell in clusters over her now pale face, as she lay stretched upon the earth, and arrested the attention of Bernhard at the very moment that he had raised his sword for the purpose of striking a deadly blow.

“Good heavens !” he exclaimed — “this is a woman ! Poor creature ! I suppose she is attached to this monster



Diedrich. I respect her fidelity, as I would that of the dog that fights for its master."

And with this compliment to the female warrior, the honest Bernhard sheathed his sword, stooped down, and began chafing the hands and forehead of Gertraud, in the hope of restoring animation.

Gertraud opened her eyes whilst Bernhard was thus employed. His attitude and his look showed to her the compassionate feelings that animated him, and she, on the instant, resolved, if she could, to save his life who had spared hers.

"You are," she said, "an honest, true-hearted, brave fellow. Here, take this helmet of mine — it is the same as that worn by our soldiers, and may serve to save you from their swords; for they are now as a hundred to one against you. Down," she continued, "down by this by-path. If you are challenged — the pass-word, '*Gertraud*,' will procure you a free passage. The life of Magnus is safe as long as he is the prisoner of Diedrich. Hasten you to the camp of Otho, and tell him what has befallen your leader and companions. Hasten — hasten away. If Diedrich sees you living I cannot save you from his rage."

As she said these words, she removed the helmet of Bernhard, and replaced it with her own. Bernhard looked around. He saw Magnus, with his arms tied behind him, and Diedrich, with a drawn sword, standing before his captive. This sight at once convinced him that the only course for him to pursue was that suggested by Gertraud.

"Farewell," he said, as he disappeared down the precipitous path pointed out to him. "Farewell — I trust we may meet again soon."

“Then if we do,” answered Gertraud, “I trust it may be in the field of battle, where I may return to you the heavy blow which makes my head still ring with pain.”

“Be it so,” said Bernhard; “so that we do meet. But be you what you may, I shall ever feel that you have done your utmost to save my life; and my sword shall never again be lifted against you. Farewell.”

“Farewell!” cried Gertraud; and, as she spoke the word, her eyes filled with tears — the first tears that had bedewed them for many a year.

Gertraud’s broad, brown hand was raised to her face. She dashed away, with a feeling akin to indignation, those symptoms of womanly weakness, and murmured, with a softened voice: —

“Tears! — I have never shed tears since I was at school in the convent — since I was a girl — since I was innocent — since I first hardened my heart against all I once was taught, and once believed; and, can it be that I am now changing? No, no, no — change! impossible! It is the wicked knock on the head which the hand of that honest fellow has given me, that makes me cry. But if I were what I once was, and still ought to be, what a good husband that strong-handed Saxon would be! Alas! —”

“Ho! Gertraud,” exclaimed Diedrich, perceiving, when he had unbound Magnus, that his camp-follower was alone, “what has become of the Saxon?”

“He is *gone down* the precipice after the rest of his companions,” answered Gertraud.

“What! is it possible,” said Magnus, “that the sturdy Bernhard could have been slain by a woman?”

“He knocked off my helmet,” answered Gertraud,

“you may perceive that I now wear his. I intend to preserve it as a trophy.”

“Do you mean to say that you have actually slain my follower?” asked Magnus.

“I mean to assert,” answered Gertraud, “he might, but for me, be now living on this platform of rock; whether he will reach the bottom of the precipice living or dead, you may guess.”

“O, miserable night!” cried Magnus, “then I am the dishonored survivor of three thousand valiant Saxons!”

“Brave Gertraud,” said Diedrich.

“Never lament the fortune of war,” said Gertraud, as she approached to Magnus, and whispered in his ear — “Bernhard has escaped — I aided him — be silent.”

“As your prisoner,” said Magnus to Diedrich, “I am ready to be conducted to any cell you may appoint.”

“Follow,” said Diedrich, as he led the way within the postern of the fortress.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE KING AND DUKE MAGNUS.

THE course of policy which Henry had marked out for himself to pursue, with respect to the Saxons, had been crowned with complete success. He had calculated that his demands for tithes to himself, as well as tithes to be paid to the Archbishop of Mayence, being alike an impoverishment of the Saxon church, and a diminution

of the means of sustaining religion, its ministers, its churches, and the Saxon poor, who looked to the monasteries for relief and subsistence, would, as a matter of course, excite discontent in the minds of the prelates, priests, monks, and people of Saxony. He insisted upon having tithes upon every thing to be found in the field, the farm-yard, the pasture-ground, the garden, and the orchard; and, as in Saxony there were to be seen whole districts, or tithings, consisting of none but free peasants, of those who were unprotected by any vassalage to lay-lords, or to churchmen, the exactions of the king rendered them, in their poverty, more destitute, whilst they were compelled to feel that they were dishonored by a patient submission to such demands. If they manifested the slightest unwillingness to comply with the requisitions of the king's officers, they were instantly visited by detachments from the various fortresses Henry had erected in Saxony: the young men were dragged away as if they were slaves, and compelled to work in strengthening the walls of the fortresses — the houses were burned down, the cattle were carried off, and the female peasantry were subjected to outrages worse than death itself.

Henry had calculated that the Saxons would be thus forced into open insurrection against his supreme authority; and he had also calculated that the sympathies of the Saxon nobility and prelacy, as well as their interests, would be arrayed against him. In both calculations, events proved that he was correct. Not content with oppressing them by his acts, he also sought to provoke them by his words, declaring them to be "a nation of slaves, and only fitted to be treated as slaves," and, "that when Saxons did not learn to conduct themselves like

their ancestors, who were slaves, the suitable, and the sole treatment for them was to punish them as traitors."

That, then, which Henry desired, he had now obtained. He had resolved upon reducing the whole of the Saxon people to a state of serfdom, or of extirpating them *as a race*; and he now saw within his grasp the military means of effecting either object. Never — no — not even in the time of Charlemagne, had there been mustered together such an army as now acknowledged him as their superior lord.

"I pray your Majesty's pardon," said Lieman, "but here comes, I fear, that which you most dread to see, an embassy from the Saxons."

"What mean you?" exclaimed Henry; "that small detachment of soldiers at a distance?"

"The same," replied Lieman.

"No — no," replied Henry. "These are not Saxons. They are some of my own Frankish warriors. I can recognize them even at this distance, by their freshly-painted shields, which, in accordance with my commands, have been emblazoned with incidents emblematic of the former victories won by Franks from the Saxons. Of a verity, I cannot be mistaken in that, no more than in the figure of their commander. It is my true and trusty Diedrich. I marvel what can have brought him here. Erzegebirge must be safe, or he would not be alive."

"He has a prisoner in his charge," said Lieman. "It must be some one of high rank; for, though deprived of his sword, the young man rides unbound by the side of Diedrich."

"I am impatient to speak with him," remarked Henry, "for the honest Diedrich is sure to tell me a fact in every word he utters."

A few minutes afterwards, Diedrich was seen dismounting, with his noble prisoner, in front of Henry, and both knelt in presence of the king, whilst Diedrich said: —

“Duke Magnus, taken prisoner by me in an attack on Erzegebirge.”

“Rise, Diedrich — and you also, Duke Magnus,” observed Henry. “Accept, Diedrich, of this golden-hilted and diamond-gemmed sword. It is the price I pay you for sparing the life of one, on whom I place such value now — *that he is my prisoner!*” There was a malignant smile on the face of Henry as he uttered these words, and then continued — “I suppose my noble prisoner, although young in years, and little practised in the affairs of this life, is aware of all the penalties that attach to the crime of treason. I imagine, that when he determined upon drawing his sword against his sovereign, he was prepared not merely to encounter death — the worst that can befall the valiant warrior — but that he was liable to encounter dishonor — the deep dishonor that is alone reserved for traitors. I presume that he has heard that princes, that dukes, that nobles have, before now, been condemned by their justly-offended sovereigns to walk from the church doors where the last rites were bestowed upon them, to the place of execution — the borders of the district in which they have been condemned — that they have been doomed to do this barefooted, as if they were beggars, and, at the same time, to carry a dog in their arms, thereby to intimate to the world, that they were, when living, only fit to associate with dogs, and dying, to be hung as dogs, and when dead, to have their carcases rotting with dogs. I presume the brave, young, prudent Duke Magnus calculated that such might be his

fate, if he should ever stand a prisoner before his rightful sovereign."

The face of Magnus flushed with indignation when he heard himself threatened with that punishment — "*carrying a dog*" — the most infamous that at that period could be imposed upon a man of noble birth.

"I calculated," replied Magnus, "if I should ever stand in your presence as a prisoner, that I should find in you neither the dignity of a monarch, the generosity of a knight, nor the compassion of a man. So well assured was I that there was not in your heart one particle of that tenderness or sympathy which a truly brave man feels for the misfortunes of another, that death — death in its most dire form — would have been far more welcome to me than the agony of this moment, in which I find myself a prisoner — helpless, swordless, shieldless, companionless, in the midst of an enemy's encampment, and yet taunted by its commander and its king, because the chances of war have made me *his* captive. O, it is base — very base — so base, that I tell you, Henry, I would not for all your titles, your mighty dominions, and your boundless power, exchange positions with you at this moment. Better, I tell you, to be Duke Magnus, whose honor is free from stain, and whose reputation is unimpeached, than Henry of Germany, whose name is seldom pronounced but with curses, and who is such a braggart, that he triumphs in the captivity of an inexperienced youth, as if with his own sword he had dispersed an army of his enemies. Yes — I am your prisoner; but remember this, that not the wealth of the Byzantine Emperor would induce me to exchange conditions with you, even for an hour. Better — a thousand times better — to be as I am now — thus forlorn, thus

reproached by you — Magnus the prisoner, than Henry the King.”

“Boy! prater! traitor!” said Henry, scornfully riding up to his prisoner, breasting him with his strong war-horse, and, as he did so, half unsheathing his dagger.

Magnus stood firmly in the position in which he had first been placed, and when he observed the king grasping his dagger, he threw back his own arms, and clinching his hands firmly behind him, he left his breast fully exposed to Henry. Thus he stood, as if defying the king, and not condescending to defend himself, whilst he again addressed Henry: —

“Boy! prater! traitor! So you have called me, King Henry. Boy, I may be, though Diedrich can tell you I have conducted myself in no unbecoming manner as a soldier; boy, I have been, but my boyhood has not been like yours; for it has been unstained by dishonor, and it has not been tarnished by a single tear from a mother’s eye. Prater I am, for the tongue is the only weapon which the captive prisoner is free to use against an ungenerous, a cruel, and unknighly captor. Traitor, I never have been, for the subject never can be a traitor when the king becomes a tyrant; in such a case the traitor is the sovereign who forswears himself, and who uses the powers that the nation has confided to him for the protection of the weak, and the safeguard of justice, to oppress the defenceless, to violate the sanctuary of home, to despoil the church, and to rob the poor. He who does these things is a traitor, the worst of traitors, for he is alike a traitor to his God, and to the people. Such a traitor, even whilst your dagger is at my throat, I say you are, King Henry. Slay me for telling you so, the slaughter of an unarmed prisoner by your own hand can



be but a slight addition to the infamy that already attaches to your name."

The bold defiance thus given to Henry by Magnus — the utter recklessness of life so exhibited by the youthful hero, produced an effect the very contrary of that which Magnus had calculated upon. Henry perceived that he would but gratify the wishes of Magnus in slaying him with his own hand; that Magnus would willingly, with his own death, procure for him dishonor — the great dishonor of being himself the assassin of a prisoner taken in battle. For this dishonor Henry would have cared but little, if he had inflicted death on one who feared it; but it was otherwise when he saw that death was courted by one he detested; to inflict it under such circumstances would be to do that which his opponent desired, and he was resolved to imbitter the sufferings of all who thwarted his wishes, or opposed his designs. Instead then of striking his dagger into the defenceless breast of Magnus, he sheathed it; and backing his horse a few paces from his noble prisoner, but still fronting him, he addressed him: —

"Had you feared death, Magnus, you would now lie before me a bleeding corpse. I admire your bravery, even though it be exhibited in a bad cause. I will not take your life. Thus it is that, as a soldier, I show respect to your courage as a soldier. I am not that tyrant which you have been taught to suppose; and which you never could have fancied me to be if your mind had not been perverted by Duke Otho. As one brave man should esteem another, I feel for you, and I pity you. As your sovereign, and considering your exalted rank, I cannot, however, wholly pardon you for taking up arms, and seeking the destruction of the paid soldiers of your

superior lord. I might punish you as a traitor ; but I will not do so. I could not only take your life, but degrade you, in the manner I have already intimated.”

“Degradation,” said Magnus, “never can be inflicted by the act of another, if it be not the consequence of our own vices. I am innocent of all crime, and therefore I defy you.”

“Listen to me patiently,” said Henry, “or I shall fancy that I have been speaking merely to an intemperate and pert boy, and not to a brave soldier. I will not degrade you ; but I cannot forgive you ; so far am I from being animated with hostility towards you, that I desire even to bestow upon you your freedom, if you will be but reasonable, and to let you go forth unquestioned from this encampment.”

“And what are the conditions ?” asked Magnus, impetuously. “If they include the abandonment of my pretensions to the hand of her whose name is too sacred to be mentioned in so polluted a place as this, I will never agree to them.”

“Love-sick youth !” said Henry, looking down with contempt upon Magnus ; “if you and I, and *she*, all stood upon terms of equality with each other, and that she were free to choose whom she would prefer, I would willingly contend with you for the prize, and be certain I should win from you the victory. As it is, however, I will not condescend to discuss with you a topic, which, for aught you shall know, may be with me an object that engrosses my affections — a passing caprice, or a mere fugitive pastime. I thought not of *her*, when I spoke to you of making you free. You sought her once, and your search has brought you to my feet a prisoner. Should I make you free, you may again seek her, and,

in so doing, find the dagger of Diedrich in your heart. Thus much I tell you, that you may know that the conditions I propose have nought to do with any thing that concerns the amours of your sovereign."

"O, rare and excellent king!" exclaimed Magnus, with bitter indignation. "How happy is Germany in having such a sovereign! But speak on—name your conditions. I feel assured that they are, before you tell them, concocted in the same generous spirit in which you have spoken to me."

"They are conditions much more moderate than you are entitled to," answered Henry. "Remember, you are now my prisoner—that I can retain you in chains for your whole life; and, be assured, that I shall do so, if you do not agree to my terms."

"Name them," said Magnus, "they must be hard, indeed, if I do not assent to them—when I bear in mind, that once agreed to, I may be not only free, but certain never again to meet you but in the field of battle."

"The conditions," observed Henry, "on which I am willing to set you free, are two—first, that you here, and in the presence of all the nobility and prelates of the empire, renounce the Dukedom of Saxony, which you hold from your father; and secondly, that you give up to me all the lands and treasures which belong to you as the sole and rightful heir of your deceased parents."

Magnus looked at the king sternly and silently, and the gaze of the youth only excited a smile on the face of the monarch.

"Your Majesty," said Magnus, at length breaking silence, "names these as the only conditions upon which you will set me free."

“Upon none other,” answered Henry.

Magnus stretched forth his hands, firmly clasped together, and scornfully said —

“Then place your manacles, without delay, upon the hands of your prisoner. Better, O, far better, that every limb should wither beneath the weight of the chains imposed upon it, than that my reputation, when living, and my memory, when dead, should bear the brand of the infamy you would place upon me. Better, the dank and noisome cell, that will slowly poison me by its pestilential vapors, than the one willing word, uttered by my own lips, which would declare me the unworthy son of worthy ancestors — better — O, a thousand times better, the bitter tears — the sobs of agony, and the groans of fainting horror which your skilful tortures can hourly extort from me in my desolate cell, than the single act which would proclaim that I condescended to abjure, as a criminal, that rank, and that wealth, that are alike mine by right of birth. Base, merciless, and avaricious king, I scorn your offer — I spurn your conditions — I defy you — and I despise you !”

Henry reddened with passion when he heard these words addressed to him by his youthful rival. His first impulse was to place his hand upon his dagger, but he instantly restrained himself, and turning to Lieman, said —

“Lieman, I transfer to your care this young madman. Take with you thirty of my Worms’ guardsmen, and conduct him to the fortress of Eberhard, with special directions to confine and treat him as *my prisoner*. Away! and return to me with what speed you can.”

Magnus listened to these directions, but spoke not. In a few minutes afterwards, Henry saw him riding out

of the encampment under the watchful care of Lieman and his associates, and whilst the detachment and their prisoner were still in sight, Henry was heard muttering these ominous words :

“Insulted by a boy! scorned by a subject! defied by a prisoner! and not feared even as a rival suitor! And he who did these things is in my power, and has passed a living man from my sight! Wherefore? Because there are punishments worse than death: because for Magnus there shall be a terrible punishment. With Saxony defeated: with a pope of my own — yes, Magnus, you shall live to witness *my* marriage — and, seeing that, you shall become your own executioner — the agony of grief and of despair shall drive you to suicide, and thus you shall pass from hell here to hell hereafter. You have defied me. Madman! idiot! you know not what awaits you. Could you but surmise it, you would seek death in the first precipice that lies at your feet.”

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE KING AND THE PILGRIM.

THE meditation of Henry was interrupted by the gallant Duke of Lorraine — Godfrey the hump-backed — who rode up at the head of a body of horsemen, and thus addressed him :

“Whilst exploring the environs of your Majesty’s camp I discovered a pilgrim approaching it, and, upon questioning him, he assures me that he is the bearer of

a special message to King Henry, from Otho, Duke of Bavaria. I have brought him with me for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is your Majesty's desire that he should be admitted to your presence."

"A special message from Otho to me," said Henry. "I wonder what can be its purport. May not this pilgrim be a spy, who seeks to learn for his Saxon countrymen what are the numbers under my command, and what the strength of my position?"

"He is neither Frank nor Saxon, I know by his tongue," replied Godfrey. "We came upon him by surprise, and when he manifestly had not the slightest idea he was so close to the royal camp. I have taken care to conduct him blindfolded from the place where I arrested him to this spot. He can therefore bring back with him no information, either as to your encampment or your army. Is it your Majesty's will that he should speak with you?"

"It is," replied Henry. "Bring him forward."

The pilgrim, with whose conduct and bravery the reader is already acquainted, was here led forth from the midst of the soldiers of Godfrey. The cowl that concealed his features was strongly bandaged, and it was plain, from the unsteady gait with which he walked, that his eyes were in utter darkness—in fact, that the bandage merely permitted him to breathe.

The bandage was unloosed, and the moment that it was, the pilgrim, as if dazzled by the sudden rush of light upon his eye-balls, gazed, apparently, wildly, but still clearly, distinctly, and steadily on all sides around him, so that, with his practised vision as a veteran general, he comprehended fully the nature and strength of the hostile force that was arrayed under the orders of the

king. He then looked at the group of dukes, counts, and prelates that were on horseback or on foot about King Henry, and he scanned, with an eager glance, the features of each, as if he were seeking to recognize the face of one who was well known to him. As he completed his search, he thus communed with himself:

“*He* is not here, and yet *here* I fancied I was sure to find *him*. But — alas! for the Saxons, if I cannot return to them before their proximity to this tremendous army is discovered. They fancy the king to be a day’s march from them, and yet, a few hours will suffice to move this force against them. If they are discovered in their present position, they are inevitably destroyed.”

“Wherefore, Sir Pilgrim,” said the Duke Godfrey, “do you not deliver to the king the message of which you told me you were the bearer when I arrested you?”

“This,” said the pilgrim, addressing himself to Henry, “is the message that Duke Otho bids me bring to your Majesty. The Duke Otho has heard that his nephew, Magnus, Duke of Saxony, has fallen into the hands of one of your Majesty’s officers. He is desirous of rescuing his relation, the head of his illustrious house, from thralldom, and therefore he bids me say to you, that he is ready to exhaust his own treasury, and to alienate the greater portion of his estates, to procure the ransom of Magnus. All he desires is, that your Majesty may name some settled sum; and he authorizes me to say, that the moment Duke Magnus is made free it shall be paid to you.”

“Is this,” said Henry, “all that Duke Otho bade you say to me?”

“No — it is not all,” replied the pilgrim; “but, if this offer be accepted, it is all that is necessary for me to

say. What else I have to add is contingent upon your refusal."

"Then, Sir Pilgrim," said Henry, "regard that offer as refused. What else hath Otho to offer me more precious than the red gold and the rich lands of Bavaria?"

"That," answered the pilgrim, "which every man who hears me will esteem more precious than gold, more valuable than land — that which comprises the most rare gifts that the Creator can bestow upon the creature — virtue, valor, genius, wisdom, and generosity — for all those qualities are combined in the person of Duke Otho."

"What mean you?" asked the king. "Speak plainly, for I do not like to be talked to in riddles."

"This, then, is the message of Duke Otho to your Majesty," said the pilgrim. "He bids me, in case that your Majesty should refuse any money-ransom for your noble and youthful prisoner, to remind you that the common ancestors of himself and of Magnus willingly shed their blood in the wars of your royal predecessors — that their lives were sacrificed in founding that old German empire of which your Majesty is now the head — that he himself, as well as the father of Magnus, were amongst the tried and most trusted friends of the late emperor. He bids you to bear those circumstances in mind, when he tenders to you, as I now in his name do make that tender, to yield himself a prisoner to your Majesty in exchange for Duke Magnus, and that, provided you give to Magnus his liberty, he will submit himself to your Majesty's pleasure, to be held by you in chains and captivity as long as you desire so to retain him, even though it should be for his whole life; and that you should



even dispose of all his personal property in whatsoever manner you please — all this he is willing to do, that he may save his youthful relation from the wasting agony of a prolonged imprisonment. This is the message of Duke Otho. Does your Majesty deign to send a reply to it?"

"Brave Otho! truly magnanimous duke," exclaimed Godfrey. "These are the words of a hero. They are more fitting in the lips of an ancient Roman than of a barbarous Saxon."

The exclamation of the gallant Godfrey was not unheard by Henry, and seemed to foment the rage that was gathering in his heart, and to give additional fire to the passions that now possessed him.

"Audacious and insolent traitor!" exclaimed Henry. "Otho — the slave, whom you, sirrah, presume to call Duke of Bavaria, is now a duke no longer. Placed under the ban of the empire — houseless, homeless, landless — the associate of robbers, of vagabonds, and of murderers — he who lives by rapine, and whose only chance of safety is in flying as a fugitive from before my soldiers — he, on whose head I have placed a price, and who, if arrested, shall die the death of a slave — he presumes to send a message to me, tendering himself as a prisoner, and thus seeking to extort my mercy — mercy that shall not be shown to him, once he becomes my captive — he, who by his cowardice in shrinking from single combat admits that he plotted against my life, and who is in a worse condition than the meanest beggar, tenders gold that he has not, and lands of which he has been deprived, as a ransom for his nephew! Audacious and beggarly boaster, my only answer to his insolent message is this — that he shall be doomed to bear not even a dog,

but an ass's saddle to the place of his execution ; that his death shall be that which the Hessians inflict on their criminals, he shall be staked alive ; and when dead, the flesh that covers his traitorous breast shall be given to feed my hawks. This is my answer — the only answer worthy of a king to send to an assassin in intention, and a traitor in fact."

So ungracious and so cruel a reply as this to the generous offer of Otho, filled the minds of most of the gallant men who heard it with indignation and disgust. A murmur of discontent filled the ear of Henry, who became pale with passion, as the unwonted sound reached him. He was enraged to perceive how vast was the difference between those who came, from a sense of duty, in arms to assist him, and that cringing band of parasites and courtiers in whose society most of his time had hitherto been wasted. He felt that he was in an embarrassing position, and knew not how to reconcile his interest, in not offending the German princes and prelates, and yet gratifying his hatred, and giving vent to his revenge.

From this embarrassment, an unlooked-for incident rescued the king.

"News! news! most joyful news!" exclaimed Rudolph, Duke of Swabia, riding up to the king. "I have discovered the Saxon army."

"Alas! alas!" groaned the pilgrim ; "then all is lost."

"The Saxon army!" said Henry, in surprise. "I fancied that we must be distant from them at least three days' march."

"We are not so many hours' march apart from them," answered Rudolph. "They are now encamped at Langensalza, on the banks of the Unstrutt ; and so little

idea have they that they are within a few miles of your Majesty's forces, that even their camp is unguarded. My soldiers, who have approached close up to their lines undiscovered, or, if observed, unattended to by them, report, that they are now solely occupied with feasting, carousing, and rural sports. There is not a man amongst them who has got on his armor, but they are all like holiday folk in the midst of a peaceful and friendly country. If we wish to destroy them utterly, every practised soldier in this camp will tell your Majesty that this is a moment for making an attack upon them. Give them not an instant to prepare for battle, and you force them to fight with such disadvantage, that their defeat is certain, or, if they have time to retreat in safety to their camp, their intrenchments can be no protection to those who have once been seized with a panic fear."

Henry's heart bounded with joy at this unexpected intelligence. He instantly flung himself from his horse, and casting himself on his knees, said aloud :

"I thank my God for these joyful tidings ; and I now say, in the presence of heaven, and of man, that I shall ever be grateful, as to my best and truest of friends, to Rudolph, Duke of Swabia, for bringing to me this news. Rudolph, demand from me what thou wilt, it is thine, before it is asked for."

"The only favor I have to ask," answered Rudolph, "is that I may be permitted, on this occasion, to exercise that which is the peculiar privilege of the Swabian soldiery — that privilege which law and custom both have sanctioned — namely, that in every warlike expedition, headed by a German king, the Swabians shall lead the van ; be the first to encounter the foe ; and the first to

shed their blood for their sovereign and their country. This is the favor I now ask of your Majesty. Permit me, on this instant, to march with my forces. Let the others, with what speed they may, follow and support me in my onset, for we have to do with a dauntless race of men."

"Brave Rudolph, the privilege you seek is conceded to you," said Henry, embracing the Duke of Swabia. "The advice you give shall be followed. Holloa! let the trumpets sound forth the charge to battle field, and victory. Now — death to the Saxons — to battle — to battle — every man who can handle a sword, and who loves his king."

As Henry spoke these words, and his brilliant eyes flashed with martial fire, a frown overcast his face, for he perceived the pilgrim standing by his side.

The pilgrim turned away, and as he did so, said —

"Now, for Erzegebirge — now, if it be possible to see that which has been so long looked for — prayed for — and sought for in vain."

The postern of the camp through which the pilgrim passed, was guarded but by a few sentinels. It appeared lone and deserted, even though there came to it now and again the sound of the braying of trumpets — the neighing of steeds, and the shouts of men, as detachment after detachment poured out of the encampment from the opposite side, and all marching in the one direction towards the fatal and long famed field of Langensalza.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE BATTLE OF LANGENSALZA.

NEVER yet did there gather in arms braver men or more resolute patriots, than those who were collected near to the waters of the Unstrutt; and who, confident in the goodness of their cause, and the purity of their motives, looked forward with an assured hope of victory, to the first moment they should come in collision with their oppressor and their sovereign — the ruthless and irreligious Henry. The army of the Saxons was composed, for the most part, of valiant rustics — of men who had been born free — and who perceived that the efforts of Henry were directed towards their degradation and enslavement. These men took up arms with all the courage, but without any of the discipline, of practised soldiers, and the nobles who led them forbore, until they were approaching the forces of their foes, exacting from them that watchfulness and rigid observance of military rules, that they would have required from hired warriors. These leaders supposed that it was necessary to maintain, at its highest point, the popular enthusiasm — to conceal, as long as they could, from their followers, the hardships of war; because they felt assured that those very men, who would have revolted, or might have become disgusted, by the strict enforcement of that despotism which is characteristic of a camp, would, in sight of the enemy, display the same daring, dauntless courage, which has ever been an inherent quality in the Saxon race. The misfortune of those leaders was, that they had not taken sufficient care to learn the precise distance that divided them from the

army under the command of Henry. At the very moment that they fancied it would be difficult for a band of cavalry, even in a long day's march, to reach their lines, and, therefore, an impossibility for a whole army, that had to convey with it baggage, wagons, and all the heavy equipage of a camp, to approach them by many miles—the entire of the troops of Henry, cavalry as well as infantry, were on the point of assaulting their intrenchments. The consequences of the ignorance of the Saxon leaders on this point, and of their misinformation, we have now to narrate.

The hour of midday was near, and the Saxons, nobles as well as common folk, had partaken of dinner, and were now enjoying themselves in various ways. The song, the merry joke, and loud laughter, were heard on every side, whilst many still sat at the banqueting table, where the wine-cup circled around. Such was the manner in which the leaders of the Saxon army were occupied. All were congregated together in the wide tent of Duke Otho, and there, with the folds of the tent cast wide open, so as to admit as much as possible of the fresh air, might be seen the quondam Duke of Bavaria, the Count Dedi, his son, the Bishop of Halberstadt, and the other insurgent nobles and prelates, whose names have been already specified. Before them were goblets of gold, and all the luxurions decorations of the table, which are so frequently seen in palaces, and so seldom transferred to the tented field. They looked like men who had assembled to enjoy themselves after the pleasures of the chase, and not like warriors, who were mustered together to encounter the perils of war. So little thought had they of battle, that few of them wore any species of defensive armor. The attention of

all—nobles, priests, and warriors—was fixed upon a minstrel, who recited to them, in a rude chant, the achievements of the great Saxon hero, Wittikind, when, with a few followers, he utterly routed the Frankish soldiers in the valley of Sental, on the banks of the Weser. Pieces of gold were cast to the minstrel, and the plaudits of a delighted auditory were heard around, when suddenly arose, at the outermost verge of the vast, expansive, and arid fields, that lay stretched in front of the encampment, dark, globular clouds, that seemed to roll slowly onward along the ground towards the spectators, and to increase momentarily in size as they approached. Darker and denser grew these clouds—they swelled in size—then seemed to meet together—then to form one compact revolving mass, that, as it whirled along, sent up a lurid mist into the air, which obscured the vision, as if a heavy canopy of vapor hung above the progressing and sable tide that came swelling over the wide and even-surfaced plain.

Amazement and affright seized upon the Saxons, as they gazed at this marvellous spectacle.

“What awful prodigy is this?” exclaimed Otho. “What mighty work of God is this we are looking upon?”

“No work of God,” replied the elder Dedi; “but the evil deed of man. Those clouds of dust arise from the trampling feet of the horses and men of a large army advancing to attack us. We have neglected our duties as generals, and God is pleased to punish us for that neglect. See! for, weakened even as my eyes are by age, I can discern the gilt helmets and golden-decorated hauberks of the Swabians, as they charge onward to the assault. I can remark even their standards, as they are

borne erect in the midst of their lines. To arms—  
Otho—bid all the Saxons to arms!”

“Ah, woe!” cried Otho, “it is as you say, Dedi. Look, the enemy now cover all the line of the wide plain before us—they come upon us like a swarm of locusts, and seemingly numberless as the sands of the desert on which they stand. To arms, Saxons! to arms! the enemy is upon us! Alas! Dedi, I am much to blame for this; I ought to have surmised that which I never could have suspected, when I sent the pilgrim on my mission, that the king might, by hurried marches, have taken us by surprise, as he now has done. To arms, Saxons! to arms! Let every brave man seize the first weapon that presents itself, and if he cannot find his own commander, let him, at least, wherever he stands, find by his sword the heart of a foeman. To arms—to arms—all brave Saxons! fight for God and our Saxon land. To arms!”

“To arms! to arms! to arms!” were words shouted forth by the mouths of forty thousand men—and that in tones as different as the passions and the feelings of the several speakers—for in the selfsame words were expressed surprise, horror, disgust, reproach, indignation that the king, with his entire army, should have been permitted to take them thus by surprise, and to force them at such a disadvantage into battle. Amid, however, all those conflicting passions, there was, in that Saxon host, but one sentiment pervading the breast of each individual—it was that of encountering the enemy; and, if it were not possible to subdue him, at least to leave him a tearful and a blood-stained victory.

Few of the Saxons had on them a ringed hauberk, still fewer the heavy haubergeon; many were without



even the leathern corium ; and numbers, who had, on account of the heat, divested themselves of their jerkins, did not tarry to resume them ; but, half naked as they were, and having only their helmet, sword, spear, and shield, rushed, pell-mell, on horseback and on foot, in one disordered mass, out of the camp, to encounter the rapidly advancing Swabians. "To arms! To arms!" was the common cry of all, as each snatched up a weapon of offence, and speeded, quickly as he could, to that spot where he believed must occur the first shock between the conflicting armies. No lines were disposed, no order of battle arranged, no distribution of men under their accustomed leaders determined upon ; but, as each man rode or ran, he joined that mass of his countrymen which was heaped together to receive the Swabian cavalry. The Saxons were, that day, a mob of fighting men, to encounter an army organized for attacking them ; for the sudden advance of the king had deprived them of all the advantage they might otherwise have obtained from the military skill and experience of their commanders.

Each moment increased the resisting force of the Saxons, as they individually hastened to their associates, and each moment brought the Swabian horse sweeping down in one long line upon them. Amongst the foremost line of the Saxons on horseback were the practised general, Count Dedi, and the ardent warrior, his son. By order of the count, the horsemen had disentangled themselves from the Saxon infantry, and had grouped together in one thick, globular body, and thus awaited the charge of the Swabians. Thus stood the Saxon cavalry, in a compact mass, upon a spot afterwards known as Hohenburg, and when they saw the Swabians

within a hundred yards of them, they, as if by one impulse, set their spears in their hands, dashed forward to meet the foe, and then came with such a crash upon their opponents, that, with the mere weight of men and horses, they broke up the force of their adversaries — hewing them down with heavy swords, as they whirled and turned amongst them. With this single charge the Swabians must have been routed, if, at the moment that they were on the point of disbanding, the Duke of Guelph, with the heavy armed Bavarians, had not come to their relief.

The soldiers of Guelph were practised warriors. There were amongst them men who were accomplished bowmen; others conspicuous for the fatal dexterity with which they flung the lance; and all were defended by helmets, coats of ringed mail, and long shields. These men first thinned the cavalry of Dedi by a shower of arrows and lances, and thus compelled, by their murderous discharge, Dedi's horsemen to attack them, and wherever that attack was made the squadrons of the Bavarians opened, to show thousands of soldiers drawn up, line after line, with shortened spears firmly planted in the earth, to receive their assailants. Despite of the orders of the count, his son, Dedi the younger, and the great body of the Saxon horsemen, rushed down upon these iron lines, and as they did so hundreds were transpierced with mortal wounds. Here it was that Dedi the younger slew, with his sword, Ernest, the Marquess of the Bavarians, a man illustrious for the many victories he had won over the Bohemians. It was the sole solace left to the young man for the disasters of that day; for, as Ernest fell, he found a hundred spears presented at his own heart, and it was solely owing to his

skill and courage that he was able to escape back in safety to the ranks of his countrymen.

A shout of joy was raised in the ranks, both of Swabians and Bavarians, as the retreat of the Dedis demonstrated the utter annihilation of the Saxon horsemen. Their exultation was destined to be but of brief duration; for they beheld the Duke Otho, followed by a chosen body-guard, leading on the multitude of Saxons, and rushing with them into the thickest of their lines, and slaughtering his foes wherever he came.

The battle now became general. Lances and spears had been discharged on both sides, and the carnage was carried on with the sword. Groans, shouts, and execrations filled the air, as Bavarians and Swabians beheld the marvellous skill of the Saxon soldiers in wielding, not merely one, but two swords at the same time, and each man, as he fought, inflicting double wounds upon his opponents. In that carnage, even Rudolph, the Duke of the Swabians, escaped with difficulty. A hundred times did his impenetrable armor receive the thrust or cut of a Saxon sword, and though no deadly wound was inflicted, yet was the strength with which the blow was given proved by the grievous bruises which rendered him moveless for many days afterwards.

Charge after charge was made by the royal horsemen upon the Saxons; but still they stood their ground unflinchingly. The dry earth was rendered clammy with blood, and the dying were sometimes prematurely smothered in the gore in which they fell, whilst horses' hoofs trampled upon the bodies of the prostrate. And yet the Saxons still fought on. Blow was returned for blow, and even the dying Saxon was seen, in many cases, to drag from his body the weapon that had given him his death wound, and with it to slay his slayer.

Saxons, Swabians, and Bavarians fought with the desperate bravery of men who might be slain but would not retreat.

For nine long hours had the battle now raged ; from twelve o'clock in the day until nine in the evening had the Saxons withstood the united attack of Swabians and Bavarians, and during all that period had Otho won for himself the glory of a dauntless soldier, reviving, wherever he appeared, the spirits of his countrymen, and, by his words and his example, maintaining their dogged determination to die or conquer : now bidding them remember they were fighting for liberty, and then rushing into the thickest ranks of the enemy, and hewing out, with his sword, a path for himself and his followers.

And whilst the battle thus raged King Henry held aloof. Perchance he delighted in this common destruction of Saxons, Swabians, and Bavarians. Whatever was his motive, he would not move a man of the thousands under his command, although repeated messages for succor reached him both from Rudolph and from Guelph. He stood in the centre of the plain, looking on at this awful carnage. He stood there, surrounded with his chosen body-guard of the Worms' knights and soldiers, all wearing their richly gilt armor, whilst on each side were drawn up, in compact masses, the Bohemians and the warriors of Lorraine.

At length, however, the signal of attack was given by Henry ; but it was not until he saw the lines of the Swabians and Bavarians wavering before the forward charges of the Saxons.

Otho and the other leaders of the Saxons were well aware that, once the king advanced, their last desperate

and hopeless struggle must be made, and therefore they prepared to encounter it.

Down then, with a deafening shout, upon the whole body of the Saxon soldiers, and their now widely extended line, came the king with his warriors. On the outermost wings the Saxons were at the same instant compelled to defend themselves from the combined attack of Heriman, Count of Glizberg, and of the soldiers of Bamberg: whilst, moving from divers points towards the one common centre, came rushing the king, with all his armed knights, the Duke of the Bohemians, and Godfrey, with the men of Lorraine.

It was a charge of horsemen — of thousands upon thousands of horsemen, all fresh — all eager for battle, and all untired by combat; and it was a charge made upon infantry, now wasted and worn down by a fight that had lasted for nine hours. The shock was irresistible — in an instant the united line of the Saxons was broken into a thousand fragments.

With that swift, combined charge, the entire face of the battle field was changed. The fight had become a carnage; and men, who had struggled for so many hours as warriors, now fled as fugitives — they were dispersed as the light dust is dispersed on the highway by the single blast of a strong wind.

There was a pause — a pause but for an instant, on the entire of the Saxon line. It was on that point where Henry, conspicuous amongst the rest, by his gorgeous armor, came in contact with Otho, and the leaders of the Saxon army. At that point were gathered together Otho and the two Dedis, and the faithful Bruin, and all the horsemen that, up to that period, had escaped uninjured. They watched the king as he advanced with the two sons

of Eberhard, Count of Ellenburg, and Diedrich; and they determined, if they could, to avenge their countrymen by the destruction of their oppressor.

At the same instant, the Dedis, father and son, discharged their spears at Henry, and he received both upon his shield, whilst the blows were returned by the two sons of Ellenburg, who lived not a moment afterwards, as both were struck lifeless from their horses by the swords of the Dedis. A blow from the sword of Henry struck Otho from his horse; and, as Henry raised his arm to strike the point into the heart of Otho, he was amazed to find it wrenched from his grasp by the expert hand of Bruin, who said:

“Spare Otho for the sake of one who now spares you your life, and whose life you sought, for I am Bruin——”

Poor Bruin never spoke another word; for, as he was in the act of restoring his sword to Henry, the heavy weapon of Diedrich came, with its trenchant blade, down upon his skull, splitting his head in two, and covering with his blood the golden greaves of the monarch, at whose feet fell the lifeless body of the humble, heroic, and generous man.

“The villain Bruin!” exclaimed Henry, trampling with his horse’s feet upon the now inanimate corpse. “I thought to have inflicted upon him a felon’s death, and not to have permitted him to die thus like a soldier. Is Otho a prisoner?”

“No,” answered Diedrich. “Our men are taking no prisoners.”

“Let none be taken,” said Henry. “Is Otho dead?”

“No,” replied Diedrich. “He has been carried away by the fugitives.”

Henry looked around him, and, as far as his eyes could reach, he saw the wide plain covered with fugitives, and his own soldiers hurrying after them.

“Follow! follow!” cried Henry. “Slay them to the last man. Show no mercy. Kill every Saxon you meet with. Take no prisoners. Slay — slay them all. Let even my camp-followers join in the pursuit, for I will not suffer, if I can, one of the Saxon race to escape. Slay — slay all.”

These merciless orders were punctually obeyed, and to the uttermost fulfilled. For mile after mile were the flying Saxons followed by the horsemen, led by Henry himself, and as they were overtaken, whether singly or in bands, they were put to death; and here, the bodies were to be seen of murdered men heaped together; and there, in groups of two or three. The cries for mercy were unheeded; or they were derided, whilst the pursuers still continued untired in their sanguinary task. Not a man of the whole Saxon army could have escaped annihilation, if darkness, conjoined with the heavy clouds of dust raised by the fresh breezes of evening, had not so bewildered the military butchers of Henry, that they could no longer distinguish those of whom they were in pursuit. In some cases, it happened that one portion of Henry's forces, supposing another division of the king's army to be the flying Saxons, slew their associates in mistake for those whom both were anxious to destroy.

The great body of the Saxons, who still held together in their hurried flight, reached the banks of the Unstrutt, and thither did they find themselves followed by some thousands of Henry's soldiers. For a moment they deliberated whether they should seek for mercy, or cast themselves into the waters of the rapid river. They looked back, and seeing the work of carnage still going on, they plunged, in a body as they were, into the waters of the Unstrutt, and, as they did so, spears and flights

of arrows came pouring down upon them ; and in an instant afterwards the clear stream was red with blood, and the corpses of the dead were rolling away with the gurgling river. Those who escaped arranged themselves in regular lines as they reached the bank, resolved, if attacked there, to exact a desperate revenge for all the massacres that had been perpetrated upon their countrymen.

The darkness of night had now covered the plain, and Henry feared to cross the stream to attack those, who, to his grief, he saw had lived to escape his vengeance. He returned to the field of battle, and from thence to the Saxon encampment, where he learned that even the non-combatant attendants on the Saxon leaders — the rustics who brought provisions to the camp, and the camp-followers — had all been put to death, and that with such brutal cruelty that men shrunk from dwelling on the details of the horrible tortures to which they had been subjected.

The murderers and torturers had been enriched with an enormous spoil of goblets, in gold and silver, and garments decorated with precious stones ; and hence it was that their joy was boundless, and their acclamations incessant, as they welcomed King Henry, when, as a conqueror, he marched in, at the head of his troops, to that encampment which had, the same morning, been occupied by the enemy.

For mile upon mile had he travelled back to that encampment over the bodies of the dead ; and heedlessly had he trampled upon the lifeless remains of friend or foe, well aware that he was to be rewarded, when he returned, with the title of “ a victor.” He thought of himself and the glory he had thus acquired, and of the power he had thus secured, and not a single compassionate



feeling arose for the numbers whose lives had that day been sacrificed. For them he cared but little when living, and now much less for the sorrow of the miserable relatives who had survived the victims to his ambition.

As the red flaring flames of thousands of torches, grasped in the hands of his soldiers, cast a light that appeared to be tinged with blood upon all around them, and seemed, as they passed along, to bring up out of the darkness in which the obscurity of night had buried them, the cold, white, naked corpses of the slaughtered Saxons, King Henry passed along, his face radiant with joy, and his heart bounding with exultation; for that awful carnage had secured, in his hands, a power upon which he now could perceive no check, and to which he was determined to place no limits.

Henry stood in the encampment of the Saxons; he even occupied, as if it were his throne, that which had been the chair of state of Duke Otho. The captured standards of the Saxons lay at his feet, spattered and dabbled with the hearts' blood of their defenders: his horse's hoofs were red with the gore of rustics; by his side were the princes and knights who had borne the brunt of the day; Duke Rudolph, of Swabia, crippled with bruises; the valiant Guelph, still fresh for another conflict; the fierce Borziwog, Duke of Bohemia; the gallant Godfrey of Lorraine, who cast an eye of pity on the dead; and the remorseless Count of Treves, who looked like a butcher from a slaughter house; whilst, in the midst of an enthusiastic soldiery, whose shouts of exultation rent the air, were a few bishops and abbots, who, trembling and sickened at the massacre they had been unwillingly forced to witness, appeared like captives of the king, by

whom they were called "subjects," and in such a battle as had that day been fought—"the auxiliaries."

"This," exclaimed Henry, "has been a great, a glorious, and a complete victory. Of the thousands who this day stood in array against me, not more than a few hundreds can have passed in safety the swollen waters of the Unstrutt, and of these few, not even one man should have reached its bank with life, but for the blinding dust which obscured our vision, and the darkness of night which concealed them."

"I do not fancy," observed Rudolph, "that Otho can have fled from the field; for whilst the battle raged, he fought more like a demon than a man, and seemed to seek for death in the midst of our ranks."

"I struck him down myself," observed Henry, "and would have slain him with my own hand, but for an intermeddling knave, who paid for his temerity with his life. I do not imagine he could have escaped in the conflict. Let his body, and that of every Saxon noble that is discovered, be hung upon trees, with dead dogs attached to their heels. Their deaths in battle shall not preserve them from the doom of traitors."

"What does your Majesty desire should be done with the carcasses of the fallen Saxons?" asked Diedrich.

"Let them rot where they have fallen," replied Henry. "They will afford a rich feast for the birds of the air and the beasts of the forest."

"But such numbers of the dead are certain to produce a pestilence for miles around the battle field," remarked Duke Godfrey.

"It is what I desire," observed Henry. "That pestilence can but sweep away the widows and orphans of those traitors. It will never reach one of my faithful

soldiers, for they shall march away from this place to-morrow.”

Duke Godfrey did not seek to disguise the feelings of disgust which this sentiment of the king excited, and, bowing lowly to him, retired from the Saxon encampment, with his followers, to his own quarters.

Henry perceived, but was too politic publicly to notice the displeasure of the Duke of Lorraine. He turned to Rudolph, and said—

“Let the trumpets sound—I wish to address my followers.”

A loud burst of trumpets woke up the echoes in the dark and dismal blood-stained field of Langensalza. It brought speedily, from the work of plunder, all the soldiers of Henry who were unwounded; and, in a few minutes afterwards, the king, surrounded with a circlet of nobles and warriors, all bearing torches, was seen mounted on his war horse; and when the cheering clamor of the trumpets had ceased, he thus addressed his triumphant army:—

“Soldiers of the empire—warriors, worthy of your indomitable sires, whose names are identified with victory in every battle in which they have fought. Heroes who have won for me, and with me, this glorious conquest, accept this open and this grateful expression of my thanks. Steadily, boldly, joyfully have you, with me, encountered a common danger, and with me subdued a brutal and ferocious race of men. Of the result I never entertained a doubt, because I was supported by you—because I relied upon your loyalty, and was confident in your bravery. I cannot imagine any peril too great, nor any difficulty so arduous, which I could not be certain of mastering, when you are my allies and associates.

“ You have gained a great victory — so great, that with it have ceased all the dangers of conflict, and all the perils of battle. You have no longer soldiers to fight against ; but you have fugitives to pursue. The toil of battle is over, and now the embers of civil war must be trodden down and extinguished. Now you have to use your rights as conquerors, and to discharge the office of executioner. The spoil of Saxony is yours — its lands must be laid waste, its farm-houses burned, its mansions demolished, whilst, as to its inhabitants, be it your care that flight shall not save, as runaways, those whom your weapons could not reach as foemen.

“ Soldiers of the empire — Saxony is now yours — let each take what spoil he can, and, what he cannot carry off with him, destroy — thus I enrich you, and thus impoverish the Saxons — thus do I reward my friends, and thus punish my enemies.

“ With to-morrow’s sun begins the work of spolia- tion and destruction, for the battle of Langensalza lays Saxony prostrate and helpless before me. It does so to my honor and for your profit.

“ Warriors of the empire — thus do I prove to you the gratitude of your sovereign.”

Loud cheers burst from the soldiery when Henry concluded an address in which he gave to them an unlicensed privilege of plundering the rich lands of Saxony ; and, at the same time, told them that they were to indulge their passions, and to shed, with impunity, the blood of their fellow-creatures. They were veterans in warfare, and knew well and thoroughly all the privileges Henry conferred on them, and they rejoiced, as demons rejoice, when they are permitted, for a time, to exercise their malignity upon mankind.

It was then, amid the loud huzzas of thousands of men, that Henry, accompanied by his chief nobility, rode out of the Saxon encampment; and he exulted, to hear those fierce soldiers hail him with the title of "Henry, the hero," and "Henry, the conqueror."

Henry had, at that moment, reached the topmost pinnacle of his highest fortune. All he had hoped for had been attained, and all he wished for, seemed, not only possible at a future time, but practical at that instant.

Henry was supremely happy.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE RESULTS OF THE BATTLE.

HENRY was supremely happy, for he believed that all his warlike opponents lay stark dead on the field of battle, and that all their clerical adherents, terrified by the fate that had befallen them, would not venture to contradict any propositions he might now choose to make, either as to the enslavement of Saxony, or the spoliation of the lands and revenues belonging to the church. Besides, he conceived that the moment had now come, when he might, with security, carry out the project he had long entertained, of uniting with the imperial crown all the spiritual powers of the pontiff—and that this might be effected, either by inducing or compelling the Pope at Rome to abdicate, and then electing one of his own slavish bishops in his place; thus, to obtain, amongst

other things, what he most wished for, a divorce from Bertha, and his marriage with Beatrice.

The manner in which he should proceed in carrying out these various projects, was passing through the thoughts of Henry, as the hearty acclamations of a jubilant and ferocious soldiery rung in his ears.

“Egen,” said Henry, to his devoted squire, “this victory renders it no longer necessary for me to intrust Erzegebirge to the watchful military skill of Diedrich. I confide it, and the care of Beatrice, to you. I look to you, by whom she was first discovered, to watch her for me. It is a precious charge I confide to you: it is that of the future empress. Upon the day of our marriage, ask a gift from me. A countship, and the richest estate of Duke Otho you choose to select, shall be your reward.”

“This is a command of your Majesty’s,” replied Egen, “of which I am certain not to be forgetful.”

“Let it be a stimulant to your watchfulness, Egen,” observed Henry, “for my promise is contingent upon your yielding up Beatrice to me in such health as when I first saw her. Farewell! all that I could have ever hoped for I have now obtained.”

As Henry spoke these words, Egen, accompanied with ten soldiers of Worms, rode off at full speed, in the same direction which the pilgrim had taken that morning. The words of Henry, declaratory of the consummation of his hopes, might be said still to linger on his lips, when there arose, from his own camp, towards which he was at the moment advancing, a wail of grief, so vehement in its expression, and so womanish by its shrillness, that Henry, despite of himself, felt his heart quail with terror.

“Gracious heavens!” he exclaimed, “what, at such

a time, can be the meaning of those doleful sounds? What disaster can possibly have occurred to justify them? Ha! Werenher," he said, "you here, and with such a woe-begone visage. Can you explain this to me?"

"I can," answered Werenher. "May I speak with your Majesty alone?"

"My friends," said Henry, "ride on, all of you, at full speed, to your several quarters. Enjoy, or repose yourselves, whichever you choose. Werenher and I shall follow slowly after you, and provide for the careful guard of the encampment during the night. And now," continued Henry, seeing that his orders had been instantly obeyed, and that he and his confidant were alone, "what is the meaning of all this? Wherefore do you look so sad? and why is it that the camp of a conqueror is changed into an abode of mourners?"

"It is," answered Werenher, "because the precise results of this day's battle have been ascertained."

"Well!" said Henry, "and that should be a cause of rejoicing, and not of grief. What more could be desired, than to see an army of forty thousand men, in the course of a few hours, annihilated?"

"The destruction of their leaders," answered Werenher.

"And they are assuredly destroyed," said Henry. "I saw Otho on the ground myself — this sword struck him down. He, with the others, must be slain."

"Not one of them," replied Werenher.

"Not one of them!" cried Henry, in amazement. "O, you say that which is impossible. How can you so positively assert that which is incredible?"

"It is not incredible," said Werenher, "for it is a fact that has been ascertained beyond the possibility of a doubt. Our camp-followers have been in all parts of

the field despoiling the bodies of the dead, and they declare that, amongst the slain Saxons, there has not been discovered one wearing any armor but that which is borne by a common soldier. There are thousands upon thousands of the rustics slaughtered, but not one bearing the rank of a noble. I offered a large reward for the discovery of the body of Otho, and twenty golden pieces for the body of every Saxon noble; and yet all declare that there is no such thing to be found on the field of battle."

"I grieve to hear this," answered Henry. "It is an evil; but it is not irremediable. I am sure soon to catch these fugitives — these officers who have no soldiers to command. What you tell me is a misfortune that affects myself more than any one else. It should not cause that general lamentation which fills my camp, and that I hear the more distinctly the nearer I approach to its trenches."

"Nor has it," remarked Werenher; "your soldiers are grieving for their comrades and commanders, not for the escape of the Saxon nobles."

"How?" asked Henry, again greatly astonished. "Have we not won a complete victory?"

"You have," replied Werenher. "Never, I believe, could a conqueror in battle count so many of his enemies slain, in a single day, as your Majesty in that combat which is now over. It is a complete victory, but it has been dearly purchased; for you have annihilated a rabble; but, in doing so, you have lost the very flower of your army. You have slaughtered a mob at the cost of the lives of nine thousand of your best and bravest soldiers. Your camp, therefore, presents a sad spectacle; for there may now be seen vassals weeping over the mangled remains of their lords — fathers for their sons —



sons for their fathers — brothers for brothers — kinsmen for their relations — their joy is changed into grief — their exultation to sorrow — and those who are the victors seem to be the vanquished. Counting by lives their losses, compared with those of the Saxons, are insignificant; but, calculating by the worth of those who have been slain, that on the Saxon side is nought, and ours is irreparable.”

“This is sad news,” said Henry, pausing, and musing for a few minutes. “This is, in sooth, sad news, and completely unexpected by me. It is not, however, as you say, irreparable. Those who fight as soldiers must calculate upon encountering death, whilst their survivors, who bear swords, should think of revenge, and not the indulgence of a useless grief. I despise those crying warriors; but still I shall pretend to sympathize with them. Werenher, be it your care, at the earliest dawn of the coming day, to have, at once, interred all the common soldiers in my army that have been slain. Let us conceal, if we can, from ourselves, the extent of the loss this victory has cost us. As to the nobles and knights who have fallen, assure their friends that, at my cost, their remains shall, with all the honors and magnificence that become brave men slain in battle, be conveyed to their family burial grounds; whilst the wounded shall receive rich rewards, and be restored in safety to their respective homes.”

“But how,” asked Werenher, “is your Majesty to appease the indignation of the army, when it is discovered that they have lost such illustrious commanders as Ernest of Austria, Count Engelbert, and the two heroic sons of Count Ellenburg; and this, for the mere purpose of depriving a multitude of headstrong boors of life?”

Be assured, they will feel that in such a war they have been degraded, and that their valor has been wasted upon a most worthless object."

"Even whilst you have been speaking to me, Werenher," answered Henry, "I have devised an expedient which, if it can be put in operation — and it shall be so — will have the effect of persuading them that they, as soldiers, are fighting in the cause of religion, and in maintenance of the rights of the church."

"Of religion! the church!" exclaimed Werenher, surprised at the words of Henry, "how is that possible?"

"Ay — of religion, and of the church," continued Henry; "remember, that the old, griping, avaricious, cowardly Archbishop of Mayence has been deluded, by me, into the notion that this war is entirely undertaken on his behalf, and for the purpose of compelling the recusant Thuringians and Saxons to pay him the tithes he craves. Be it your duty now to persuade him, for he is sometimes visited with religious scruples, that the result of this day's battle proves that heaven has declared in favor of his claims; and that, as I have aided him with the secular arm, it behoves him now to assist me with the spiritual weapons at his command — that he should, therefore, at the earliest hour in the morning, advance with his clergy to the royal tent, and there, in presence of all my army, pronounce sentence of excommunication upon the Saxons."

"Excommunication!" said Werenher; "why no such sentence can be canonically pronounced until after a regular trial and conviction of those thus condemned."

"Upon him then rest the responsibility, if he does that which he is not authorized to do," observed Henry. "Do you but persuade him that it is indispensable for

the recovery of his tithes, and I am sure he will not refuse. Besides, you can tell him that his excommunication will compel the Saxons to yield, and, whilst it secures to him the riches he seeks for, will also save much effusion of blood."

"I shall exert myself to the utmost," said Werenher; "but in case the archbishop refuse ——"

"I tell you that he will not do so," answered Henry. "But if you find him prating about religious scruples, remind him that he is in a camp, and not in a church — in Langensalza, and not in Mayence — that here he is bound to obey me, as a king, and if he refuse, to be punished, and even put to death as a traitor. Be assured that there is not a particle of the martyr's zeal in the timid Sigefrid. He will do as he is commanded; especially when he is once convinced that he has a strong pecuniary interest in yielding obedience. With a sentence of excommunication pronounced against the Saxons, there is no man who wields a sword that will not consider it to be his duty to fight against them. With that expedient will cease all murmurs amongst my soldiers."

"But it is an expedient that will force the Saxon nobles to desperation, in the first instance; and will, in the next, induce them to appeal to Rome, both against you and the archbishop," objected Werenher.

"I am not worthy to be a king," said Henry, "if I cannot discover a pathway through the maze of difficulties you suggest. I shall take care not to drive the Saxon nobles to desperation, for, at the very moment that I am laying waste their lands with fire and sword, I shall offer to them terms of peace, pardon, and an ultimate restoration of their property, provided they will yield themselves as my prisoners. I mean to despatch Duke

Godfrey on a mission to them to-morrow, with the most generous offers. He, who believes all men honest as himself, will readily undertake such an office ; and they, relying upon his promises, may place themselves in my power. Let them but do so — I need not tell you how such promises, made in my name, shall be fulfilled. As to the opposition from Rome which you apprehend, I have no fears respecting it. Aided by your cousin Croft, I have little doubt but that *a Pope*, not the Pope of Rome, will soon be my best supporter and my surest friend. This victory, Werenher, is not as decisive as I at first imagined ; but it is a great one, and it will be my own fault if it does not place at my disposal greater power than any monarch on this earth ever before wielded."

"I have full reliance in your Majesty's wisdom," said Werenher, "and a perfect confidence in your complete success."

"I was born to be a king," observed Henry, haughtily ; "and I do not feel myself to be so as long as any man lives who thinks he can oppose me with impunity, or presumes to fancy that he is in any way my equal. The moment Croft returns from Hildesheim I wish to see him ; he is the bishop I delight to honor."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE HIDING-PLACE OF THE SAXONS.

It was night, and something more than a month had passed away since the battle of Langensalza had been

fought and won by Henry and his princely vassals; whilst the rich lands of Saxony were traversed and wasted by his soldiers, and the only safe place of refuge for the Saxon nobility and prelacy was the impenetrable fortress of Magdeburg.

It was night, and passing along a narrow hill-path that went shelving over a dark and swampy, bush-covered valley, might be seen a person who wore the helmet and hauberk of a soldier, and who seemed to pause, from time to time, as if uncertain whether to proceed or turn back.

“Fool that I was — fool that I am,” exclaimed the solitary traveller, “fool, to have permitted Diedrich to depart without me from Erzegebirge; and still a greater fool, when I found that Egen had replaced him, to set out alone, in the hope that I might make my way to the king’s camp through a strange country. My good steed has broken down under me, and now, some accursed chance has brought me upon a path which it is equally dangerous to continue, and to retrace. O, for one single gleam of moonlight to guide me in this horrid night, and over this frightful pass! But for this trusty sword of mine I must long since have tumbled down this precipice by my side.”

The female warrior, Gertraud, had paused for a moment, thus to speak aloud her thoughts. She resumed her slow and onward progress, poking with her sword-point in the earth as she proceeded, and occasionally gently waving it about her, to see if there were projecting rocks or trees which might, by her suddenly coming in contact with them, throw her off the path to which she clung with such difficulty.

Gertraud advanced thus doubtingly along. All was

silent around her, and not even the hooting of the owl was to be heard. The perfect stillness of the night, combined with the utter darkness, and the peril of the unknown path she was cautiously treading, produced at last their benumbing effect upon the stout-hearted woman ; and she felt — it was the first time in her life — the chill of fear creeping over her.

“ O, for the warm, staring sunshine,” she exclaimed, “ or, even the cold, clear beams of the moon, though it was but for a moment ! ”

These few words had scarcely been uttered, when the dark, massy clouds, which hitherto had concealed, as if in a profound abyss of darkness, the broad disk of the full moon, rolled suddenly away — allowing it to appear but for a minute — and then closed suddenly together, as if some Titanic hand had, for a moment, torn violently asunder their sable folds, and then loosing its grasp, let them unite again.

There was moonlight — clear, bright moonlight for a minute — but that minute sufficed to show Gertraud that she was pursuing a path that seemed to run, as far as her eye could reach, upon the brink of a narrow and obscure valley, whilst behind, a sudden turn in the hill concealed from her the point on which she must have first commenced her ascent. The hill from which she gazed, she could perceive, was but the base of a range of steep mountains that rose up, like a high wall, upon the side of the valley on which she stood, and that valley she saw was, on the other side, closed in by a range of dark, rocky mountains.

Gertraud stood erect as she made this survey. With the moonlight all her courage revived, and she seemed, when thus seen, to be a soldier, who, engaged upon a

warlike expedition, is examining the ground upon which he and his associates might be required to act.

“It is a Saxon — I know him by his helmet,” exclaimed a voice, about fifty yards from where Gertraud stood. “Slay him.”

The whistling of a flight of arrows was heard, as the dark clouds in the heavens overhead flew together, and at the same instant were uttered the words — “O, God!” and then — the path on which Gertraud stood showed no further trace of her!

There was an unbroken stillness for several minutes, and then four men crept stealthily along the path, feeling with their sword-points whilst they advanced, as if seeking for something lying upon the earth.

“The Saxon stood within fifty yards of us; he must have fallen *here*,” said one of the men, occupying the very spot on which Gertraud had been but a short time previously. “O,” he continued, placing his naked hand on the earth, “the Saxon has been shot — the earth is moist with blood — he must have tumbled into the valley beneath. He is worth seeking for by daylight, if for nought more than his golden-burnished hauberk. One clad so richly, must have golden coin in his belt. We must bring our dogs with us in the morning. They are well trained in the search for hidden treasures.”

“We must bring more than our dogs with us,” observed his companion. “The Saxon we have slain, you may rest assured, was not alone. Let us be careful then, in seeking for his gold, we do not meet with death from his companions.”

“What you say, Einhart, is prudent,” remarked the first speaker. “Do you then repair to the tent of Duke Borziwog — report to him what has occurred, and what

you apprehend. Where there is a chance of plunder, or of a battle, Borziwog is too true a Bohemian not to be on the alert ; we, meanwhile, shall return to our post, far happier than when we were first stationed there, since we have had the good fortune to slay a Saxon, sword in hand."

With these words, the four Bohemians slunk back to the cave in the hill side, from which they had discharged their arrows at the unsuspecting Gertraud.

Of the four arrows discharged at the same moment at Gertraud, one had flown wide of the mark ; the second had struck her helmet, and rebounded from it ; the third had gashed her neck, and covered her and the place on which she stood with her blood ; and the fourth had plunged into her body with such fearful force, as to carry her at once from the pathway down the precipitous bank, and to extort from her, by the agony it cost, an exclamation, which habit, and not a sense of religion, induced her to utter.

Hour after hour passed away, of which every moment was an intense torture to the suffering, mangled, and bruised body of Gertraud. Thus she lay in complete darkness — one quivering mass, rather of sensation than of thought ; and then, as the morning sun arose, human nature gave way — the strong woman fainted — and she lay as one that was already dead, in a clammy pool formed of her own blood.

When Gertraud recovered her consciousness, she found that she lay upon a soft bed, composed of dry herbage, and that this bed was placed in a sort of tent — if tent it could be called — which seemed to be made of an awning of cloth, which, fastened from tree to tree, seemed merely designed to shade those who sat beneath from the



rays of the sun, whilst, open upon all sides, it permitted the eye to reach to the most distant parts of the valley. Gertraud gazed around, and saw some hundreds of persons variously occupied ; some, sitting on the grass, conversing together ; others preparing their food ; some carrying with them provisions — the results, plainly, of the chase, in which they had been engaged — others shaping out arrows ; some furbushing their swords ; whilst soldiers, hunters, women, and even children, were mingled together ; and all were silent, and all looked sorrowful.

“ Is this a dream ? ” said Gertraud, sighing with pain as she spoke. “ I have never seen aught like this before.”

“ It is no dream, my child,” said an old woman, placing a goblet, filled with cold water, to the parched lips of Gertraud. “ It is a sad reality. Those that you now look upon are Saxons. They have fled to this wilderness, in the hope they may escape the persecution of the merciless myrmidons of our cruel King Henry ; and, above all, they have fled from the murderous swords, the brutal passions, and the insatiable cupidity of the ruthless Borziwog and his Bohemians. Alas ! there is scarcely a man, or woman, or child, that you now behold, that has not to deplore the death, by violence, within the last month, of some near and dear relation. There is scarcely one of them but has lost a wife, a sister, a daughter, a father, a brother, or a son ; for there is no respect shown by the king’s soldiers to the weakness of women, the innocence of childhood, or the imbecility of age. A month ago, and all you now see before you were free, were happy, and were contented. Many of them were rich ; and there is not one of

them now that is not poor as the meanest mendicant that seeks alms at a monastery gate. They have seen their homesteads and their farm-yards burned down, their cattle slaughtered, their crops fired, and their relatives murdered. Wonder not, then, that you see them all thus woe-begone — for they know, that if they are discovered by the Bohemians, who search for the Saxons every where, in the marsh, the forest, and on the mountain top, their death — and not improbably a torturing death — will be inflicted upon them. O, God, have mercy, my child, on those who delight in war; for, if he be as pitiless to them, as they are to their fellow-creatures, then, a never-ending death must be reserved for them in another world.”

Gertraud shuddered as she heard these words pronounced. Weakened with loss of blood, and agonized with pain, she was, for the first time, an eye-witness to the consequences of war, when accompanied with a disastrous defeat, and she loathed, from that moment, that which, hitherto, she had so much loved.

“O, God!” she cried, “have mercy on me! — the worst of sinners — pardon me, the worst of women, who have forsworn my sex, and forgotten my Creator, in my admiration of that which I now see is but murder and rapine, disguised under a false name!”

“If you have sinned thus, I trust God will forgive you,” continued the aged female. “But what you now behold can give you but a scanty idea of the horrors of the war that King Henry is waging against the Saxons. He has consigned us all to the Bohemians, to be treated as these half-infidels please. I, myself, bear the scar of a Bohemian sword upon my forehead, inflicted upon me within the holy precincts of a church to which, with

other women, I had fled for shelter, and where I saw first its altars despoiled, and then its roof set on fire by those unbelievers. It is in vain that the fugitive Saxons seek to hide from them their treasures, or to conceal themselves. The Bohemians never cease in their search, and never tire in pursuit. Silver and gold, and gorgeous garments, and articles of value are dug up by them, and dogs, trained by them, point out every spot in which the earth has been recently stirred — and these animals can detect the glitter of the precious metals even in the darkest hole of the most gloomy cave. Sought for by them whithersoever we fly, we would willingly yield to them our wealth, if they would spare our lives, or if they did not seek to extort, by torture, the possession of the riches they crave. We live in momentary fear of death, and we daily prepare for its approach, I hope worthily, in the manner you are now about to witness.”

As the woman spoke, the gentle tinkling of a bell was heard, and the occupations of all ceased. All gathered, rank after rank, behind the rustic couch on which Gertraud was lying, and that was placed but a few paces' distance from what appeared to Gertraud to be a narrow table, on which was placed a statue, covered over with white cloths.

Gertraud did not hear the tinkling bell, for her whole soul was absorbed in the words of her aged nurse.

“And this,” she cried, “this is war! The burning of churches, the dishonor of women, the murder of men, the massacre of children, the destruction of property, the defacement of the works of God! O, heaven have mercy on me, for I repent, bitterly repent of my past life.”

As she spoke these words, she saw the white cloths

withdrawn from what she conceived to be a table and a statue, and there stood revealed to her an altar, on which was raised a cross of pure gold, glittering with jewelry, that had manifestly originally belonged to some rich monastery. On each side of the altar were candlesticks of gold, and in the centre, a magnificent chalice, with its patena of gold.

Gertraud gazed at this spectacle with wonder; but that wonder became delight, despite of all her sufferings, when she saw the candles lighted up, as if for the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

“Alas! alas! sinner that I am,” exclaimed Gertraud, bursting into tears. “God is very merciful to me. He permits me, before I die, to be present at this solemn sacrifice, which I have never witnessed since I prayed before him in my innocent girlhood.”

“My child,” said a priest, whose hairs were as snow-white as the alb with which he was invested, “I am now about to ascend the altar; but before I do so, I would wish you to receive the Holy Communion.”

“Me — Communion!” exclaimed Gertraud. “Alas! father, I am not worthy to hear even the bell that rings for the faithful to come and worship him whom they have served. Never — never — O, never have you looked upon so great a sinner as now writhes in agony of body, but still greater agony of soul, before you. O, father, look upon me with horror; for I look with horror upon myself, and detest my sins from the bottom of my heart.”

“My child,” said the priest, “I recognize in you the best dispositions for that holy feast to which I invite you — for you bring to it humility and repentance. Do you desire to confess your sins, that they may be for-

given — then address your thoughts to him whose image is on that altar, and your words to my ear. Remember, you have his promise, that, complying with the conditions which he has imposed, in establishing his church upon this earth, those sins, be they ever so great, shall be remitted.”

“Father! father!” said the weak and exhausted Gertraud, “then hear my confession speedily, for I feel that my strength is fast departing from me.”

The old priest knelt down by the couch of Gertraud. Those who gazed at a distance upon the confessor and the penitent, could perceive the latter frequently to wring her hands, as if in bitter agony, and then all motion, upon her part, ceased. The confessor, on the other hand, who had remained quiescent, was seen to lean his head towards her, as if exhorting her, and then, making the sign of the cross over her, all felt assured he had given her absolution.

When this was seen, all advanced again, close to where Gertraud lay, and the priest, addressing them, said: —

“My children, death, at this moment, impends over the head of all of us. We know not when it may come upon us — to-day, or to-morrow, or the day after; but, for our suffering sister, who lies here, it is inevitable. Before an hour has passed away, she will be numbered with the dead. She, therefore, urgently demands all our prayers. Let us all, at the same moment, as faithful, believing, and truly penitent sinners, join in the same awful sacrifice, and partake, with her, of the same Holy Communion.”

The people ranged themselves according to the ancient Roman order, in front of the altar, the men on the

south, and the women on the northern side. The priest, attended by his clerks, proceeded to the altar, arrayed himself in his vestments, said mass, gave the Communion to Gertraud, and to all the grown-up persons of his congregation, (for all had been prepared to receive it,) and he had turned to them, and was in the act of pronouncing the benediction upon all present, with the eyes of Gertraud intently fixed upon him, when a rushing noise was heard in the air, and she saw the crucifix struck and overthrown, the chalice shivered, and the priest, covered with blood, falling lifeless to the earth before the altar at which he had officiated. At the same instant was heard the yelping of dogs, the shouts of soldiers, as they dashed forward, with glittering swords, to seize the altar ornaments of gold, and then there rung in her ears the shrieks of women and the cries of terrified children.

“And this is war! glorious war!” exclaimed Gertraud, as a thrill of horror ran through her veins. “I have loved such deeds as this—O, heaven spare me—have mercy upon me; for I have sinned, and I know not what I did. Mercy! mercy! ——”

As she spoke these words blood gushed from the lips of Gertraud, and she lay like a corpse in the midst of a scene of carnage. The prayer of Gertraud was poured forth amidst a scene of terrible carnage; for the Bohemians, who had supposed, in bursting into the Saxons' hiding-place, that they would have, at the utmost, but a few spiritless soldiers to cut down, found themselves, when the first surprise was over, opposed to a band of brave Saxons, who met them on every side, singly, or in groups, and who, thoughtful of their good old priest, murdered before their eyes, inflicted a death-wound

upon every Bohemian they could reach with their swords.

“Back, men — back,” cried Borziwog, to his rude Bohemian followers. “Take shelter behind those trees, and from thence you can shoot, like wild beasts, those Saxons — men and women.”

“On, Saxons — on!” exclaimed a voice from behind the rearmost rank of the Bohemians. “Charge those vile Bohemians with your swords in the front. We shall meet them here as they retreat.”

These words were spoken by Bernhard, the forester, who was seen at the head of some thousand armed rustics, dashing down the sides of the valley.

The Saxons, who had been surprised in the valley, advanced, amid a shower of arrows, towards the trees where the Bohemians had retreated, and, although they left some dead bodies behind them as they advanced, still they closed with the robber band of Borziwog, and the loud clash of swords was heard for a few moments, then groans, and the shrieking Bohemians burst forth from the trees, pursued by the Saxons, and whenever overtaken, cut down at once. Bernhard seemed to have singled out Duke Borziwog for his opponent, as, wherever the Bohemian duke turned, he followed, and, at length, coming up with him, struck the Bohemian, as he ran, so heavy a blow on the back of his helmet, that Borziwog fell senseless to the earth.

Three of the Saxon rustics rushed forward to plunge their swords into the body of Borziwog, when they saw him thus prostrate on the earth. Bernhard, however, interposed to preserve him, saying —

“No — for such a base wretch as this there is a punishment worse than death. He has degraded his duke-

dom by his church robberies, his private pilferings, and his priest murders. We must send him forth amongst his fellow-men, a disgrace to his country, and a scorn even to the poorest wretch that walks this earth. Let him be as a leper amongst the princes of the empire."

"What!" said one of the Saxon rustics, "will you spare the life of him who murdered my helpless old father?"

"Will you," cried another, somewhat indignantly, "allow him to live who has slain the priest at the altar?"

"Bind his hands; raise him from the earth — harm him not; and when you have heard what I have said to him, then determine if you would wish him to die," was the answer that Bernhard gave to the infuriated Saxons.

Borziwog, who had been merely stunned by the blow which Bernhard had inflicted, was placed, by his captors, standing erect, in front of the man who now assumed, in his demeanor, all the gravity of a judge, as he proceeded to question his prisoner.

"You are," said Bernhard, "the notorious Borziwog, Duke of Bohemia."

"Such is my name, and such my title," answered the prisoner, looking scornfully at his captor. "Who, may I ask, is it presumes thus to question me, as if he were my superior in birth and in rank?"

"By birth, I am a serf; by charter, a freeman; by my sword, your captor; and, therefore, by right of war, your superior; and now, in the name of oppressed and rightfully insurgent Saxony, your judge."

"My judge! A prince judged by a serf — a noble by a freedman. Ho! ho!" laughed Borziwog. "The man



is mad. Whoever yet heard of an inferior sitting in judgment upon his superior?"

"You are my inferior," gravely and solemnly replied Bernhard.

"Your inferior!" said Borziwog, amazed at the pertinacity of the forester.

"Yes; my inferior in every thing which it is no merit in you to possess—the chance of birth, and the accident of rank. You are my inferior, for you are degraded by crime, and I am innocent—my inferior, for you are debased by vices, and I am unstained by them—my inferior, for you have murdered the young and the old, the priest in his sacerdotal robes, and the mother in the midst of her children. Born a duke, you have descended to the practices of the meanest thief—in name, a Christian, you have laid your unhallowed hands upon the altar, and robbed it of its sacred vessels. Uninjured by the Saxons, you have made yourself their scourge."

"Fellow," replied Borziwog, "what I have done has been in obedience to the commands of King Henry—of my king, and of yours. To him, alone, am I responsible."

"O, yes; there are others to whom you are responsible; to God, whom you have offended," answered Bernhard, "and whose mercy time will be given you to invoke; and you are next responsible to Saxony, whose unoffending people you have persecuted."

"Calculate what you call my offences," said Borziwog, "in coin, and, be the amount what it may, the blood-fine shall be paid to you. It is a good old Saxon practice, and I am ready to comply with it."

"You have no right," observed Bernhard, "to appeal

to the German custom of blood-fines ; for your homicides did not originate in any sudden gust of passion — they all spring from a base and sordid avarice. Yours have been the crimes of a fugitive slave ; and, as a fugitive slave — as a debased villain, you shall be punished. Were you a mere prisoner of war, you should be treated generously, until restored to your friends ; but, as it is, you shall be mutilated as a despicable wretch — as one with whom no honest man can for the future associate. Here,” said Bernhard to the three Saxons who stood by his side — “ cast this miscreant upon the earth, slit open his nostrils, cut off one of his ears, and then, from where his hair first springs from his forehead to the topmost point of the skull, cut all the hair, and with the hair, the skin from his head ; so that, as long as he lives, he may bear about him the marks of the most infamous punishment that can be inflicted.”

“ O, mercy ! mercy ! mercy ! ” exclaimed Borziwog, when he heard these words.

“ As little mercy as you ever showed to man, woman, or child,” said Bernhard, as he walked from the place of execution, from which speedily arose the heart-thrilling shrieks of the tortured Duke of Bohemia.

Bernhard advanced through the tangled brushwood of the valley towards that portion in which he perceived that an awning had been erected. As he advanced, he found his path strewed with the bodies of the slaughtered Saxons and the slain Bohemians, whilst, here and there, were still to be seen, Saxons writhing with pain from their wounds, and Bohemians rendered moveless by the gyves that fettered their limbs.

Upon entering beneath the awning, the first thing that attracted the attention of Bernhard was to find that the

temporary altar, with its golden ornaments, was surrounded on all sides by a pack of Bohemian dogs, who yelped, and looked around it, as hounds do when the animal of which they are in pursuit has been discovered.

“Poor brutes!” exclaimed Bernhard, “the perverse ingenuity of man has made them, unwittingly to themselves, the instruments of persecution to the hapless race of Saxons. These are the dogs of Borziwog, that have been taught by him to search for hidden treasures, and who are now calling upon him to come and seize upon what they have tracked out for him. They will wait patiently to have their throats cut,” said Bernhard to his followers — “slay them all!”

“Bernhard — brave Bernhard — come hither,” cried the faint voice of one who lay like to a person dead, and stretched close to the pathway on which the gallant for-ester stood.

“Who calls on me?” asked Bernhard, stooping down, and taking in his own the now heavy, ice-cold hand of Gertraud.

“It is she who saved your life at Erzegebirge,” answered Gertraud. “That is one good act of my life — thank God! for, if I had not exchanged helmets with you — if I had not been mistaken, by the wearing of your four-cornered Saxon helmet, for a Saxon, the Bohemians never would have discharged their arrows at me.”

“What!” cried Bernhard, “have those vile Bohemians slain you, though an ally? It is well for Borziwog I did not know this before I had passed sentence upon him.”

“Slay no more Bohemians,” said Gertraud, “spare them for my sake; for unwittingly they have slain me, and, unintentionally, they have conferred upon me the great-

est blessing which mortal can possess — that of being reconciled to God through the sacraments of the church. Alas! Bernhard, I have loved war for its own sake; and I have been forgetful that it is never justifiable but in defence of religion — of a sovereign's right — or a people's freedom. For me to grasp a shield was a crime: with you, it is a virtue. Ah! woe to me! I challenged you to meet me sword in hand, and now you have come to see me die by the weapons of those to whom I had wished success. Bernhard, I have two requests to make of you."

"Name them," said Bernhard — "if it be possible to perform them, they shall be executed; for, now I may say to thee, that which otherwise might be regarded as rude and unbecoming, that never until I encountered you, did I see woman worthy of the love and devotion of man."

A faint smile lighted, for a moment, upon the pale and trembling lips of Gertraud, as her own thoughts respecting Bernhard recurred to her memory. The smile passed speedily away, and it was succeeded by a deep sigh, as she said:

"In this world, dear friend, there is nought but vexation of spirit. My time presses. Of the two requests I have to make, one is possible, the other may prove impracticable. The first is, that you will see the saintly maiden, Beatrice, and her faithful companion, Gretchen, and beg that both will forgive me — both pray for the repose of my soul — because it was I who betrayed their secret to Diedrich."

It was the first time the wretched woman had pronounced that once-prized name, from the moment she had been wounded; and, as she gave utterance to it, a

shiver of horror made every limb tremble. She closed her eyes, as if suffering intense pain, and then proceeded:—

“Bernhard—if it be possible—if without exposing your own life to imminent danger, you can see and speak with Diedrich, do so. Bear to him my last request, that he will think over his life of sin and of blood—that he will repent, if it be possible—that he will, as I have done, humbly confide himself to the mercy of God. Will you do this?”

“I will,” answered Bernhard, “even though I think the attempt will be made in vain; for, who can hope to see that God will be merciful to one who has shed the blood of a holy bishop?”

“Ah! Bernhard, Bernhard!” cried the weak and faltering Gertraud, “Judas himself would have been forgiven, if he had sincerely repented of his sin. As I was misled by my admiration for the courage of Diedrich, so has Diedrich been misled by his besotted devotion to King Henry. Tell him, that my last prayer was for his sincere repentance; bid him seek for it through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.”

“Again, I promise you,” said Bernhard, “that if it be within my power to fulfil this wish, it shall be performed; and if heaven desire that the grace of repentance be bestowed on Diedrich, such means will be afforded to me—but—Gertraud—dear Gertraud—you are dying!” exclaimed Bernhard, as he perceived her eyes assume a fixed and glassy look.

Gertraud no longer saw nor heard him. Her eyes and ears were alike closed to this world—a smile was on her lips, as she murmured forth—

“To the church—to the altar of the virgin—sing Ermold’s hymn—it is so sweet, when chanted by the nuns:—

‘Hear, holy mother! Virgin fair!  
Hear, O, hear my humble prayer,  
And help me in this hour of care.

‘Say to thy Son, I reverence thee,  
And He will love me tenderly,  
And soothe my sorrows constantly.

‘Help me, Mary, sin to fly,  
Help me, when in pain I sigh,  
Help me, Mary, when I die.’”

With these words, slowly and indistinctly uttered, broke the heart of Gertraud, and she now lay stiff, blood-stained, and lifeless, like the martyred priest, who had, but an hour previously, administered the last sacraments to her.

Bernhard, as he looked upon her, covered his face with his hands, and wept like a child.

“To all,” cried Bernhard, “friends and foes alike, one common grave. Now then for our prisoners—those vile Bohemians—shave their heads of every scrap of hair, so that they may hereafter be known to be ruffians who have been punished as thieves, and did not deserve to be treated as prisoners. When shorn, tie them to trees; but leave the hands of their duke free, that he may loose them when we have departed. To work—to work, men, speedily; for before nightfall we must be on our road to Erzegebirge.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE ENVOY.

GODFREY of Lorraine had willingly undertaken the task which Henry had confided to him, of seeking out the Saxon nobles and prelates, and tendering to them the king's full pardon, on condition that they would, in presence of the army of the empire, place themselves in his hands, and publicly submit to him. An obstacle to the successful accomplishment of this negotiation presented itself, on which Godfrey had not calculated; and that was, the universal distrust entertained by the Saxons with regard to the promises of Henry. None believed in his sincerity, none confided in his declarations, and none seemed disposed to place life or liberty at his disposal.

“But how,” asked Godfrey, at a conference with the nobles of Saxony, “how am I to remove your suspicions, which I believe to be unfounded, and how dissipate your fears, which I am convinced are vain? What can Henry do more than bind himself by his troth as a king? A king who would break his word with his subjects takes the first irretrievable step towards his own abdication. For his own sake Henry cannot, dare not, deceive you. Submit then in the manner he desires. It is no dishonor to you to do so; for you have fought bravely against him, and now have no longer power to resist him. Besides, you should recollect that every day you refuse is a day added to the misfortunes of your country, as a brutal soldiery waste its lands, and bring unnumbered woes upon its poor unoffending population.”

“It is not that we fear discredit by submitting to King Henry,” replied Otho, “that we decline, or rather hesitate, to do so. It is because we know him to be perfidious that we fear to take from our country its last hope of liberty, by placing ourselves in his power. We pine for peace, not for our own sake merely, but for the sake of our poor countrymen, on whom he exercises, by his Worms’ body-guard, his Swabians, and, worse than all, his Bohemians, the worst of cruelty.”

“Then what,” asked Godfrey, “can be done to satisfy your scruples, and to remove your suspicions?”

“First,” answered Otho, “that we have you to pledge yourself — life, body, honor, and goods, that what the king promises shall be literally fulfilled; next, that some one amongst us shall, at the risk of his own life, accompany you to the king’s palace at Goslar — there have a personal conference — and candidly tell him what our accusations are against him as a king. If Henry will patiently listen to these accusations, and, having heard them, permit our envoy to return back to us in safety, then, from the report of that envoy, to decide our course — it is most probable we shall determine, encouraged by such a test, upon placing confidence in his promise, and submitting to him.”

“What you now propose,” said Godfrey, “is perfectly fair and reasonable; and, in the king’s name, I accede to it. Who shall be your envoy?”

“If I am not guilty of presumption in making the offer, I shall be that envoy,” said Dedi the younger, standing up, and blushing to hear the sound of his own voice in the midst of his superiors and elders. “I know well, from my venerated father, all that should be told to the king of his past conduct; and, if there be danger



in the task I undertake, it is far better that the life of one so worthless as myself should be sacrificed than that of any I see around me, who could not die without inflicting a severe loss upon Saxony — nor without leaving, in his own home, a widow — and, perchance, orphans.”

“Thy father may well be proud of such a son,” remarked Godfrey; “for in thee I perceive the becoming diffidence of a youth and the thoughtful courage of a man. If my wishes have any weight with the Saxon nobles, then thou shalt go with me; for I would prefer thee as a companion to any other noble they could name.”

Duke Otho looked to the elder Dedi, as if it were for him alone to decide whether or not he would consent to his son proceeding on an enterprise which every Saxon knew to be pregnant with danger.

To this silent appeal to his feelings as a father, and his judgment as a statesman, the Count Dedi made no other reply than by clasping his son in his arms, and saying:

“Brave boy! it shall be as thou wishest. Go — remember that, from this moment forth, thou dost represent Saxony and all its wrongs, as well as all its rights. Go — and may heaven protect thee!”

In a few minutes afterwards, Godfrey and his attendants were, with Dedi the younger, on their road to Goslar.

As the shades of evening descended upon the earth, a special messenger, sent forward by Godfrey, announced to Henry that the Duke of Lorraine, with Dedi the younger, were approaching to Goslar, to settle the terms on which peace might be concluded with the Saxons.

Henry and his favorite Werenher were alone when

this messenger arrived. As the name of Dedi the younger was pronounced, Werenher turned pale with anger — and, the moment afterwards, his face flushed with joy, as a diabolical thought entered his mind.

“Dedi the younger,” said he to the king, as soon as the messenger had retired, “does not come here to treat of peace ; but, covering over his baseness with what he conceives to be the safe shield of an envoy, he comes to insult your Majesty !”

“To insult me !” said Henry, his proud spirit revolting at the idea of any man presuming to speak to him but as to a superior being. “Insult me ! He dare not.”

“He dared to raise his sword against you in battle, when death impended over him. Be sure he will not fear to wag his tongue against you, when he can do so in safety,” replied Werenher.

“In safety !” said Henry, stamping with rage. “Safety for one who assails me ! He must be mad to think so. He shall not live an hour afterwards !”

“But your Majesty should bear in mind,” said Werenher, “that he comes here under the protection of Godfrey. He comes with all the impunity that attaches to the character of one who discharges the duty of a herald, an ambassador, or an envoy.”

“Then let him be careful he does not abuse the impunity that belongs to his office,” remarked Henry. “If he does so, he shall not leave this place alive.”

“But putting him to death,” replied Werenher, “would be the proof to the Saxons that they could not rely upon your promises of impunity, once they had submitted to you.”

Henry paused. He looked fixedly at Werenher for a

few moments, and seeing his favorite smile in answer to his glances, he said :

“ Werenher, you have devised some plan which you have not thought fit to suggest to me. Tell me plainly what it is. How know you that Dedi will use insulting language towards me ? ”

“ Because Dedi,” replied Werenher, “ has been nurtured in rebellion — because he has been taught, from his childhood, by his father and the Countess Adela, to abhor you ; because he, therefore, does not respect you as his king, and hence is disposed to use contumacious language both of you and towards you. And then I know that the Saxons have resolved never to submit to you without warning you of your past misgovernment (for such they call it), and they cannot, nor any one who represents them, convey their opinions but in language that must inevitably be insulting to your feelings. Hence it is that I say I am sure Dedi the younger comes here to insult you. If I be wrong in my judgment, and my apprehension prove unfounded, then let your Majesty not remember either what I have said to you, or what, in connection with this subject, I may have occasion to say.”

“ But wherefore,” asked Henry, “ if what you say be true, warn me that I cannot take instant vengeance upon the man who presumes to speak to me in any other terms than those which a subject should use in addressing his sovereign ? Why tell me of the evil consequences to myself of shedding his blood, as if I were a mere citizen, and feared that I should be ruined by the *fredum* I should have to pay to the state, and the *faidum* to his family, for the homicide I had committed ? ”

Werenher did not answer these questions by words,

but in action. He drew from his breast, and placed on the table before the king, a thin case of steel, and a diminutive round box which had formerly belonged to Anselm of Worms, and of which he had become the possessor, when sailing down the Maine with Lieman and Egen.

“What mean you, Werenher, by these toys?” said Henry. “Do they afford an answer to my questions, that you thus display them?”

“They do,” replied Werenher. “Within this case lies a dagger, the most minute puncture from which is certain death; and within this box a poison, imperceptible to the taste, but so noxious that no substance can contain it but crystal, and that only as long as it is prevented from being exposed to the air.”

“These are marvellous things,” said Henry; “but yet I cannot perceive how they serve to solve the difficulty you have yourself proposed.”

And as Henry said this, there was a cold, malignant smile not merely on his lip, but in his eye, which, if Werenher had interpreted aright, would probably have induced him to pause in the conversation he had thus commenced, and to shrink from the proposition he was about to make. In his eagerness to shed the blood of the man who had dishonored him by a blow, and publicly branded him as a coward, he did not perceive the rigidity of countenance with which Henry listened to him, as he thus proceeded:

“I have shown to your Majesty these two sure instruments of death,” said Werenher, “because, in seeing them you may at once be conscious that the life of Dedi is in your power, and that you are free to take it, whenever you please.”

“But so it is,” observed Henry, “at any moment he is within reach of my sword. Wherefore am I a soldier, or a king, if I am not free to take the life of him who avows himself my mortal foe?”

“But you cannot touch him if he be under your protection as an envoy,” replied Werenher. “To slay him then, would be to dishonor yourself.”

“Go on,” said Henry, — “I listen to you.”

“Without noise — without tumult — without even appearing to be conscious of the manner in which he has met his death, and therefore free in the sight of the world from any participation in it, you see, in these minute instruments, the certain means of punishing Dedi for his insolence,” observed Werenher. “Conscious that he only breathes by your permission, you can, with an assumed patience, listen to him. To do so, will much promote your Majesty’s plan for getting the Saxon nobility and prelacy into your hands. The Duke Godfrey will be a witness to your conversation. He will thus be able, hereafter, to testify that neither in your words, nor your demeanor, did you manifest the slightest enmity against the younger Dedi; and that, therefore, if any accident should befall him, you, at least, must be innocent. Thus acting, your Majesty will have an enemy the less, and your policy of pretended reconciliation with the Saxons will not be in the least degree marred. What says your Majesty to my proposal?”

“I say,” replied Henry, “that it is a very safe one — it is very prudent, and very base.”

“Very base!” repeated Werenher, somewhat startled by the words of the king, and still more so by his manner.

“Ay — Werenher — I repeat it, very base,” observed

Henry; "why should friends mince their words, when every sentence they speak may affect the life of a human being? I say it would be very base in me, who am a king, if, in dealing with one of my subjects, and desiring his death, I should strike him, not with the sword, but, like a cowardly and hired assassin, have him stabbed or poisoned in the dark. The evil I do, I am ready to avow, and to abide the consequence. I may be hated — I am sure I am hated; but I never shall be despised. No — no, Werenher, in giving me the advice you have done (and a portion of it is wise counsel, and I mean to follow it) you have been actuated far more by a desire to slay Dedi than to serve me."

"I assure your Majesty," said Werenher, vehemently, and giving utterance to more than he intended to have spoken — "I declare to your Majesty, that you are mistaken. I have no especial cause for disliking Dedi — except that he is known to be your Majesty's avowed and relentless enemy."

"Indeed!" cried Henry, in a tone which plainly intimated to Werenher that his assurance was not credited.

"What I mean to say," continued Werenher, endeavoring to recover from the mistake into which he had fallen — "what I mean to say is, that in the plan I suggested, I was not thinking of my own personal dislike to the younger Dedi, but of serving you —"

"I remember what you have said, Werenher, and I desire no explanation," replied Henry. "To me, it is a matter of indifference whether or not you regard Dedi as your personal enemy. All I say to you is this, *I* will have nought to do with his assassination. I will not counsel it — encourage, nor sanction it. At the same time that I say this, I wish you to remember that

there is no reason why I should stir hand, foot, eye, or tongue, to save Dedi from his enemy. He is my foe, and if I saw him walking blindfold and direct towards a precipice, where I knew he would be dashed to pieces, and that the stirring of my little finger would save him, I would not move it. To remain quiescent at such a fearful moment, is a far different thing from getting behind his back at the time that I professed to be his protector, and pushing him down the deadly abyss. You, Werenher, are my friend — he, Dedi, is my enemy. I will not interfere with my friend if he seeks to revenge himself on my enemy.”

“I think I understand now what your Majesty means,” said Werenher.

“Then if you do, add no explanations of your own. What I have said,” continued Henry, “may be summed up in a few words — that, if I saw you and the younger Dedi in mortal conflict with each other, I would wish success to you, defeat, disgrace, and death to him, although I would not interfere to help you, because I am forbidden to do so by the laws that regulate single combat. But hark! that flourish of trumpets announces the arrival of Godfrey and the Saxon envoy. Go, command that both be received with all the fitting honors due to their rank. See that a suitable sleeping chamber be prepared for Dedi. Do that before you return. I desire that you should do so whilst both are with me. Hasten then away, and return as speedily as you can.”

“I shall do all as your Majesty commands,” replied Werenher.

“And here, Werenher,” said Henry, “take these bawbles with you — your tiny dagger, and your wondrous poison. But no — keep you the dagger, and

leave me the poison. I wish to try its effects on a treacherous hound, that this day made a snap at my hand whilst I was caressing him. Go—go speedily; I can hear from this the tramp of the horses' feet as they cross the draw-bridge."

Werenher quitted the room, and, as he did so, Henry opened his purse and slid into it the small box of poison.

"It is dangerous," said Henry, "to have about one a servant who handles such instruments as these. A poisoner is a very unsafe companion. Had I known, honest Werenher! you approached me so often with your tiny dagger and crystal drug, I would have fled from you as from a serpent. But your race is now nearly run. You hate Dedi—you see him now in your power—the foul fiend, revenge, is in your heart, and you will do his bidding, and then—farewell Werenher!"

"I have the honor," said Duke Godfrey, entering the apartment, and leading Dedi the younger by the hand, "to present to you the son of the Count of Saxony, who, on this occasion, appears before your Majesty to pray that you will grant to him, to his father, to Duke Otho, to the Bishop of Halberstadt, and to the other nobles and prelates of Germany, such terms as they may, with honor, submit to you, and renew those vows of allegiance which necessity alone has compelled them to violate."

"I repeat to your Majesty," said Dedi the younger, bending down and kissing the knee of Henry, who stood erect before him, leaning upon his sword, "the words of Duke Godfrey. Such is the object with which I appear before you. I come to you seeking for peace—



I come to you asking for justice, without which there never can be peace."

"And I receive you with pleasure," said Henry; "to a warrior, the sight of a brave man is always welcome. I have seen you in the field of battle, Dedi, and whilst I admired your courage, my only regret was that you were fighting, not for me, but against me."

"Alas! my liege," said the younger Dedi, "it was my sorrow that it should be so; but, when I was girt with the belt of a knight, and a sword was placed in my hands, I was bid to remember that I was to fight for my God, my country, and my king. It was not I who separated those things that should ever be inseparable."

"Then, if it were not your fault," observed Henry, with a good-humored smile, "it must have been mine. I must have wronged the Saxons—let me know what they complain of, in order that if there be griefs they may be redressed; and, if my actions have been misinterpreted, I may candidly explain them to two brave men, who are sure not to put a false gloss upon my words."

"Then I have your Majesty's permission to speak freely the sentiments, and to give plainly expression to the complaints of the Saxons," said Dedi.

"Freely, fully, and plainly, I give you that permission. Say what you think—say what the Saxon nobility speak. I free you from all responsibility—I do so in the presence of Duke Godfrey, and I do so in presence of another witness—Count Werenher," said Henry, pointing to Werenher, who at that moment was seen entering the apartment.

Dedi started back, with abhorrence and contempt marked upon his face, as if some foul, obscene thing had crossed his path.

“I pray your Majesty’s pardon,” he said, “but in any transaction in which I am concerned, I cannot meet Count Werenher as a witness, a compurgator, or a man who should be admitted to the presence of a knight, or a nobleman, much less of a king. I have twice before encountered Count Werenher — first, when he was discharging the loathsome office of a pander. I then arraigned him as a disgrace to manhood, as a dishonor to knighthood, as a blot upon the nobility of the empire. I then struck him — chastised him as if he were a dog, and though we stood as man to man against each other, he did not dare to resent the insults offered to him, but trembled like a craven before me. The second time I met Count Werenher he was armed as a knight, but acting like a robber, and seeking, with felons, his associates, to murder and despoil a bishop. I then challenged him to meet me sword in hand — I branded him as a coward, and he, with arms in his hands, fled from me. In your Majesty’s presence I will inflict upon him no personal punishment; but I will not, cannot speak with him as a witness to my language; for I feel there is infamy in breathing the same air with him.”

Henry looked at Werenher whilst Dedi was speaking, and he saw that his favorite minister did not venture once, even for an instant, to meet the glance of his accuser; but stood like a trembling culprit before him.

“The coward and the traitor is also a liar and an assassin, who would make me a participator in his foul plot,” muttered Henry to himself; then turning to Dedi, he said aloud:

“Brave warrior, whatever be the cause of quarrel between you and the Count Werenher, this is not the time, the place, nor the occasion for discussing it.

Other and greater interests now press for our consideration. The fate of an entire nation — the happiness and the stability of an empire, are depending upon our deliberations, and we cannot permit them to be postponed for the purpose of settling a private dispute between two individuals, however highly we may respect the bravery of the one, or value the many services rendered to us by the other. You object to Count Werenher as a witness. If you are content with the single testimony of Duke Godfrey, so am I. I yield then to your objection, without pronouncing any opinion upon its validity. Werenher, withdraw. You see," said Henry, whispering to the confused and abashed Werenher, "that I am acting upon the good advice you gave me. I am conducting myself with great courtesy towards this ruffian Saxon."

"I see — I see, your Majesty is most wise," said Werenher, as he tottered out of the room, and clinching in his right hand that small steel case, of which, and its potency, he had boasted in his conversation with Henry. The king observed this, and that the pallid face of his favorite was corrugated with wrinkles, and that his eyes flashed with a fire that seemed to be a reflection of the lurid flames of hell.

"It is well — all goes on as I had hoped," thought Henry to himself, with inward satisfaction. "I have outwitted that skilful politician. He will do for me my work, whilst he fancies he is only indulging his own passions." He turned to the younger Dedi, and said: "Speak as I have said, plainly. Godfrey shall listen to your statements, and hear my reply to them."

"I do not deem it necessary," said Dedi the younger, "to reopen the question of the claim made by your

Majesty, as a layman, nor by the Archbishop of Mayence, as a prelate, to exact tithes from the Saxons, when from neither the one nor the other is there given, in return, any spiritual services. That question, I say, it is not necessary to reopen, because we have appealed to the Pope on the whole matter, and whatever be the decision of his holiness, we are prepared to abide by it. We consider it as a question that affects the church, and we are prepared to submit to the decree of the head of the church. What we complain of now, is, that your Majesty has studded over the soil of Saxony with strong fortresses; that, in the erection of those fortresses, you have compelled not merely serfs to labor, but that free-born men have been torn from the midst of their families, and forced to toil at them as if they were slaves; that those fortresses, when erected, are garrisoned by a hireling soldiery, who compel the rustics to supply them with provisions, and who treat the wives and daughters of those rustics as if they were their degraded slaves; and we complain that your Majesty has been induced to treat us, Saxons, in this manner, because, instead of associating with the princes of the empire, you keep aloof from them—are not guided by their counsel, nor influenced by their advice; but that you have, as your companions, men of mean birth and of depraved habits; and that, raising them to the highest dignities in the state, you delight to spend with them your days and your nights, gratifying the worst passions with which human nature, in its fall, is afflicted.”

“The Saxon nobility and the Saxon prelates have desired you to say these things to me?” said Henry, in a tone of voice that appeared to be perfectly calm and unmoved.

“They have,” continued Dedi. “These are the complaints they constantly make respecting your conduct. And what are the consequences they represent as following from them? These: that the empire over which you rule — once flourishing, peaceful, and prosperous — is now torn and divided by civil war; that the soil of Germany is stained with the blood of its people; its fields desolated with fire; its cities begrimed with sin; its churches dilapidated; its monasteries destroyed; its lands, bestowed originally for the maintenance of those devoted to a religious life, now alienated, and become the property of a licentious soldiery, for the sustentation of their vices; that widows, that orphans, that the poor and the destitute are thus reduced to a state of starvation; that the bonds of society are dissolved; and that there is no longer any respect for the law of man, and no reverence for the law of God.”

“You speak eloquently, if not correctly, nor truly,” observed the king, restraining, with great difficulty, any manifestations of the passions which raged in his breast.

“I speak without exaggeration,” said Dedi; “I speak that in your presence which every tongue repeats behind your back. I speak it, not as a reproach upon what is past, but as a warning for the future. I speak it, because, if you reflect upon what I say, it will show you, that without a change in the conduct you yourself have hitherto pursued, no exterior circumstance can consolidate your power, and no event, however fortunate, render it stable and secure. Without that change, no submission on the part of the Saxon nobility can give you peace. With that change, you can become the most powerful, because the most justly-beloved monarch in Christendom. We hope in that change, because we

see, that in seeking to grant us peace, you have chosen as your adviser, your counsellor, and your guide, the illustrious Godfrey of Lorraine ; a man who has won the respect of his enemies by his bravery, and of his friends by his truthfulness and virtues. Had your Majesty sent to us any other man than Godfrey as an ambassador, we should not have listened to him ; for, knowing how many perfidious and cruel men instil their evil counsels into your ear, we should have preferred dying, sword in hand, in battle, rather than be entrapped into a false peace, which could have only resulted in our imprisonment, our exile, or our death. With Godfrey as the guaranty for our honorable peace, we are prepared to yield submission to your Majesty. I have now discharged my mission, and I await your Majesty's reply."

"You have spoken," said Henry, "as becomes a knight—boldly. Thanks to you, I know the worst that can be said of me—and that *is* said of me. If I be guided by your advice, I shall amend my faults. And now, listen to me with the same patience I have given to your discourse. I am a king, you and the Saxons are my subjects. I am responsible to God, and not to you, for my conduct as king. You have rebelled against me, and as rebels I have punished you : but I do not desire your entire destruction ; and, therefore, I am willing to grant you peace—to receive you under my protection, and to treat you as the father treats his child that has erred, but that he pardons, because he loves him. The flagrant offence, however, of which you have been guilty, requires a public expiation ; and that, for the sake of myself and of my successors in the empire, I insist upon having. Without it, I will have no peace with you. There must be an unmistakable sub-

mission made to me, by those who have dared to take up arms against me. I require that all the Saxon nobility appear in presence of my army — nobility and prelates both shall do it — that there they yield themselves absolutely up to me as prisoners. Let this be done by them, and I then not only promise — but I am now prepared to swear, and with my oath the Saxons shall have the oaths of Duke Godfrey and of the prelates who have remained faithful to me — that once they have so surrendered themselves as prisoners, they shall suffer no loss in life, in liberty, in property, in rank, or even in personal wealth; but, that having, by their public submission, given satisfaction to the king they have offended, and thus tendered the best reparation in their power to the majesty of the throne they have outraged, they shall be immediately afterwards set at liberty, restored to their native land, to freedom, and to their former dignities. Such are the terms of peace I tender to the Saxon nobility and Saxon bishops, in presence of Duke Godfrey. What think you of them?”

“That they are just, that they are reasonable, that they are fair,” replied Dedi; “and, that in the name of the Duke Otho and the Bishop of Halberstadt, and all the others I represent on this occasion, I am prepared to accept them.”

“Thank heaven!” said Duke Godfrey, “that there is now a certainty of peace being established between a sovereign that I honor and a race of men whom I respect. I am most happy that my humble efforts have contributed to this peace, of the permanency of which I can entertain no doubt; for its full accomplishment depends upon your Majesty; and your Majesty’s patience and equanimity, whilst this young soldier detailed the complaints and

accusations of the Saxons against you, convince me that many of those complaints are unfounded, and most of those accusations destitute of truth."

"And I, too," observed Dedi the younger, "am bound to testify, that your Majesty has conducted yourself towards me with a magnanimity which I was not prepared to expect. I speak what I feel, when I say, that if this were the last hour of my life, I would willingly part with it to procure peace for Saxony, and to secure to your Majesty the loyalty of a brave and devoted people. And now, for myself, I would say, that I pray your Majesty's pardon, if, in the address which I delivered to you, on the part of my associates, I said any thing to offend you."

"I have no pardon to pronounce, for I have no offence to forgive," replied Henry. "You had a duty to perform; you have faithfully discharged it; and I respect you for the manner in which you have acquitted yourself. To you, Godfrey, my thanks are now due. Here, then, our conference ends. I would wish you and Duke Godfrey to return to the Saxons, early in the morning, and arrange with them the day on which the public submission will be made. Duke Godfrey is responsible now for the fulfilment of the conditions on my part, and in the sense in which you have heard me express them. For this night, Dedi, you are the guest of Godfrey. To you, Godfrey, I confide the care of the Saxon envoy. Let not, I pray you, this great business be marred by any personal conflict between your guest and my worthless minister, Werenher, of whose baseness I never was apprised until this evening."

"I thank your Majesty for the warning you give," said Godfrey. "Be assured it shall be attended to."

"It is, as far as I am concerned," remarked Dedi,



“absolutely unnecessary. I could not now condescend to cross my sword, as a soldier, with Werenher. As soon as this peace is established, I mean to summon him before the assembled knights of Franconia, so that he may be degraded, and his spurs chopped off, upon a dunghill, by the hatchet of a hangman.”

“It is a wise determination,” said Henry. “And now betake yourself to refreshment, and then to repose, for a long journey awaits you. To you and Godfrey I bid farewell. Good night! good night, my friends.”

“I thank your Majesty for your gracious reception, and for that kind word,” said Dedi, with all the enthusiastic, heartfelt effusion of a young man.

“And I, too, thank your Majesty for classing us both as your friends; and I hope the time may soon come, that friends as we are, we may have the power to prove we are your devoted subjects,” observed Godfrey, as he conducted his guest from the king’s apartment.

There was a malicious sneer upon the face of the king as the Lorraine duke and Saxon knight disappeared.

“*Dupes,*” he said. “Simpletons, with beards, that are as easily deceived with sweet words as idle children are decoyed by sweetmeats. But I have to protect my life against worse than you.”

The shrill note of a whistle, blown by the king, brought Lieman into the room.

“Lieman,” said Henry, “see that all things be prepared in the Olympian Palace for the reception of a new guest. He may be there in the course of a few hours. One hour from this time, and I shall be there myself to see that all is in readiness.”

“And may I ask who is this new guest?” asked Lieman.

“Of course,” answered Henry, “for it will be your duty to conduct him thither. It is Werenher.”

“Werenher,” said Lieman, somewhat surprised; and then he murmured, so as not to be heard by the king, “I am glad of it. I owe him a grudge, since he cheated Egen and myself out of the price of the two poisons we found on Anslem.”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE KNIGHT AND THE ASSASSIN.

It was now black midnight, and in the darkest corner of a dark room, and concealed behind the heavy drapery that covered the walls, was Count Werenher; his face pale with fear, his limbs trembling with the agitation of contending passions, and his clammy, shaking hand convulsively grasping that fatal dagger on which he now placed all his hope of avenging the many wrongs heaped upon his head by the younger Dedi. He watched, as the hunted fox watches for the first sound that may indicate to him that the hunters have recovered the scent they have lost—he watched with fear, and with hope. In the craven, cruel heart of Werenher, there were both fear and hope—fear, even of the man he was resolved to slay—hope, that he might commit the crime, upon the perpetration of which he had determined; and that he might accomplish it so stealthily that suspicion should not rest upon him.

“The hour of midnight is past,” thus soliloquized

Werenher, "and yet he comes not. I thought the deed would long since have been done; and I, before this time, banqueting with the king. What if the king should call for me! No matter, he may fancy, after the scene with Dedi, and the exposure of the falsehood I told him, that I have quitted the palace; or, he may guess that I am at this moment where I am, concealed in the sleeping room of Dedi, and resolved upon revenging myself. If it were not so, why did he specially charge me to take with me this dagger?"

"But, hist! ay, there are steps approaching — he comes — he comes.

"O, this coward heart! this weak, trembling hand! why do I wish for revenge if I have not the power to execute it? Wherefore am I wicked, if I am, at the same time, weak?"

"No — I was deceived. The wine-cup still detains him and Godfrey. It is but the fancy that I heard his footstep that has made me tremble. In what state then shall I be when he is bodily present before me? when we are alone together? Perchance I shall then faint with terror, and be discovered by him — dragged by the heels out of his room — spurned by his foot — made a mockery of by the king and his courtiers, and even the beggars that seek for alms at the palace gates will despise me for my cowardice! Curses — ten thousand curses on his head; there is no indignity which he will not delight in subjecting me to. If I am imbecile now — if I do not now take his life — he will never cease until I end a life of disgrace by an ignominious death upon the scaffold. He has been born for no other purpose but to prove my ruin — and now I have to choose between his death and my own. If my coward hand will now, felon like, betray

me, I am forever destroyed. Let me bear *that* in mind, and when I do strike — strike strongly, steadily, surely. Ha! now — I cannot be mistaken — footsteps approach the door. Would that he were here! Would that he were dead! Yes — I tremble no longer. The decisive moment is fast approaching. I am, at last, as I should be — resolute, eager for blood. It is well — it is well.”

The door opened, and Godfrey, bearing a lamp, entered the room, followed by Dedi.

“This, my friend,” said Godfrey, “is the room assigned to you for the night. I have, as a matter of precaution, stationed two soldiers outside, with directions to enter, if they hear the slightest noise made.”

Werenher trembled when he heard these words, but the resolution with which he entered the room was not shaken.

“I thank you,” answered Dedi, “for those marks of your kindness, but the precaution is unnecessary. My best safeguards, in every danger hitherto, have been God and my own stout sword. I have wronged no man, and I have, therefore, nothing to fear.”

“That you have done wrong to no man I can well believe,” said Godfrey; “but, wherefore are you at deadly feud with Werenher?”

“I at feud with Werenher!” observed Dedi. “The lion might as well be said to be at feud with the treacherous weasel — the eagle with the thieving jackdaw. I despise him too much to dislike him; but, whenever he comes in my way, I feel it necessary to tread upon him, as I would upon any other noxious reptile. It shall not be my fault, if, before a month has passed away, you do not see him carrying an ass’s saddle on his shoulders, and his bare back scourged by slaves, through the streets of Goslar.”

If it were not for the fear of instant death being inflicted upon him by Godfrey, Werenher would have started at once from his hiding-place, and plunged his poisoned dagger into the heart of Dedi, who disarrayed himself of his hauberk as he spoke these words.

“But Werenher must have done something to offend you personally, that you speak thus bitterly against him,” observed Godfrey.

“Personally, nothing, I assure you,” answered Dedi. “I loathe him as I loathe the serpent — I hate him as I hate the devil, and for the same reasons — because he is a base wretch, whose heart and whose soul are alike leprous with sin. I abhor him, and I am determined upon his destruction — not from personal enmity to him, for I feel none — not a particle, or so little, that if he were what he ought to be — a beggar — to-morrow, I would bestow upon him my alms.”

Werenher could scarcely restrain the panting indignation with which he heard himself thus slightly spoken of.

“I have considered it right,” answered Dedi, “to degrade him wherever I could, and to provoke him to a personal combat, if it were possible, in order that I might rid the world, and especially the king’s court, of so base, so malevolent, and so mischievous a villain. Of all the bad men that surround the king, Werenher is the worst. He was the first to advise the king to seize upon the properties belonging to the monasteries; to encourage the king in making a bargain and sale of mitres and abacies; he, too, has been the prime instrument in exciting the worst passions of Henry, and in encouraging a youthful monarch to plunge into an abyss of vices. I am told that the base wretch presumed to address unholy words

to the saintly Queen Bertha, and that, in revenge for the rebuke she gave him, he incited her husband to seek for a divorce; and he it was, who, wearing a disguise, was recognized by myself, taking part in the abduction of the fairest maid in Germany — the lovely Beatrice, of Aschaffenburg; he, too, it was, who bore her away from her betrothed, my cousin Magnus, to have her conveyed to the castle of the king, in which she is now immured. These are my reasons, and none other, for seeking the downfall of Werenher. I never shall rest satisfied until it is accomplished. I desire it from no unworthy motive. I wish for it, not because I have a personal feeling against Werenher as a man, but because I love virtue, hate vice, and detest sinners.”

“The sentiments you express do you honor, Dedi,” said Godfrey. “And now, good night; we must be on horseback at an early hour in the morning.”

“Good night, my friend, and God bless you!” answered the young man, as he lighted Godfrey to the door, where the attendants of the latter awaited him.

Dedi returned, and replaced the lamp upon the table. He then walked up and down the room for two or three minutes, as if indulging in meditation, and then stopping before the table, he said, or rather thought —

“Enough — more than enough of my time has been given this day to the world. Now to devote a few minutes to heaven, and in prayers for mercy to him, who is all-merciful:”

So communing with himself, the young man removed from his head the helmet, the nasale of which, when turned up, and resting against the crest, represented a cross. He knelt lowly down, and gave up all his mind and heart to devotional thoughts and prayers. As he

raised his head to make the sign of the cross upon himself at the conclusion of his prayers, his eye rested upon the polished sides of his helmet, and in one of them he saw, but indistinctly, the distorted white face of a man peeping out from the dark curtains behind him.

Dedi started at once to his feet, placed his helmet on his head, and his shield on his left arm, and then, unsheathing his sword, said — not in a loud voice, but in one that could be distinctly heard in all parts of the room —

“ I am aware that at this moment there is a man concealed in this apartment. I call upon that man now to come forth, and if he have the courage to do so, to cross his sword with mine. If he refuse, I will summon the guard that watch at the door, and with our swords' points discover the part of the room in which he lies hidden. Instant death shall then be inflicted upon him. Whoever the skulking villain may be, I say to him, if he have the slightest hope for mercy, come forth at once, for I will not summon him a second time.”

As Dedi concluded this address, he perceived the dark curtains drawn slowly back, by the palsied hands of Werenher, who stood, at length, fully revealed before him, with his arms extended, convulsively grasping the tapestry, to which he seemed to cling for support, and so overcome by terror, that he seemed to be deprived of the power of speech.

Dedi was a brave man — he would, without a moment's hesitation, have mounted a wall on which he saw hundreds of ballistas pouring forth discharges of arrows, and of heavy stones — alone, he would have unshrinkingly stood a charge of a troop of knights — unshrinkingly he would have seen death advancing against him

in a field of battle ; but now — alone — at midnight — in his bed-chamber — and when he had given up all his thoughts to prayer, to find that a foeman had been on the watch, basely to slay him in his sleep, produced a thrill — not of terror, but of horror in his frame, and a sickening sensation came over him, as he said, in a voice that trembled with emotion :

“ Werenher ! here ! and at such a time as this ! ”

The Count Werenher heard these words, but did not answer them. He was not capable of doing so. All his faculties seemed to be absorbed in the keenness of his perceptions, and the nervousness of his fears. He felt, in its full extent, the horror that must fill the soul of Dedi in beholding him ; and he knew from Dedi’s voice, that he comprehended, precisely, the intention which brought him to that chamber. He felt all this ; but there was upon him an incapacity of thought, and impotency of words, as to how he might hope to evade the vengeance or excite the commiseration of his justly-exasperated enemy.

There was a silence of some moments, as those two men looked upon each other. In the stillness of the night the strong breathing of both might be heard.

The first to break the silence was Dedi ; because that strange sensation that possessed him, and which was so like fear, was over-mastered ; whilst each moment but added to the terror of the trembling Werenher.

“ Speak, villain,” said Dedi, “ speak, or I will stab you where you stand. Wherefore are you here at this hour ? ”

Werenher did not advance a step from the spot on which he stood ; but, dropping upon both his knees, and clasping his hands, whilst his teeth chattered together, he exclaimed, in a voice that was scarcely audible —



“Mercy — mercy — mercy!”

“Mercy!” said Dedi, “mercy for the man who so thirsts for my blood that he seeks it in my sleeping chamber! Wherefore show you mercy?”

“For your own sake — not for mine,” replied Werenher, whose confidence returned to him when he found that Dedi showed no disposition to put him instantly to death.

“And why should I be merciful to you for my own sake, when you come here to show me none?” asked Dedi.

“Because,” said Werenher, “you have but risen from your prayers — because you have begged that your trespasses should be forgiven to yourself as you forgive to others their trespasses.”

“It is true — it is true,” answered Dedi. “But hearken, villain. Did you hear the conversation that passed so lately between Godfrey and myself, in which your odious name came to be mentioned?”

“I did,” said Werenher.

“Then you must know,” said Dedi, “that I have no desire that you should be dead, but that the king may thus be prevented from following your pernicious counsels. What I desire more than your death is, that you may be driven from the palace, and prevented from ever returning to it, by being rendered infamous. At this moment your life is in my hands, and, before you stir from this room, I am determined upon taking it, unless you comply with two conditions which I mean to impose upon you. Do you beg for your life on these conditions?”

“I do,” said Werenher; “whatever the conditions may be, I subscribe to them.”

“Craven — odious craven, that you are, it sickens me

to speak with you," said Dedi, unable to restrain his indignation at beholding so much of base cowardice under the form of a man. "The first condition with which I require a strict compliance on your part, is a candid — mind you — a candid, plain avowal, why and wherefore you have concealed yourself in this chamber?"

"A candid answer to that question," said Werenher, sighing deeply, "must, I feel, consign my name justly to eternal infamy, whilst it disentitles me to any compassion on your part. You have, however, named it as the first condition on which you spare my life, and I, therefore, shall fulfil it. Alas! Count Dedi, you have, unsought for, and unthought of by me, intruded yourself upon my path. I never thought of doing you wrong, and you have wronged me grievously. You have not acted towards me as a brave man should have done."

"How!" answered Dedi; "have I not twice offered you battle — man alone opposed to man — and have you not each time, like a timid coward, shrunk from it?"

"You have," replied Werenher. "And yet it was not bravely done of you! A giant challenges a dwarf to combat, and when the latter declines it charges him with cowardice! A single combat between one so weak and fragile of form as I am, with one so strong and so accomplished in feats of arms as yourself, would be, in effect, but my unresisting assassination in the light of day. In provoking me to battle you were well aware you exposed yourself to no danger — that you only sought for the means of slaying me. It was not then, I repeat, bravely done of you to treat me so. You sought my life by such arms as you could use, and so persisting, you have compelled me to seek your life by such

arms as I can alone wield. Driven to despair by your unceasing persecution of me — exposed this night, by you, in the presence of the king, and of Duke Godfrey — by being denounced as a wretch, a robber, and a poltroon, I have stolen to your chamber with the resolution of slaying you here as you slept. If then I kneel before you an assassin in intention, though not in fact, be not forgetful I should not be in this degraded position if it were not for the course you yourself have pursued towards me.”

This artful speech of Werenher’s produced the effect for which it had been delivered upon the conscientious and scrupulous mind of Dedi. It excited pity for the vile and trembling villain he saw prostrate before him. Dedi reflected, for a few moments, and said :

“ And so you intended to kill me when I slept ! ”

“ I did,” answered Werenher.

“ With that dagger, I suppose, I see in your girdle ? ” said Dedi, pointing to a weapon, whose rich enamelled hilt attracted his eye.

“ Perchance, in the blindness of my despair, I might have had recourse to this dagger,” replied Werenher.

“ Draw it — fling it behind the canopy,” said Dedi ; and then he added, when he perceived how readily Werenher complied with his command, “ now — rise from your knees — advance to this table — and — here is parchment — write these words according to my dictation : —

“ I, Count Werenher, hereby declare, in my own handwriting, that I was discovered at midnight, in the chamber of Count Dedi the younger, where I had concealed myself with the intention of slaying him in his

sleep ; and now, for the sole purpose of saving my life, I avow that I am, from this time forth, to be ever regarded as infamous."

"This," continued Dedi, "is the second condition on which I am willing to spare your life. I exact it from you, for the purpose of driving you into exile, and thus preserving my country from further affliction and misery."

"Alas!" exclaimed Werenher, "will nothing but my utter ruin content you?"

"Miscreant," answered Dedi, "would less than my life have contented you, had you found me sleeping, helpless, and unprotected, beneath your dagger? Write, villain, write instantly, as I have dictated — or die. Before I leave Goslar, to-morrow morning, a herald shall read aloud, in every cross-road, that declaration which I now exact from you."

Werenher looked at the young man, and his compressed lips, his frowning brow, and the fierce glance in his eye, convinced the trembling wretch that any further hesitation to comply with the command given to him would be followed by the instant sacrifice of his life.

Werenher seated himself at the table. The first words he attempted to write were rendered almost illegible, by being penned in a trembling hand ; but, as he proceeded, his nerves seemed to steady themselves, and the last lines he wrote were a beautiful specimen of the finest calligraphy of the age.

"Now attach your seal to that brief of your dishonor," said Dedi.

Werenher complied with the order so imperiously given.

"Begone, now," continued Dedi, flinging his sword

on the couch on which he intended to repose, and, as he did so, turning his back upon Werenher. "Avaunt! hide yourself from the scorn of your fellow-men, and repent if you ——"

The words of Dedi were interrupted by a blow from Werenher, who held, all this time, the poisoned dagger in his left hand, and who, the moment Dedi turned his back, changed it instantly to the right, and plunged it, with such fearful force, between both the shoulders, that it became so firmly fastened he could not himself again withdraw it.

At the same moment, Werenher snatched the parchment from the table, and endeavored to rush out of the room, but Dedi, though wounded, rushed upon him, caught him, and grappling him by the throat, exclaimed :

"Ho! help! help! without there — murder! murder!"

Before the assistance he cried for could reach him, he had fallen to the earth, dragging down Werenher with him in his fall, and holding him in his grasp, despite all the desperate efforts of the assassin to escape.

"What means all this?" said Godfrey, bursting, with some of his attendants, into the room, and seeing his friend Dedi writhing with agony on the floor, but still holding Werenher in an iron gripe.

"Take the parchment from the villain; it will tell you all," answered Dedi.

One of the soldiers of Godfrey, perceiving the parchment in the hands of Werenher, stamped his iron-soled sandal down upon the clinched hand, and thus bruising all the bones, forced it from the grasp of the wretched man, who lay, henceforth, without a struggle in the grasp of Dedi.

“I have slain him in vain,” said Werenher, to himself. “Fool and madman that he was, to force me to write such words. But for them, I had never struck him. He has brought his death upon himself.”

“I am slain, Godfrey,” said Dedi; “and you will perceive — by the document you hold in your hand — slain by the man whose life I spared, when I discovered him lying in wait to assail me. Let no blame fall on the king for this base deed. Say to my father, and to the nobles, that it should not interrupt the arrangements which you and I had so happily begun. Remember my last words are these — the king is guiltless. Godfrey — farewell! Commend my soul to the prayers of the faithful. O! God! have mercy upon me.”

The lips of Dedi still moved in silent prayer, and then he rolled upon the floor in agony — then he was observed to raise his eyes in prayer, and in a moment after lay a moveless, inanimate corpse at the feet of his trusty friend!

As long as the death-agony of Dedi endured, not a word was spoken in the chamber; but when the hold which the young man had taken of Werenher was seen to relax, two of the soldiers laid hands upon the assassin, and binding his arms behind him, thrust him back into a dark corner of the room, so that the sight of him might not disturb the last moments of his victim.

Godfrey knelt down by the side of the dead body, and, impressing a kiss on the forehead, cried out, in a voice that was choked with emotion —

“Farewell! Dedi! Farewell, most valiant and most virtuous of the brave and good men of Saxony. Farewell! victim to your own generosity. May your happiness in heaven be a recompense for the ingratitude

which you have received in this wicked and miserable world!

“Let me,” continued Godfrey, “look upon the villain who has slain this man. What!” he cried, for he had not yet examined the parchment he held in his hand! “Are you the assassin of Count Dedi?”

“I will answer you no questions,” said Werenher, doggedly. “You hold not the office of a graf in this district — you exercise no judiciary power in Goslar.”

“No — but I am a soldier. I find my companion slain by my side, and I have a right to kill his murderer!” answered Godfrey.

“Slay me, if you dare, upon suspicion, in the king’s palace, and when the king is near to administer justice in person,” was the reply of Werenher.

“Cunning, as if you were one of the scabini, in the quirks of the law,” remarked Godfrey, pointing to the document which he now read, — “here is that which condemns you.”

“It does no such thing,” readily answered Werenher. “It only proves that I was found in the chamber of Dedi, with a certain intention — it does not prove that I fulfilled that intention; and Dedi never, in dying, mentioned my name.”

“But he described you, though he did not name you,” said Godfrey, somewhat confounded by this audacious denial of facts of which he was himself a witness.

“That is your inference,” replied Werenher; “but it is one in which the *landgerichte* may differ from you, and even discover my innocence, where you fancy you have found a proof of my guilt. I claim my right, as a count of the empire, to be tried by my peers. I appeal to the king for justice.”

“Be it so,” said Godfrey. “Here, friends, examine the body of the gallant Dedi, in order that we may discover how his death has been caused.”

In a few moments afterwards the small dagger was wrenched, by main force, from the back of Dedi, and placed in the hands of Godfrey. The latter examined it with curiosity, and then looked to the wound it had inflicted. He perceived that, though the puncture made in the flesh was so small as to be scarcely perceptible, still, a wide circle around was one mass of fiery inflammation; and even though so few minutes had occurred since life had been extinct, there were, amid that redness, dark spots, as if decomposition had already taken place.

“O, villain, villain!” he exclaimed, “this is a poisoned weapon. You ask for justice — you shall have it; for, if this crime be not punished with your death, then, be assured, better lives, and greater men than you shall be responsible for so foul a deed. You appeal to the king as if you were sure of a pardon. He cannot grant it, unless to declare himself your participator; and even if he were to grant it, you should not escape my vengeance.”

“An innocent man and a prisoner,” said Werenher, “must bear, with patience, the angry reproaches of his armed and angry prosecutor. I say again, that, with you, I will not discuss the question of my innocence or my guilt. Let me be conducted to the presence of the king, for he is a just, a generous, and a gracious sovereign.”

“Be it as you wish,” answered Godfrey. “Friends, hold that assassin fast. Bring him to the apartments of the king. I will precede him, by a few moments, so that his majesty may know how dire a deed has, this



night, brought disgrace and dishonor upon the abode in which he dwells. 'To the king!'

Godfrey hastened from the apartment, bearing with him the poisoned dagger and the written confession of Werenher.

Werenher, in being led from the apartment, had to pass close by the body of his victim, which still lay stretched upon the floor. He looked down upon it, and an icy shudder ran through his frame.

"Miserable, mad youth," he thought, "it was not without cause I trembled when I first heard your name. In seeking, needlessly, for my destruction, you have brought it upon yourself. I feared it would be otherwise. You now lie dead and unavenged, and I fly for refuge to a king who loves me. This is as it should be!"

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE FATE OF THE FAVORITE.

"THESE are sad and dreadful tidings that you convey to me," said Henry, to Duke Godfrey of Lorraine. "This document, in the handwriting of Werenher — the circumstances which you yourself witnessed — the dying declaration of the brave Dedi — his generous reference to myself — are all facts which leave not the slightest doubt upon my mind that Werenher is the base wretch who planted this poisoned dagger in the back of the gallant soldier; and, being so convinced as to the facts, I am anxious to avenge his death, speedily and sharply."

“And capitally. Blood demands blood,” observed Godfrey.

“I am resolved that Werenher shall die,” said Henry.

“But let it be at once,” continued Godfrey; “for, if not, strange rumors will get abroad, and men will say you participated in his crime; because, when arrested, he appealed with as much confidence to you as if he was certain of impunity. I say this for the sake of your Majesty’s fame — and for the sake of bringing to an honorable conclusion that negotiation in which the murdered man and I were engaged.”

“I feel obliged to you,” said Henry, “both for your candor and your prudent advice. The best proof that I can give you how much I appreciate your wisdom is, by declaring to you, that, with the exception of subjecting Werenher to a public trial and execution, because such would delay his punishment too long, I shall do, or cause to have done, as regards his death, whatever you may suggest.”

“Then let me,” replied Godfrey, “bring back to Saxony, at the same time, the dead body of Dedi the younger, with this parchment, the poisoned dagger, and the head of the assassin.”

“It shall be as you say,” replied Henry. “I leave to you the care of the body of the dead. I wish to have bestowed upon the remains the same honors that would be shown to those of a duke of the empire. In all that pertains to the execution of justice leave the task to me. Be assured it shall be done speedily. The hour of matins has passed, and, before the prayers of the prime are completed, Werenher shall be no longer a living man. Are you content?”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE SURRENDER.

THE decapitation of Werenher; the proof, thus afforded, that Henry was sincere in the promises he made of pardon, and of restoration to all their rights, privileges, and dignities of the Saxon nobles, who should place themselves within his power, by a public submission, tended to facilitate that negotiation in which Godfrey had been engaged.

The terms, such as they had been agreed upon by the Duke of Lorraine on the part of Henry, and of Dedi the younger on behalf of the Saxons, were fully ratified by the latter.

“I will not,” said the father of the slain warrior, “protest against an act which meets with the approval, and has obtained the sanction, of my superiors and my associates. I content myself with saying, that I am not a participator in it. I cannot confide in the faith of King Henry, and I will not seek for his clemency. Heaven grant that none of you may be deceived in either. I shall withdraw myself from Saxony, and repair to Rome, there to pray for your happiness, if you are permitted to enjoy the peace that is promised; and there, if it be necessary, to interfere on your behalf — to place the pontiff in possession of all the facts that have occurred, and to beseech his holiness so to act, as that justice may be done to you, to the people, and to Saxony. Here,” continued the brave old man, “I part from you; but I leave with you those that are most dear to me — my beloved wife, Adela — my younger son,

and, what is still more precious, the corpse of him that I fondly hoped would yet, with a warrior's hand, have consigned me to a warrior's grave."

There were tears in the eyes of many brave men, and sad forebodings in the hearts of many good men, as Count Dedi departed from the encampment of the Saxons; and the nobles who remained, prepared to repair to the place appointed for them to make a public submission to King Henry.

There was sadness in the camp of the Saxons. But it was far otherwise with the troops collected under the royal standard of Henry, once the intelligence spread amongst them that the Saxons were about to surrender to the king. Nought then was to be heard but shouts of joy and cheers of exultation. This, they regarded a triumph greater than any battle could have given to them; for it was won without wounds, and purchased by no loss of life. It was a victory of which they considered they had much more reason to be proud than that gained by them on the banks of the Unstrutt, because the Saxons, though defeated there, had destroyed the best and bravest of their Swabian cavalry and Bavarian knighthood.

A negotiation so concluded, exalted Henry as a statesman, and made him revered by his soldiers, as a king who was sparing the lives of his subjects, and who infinitely preferred their safety to his own military fame.

The proudest day — it might also have been the most glorious — in the entire life of Henry the Fourth, was that on which he — high and exalted above his fellow-men — wearing his royal crown and Dalmatic robes, sat upon a lofty throne, in the broad plain at Spira, between Kindebrück and Greussen, and that his entire army was

drawn out in opposite lines, facing each other, and separated by so wide a space, as to admit the whole of the Saxon leaders — nobles, prelates, landsmen, knights, and warriors, to pass between them. And those Saxons were seen advancing, rank after rank ; the bishops in their mitres and pontifical robes, the nobles and other laymen in the panoply of war ; and, as they came to the foot of the throne, knelt slowly down before their offended sovereign, and thus testified to him and to the world that they acknowledged him as their superior lord, and then passed onward, to be received into the several tents, previously prepared for their reception.

Had Henry been a humble man, this was a sight to make him proud, for here were those he regarded as his most bitter foes, obliged to bow down before his footstool. Here were his foes, the Princes of Saxony and Thuringia, at his feet, and scornfully did his eye glare upon them as he recognized each — Wezel, the Archbishop of Magdebourg ; Bucco, Bishop of Halberstadt ; Otho, the quondam Duke of Bavaria ; Herimann, the relative of Magnus ; Frederick, the Count Palatine, with Adelbert, Rudiger, Sizzo, Berenger, Bem, and other Counts of Thuringia ; whilst there was a careless, almost vacant, look of contempt as those of minor rank followed them, as if he would not condescend to regard such inferior persons worthy of his resentment, as his foes, nor of respect, as his subjects.

Henry was naturally proud, and this was a sight sufficient almost to make him forget that he was a man ; for here he now sat enthroned the supreme monarch of Germany, at the head of a gallant and a devoted army, and the most dangerous foes that he had ever encountered were forced to bend their knee to him, and worship him,

as if he were invested with the attributes of the Deity ; for, once they had so submitted to him, their lives, their liberties, and their properties were dependent upon his word, and might be disposed of according to his caprice. Had there been one spark of generosity in the heart of Henry, here was an occasion on which he might have manifested it. Here he might have added dignity to his power, and conferred a fresh lustre upon his crown, by proving himself worthy of the triumph he enjoyed in the compassion he exhibited for the fallen condition of his foes.

No such kindly, no such generous, no such chivalric sentiment found a resting-place in the breast of Henry. There was no pity for his prostrate enemies. Coldly, silently, frowningly, he saw bishop and noble, landsman and knight, soldier and freeman, bowing down to the earth. He looked at them, not like a king upon his subjects, but as an executioner upon his victims.

Duke Godfrey was a witness to this scene, and the ominous silence, the cold reserve, and the ungenerous bearing of Henry chilled his heart. The submission of the Saxons had been received in a manner so different from what he had calculated upon, the demeanor of Henry was so contrary to what he felt his own would have been, if similarly situated, that he could not refrain from saying, as he saw the Saxons conducted into different tents :

“ I trust your Majesty feels perfectly satisfied with the manner in which the Saxons have fulfilled the conditions you imposed upon them.”

“ I am not,” replied Henry. “ I do not see the father of Dedi here, and I miss hundreds of other rebels of minor rank.”

“The old Count of Saxony, Dedi,” said Godfrey, “does not seek your Majesty’s pardon, and therefore he is not here. He has withdrawn from Germany altogether, and repaired to Rome.”

“Then he has escaped my vengeance,” said Henry.

“Your vengeance!” said Godfrey, surprised. “Why, if he had been here it must have been only to obtain your forgiveness.”

“Ay! such forgiveness and such pardon as he merits — such pardon as I have bestowed upon those villains who have publicly avowed themselves to be rebels. Look *there!*”

As Henry spoke these words, he pointed to the bishops and nobles of Saxony, who were now seen issuing from the tents, their hands laden with chains, and each followed by two soldiers, with drawn swords.

“O, heavens!” exclaimed Godfrey. “This surely is but done by you in mockery. You certainly do not mean thus to treat and retain them as prisoners.”

“The time for concealing my thoughts, and disguising my intentions, Duke Godfrey,” answered Henry, with haughtiness, “is now passed. I am now omnipotent in Germany, and there is no monarch in all Christendom strong enough to contend against me. Perchance you, like the old dotard Dedi, may fancy that I stand in fear of excommunication from the Pope. Let me but hear that one of my subjects presumes to appeal to Rome, and that instant I shall have him executed as a traitor. If I find it but whispered that the Pope intends to wag his little finger against me, I shall have him seized, though it were at the altar, and dragged a prisoner to my palace to act as one of my menials. I have put down rebellion, not to reward traitors, but to punish them — mildly pun-

ish them ; for I will not kill them, as they have confided to my clemency. I will merely send them into banishment. There is not one of those chained traitors you now behold, that in twenty-four hours from this time shall not be on the road to his prison, whether it be in Swabia, Bavaria, Burgundy, Italy, or Bohemia."

"I know, and most readily do I acknowledge," said Godfrey, "that the power possessed by your Majesty at this moment, makes you, as far as mortal can be on this earth, omnipotent. It is because I feel that you are so, that I now kneel to your Majesty to do that, which I never have done before, and never thought I ever should have to do — to beg from you a favor."

And, as Godfrey spoke these words, he cast himself on his knees before the throne of Henry.

Henry smiled to see the proud, gallant Duke of Lorraine thus bowing down to worship him, like the meanest and most subservient of his courtiers.

"Rise, Godfrey," he graciously said. "It is not fitting that you should thus bow down to me. Demand what favor you will. There are but few things I can refuse to you, for you have served me faithfully in the field and at the council board."

"I have no favor to ask for myself," answered Godfrey, whose self-pride was hurt to find that his action could have been misinterpreted. "I have inherited enough of the world's wealth not to crave for more: I cannot be raised higher in rank than I am, and for my fame I am indebted to myself. It depends neither on a monarch's smile, nor on the plaudits of a mob. The favor I seek for, if it be conceded, is one that will tend to your Majesty's welfare. I ask it much more for your sake than for my own."



“For *my* sake!” repeated Henry, proudly. “You choose to speak in riddles, Duke of Lorraine. How can my welfare be contingent upon the concession to you of what you designate to be a favor?”

“Because,” answered Godfrey, “in it are involved your Majesty’s conduct now, your present peace, your future glory, and the ultimate permanency of your empire.”

“I pray of you to speak plainly,” said Henry, “for I cannot comprehend your warning without a candid explanation.”

“Your Majesty forces me to speak plainly,” continued Godfrey, “although I doubt not, whilst you look upon those noble Saxons, now in chains, you cannot be forgetful that they never would, or could be so, if I had not had your Majesty’s promise — nay, even oath, given in the presence of the young Dedi, that no such circumstance as this was to occur. Nay, I am compelled, to remind your Majesty, that it was in reliance upon what you said to me, that I pledged to them my oath, that, having gone through the ceremony of a full submission, they should not suffer in life, liberty, or property. They believed me; they confided in you; and because they did so, you treat them as if they were captives taken on the battle field, and were yours to dispose of by right of war. They regarded a king’s word as inviolable, and so did I. It is true that your Majesty may, if so disposed, violate your promise, and your doing so, I admit, increases your power for the moment — I may even add, renders you for the time all-powerful. But O, remember this, that truth is not merely the brightest jewel in a king’s crown, but that it is the very substance of which that crown is composed, and once broken by him who

wears it, it is speedily followed by a dissolution of all the particles that constitute the royal diadem. The king who breaks his word is the chief conspirator against his own throne, and his evil act is the signal to endless conspiracies as long as he reigns. The favor, then, that I have to demand of your Majesty, is, that you will fulfil your promise, and by setting those captives free, redeem the oath by which I stand pledged to them."

"I had hoped," said Henry, contemptuously, "that the Duke of Lorraine had at least the wit of a humpback, and would never think of warning a king (at the head of such an army as I now command) that he should do that which it was plain he had determined not to do. Ask me something that I may grant, Duke Godfrey — for instance, one of the estates of those rebels, which I mean to confiscate. Would you like the Countship of Saxony? Old Dedi has abandoned it, and my trusty Werenher has saved the son the trouble of seeking for it."

"I take my leave of your Majesty," replied Duke Godfrey. "To make such a proposition to me, is to answer my request with cruel — with undeserved mockery — nay, with insult. I feel that I have excited your Majesty's hatred against me, and I am now conscious, from what is passing before my eyes, that your enmity will only cease with my life; and that, as my existence must be to you a reproach, you will seek to deprive me of it. Be it so — I have ever preferred my honor to my life, and, to preserve that honor untarnished, I care not if the assassin's knife should reach me. I am certain that from this moment I am a doomed man — doomed to death by you. As such, I now speak to you; as such, I not only warn you, but I venture to foretell

to you, that, from this breach of plighted faith with the Saxon nobility, you will have to date your downfall — and that, so low shall you sink in the estimation of mankind, that you — even you, now the mightiest of mortals — shall yet beg for some scanty stipend, to procure the common necessaries of life, and shall be refused that which, as a mendicant, you have asked for. The time will come when these words will be remembered as a prophecy. Henry, farewell — I leave you to die; I know not by whose hand I may be struck, but I am sure that you will direct the blow. Forever — farewell.”

A few minutes afterwards the Duke of Lorraine and all his military retainers marched out of the encampment of Henry.

The Saxon prisoners had not the opportunity of conversing with Godfrey; but, in his sudden withdrawal, of which they were made aware, previous to removal to their various places of imprisonment, they became conscious that he, with each one of themselves, was alike the victim of the duplicity, the falsehood, and the treachery of King Henry.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PLOTTERS AND THE LISTENER.

“LIEMAN,” said Henry, to his attendant, upon retiring to his tent at night, “what think you of the language that the hump-backed duke addressed to me to-day, in presence of so many persons, with respect to the surrender of the Saxons?”

“That it was language calculated to disparage your dignity, to excite discontent, and to encourage traitors to rebel against you ; and that it was so like to treason, it should be punished with death,” answered Lieman, aptly corresponding with the spirit in which the question had been put to him.

“I think so too,” observed Henry ; “and I should regard that man as my best friend and most faithful servant who puts the sentence of death, which I now pronounce upon Godfrey, into execution.”

“Let me but have the warrant for his death testified by any symbol from your majesty,” said Lieman, “and I answer for it, with my life, he shall not be a week longer in existence. Even if Godfrey had not offended your Majesty now, you would soon have found him in the field an armed foe, resolved to lose his life in opposition to your Majesty.”

“Why say you this ?” asked Henry ; “I know not how I could, except by the withdrawal of my promise from the Saxons, have provoked his enmity.”

“Because, your Majesty having determined upon opposing yourself to the Pope upon the cessation of this Saxon war, you would have thereby excited against yourself the hostility of Godfrey — the avowed partisan of the pontificate,” answered Lieman.

“Indeed !” said Henry, “I thought not of that before, and yet what you state must be the fact ; for I have heard him say — ay, a hundred times, and I laughed at his absurdity — that the most glorious achievement, and the most honorable to Germany, in all its annals, was the carnage of Germans by the Normans at the battle of Dragonara, when seven hundred Swabians died, to the last man, in defending the dominions of Pope Leo IX.

A hundred times, and more, I have heard him affirming that the 18th of June, 1055, was a day to be remembered with pride by every German; and I now recollect that he has often wished that, like those Swabian dolts, he might so meet his death on the field of battle, and thus be permitted to expire like a soldier, and as a martyr. Yes, Lieman, you are right. Even if he had not offended me, he must be got rid of; for he will be one soldier less in the ranks of that — which I now regard as my sole enemy — the papacy at Rome.”

“I know not,” remarked Lieman, “when your Majesty may deem it prudent publicly to declare your hostility to Rome; but, whenever you do so, you will find arrayed on your side hundreds of supporters that you wot not of!”

“And who may these be?” inquired Henry, “that I may feel obliged to them for their sympathy, even though I may not require their aid.”

“They are,” replied Lieman, “the Paterini — they are to be found in all parts of Germany — they swarm in Lombardy, and have associates even in Rome itself. They have, according to the several localities in which they are placed, special objects that they desire to accomplish; but in all there is to be found one common principle — a hatred of the strict supervision of a scrupulous and a powerful priesthood — because, wherever such a priesthood is to be found, they prevent men from indulging their natural propensities. The Paterini wish to enjoy life, and to see all others enjoy it — and hence they hate those priests who denounce the marriage of priests, and they love to see the offices, riches, and emoluments of the church bestowed on laymen, and possessed by laymen, because then men are free to live as they please. Hence, they are the natural enemies of the Pope, and of a strict

clergy; and they are the natural supporters of your Majesty, and of a free living priesthood, and would wish to see you the ruler at Rome, and the Pope banished from it, or put to death within its walls."

"Then these friends of yours — for I presume that they are your friends," said Henry, "since you speak so confidently of their sentiments, greatly approve of my selling the bishoprics and abbasies in my dominions."

"Most highly," answered Lieman. "I have the conviction, that the only good use that can be made of a church is to convert it into a source of profit for the state; I can say that for them, because I am myself a Paterini."

"I am glad to *know* the fact," said Henry, with a smile that had much meaning in it. "Are they numerous?"

"Very numerous," said Lieman.

"And, I suppose, can recognize each other wherever they meet?" inquired Henry.

"Assuredly," answered Lieman. "They have secret signs, which none but one Paterini can tell to another, under the penalty of death."

"Do they believe in a God?" asked Henry.

"Some of them do — others do not," replied Lieman. "Each is free to think as he pleases; but no one can be a member who does not think that Nature, which gave us passions, intended we should indulge them; and, that whoever attempts to restrain them, be he pope, prelate, priest, or layman, is a tyrant, and, as such, to be encountered in private and in public, by word and deed, wherever it is possible — and by the sword whenever it is practicable."

"This is a very formidable association," observed Henry, "according to your description of it. I may congratulate myself upon having its support, as my objects coincide so well with its own."

“They do so completely. There is no name so popular with the Paterini as that of Henry IV. If their daggers alone could accomplish such an object, you must have long since been elevated to the Roman throne upon the ruins of the papacy,” said Lieman, proud of disclosing to the king the opinions of the society of which he was a member.

“Could I be admitted a member of the society?” asked Henry, anxious to have these conspirators within his power.

“It is impossible,” replied Lieman; “for no man of title can be one of the Paterini. It is one of their fundamental rules; but whatever your Majesty wishes them to do, shall be done by them. It was, aided by the Paterini, that I excited, as you desired, that commotion at Cologne, which was so near costing Anno his life. And now I have but to tell them that you desire the death of Duke Godfrey, and from that moment every step he takes will be dogged; and, at the first favorable moment, he will be despatched.”

“I thank them for their devotion, and you for your zeal,” said Henry. “The task, however, is one that I prefer being consigned to your hand alone. It is full of peril — and I desire to intrust it to you, because I am aware that yours is a courage which no danger can appall. Supposing I were to elevate you to the office of a count, could you still continue to be a confederate of the Paterini?”

“Me — a count!” said Lieman, gasping with joy and surprise. “O, yes — for, having been admitted a member when I had not a title, rank could not deprive me of my rights as an associate.”

“I rejoice to hear it,” observed Henry, “for I should be sorry to lose so trusty a means of communicating with

them. I shall have need to do so soon ; for the time is not distant when open war between me and the Pope shall be declared. Is Bishop Croft yet returned ? ”

“ He rode into the camp not an hour ago,” answered Lieman.

“ What thinks he of the death of his cousin, Werenher ? ” asked Henry.

“ As little as men of the world think of those who can no longer be of any service to them,” replied Lieman. “ He believes, or is content to believe, and cares little whether it be true or false, that Werenher was slain by Godfrey, in revenge for the assassination of Dedi.”

“ Then you are confident,” Henry said, “ that Werenher’s death makes no change in his devotion to me ? ”

“ Not in the least,” answered Lieman ; “ because he feels convinced it cannot interfere with the promotion of his own interests. He is devoted to you, because he is devoted to his own ambition ; and he knows he can only climb to a higher position in the church by the aid of your arm. He therefore belongs to you soul and body ! ”

“ I like to hear such tidings of my servants, for they are the men I can most trust,” remarked Henry. “ Go, then, Lieman, to Bishop Croft ; bid him be here with all convenient speed. As to you, remember that the day on which you tell me Duke Godfrey of Lorraine is dead — whether that death be by violence or by accident, the lands, power, and title of a Thuringian count shall be bestowed upon you.”

Lieman, elated with joy, passed from the presence of his sovereign.

“ I have been too confiding — too unsuspecting a master,” thought Henry to himself. “ Here have I been, for years, associating with two most dangerous men,



Werenher and Lieman, and knew not the peril in which I stood. Any day, for some years past, Werenher might have destroyed me with poison ; and, at any time during the same period, this Lieman might have admitted a furious homicidal Paterini into my presence ; for, if I am not much mistaken, these Paterinis hate kings and emperors as much as popes, bishops, and priests. Lieman has not told me all their secrets. But if he once get within the sweep of Godfrey's sword, I shall hear no more of him ; whereas, if he slay Godfrey, he will be so far useful, in ridding me of a dangerous foe ; and I can afterwards consider what I shall do with him and his obscure band of vulgar conspirators. At present, I have a mightier, more formidable, and more dangerous foe to grapple with. Ah ! my dearest Croft," he said, throwing his arms around the Bishop of Hildesheim, as he entered the tent, " I trust I see you in perfect health."

" For years I have never been so well — never felt myself in such perfect strength and vigor as at this moment — no, not even in my boyhood, when all my thoughts were of religious studies, or of rustic sports," replied Croft.

" I am rejoiced to hear it," remarked Henry, " both for your sake and my own. I require from you all your energy, I demand from you all your strength, and I seek from you all your courage ; for I have a proposal to make to you, which I would long hesitate even to whisper to any but yourself ; and not even to you, but that I feel assured you are fully qualified to assume all the responsibility I desire to impose upon you."

" I make no professions," said Croft. " Try me ; and judge by such a test whether or not I am faithful to you."

" With such a man as you, I will not," observed Henry,

“descend to circumlocution of any kind. I then say at once to you, what would you think, if I asked you to place yourself in a position of direct hostility with the Pope?”

“I would say,” answered Croft, “that if your Majesty did not feel assured that I was a man of dauntless courage and of unshaken resolution, you would never invite me, whether I were a layman or religious, to place myself in a position in which I must provoke the hostility of Hildebrand, a pontiff whose nerves would never tremble, although he felt the whole earth shaking beneath his feet.”

“And yet,” said Henry, “I do invite you to take that position.”

“And I am prepared to take it,” observed Croft. “Have I now answered you as your Majesty wished?”

“You have answered,” said Henry, “in a manner that completely corresponds with my expectations. You have done so in such a manner, that I say to you, ask from me, for the future, whatever you wish, and every thing that you desire, short of my crown itself, shall be given to you. To the fulfilment of this promise, as long as I live, I pledge my faith, my oath, and my honor.”

“Most gracious and most generous master,” said Croft, “tell me now what is the particular duty you desire me to perform?”

“I desire you to take upon yourself the highest office in the world. I desire you to become a sovereign!” answered Henry.

“The highest office in the world! I—a sovereign! The Prior of Aschaffenburg—a sovereign!” exclaimed Croft, his ruddy cheek assuming the pale and leaden hue of death, as he repeated the words: “I—a sov-

ereign! Can I have heard your Majesty aright? What can be the meaning of your words? I do not understand them — I — the highest office! I — a sovereign! O, it is a dream — or, perchance, an attack of illness has made me misinterpret your Majesty's words!"

"No — no," remarked Henry laughing, and amused at the confusion and amazement portrayed in the features of Croft. "What I say, I mean; I could not, I think, in plainer words, ask you to become that which I wish to see you — a pope!"

"A pope," observed Croft, hastily; "the Pope lives at Rome — the chair of St. Peter is filled by Gregory VII. That formidable man, who is best known and feared, by us German priests, as the Archdeacon Hildebrand, dwells now in Rome; and the moment he hears of such a project as this he will fling, with a ready hand, a thunder-storm of excommunications upon our heads."

"But if I insure the popedom to you, are you ready to set his excommunication at defiance?" asked Henry.

"I am," was the ready and instant reply of Croft.

Henry embraced Croft, and then said: —

"True and trusty friend, I may now tell you a secret, which, if there had been the slightest shrinking on your part, I would have concealed from you. I have only waited for the cessation of this Saxon war, to develop plans that have long since been contemplated by me. I conceive that the popedom should be in my gift as Emperor of the Romans — that no one should be pope but one that is devoted to my interests. I hesitated, for some time, whether I should make you or the worthy Cadalous, my pope; not because I doubted which was the more fitting — but because I am told that Cadalous, though a priest, has had a wife; and, therefore, was cer-

tain, for his own sake, not to reform that abuse, in which he himself had been a participator. Though thus committed in hostility to Rome, he is, I think, a weak man, whose fears of an hereafter might be worked upon — whilst you, I am sure, have the courage of adamant — you will care as little for the thunders of an excommunication as for the clamors of the mob, who are all upon the side of Hildebrand, and who exalt him for his bravery, because he denounces all archbishops, bishops, and priests indebted for their rank to what he calls simony. I ask you, then, to become my pope, in order that we may, together, put down that Pope at Rome, Gregory VII., who holds now in his hand the hearts of the people as firmly as if they were there enclosed with clasps of iron. It is a great task I ask you to perform — are you prepared to undertake it ?”

“ I am,” again promptly replied Croft.

“ It is bravely answered,” observed Henry, “ and will, I am sure, be as resolutely performed. Be assured, Croft, that I have done, and am doing my utmost to remove the difficulties from the path both of you and of myself. I am, at this moment, in communication with Cenci, the prefect of Rome, for the purpose of inducing him to seize upon Gregory, the first favorable opportunity, and to bring him here a prisoner. Cenci has promised to do this: he has even declared that, if the Pope refuses to obey his orders, he will slay him. This much I have provided for at Rome. I have not been idle in Germany. I have used the display of my army here to some effect upon the fears of the bishops; and there are now, few amongst them who would refuse, or rather, who would dare to refuse, upon my demand, the deposition of Gregory, and to elect whomsoever I

may name, as pope. What think you of my plot, Croft?"

"That it is almost perfect in all its parts," answered Croft. "There is still, however, one material thing wanting to it."

"And what is that?" asked Henry.

"It is," answered the king's astute adviser, "that in the spiritual war in which you are about to engage, you should be prepared to be the first assailant; that, without waiting to be attacked, you should attack; that, without delaying to be excommunicated by the Pope, you should excommunicate the Pope."

"It is a valuable suggestion," Henry remarked, "but amongst all my bishops, who but yourself would have the courage to do that?"

"I know there is one who, I am sure, would do it," observed Croft. "It is William of Utrecht."

"How came you to entertain so high an opinion of William, Bishop of Utrecht?" asked Henry. "He rarely comes to court — seldom is seen in his diocese — and appears to be a man, who, though a bishop, takes little interest in the affairs of church or state."

"I say it," said Croft, "because I am pretty certain I have discovered the secret of his life. I know that there is something like insanity in the intensity of his hatred to every Pope that has been in Rome, from Gregory VI. to Archdeacon Hildebrand — that he chafes under the repeated excommunications that have been launched against those clergymen who have violated the vows that bound them, solely and entirely, to the service of the altar; and that he will rejoice in the opportunity of denouncing him who has been most urgent in issuing such excommunications."

“I am delighted to hear this,” remarked Henry; “it is another instrument to insure success; but, for that success, I count mainly upon you and your unshrinking firmness.”

“In your service,” replied Croft, “I shall know neither fear, compunction, nor remorse.”

“I embraced you as my friend,” observed Henry, “when you entered this tent; I now embrace you as my fellow-sovereign: and, as more than one of my predecessors has, as a mark of respect for the pontiff, held his bridle-rein for a short distance, I shall now, as a proof of respect, and of love for *my* pope, see him out of my tent, and safely placed upon his steed.”

And so saying, the proud King of Germany led the exulting Croft, by the hand, from his tent.

As both disappeared in the darkness outside, the folds of the tent, which, when rolled together, left a space for the entrance, were shaken gently out, and thence emerged one who appeared in a strange garb to be seen in that costly tent — it was a man wearing the torn and miserable robe of a common mendicant — it was Bernhard who was thus disguised. He crept cautiously out into the open air, and, as he did so, was so bewildered with what he had just heard, that his thoughts only came by fits and starts:

“What a wise man is that pilgrim! Most lucky he sent me, so disguised, to be a spy! What strange things I have heard! — my former avaricious, wicked master, to be a pope! Lord have mercy on us! — and then the plot against the real pope’s life — and the plot against Duke Godfrey’s life. What a wicked world it is! I must tell all to the pilgrim — he will best know what to do. And then that strange Bishop of Utrecht! — eh! —

*it might be!* — I must not forget that either. I hope I may meet Lieman before he can overtake Godfrey — if I do, I shall save at least one good man's life. O, for an aim of three seconds at that villain Lieman. Even though I have such news as this to tell, I would stop to kill him, and avenge Meginherr."

So thinking, Bernhard made his way out of the king's encampment, and speeded, hurriedly as he could, towards Erzegebirge.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE TREASURE-CHAMBER.

THE Bishop Croft was alone in his chamber, and in that chamber he had secreted the entire vast mass of gold, silver, and jewelry, which he had passed an entire life in accumulating.

Croft was alone. He had dismissed all his attendants, with the special command that he was not to be disturbed for some hours, as he stood in need of perfect quiet and of complete repose.

The Bishop Croft was alone. He sat in his episcopal chair, his head resting on his right hand, and the bright rays of a warm setting sun flashed out in purple sparks from the amethyst-jewelled ring of that hand, as its fingers moved convulsively upon the quick-beating temples of the bishop.

The Bishop Croft was alone, and there was not a sound to be heard, within doors or without, to jar with that profound meditation in which he was now buried.

There was a smile upon his lip — there was the flash of triumph in his eye. He looked as if he were a consummate general, who had, by his skill, gained a decisive battle, and not content with enjoying his victory, was calculating upon all the great results that might be derived from it.

Thus sat Bishop Croft in his solitary chamber ; and thus did he commune with himself : —

“ With the exception of the mere performance of a few ceremonies, I am now that which I often wished, but scarcely could ever have hoped to be. Kings shall bow down before me ; and ambassadors from the most distant parts of the globe shall come to lay at my feet whatever is most rare and most precious in their respective countries. My power shall extend, not merely to the utmost limits of Christendom, but beyond them — for *I—am* the Pope.

“ The Pope — His Holiness the Pope !

“ Yes — these are the titles with which men shall greet me.

“ The despised Prior of Aschaffenburg shall be a pope, and in Rome, too ! and those who contemned me, and those who denounced me, because I attached its proper value to wealth, shall be forced to bow down to me as a supreme pontiff ! — to fear my power, if they will not court my favor.

“ How different is my position from that of the simple-minded Meginherr ! He now lies forgotten in his grave. He is as if he never had been, whilst I, living, shall be a pope, and when dead, remembered forever. My name shall appear in the annals of all nations. But in what terms shall I be spoken of ?

“ I care not. Let the future provide for itself. This



is the time for me. At present I am to be a pope. Yes, Pope; despite the dauntless Hildebrand, who now sits enthroned at Rome.

“He will call me a schismatic — he will denounce me as an anti-pope.

“We shall mutually excommunicate each other — that is all.

“He and I do but typify the state of the church at the present moment. There is a schism. He embodies the independence of the church as distinct from the state — I, the dependence of the church upon the state.

“Which of us is right? It is a great question. It will outlive us both. Neither he nor I can decide it. All *I* have to do is to take advantage of the quarrel, and convert it to my own profit.

“In such a quarrel I am sure of the victory, because I have opposed to me nothing more than the will and the weakness of Hildebrand. His only allies are fanatic but helpless clergymen; his only supporters the poor — the multitude — still more helpless, still more weak, and still more contemptible than the old man at Rome, and his adherents who serve at the altar. He is surrounded with personal enemies. Some desire his deposition, some thirst for his blood — all are ready to coöperate in his downfall.

“What, on the other hand, have I to aid me? First, the full support of Henry, who identifies himself with this struggle against Hildebrand; secondly, the avowed or the covert support of every European monarch, who must perceive, that with my exaltation, will be secured to himself the free disposal, according to his desire, of all the bishoprics and abbasies in his own dominions;

thirdly, I must have for myself the hearty coöperation of every one who desires to obtain the highest rank in the church, by means of the personal or pecuniary influence he can command; and with these, the coöperation of all the great laymen, who desire to have restored to their families those fertile lands of which the piety of their ancestors have divested them; and with these laymen there must be, and especially in Germany, that large body of clergymen who are threatened by Hildebrand with being deprived alike of office, rank, and riches, if they will not live piously, chastely, and virtuously.

“Imperial and kingly power — the passions, stronger than the armies of kings, and wealth, more omnipotent than armies or the passions themselves, are ranged upon my side. What then can resist me?

“Nothing — no — nothing on this earth can do so.

“I am a pope, in hostility to one who calls himself *the* Pope; but, in a few days — perhaps, in a few hours — perhaps, even now, if Cenci has fulfilled his promise, Hildebrand is no more; and I am, alone, and uncontested, the Pope — His Holiness, the Pope!

“Or, if it be not so? If accident preserves Hildebrand from the sword of Cenci? If Hildebrand fly in safety from Rome, and some unforeseen chance raise up, in some unknown and hitherto undiscoverable quarter, friends for him, and he engages in a quarrel with me — presumes to question my right to that title, which, from this day forward, I mean to assume, then, in that case, I have here — ay, even *here* — friends who never failed me — true allies, whose mere presence alone, can not only win for me peace, but secure to me victory.

“ Let me look upon them — let me feast my eyes with the sight of them — let me seat myself as a king in the midst of them.”

So speaking, Bishop Croft rose from his episcopal chair, and took from a casket, which he wore around his neck, a small key, applied it to a minute orifice in the wall, and a panel, large as a door, opened, and instantly a flood of sunshine poured into a recess, like a room, it was so wide and so high, and the walls were one dazzling mass of precious stones, and the pavement completely hidden by the heaps of gold and silver coins which covered it over, and lay, in many places, as if they had been shovelled up, in large masses, together.

A thousand and a thousand times had Croft looked upon this accumulation of riches, which was apparently incalculable. Never had he gazed upon it but with admiration — and yet, never before did he feel such exultation in contemplating it as at that moment.

“ O, my wealth ! my own wealth ! my own precious wealth !” he cried ; “ with what pains have I not collected, and with what anxiety have I not gathered thee, piece by piece, and bit by bit, together ! How gladly hast thou grown and thriven beneath my care — the pale silver, the ruddy gold, and the rich diamond. I have watched thee by day, and I have cared for thee by night ; and now thou sparklest before my eyes, and thou smilest upon thy loving master, and thou tellest him that thou wilt wait upon him, and do his bidding, when he wears the tiara. O, wealth ! wealth ! wealth ! precious wealth ! he who clutches thee, as I do now, holds that for which Archimedes wished, when he declared that he could, with it, move the entire world.”

As Bishop Croft spoke these words, he flung himself

down upon the floor, and rested his glowing cheek upon a mound of gold, as if it were a pillow.

“Henry’s pope,” he said, with a smile, “reposes upon that which is greater than king, emperor, or pontiff. O, it is glorious! almost Godlike! thus to lie amid that which all men worship—and to think it is my own—all my own. How these jewels above me sparkle, as if they were so many stars—how the gold reddens around me, as if the coins were beginning to glow with a vital heat, and would, of themselves, move to do my bidding.

“O, gold—precious, glorious gold!

“But what is this?” said Croft, starting up from the recumbent posture in which he had been reposing. “It seems to me as if that heap of gold had suddenly become one mass of fire beneath my cheek, and burned it to the bone. And eh! what is this? Why, the gold by my side, if I touch it with my hand, seems, also, changing to fire. And O, horrible, I seem to be lying amidst flames.

“Ah! I have been thinking over much—I must leave this—yes—I must—must quit this rich treasure-chamber.

“Great heavens! what is this? I—O, horrible! I cannot stir.

“And see—see, my jewels are changing—changing—O, monstrous! they have changed into white particles of fire, and are now dropping down upon me in burning flakes.

“I am all in a flame of fire, and yet I cannot move!

“It is my over-heated, over-worked brain that is thus deluding me—I know it well—and yet I am burning—burning—ah! the gold is melting, and sink-

ing into my flesh. And hark! there are strangers in the outer room.

“They come to help me. No — no — they come not to help me. Their laugh is loud and malignant as that of demons.

“They are demons! They tear down the diamonds of fire and fling them on me. They heap up the gold in shovels, and are smothering me with the scorching masses. They are burying me — they are burying me in hell. Ah! one has caught me by the neck — he is choking me.

“O, I am slain — slain in my sins.

“Help! help! help!”

A shriek of agony rang through the mansion of the reprobate which made the flesh of all creep who heard it; for the sound was expressive of the intensity of extreme agony, and of the absolute horror of despair.

The hearers feared, for a time, to move. They did not dare to ask each other whence it came. They trembled, as they felt assured that it had issued from the private room of Croft. With timid steps they advanced to the door — knocked first lowly, and then loudly at it; but there was no response given to their repeated calls. At length the attendants of Croft burst open the door. The spectacle that there presented itself to their eyes it would be difficult, accurately, to describe.

Upon breaking open the door, they discovered the deceased, with his neck as if it had been broken; his skin dark and discolored — himself a rigid corpse — the miserable wretch lying dead upon all his treasures, which were strewed beneath him as if he rested upon a bed!

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE EVIL DEED AVENGED.

ON travelled Bernhard, hastily, anxiously, and hopefully, for he believed that on his speed depended, not merely the life of Godfrey, but thousands of his fellow-creatures. In his breast there lay deep and important secrets, and upon their quick disclosure to the pilgrim (regarded by him as the wisest and best of men) rested, as he considered, the triumph of the good, and the downfall of the wicked. He travelled on, with those untiring limbs, which none but a hunter can command; and never did he stop to repose, but for the mere purpose of giving to himself so much rest as might enable him to resume his journey with the same energy that it had been begun. He ate, he slept, but to travel onward; and, as he did so, there was but the same thought engrossing him—all that he had heard when he lay concealed in the king's tent.

Some days had passed since he had listened to the conversation of Henry, first with Lieman, and then with the Bishop of Hildesheim; and yet Bernhard was still upon the road. That road, at last, began mounting up amid thick, tangled forest trees, to the top of a high hill, and as Bernhard recognized the topmost point of the hill, his heart bounded with joy.

“Thank God!” he exclaimed, “I am, at last, within a few hours of the end of my journey. When I reach the top of that hill, I can see a deep ravine which runs between it and the opposite mountain—I have but to descend into that ravine, and then to climb the mountain

on the other side, and from that mountain I shall see the fortress of Erzegebirge, either invested by the rustics, under the command of the pilgrim, or captured by them. I hope the latter may be the case. O, what things I have to tell the pilgrim!" cried Bernhard, his constant thought, for the last few days, again taking possession of his mind. "What strange tidings for him! and then there is Duke Godfrey! It is strange I should find, wherever I have gone, the traces of him and his troops having preceded me. Perhaps God, in his mercy, may permit me to be the humble instrument of saving the life of so good a man from the dagger of the infidel Lie-man. It is wonderful that I should have been able to hear the particulars of so foul a plot. No man but a forester, who has been habituated to remain for hours in the same position, watching for the wild beasts of the woods, could have stood unmoved, as I did, for such a length of time, within the folds of the king's tent. Ah!" thought Bernhard to himself, with a pardonable vanity, "if a spy be wanting, in a good cause, there is no man equal to a practised forester. We can dog the steps of the wicked as we track the wolf to his lair."

As Bernhard thus thought, he stopped suddenly in the midst of the rapid pace at which he had been proceeding, for his practised eye had distinguished the glistening of armor amid the green branches.

"Who may these be?" said Bernhard; "the followers of Godfrey, or the soldiers of the king, employed upon some marauding expedition? I must ascertain before I permit them to see me."

Thus speaking, Bernhard darted from the pathway behind some trees, and then cautiously looking around, so as to be certain that there was no one watching his

movements, he crept upon his hands and knees along the earth, until he obtained a distinct view of the persons whose armor he had remarked, and could, unobserved, hear their conversation. He found that there were collected together a troop of about twenty archers, and that they seemed to be reposing after the fatigue of a march.

“I wonder,” said one of the unknown soldiers, “what that stranger could have desired to impart with such secrecy to our leader, that he should have begged for a private interview with him, and completely alone.”

“I suspect,” said another of the soldiers, “that it must have been a message from the king.”

“A message from the king!” remarked a third; “that is impossible, for he left the camp greatly displeased with his majesty.”

“And therefore the king,” said a fourth, “may have sent after him to seek a reconciliation. If the king have any gratitude in his heart he will do so, as no man rendered greater service in the battle of Langensalza than our valiant commander.”

“It is very probable,” said a fifth soldier, “that a reconciliation is sought for, because, though the man who is now with him does not hold high rank, I am quite sure I have seen him amongst the king’s personal attendants. Besides, he wears the gilded armor of one of the Worms’ Life Guards, his majesty’s favorite soldiers.”

To this entire conversation Bernhard listened with burning impatience. He had done so, in the hope that some name might be mentioned, which might guide his conduct; but the last words uttered were so applicable to Lieman, that he could restrain himself no longer, but rushed into the midst of the soldiers. In an instant twenty swords were pointed at his breast, and there was



the demand made by all upon him to declare who he was, and wherefore he thus appeared so agitated?

“For heaven’s sake,” he said, in a voice that was shrill with anguish, “do not stop to ask me questions, but answer mine, for more than one life may depend upon the delay of a moment. Of whom are you the followers?”

“We are the followers of the gallant Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine,” replied one of the soldiers.

“And it is with him that an interview has been sought by a messenger of the king?” asked Bernhard.

“It is,” answered the same soldier.

“Is the messenger of the king a man with large, black eyes, of a pale complexion, of tall and muscular form?” again asked Bernhard.

“He is — you describe the stranger exactly,” replied the Lorraine archer.

“O heavens! where are they? How long have they been together? How soon may we come up with them?” exclaimed Bernhard, his voice tremulous with agitation, and his cheeks, from excitement, fired with the heat of passion that filled his breast.

“They have been together about an hour,” said the leader of the troop, who now gathered around Bernhard, and sympathized with the agitation that he exhibited. “They passed from that hill down into the ravine, and wherever they are, we can from thence perceive them, and in a few moments afterwards come up with them.”

“Thank God,” said Bernhard, with deep emotion. “Men — soldiers of Godfrey — if you love your lord, seek now, with me, to save his life, for the man who is with him is a messenger from the king, and has followed with the intention of assassinating your brave commander. Forward — then, forward, to the top of the

hill. Prepare your bows, as I have mine, and if you see the duke in any danger, slay Lieman — for it is the villain Lieman, who has come to murder Godfrey.”

No sooner had these words been spoken, than all rushed, at their best speed, to the brow of the hill; and the moment they did so, perceived the two, of whom they were in search — the Duke Godfrey and Lieman. They were not in the ravine; but stood on a projecting ledge of rock on the opposite mountain, directly on a level with Bernhard and the soldiers. A narrow, but an impassable space separated Duke Godfrey from his friends. Modern science has invented the means of constructing bridges over a wider space than that which there divided Godfrey and Lieman from Bernhard and the Lorraine archers; but, to place the one party by the side of the other, would require a descent on one side, and an ascent on the other, which the most agile could not hope to accomplish in less than half an hour. Bernhard saw, at once, that unless Godfrey could defend himself from Lieman, no human aid could be rendered to him, and as this conviction came to his mind, he wrung his hands in despair.

Godfrey and Lieman, when seen by Bernhard, were so deeply engaged in conversation together, that neither had remarked they were observed by others. Godfrey was seated on the trunk of a fallen tree; and Lieman was standing by his side, but his back turned to the group who now watched him.

“The duke is still unharmed,” said Bernhard. “But how are we to warn him of his danger; for alas! that is all we can do. The man who is speaking to him at this moment, I, myself, heard promise the king he would slay him. What is to be done?”

“I know not any thing better,” said the leader of the archers, “than to shout to him to be on his guard. If he be so, he is like one of the warriors of the north, and will count it no honor to kill a single opponent. Besides the sight of so many of his followers may deter the assassin from carrying out the base object with which he has sought this interview.”

“Alas! I know nothing more feasible than what you suggest,” said Bernhard. “Do you shout then to him — he will recognize your voice, whereas, if I spoke, he might not heed the words of a stranger.”

“Holloa!” cried the follower of Godfrey, raising his voice to its utmost pitch; “holloa! watch the movements of the man beside you — he has come to assassinate you.”

As these words were uttered, and that echo repeated them, and, by the quick repetition, rendered all that was said confused, Godfrey and Lieman looked across the ravine, and perceived, for the first time, so many persons watching them.

Godfrey, unconscious of the slightest evil impending over him, did not rightly, nor clearly, apprehend the signification of the words that were spoken, and, starting up from his seat, advanced towards the edge of the rock, with the intention of calling to his men to repeat what they had said. Such was not the case with Lieman; the fell design he had in his heart rendered him suspicious, and hence, the moment that he heard these words — saw the soldiers — and recognized Bernhard, he perceived that the only time he could ever have a chance of slaying Godfrey was then; and that even his own life now depended upon the execution of the project, for Godfrey, he knew, would kill him if his suspicions were once aroused. Hence, it was, that the moment he saw

the back of Godfrey turned towards him he drew his dagger, plunged it into the back of the duke, and, amid a shout of horror from those who witnessed the bloody deed, pushed the body of the brave duke over the edge of the rock into the ravine beneath, and, in so doing, inflicted a second death upon his victim.

“Shoot the murderer where he stands!” exclaimed the leader of the archers; “if we could not save the life of Godfrey, let us, at least, avenge it.”

At the same moment, twenty arrows flew in a straight line over the ravine, all directed against the person of Lieman — and, had he not been a practised soldier, he must, on the instant, have fallen, transpierced with wounds; but he anticipated the movement by dropping upon one knee, and bringing round his shield, so as to present it and the crest of his helmet alone as the only object to be aimed at.

The sharp ring of six arrow heads on Lieman’s shield was heard, and the whizzing sound of others, as they flew over and around him, but he stood up in the midst of them unharmed; and, shaking his sword in derision at the archers, sought, by a single bound, to clear himself from the vacant ledge of the rock, and hide himself beneath the deep-set trees behind him. That bound was made; and, as he reached the first tree, he turned his face sideways from the group that gazed upon him, but from that spot he never again stirred; for, at that instant, there came flying, with the speed of lightning, and in a straight line at him, a single arrow, which, striking him through both cheeks, nailed him to the tree by the side of which he stood — and there penetrating a couple of inches into the stem, trembled as it held him, from the force with which it had been discharged.

A shout of joy rung in the ears of Lieman, as that wondrous arrow shot fastened him, writhing in agony, to the tree. He was seen, for a moment, to fling his arms and sword about, as if he were fighting against a foe — then, as a flight of arrows struck him, the sword dropped from his grasp — he beat the air with his hands — and then, drawing up his feet from the ground, he hung, by a single arrow, to the tree — every limb was seen to shake and tremble, and then he remained as quiescent — as if he were dead.

He *was* dead; and when the soldiers of the duke climbed up to the place in which he hung, half an hour afterwards, they were horrified to see what intense agony was portrayed in his distorted countenance; and they wondered not a little to find inscribed, upon the arrow that had slain him, a word — the signification of which they could not comprehend — that word was — MEGIN-HERR!

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION.

“I HAVE fulfilled my vow,” said Bernhard, “but I have not saved the life of Godfrey. Man cannot do all that he desires, but only so much as it is the will of heaven he should accomplish.”

As Bernhard spoke these words he reached the crest of the mountain, from which the fortress of Erzegebirge, and the hamlet at its base, were distinguishable.

“The battle, I see,” observed Bernhard, “is still

raging, but the valiant pilgrim, I perceive, has contrived the means by which it must soon be brought to a close."

Whilst Bernhard was expressing, aloud, his admiration of the strategic skill of the pilgrim, circumstances occurred which fully justified his applause.

The sounds of battle were heard — the shouts of warriors, commingled with the shrieks of the wounded, reached his ears, as he advanced towards the fortress, which he could perceive had foes both from the hamlet below and from a fortress higher placed than itself, to contend against. During his absence, he remarked that a projecting pinnacle of the mountain on which Erzegebirge was built had been seized upon by the pilgrim, and there, with much difficulty, a tower had been erected, capable of containing twelve hundred soldiers. This fortress had been filled with various machines of war, and commanding, as it did, the fortifications of the fortress beneath, there were now pouring from it, upon the fortress walls, enormous piles of wood, pointed at the top with iron, and with these, huge stones, which mangled and crushed to death all upon whom they fell; whilst, at the same moment, flights of arrows came from the rustics beneath, and struck those upon the walls who had escaped the dreadful assaults from above.

The soldiers of the garrison, who, under the command of Egen, had been harassed by repeated attacks, now declared to him they were able to resist no longer; that, penned up by the rustics, they could no longer, with safety, forage abroad; for the foes above could, by watching all their movements, give warning to those in the land around as to the time they were about to issue forth — and that, destitute of food, they must yield the for-

tress, even if they could resist — which they declared to be impossible — the attack from the tower.

When Bernhard gained access to the presence of the pilgrim, he found that the soldiers from the fortress were with him, desiring to know upon what conditions they might yield up the place.

“Your bravery as soldiers,” replied the pilgrim, “induces me to forgive the cruelties you have practised upon those who were unable to resist you. I rejoice that you offer to surrender to-day, rather than to-morrow, for it saves me the necessity of employing against you a weapon of warfare, the knowledge of which I gained in the East, and which if I did use, you would be as completely destroyed by it, as if the heavens opened and rained down fire upon your heads. I have forborne to employ it to-day, not for your sakes, but for the sake of her you hold a prisoner. The conditions on which I am willing to spare the life of every soldier, are, that the fortress, with all it contains, be yielded up to me; that the lady and her attendant be at once brought, safe and unharmed, to the tower; and that your commander, Egen, be conducted to me in chains — not that I intend to take his life — but to punish him as a criminal, and as a perjurer — but without shedding his vile blood. As to the soldiers, they shall be treated as brave men in misfortune should be dealt with — and only detained as prisoners until the opportunity is afforded of exchanging them for Duke Magnus, who was made a prisoner when leading on an attack against this fortress. These are the conditions I name, and I can listen to no other.”

The terms of this surrender were readily, even joyfully, accepted by the garrison. Seventy Swabian soldiers were transferred to the tower, to be detained there as

hostages for the fair treatment and the speedy release of Duke Magnus; whilst Egen, their commander, was thrust, heavily laden with chains, down into the lowest dungeon of the fortress, there to await the doom that might be passed on him by his captors.

Whilst these conditions were carrying into operation, the pilgrim and Bernhard were engaged in deep and serious consultation with each other; for Bernhard was disclosing, word for word, the conversations he had heard, and the observations he had himself made.

“What you now tell me,” said the pilgrim, “fills my heart with grief. I think not of myself, although, in what you hint, and what you surmise, and what you suspect, I fear to find that worse than I had ever anticipated has befallen my child. This, however, is my own wound, and with my own hand I shall probe it. Whatever be my grief, I am sure to find it superabound with the mercy of God. For the present, I have other and greater things to think of. My true and faithful Bernhard, even by you — so humble an instrument as yourself, this projected schism of the king may be nipped in the bud. As you have told to me what the king has said, so tell it to His Holiness the Pope. This ring will obtain you instant admission to the presence of the humble Hildebrand. Here, too, is gold, to expedite you on your road. Take the most fleet horse you can procure, and lose not a moment in speeding to Rome. Remember that every hour that brings you nearer to the Pope, lessens, by an hour, the reign of heresy; for he will strike it down — ay, and tread it out with his own naked feet, even though hell should, with all its flames, rise up to terrify him and try to scorch his sacred limbs. Away, then, away — the cause in which you are now



engaged is not yours nor mine — it is the cause of God. Away then to Hildebrand. See him, and then — thank heaven that you have lived !”

Bernhard hurried from the presence of the pilgrim when these words had been spoken to him. He uttered not a syllable in departing. He seemed to be in such haste to be gone, that he would not, as it appeared, lose time even in saying a simple farewell.

The pilgrim seemed to be animated with the same anxious desire as Bernhard. He watched the forester as he rode forth, and he followed his rapid movements with the longing wish that the rider could speed fast as his own thoughts ; and he felt, whilst gazing upon this courier to Rome, that the intensity of his own gaze was a spur in the side of the steed which was bearing Bernhard from his sight.

It was not until Bernhard had disappeared, that the pilgrim turned round, and found that Gretchen was in the same room with him, and seemed to be waiting there until he should deem it convenient to address her.

“What can I do to serve you, maiden ?” inquired the pilgrim.

“I have waited, Sir Pilgrim, upon you,” replied Gretchen, “by the desire of my mistress, to say that she wishes earnestly to see a priest, as the martyred Bishop of Osnabruck confided a sacred charge to her, which it is necessary for her to dispose of, before she can claim the happiness of personally thanking you for the great benefit you have conferred upon her.”

“A priest from the hamlet shall be with her in a few minutes,” observed the pilgrim ; “even before I knew that she had a special commission confided to her, I desired that a clergyman should come here, as I supposed,

—since those infidels had so long held you captive, it would be as grateful to you as to your mistress to be restored to the consolations which religion can afford to you.”

Gretchen curtsied lowly, but made no reply.

“Tell your mistress,” continued the pilgrim, “that as soon as she has seen the priest, I wish to speak to her; for I have to tell her tidings that will deeply interest her. Meanwhile, I may ask you a question, which I am sure you will answer me candidly. In the midst of all the evils that have lately afflicted her, does your mistress ever speak of any one allied to her by blood?”

“Of none,” answered Gretchen, “have I ever heard her speak but of her parents.”

“Of her parents!” said the pilgrim, somewhat surprised. “Instead of parents, you surely mean parent.”

“Yes, you are right,” said Gretchen, “it is but of one of them, that she is hourly speaking.”

“And that one is ——” inquired the pilgrim, his utterance nearly choked with emotion.

“Her mother,” answered Gretchen.

“No, no, no, girl — you are wrong; it is of her father,” vehemently asserted the pilgrim.

“Her father!” said Gretchen, in an astonishment almost equal to the pilgrim’s. “Not at all. Now you remind me of it, she seldom or ever speaks of her father, whilst scarcely an hour passes that she is not thinking or speaking of her mother.”

The pilgrim sat down, pale and breathless, when he heard these words of the Saxon maiden.

For a few moments the old man was utterly speechless, and, when he had in some degree recovered from the surprise into which Gretchen’s information had cast him, he said to her :

“Go, maiden, tell to your mistress what I have said to you, and add, that I shall wait here until it is her pleasure to come to me.”

Gretchen quitted the room, pitying, without being able to comprehend the nature of the grief she saw their brave deliverer suffering.

“What!” exclaimed the pilgrim, when he found that he was alone, and could, unobserved, abandon himself to his reflections, “what can be the meaning of all this? For years upon years I have had but one grief, one care, one thought — my child — my only child — my child, pure, loving, innocent, beautiful — a flower of heaven permitted to bloom upon this earth. I have sought for her, toiled for her, and now, fought for her; and yet, when I ask of whom has she been thinking all this time, I am told that it is *not* of *me*; but that it is of one, of whom, as an infant, she cannot have the slightest recollection. And this I hear of her, who, next to heaven, had no other thought but of me, until —

“O, villain! villain!” cried the old man, starting up, and stamping on the floor, as if some noxious reptile lay beneath his foot. “O, villain! hypocrite! liar! double-dealer. He has persuaded her that I am long since dead! She knows not that I have searched for her and for him in every land in Europe! that I have endeavored every where to track him out, and never, until this day — even if this day Bernhard be correct — with the slightest semblance of success.

“It would then but increase her grief to think overmuch of her father, of whom she must feel fully persuaded, that, if living, Henry would not have dared — no, not for his crown and life — to have laid hands upon her. She seeks to forget that father whose sword was

the fear of every villain ; and she tries to wile away her time, and, if possible, to forget her sorrow, by conjuring up images of a mother that she has never known. Poor child — poor child ! How grossly must she have been deceived — how completely must she have been deluded, when she could not recognize me the day I tried to rescue her from this villain, Egen, in Aschaffenburg !

“ Ah ! I see it all now — she is certain that the father who would have protected her, is long since dead, and, therefore, her tender heart shrinks from dwelling upon him, who was once recognized by the church and the people as the champion of the innocent and the defender of the oppressed.

“ Poor child — poor child ! I must break, by degrees, the joyful intelligence to her, that the father she loves so much is living — that it is to him she is now indebted for her freedom.”

Gretchen here entered the room, and said —

“ My mistress desires me to say that she is now anxious to see you, if you are prepared to receive her.”

“ Conduct her hither,” answered the pilgrim, in a voice so tremulous with emotion that the purport of the pilgrim’s speech was more distinctly comprehended by Gretchen than his words were clearly heard.

“ At last — at last — at last, I am to behold her,” mentally said the pilgrim ; “ but I must not let her look upon my face, until I have intimated to her that the father she loved is not dead, but still lives !”

As the pilgrim thus spoke, he drew his hood over his head, so as to completely conceal his features beneath its ample folds ; and, at the same time, Beatrice, wearing a long, thick, black veil, over her dark dress, as a novice, which she still retained, was conducted into the apartment by Gretchen.

“Maiden,” said the pilgrim, turning to Gretchen, and speaking to her in a voice husky with emotion, “I must ask of you to leave your mistress and me alone; for I have that to say to her to which no third person can be a listener.”

“Go,” added Beatrice, “for I feel that, with this good old man, heaven has given to me a protector — one who has acted to me as — *as a father.*”

The old pilgrim was deeply shaken by the first sweet accents of that gentle voice; but, when he heard himself spoken of — as a father — he sank back in his chair; and, still more cautiously than he had yet done, muffling up his face in his hood, he burst into tears.

Gretchen hurried out of the room.

Beatrice saw that the pilgrim was unable to speak; and kneeling down by his side, she caught hold of his right hand, and, clasping it between both her own, she said —

“Forgive me, Sir Pilgrim, if I presume to kiss this hand which has been my deliverer — this hand that has rescued me from bondage — this hand that has freed the weak and the innocent from the grasp of the cruel and the sinful — this hand ——”

Beatrice stopped, confused; for she saw upon the forefinger of the pilgrim’s right hand a small, thin, gold ring — having in the centre a minute emerald stone, on which were engraven a cross and a sword, — the cross appearing to be propped up by the point of the sword.

“Ah! what can this mean?” said Beatrice. “I pray you, Sir Pilgrim, to explain to me how you came to wear such a ring as this; for I have been told that such was a gift from the Pope — that it and another were given by his holiness to one brave man and to his daugh-

ter, as special marks of gratitude, from Gregory VI., for the courage displayed by that man — a warrior — in defence of the church.”

“And do you not, my child,” asked the pilgrim, “wear a ring like to that?”

“No, Sir Pilgrim,” replied Beatrice, “for I have not the right to do so.”

“Not the right?” said the pilgrim, astonished at these words. “And wherefore?”

“Because,” answered Beatrice, “I am not the daughter of the Lord of Viterbo.”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the Pilgrim. “What do I hear? What strange delusion is this? The voice is the same! Let me look upon your face.”

Beatrice raised her veil, and the old man saw, kneeling before him, as he fancied, the same creature, in all her maiden beauty and exquisite loveliness, that he had looked upon, with all the admiration of a father, twenty years previously. The features were the same — the voice the same — and yet there was a difference — an imperceptible difference — but he could not define what it was — between that face and the face he had thought upon so long. Whatever it was, it made him pause, and say —

“Then, if you are not the daughter of the Lord of Viterbo, of whom are you the daughter?”

“I am,” replied Beatrice, “the daughter of his daughter — for it is upon my mother’s hand I have seen the same description of ring you wear.”

“O, God! my God!” said the pilgrim, clasping his hands together. “Thy power is great! and thy mercies infinite! I pine for one blessing, and thou grantest to me greater than I hoped for. I was seeking for one

child, and thou givest me two. Thanks and praise be thine, now and forevermore.

“O,” he exclaimed, “I see it all now — I have been thinking of my child as if she must continue to be as young as when I last saw her. I perceived that I was growing old myself, but it never occurred to me that she must be doing the same — and when I meet her child I fancy it must be herself. O, the foolish heart of a father, which makes him fancy that his children never can be stricken with age, and that youth and beauty must remain with them forever. Ah! the folly of parents,” said the old man, smiling through his tears.

“Then, you are,” continued the pilgrim, taking the hand of Beatrice, and pressing it to his lips, “the daughter of Bianca.”

“I am,” replied Beatrice, surprised to hear her mother’s name pronounced by the lips of a stranger.

“And your name is ——” said the old man, gazing with rapture at the young girl by his side.

“Is Beatrice,” answered the maiden, who felt, she knew not wherefore, agitated by the manner and the words of the pilgrim.

“And what do you recollect to hear your mother say of her father — that he was living, or dead?” anxiously asked the pilgrim.

“That he was slain in battle, fighting against the enemies of the Pope,” answered Beatrice.

“And do you remember who it was she said told her that her father was dead?” inquired the pilgrim.

“I am not sure,” said Beatrice; “but I think she stated that she had learned that fact upon the assurance of my father.”

The pilgrim started when he heard this ; then muttered, so as not to be overheard by Beatrice —

“ It is as I suspected — false — false — false in every word and deed.”

A silence of some minutes then ensued. The pilgrim was considering what course he should pursue. At length the silence was broken by him.

“ Where,” he asked, “ is now your mother ? ”

“ Alas ! I know not for certain,” Beatrice replied ; “ but I hope and trust under the protection of the Empress Agnes, and Queen Bertha, who are, however, as helpless as the meanest of their subjects in preventing the iniquities of the king. Of my mother, I have never heard directly since the day I was torn from Aschaffenburg.”

“ Then we must both seek out thy mother,” observed the pilgrim. “ Let me now tell thee, for it will rejoice thee to hear it, thy mother was misinformed when she was told that her father was slain in battle. Her father is now living — her father has been engaged for years in seeking for her — her father, in that search, mistook her child for herself — her father rescued her child from the hands of the enemy twice — her father — it is not the first time that thou hast seen him, Beatrice,” added the pilgrim, casting back his hood, “ is now before thee — now clasps his arms around thee — now kisses, and now blesses thee — his grandchild.”

Beatrice at once recognized the pilgrim, who, in the hamlet of Aschaffenburg, had rescued her, for a moment, from the hands of the Worms’ soldiers, and that she had seen, as she fancied, stricken dead at her feet.

“ O, this,” she said, “ dearest grandfather, is a hap-



piness which I never dreamed I should be allowed to enjoy on this earth! Ah! me!" she sighed, "why is it that I feel, because you are the father of her I most love of all human beings, more consolation, more joy, more assurance of safety, whilst I hold your hand clasped in mine, than I have ever done, since I was a child, when in the society of my own father?"

The short gleam of happiness, which, for a moment, had warmed the heart of the pilgrim, was, on the instant, overclouded by this question, asked, in her unconscious innocence, by Beatrice. Instead of giving to it a direct answer, the pilgrim started from the side of his grandchild, and walked up and down the apartment in a state of great agitation. He recovered from his emotion, to seat himself again by her side, and to say, whilst his aged hand rested in fond affection upon her head,

"Is your father very kind to you?"

"Kind to me, he has always been," said Beatrice; "but I cannot affirm that he is fond of me. There is something about him which I do not understand, and that, in my solitude, has appeared, the more I have thought of it, the more incomprehensible. Perchance you, grandfather, can explain it to me."

"I know not to what you particularly refer," said the pilgrim.

"How comes it," said Beatrice, "that my father should be a man of immense wealth, and yet not of any particular rank; for even I cannot tell whether he be noble or burgher: he has too much wealth for the latter, and he does not command the military retainers of the former. And then, again, wherefore is it that he should have three distinct names?"

“Three names,” said the pilgrim — “I do not, my dearest child, comprehend you.”

“Yes — it is so — I remember my mother telling me — it was the very last conversation we ever had together — that he wooed her as Eberhard — that when I was born, at the Lago Maggiore, he was called Manfred — whilst, in Aschaffenburg, he was never known by any other designation than that of Ruebert. You have never changed your name, grandfather. You were the Lord of Viterbo in your youth — you are the Lord of Viterbo in your old age. There has been no alteration with you. Why should there be any with my father? I pray you explain this to me — but — alas! my dearest grandsire, you are pale — deadly pale — alas! alas! you are very ill.”

“It will pass — it will pass, my child,” said the pilgrim, struggling with the passions that were contending in his heart. “Your questions, I must own to you, excite many painful feelings — the more painful, because I cannot give them an explicit answer. Be content with this, that I shall seek the solution of them; but I cannot hope for a clew to them, until I have seen and spoken with the long lost Bianca. You shall, if she be living, soon speak with her, and by your lips shall be conveyed to her the joyful intelligence, that the parent she has deemed to be so long dead, twice placed his life in peril to save her child from a doom worse than death.

Beatrice could not speak; but a thousand kisses, showered upon the lips and cheeks of her grandfather, expressed, at the same time, her joy and her gratitude.

The old man smiled at the child-like fervency of her affection, and there was both sadness and joy in his

breast, when he thought how like this lovely creature was to her mother, when, at the same age, she so embraced him, in his strong castle at Viterbo. The smile, however, soon changed into a frown, when he thought how that mother had been, in his absence, induced to quit the shelter which that castle could have afforded her. The frown, however, was speedily dispersed by the next observation made by Beatrice.

“See, grandfather,” said Beatrice, “there are fires on the distant hill-tops — see — see — as quick as I speak they seem to be lighting up — lo! there were but two a moment since, and now there are twenty — see! the red blaze of fire appears to be coming nearer — and afar, are the sparkles as of bright stars. What a strange sight is this — What can it mean?”

“It means,” said the pilgrim, jumping up from his seat, and pacing the room with all the elasticity and vigor of a youthful soldier, “it means that great deeds are about to be done. It is the signal that the downfall of a tyrant is fast approaching — it declares that all Saxonland is again in insurrection. It is the signal for battle — it is the signal for victory. To arms — to arms,” shouted the old man, as he rushed from the chamber. “I shall conduct you, Beatrice, in triumph to the presence of your mother. To arms — men of Saxony, for war is now proclaimed, by an oppressed nation, against a profligate tyrant.”

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE RE-UNION.

ABOUT two months had elapsed since the occurrence of the events described in the preceding chapter.

The fortress of Magdeburg, placed upon an island formed by the waters of the Elbe, and, at one time, the stronghold of the revolted Saxon nobles, had been assigned by King Henry to his mother and wife as a dwelling-place. There they remained, with a few attendants to wait upon them, and, with those attendants, a sufficient number of soldiers to act as a garrison, and protect this important fortress from a sudden attack.

In a large apartment of this fortress, might be seen the empress, the queen, and two ladies, who, like Agnes and Bertha, were clothed in robes of black. These two females were, Bianca, the mother of Beatrice, and the Countess Adela, the wife of the old warrior, Dedi, Count of Saxony. All appeared, from their dark robes and the gravity, if not grief, impressed upon their features, to be sisters of the same religious community. And, like to nuns, in a convent, the affairs of the world abroad had remained for months unknown to them.

The four females were now engaged with the same occupation. They were arranging, upon a wide frame, a large piece of embroidery, which they had worked with their own hands, and had that day completed. It was an altar-cloth of crimson silk, on which there had been formed bright leaves of laurel, in glittering gold, intermingled with branches of palm in dull gold; and at various, but regular, distances, stars, with ruby crosses

in the centre, each of which was resplendent with numerous brilliants.

These four females, as they looked at the result of their toil for so many months, gazed upon it with a sincere and disinterested admiration, for they thought not of it as a proof of their skill in the art of embroidery, but as a present not unworthy to be placed on the high altar of the Cathedral Church of Magdeburg.

“My dear child,” said the empress, “I am quite charmed with this altar-piece. The design is yours. The manner in which those palm branches and laurel leaves intermingle, is perfectly novel, and will, I am sure, be imitated by others, who, by so imitating it, will prove their own good taste.”

“How kind you are, my mother, to say so,” observed Bertha; “but do not overlook those stars. It was you that thought of them, and it is your diamonds alone that give to this altar-piece that novelty of appearance for which you praise it.”

“It is only when they are applied to the services of the altar, that I find myself an admirer of precious stones, and dainty in the due arrangement of them,” answered the empress. “But if it were not for the nimble fingers and the wondrous skill of our two friends Bianca and Adela, many a fifth of June must have passed away before our altar-piece was displayed in honor of him for whom it was worked — the archbishop and martyr, Boniface. You and I, alone and unassisted, could not have completed in years that which they have done for us in a few months — I might say weeks.”

“Time passed in toil like this,” said the meek and pious Bianca, “is, in my estimation, like a meditation,

for as our hand labors our heart is filled with the thoughts of the saint to whom we devote the exercise of our skill. We reflect upon his labors, his sufferings, his life, his death, his example, and his precepts. From him we raise our thoughts to God, who bestowed such graces upon him, and, accompanied by such an intercessor, we hope that the prayers we offer up to heaven may be acceptable. A magnificent altar-piece like this is therefore, in my regard, but a memorial of many holy aspirations. Issuing from the hands of women, it may be, as in this case I trust it is, the type of the thoughts of those who, suffering much in this world, have abandoned all its pleasures to place their hearts, where those hearts can alone find peace — on the altar of God.”

“Ah! Bianca,” observed the Countess Adela, “I cannot say that all the time I have passed over that piece of embroidery has been as piously occupied as you suggest it should have been. To me it has been merely a refuge from grief. I have sought, whilst engaged at it, to forget that I am a wife separated from my husband — that my brave step-son sleeps in a premature and a blood-stained grave, and that my own son — boy as he is — now pines in a prison. As I so labored, I endeavored to banish sorrows from my heart — and to forget, at the same time, the wrong-doer and the wronged, whilst I prayed that I might yet live to see virtue triumphant upon this earth as it is in heaven.”

A female attendant here entered the room, and, presenting a large golden ring to the empress, said :

“A tall, old man — a peasant — desires this ring to be given to your Majesty, and at the same time prays that he may, as the bearer of it, be allowed a few minutes’ conversation with you, and alone.”

The empress regarded the ring for an instant, and then said —

“Conduct him to this apartment, and leave us, as soon as you have introduced him.”

The attendant departed with these words, and the moment she had done so, the empress beckoned to Bertha, Bianca, and Adela to approach her, and thus whispered, in a low tone of voice :

“This is the ring of the Bishop of Halberstadt. The bearer must bring us some important intelligence from the prelate, who was arrested with the other bishops at Spira, upon surrendering to my son.”

The person to whom she thus referred was now led into the room, but it was impossible to discern his features, as his head was covered with a large hood. The moment he entered the apartment he approached the empress, and, without speaking a word, knelt down before her, whilst his eyes glanced carefully around all parts of the chamber, as if he were anxious that the empress should take care that no intruder might listen to the words he had to speak to her.

“We are alone,” said the empress ; “what message bearest thou from one who is venerated by me for his manifold virtues ?”

The man made no answer for a moment ; but again looking round the room, and perceiving none other to be present than Agnes, her daughter, and their two friends, he cast back his hood, and said —

“The humblest of your subjects kneels before you.”

“O ! heavens !” exclaimed the Empress Agnes, “it is the Bishop of Halberstadt himself. Rise up, my lord bishop ; it is not fitting that one so good as you should kneel before a sinner like myself. How comes

it that you have thus ventured hither — or, do you come with the joyful tidings that my son has repaired the wrongs he has done you ?”

“Alas ! no,” replied the bishop. “God has not yet been pleased to touch the heart of King Henry, and bring him to repentance for his manifold sins. I am now here in disguise, because he still thirsts for my blood ; and I am here, by stealth, because I have but now escaped from the life-long imprisonment, in a foreign land, to which he had doomed me. But, despite of the dangers that surrounded me, and the perils with which he has beset my path, I have ventured into this strong fortress, now occupied by his soldiers, because, what I have to say may be useful to you, to Queen Bertha, and, ultimately, even to my persecutor.”

“Excellent man ! worthy brother of the virtuous Anno,” observed the empress. “I thank you — my child, Bertha, thanks you — and I trust that even the sinful Henry will yet thank you. But let us know what has happened to you ; as we are all absolutely ignorant, for more than two months, of what has occurred in that world which is beyond the waters of the Elbe that flow around this fortress. Let us know especially what has happened to yourself.”

“It is absolutely necessary I should state it,” replied the Bishop of Halberstadt, “as, otherwise, you could not clearly comprehend the necessity of my being here. No sooner were chains placed upon my person, than King Henry proposed that I should be put to death, and that, too, by tortures, such as are inflicted upon the worst and meanest of criminals. That intention was abandoned by him, because he found that the nobility and the prelates, who had hitherto supported him, would regard it



as a dishonor and an infamy attachable to their rank. It was their remonstrances alone, and these, too, with great difficulty, that saved my life."

"O! monstrous! monstrous!" exclaimed the empress. "Who, but Henry, ever thought of so treating a bishop? Wherefore did so hellish an idea enter his mind?"

"The reason he alleged for desiring to inflict upon me a cruel death," replied the bishop, "was, that he considered me, not merely as the fomentor, but as the author of the rebellion of the Saxons against him. The intensity of his hatred he demonstrated by conduct unworthy alike of a king and a Christian, for, finding that it would not be politic to slay me, he sought to degrade me, and, therefore, he compelled me — a bishop — to have no other dwelling-place but in his kitchen — to associate with his scullions, and to perform the meanest and most filthy duties required from such domestics. This conduct, he soon perceived, dishonored himself, but did not dishonor me; for I cheerfully submitted to it. I need not say to my pious listeners by *whose* high example I was encouraged, when I found myself treated 'like a slave.'"

"Why, this treatment was worse than death," said the excited Adela — "a king who so treated a bishop ought to be hurled from his throne."

"Henry only does that which he is permitted," meekly replied the bishop. "Perchance, there was pride in my heart, and God, in his mercy, desired that I should be so humbled. It is now past — my conscience is my witness that I patiently submitted to it — so patiently, that the king saw it was not what he intended it should have been — an intolerable punishment. And hence it

was that he resolved upon banishing me for life. To effect this object, he had obtained a promise from the King of Hungary, that, if I were sent to him as a prisoner, he would incarcerate me in a strong fortress, and in such a distant part of his dominions, that it would be impossible for me ever to make my way back in safety to Germany. This plan was arranged; but, luckily for me, intelligence respecting it was gained by a true and devoted friend — Udalric of Bavaria — who desired me, as I descended the Danube, to obtain permission, as frequently as I could, from my guards, to land upon its banks, for the purpose either of repose or prayer, whilst he would be constantly on the watch, at the first favorable opportunity, to rescue me.”

“Brave Udalric,” said Bertha. “I shall ever think of him in my prayers.”

“The suggestion of Udalric,” continued the bishop, “was one absolutely necessary for me to act upon, even for the preservation of my life; for, when I was on board the vessel that was to convey me, by the waters of the Danube, down to Hungary, so exhausted was I by anxiety, by care, and by the toils imposed upon me in the king’s kitchen, that I must have died upon my passage, if I had not been permitted, now and then, to land. The first two or three days I was placed upon the banks I could walk with the greatest difficulty, but at last I recovered my health, and when we had got to a vast distance away from the king’s court, I was permitted, much more freely than at first, to leave the boat. Last St. John’s day, we came, at an early hour of the morning, within sight of a church. As that church was but a short distance from the river, I requested permission to proceed thither and offer up the holy sacrifice of the

mass in honor of St. John. This request was acceded to. I had finished the mass, and was preparing to return to the boat, when I found the church surrounded by bodies of armed troopers. At the head of these I recognized Udalric, who immediately carried me away from my guards, and conducted me to one of his castles, where I remained concealed until all chance of pursuit was at an end. From thence I travelled, disguised as you see me, and am now on my way to Halberstadt, where, in the course of a few hours, I shall be at the head of a Saxon army sufficient to encounter and defeat any force that Henry can bring against us."

"Thank God!" said Adela, "then we may hope soon to hear of the downfall and destruction of a tyrant!"

"Lady," remarked Bertha, "you forget that you speak in presence of a wife and a mother."

"I did, indeed, forget," answered Adela, "and I pray your pardon, if what I have said has given offence to you or the empress, whom I both respect and love. I hate the king, because I regard him as a bad son, and a worse husband. I wish for his downfall, because he has made many a wife a widow, and many a mother childless."

"It is in his downfall that we can alone hope to find his conversion," remarked the bishop, "and you, therefore, though his mother and his wife, must desire it. As to his destruction, I am not less anxious than you to prevent it; and therefore it is that I have risked my life to see and speak with the mother and the wife of my greatest enemy."

"We thank you," replied the empress, "for this great proof of your Christian charity. We pray you

“speak. You shall find Bertha and myself alike docile, whatever be the sage advice you give us.”

“The treatment,” remarked the bishop, “which I received at the hands of Henry, will suffice to show you how he conducted himself towards others, who, relying upon his oath and honor, placed themselves at his discretion. As to the humbler classes of the Saxons, once the country was left without protectors, he reduced them to the condition of slaves, or he has had them massacred — lands, remarkable for their fertility, have been converted into wildernesses — families, distinguished for their wealth, have been reduced to a state of absolute penury. The sword has been at the throats of all — fire in the habitations of all, and the king has conducted himself in such a manner that there can be now no doubt entertained — and none is felt — by the Saxons, that it is his deliberate intention to exterminate them as a nation. Hundreds — nay, hundreds of thousands, despite all his precautions, have escaped his wrath and evaded his vengeance. He has so misgoverned Saxony — with such impiety and such inhumanity — that all now regard it to be their first duty, as men, as citizens, and as Christians, to take up arms against him, and never again to lay them down until they have driven him from the throne. The Saxons, now, will make no peace with him; they will never rest satisfied until they have chosen another to reign, as king, over them. He stands, at this moment, upon the brink of a precipice, and yet fancies he is as secure as if he were in the strongest citadel, and surrounded with an army like that which he commanded at Langensalza. He has, every where, created against himself relentless enemies, and he has, every where, alienated from him those disposed to

be his friends. Upon the first shock that is given to his seeming power, it will be found to disperse, as the thick spring-mist that gathers on the surface of the earth vanishes from the sight before the burning rays of the sun. It is at this moment, when he supposes Saxony is helpless at his feet, that there is, in the hand of every Saxon man, a sword ready to be unsheathed when the signal for battle is given. He dreams that he is omnipotent, when it requires but one single word from Rome to be hallooed in his ear, and he must wake to find himself alone, helpless, desolate; with no hand to help — no tongue to commiserate — and no eye to weep for him. That single word from Rome will soon be spoken — the messenger, who is to pronounce it, is now speeding fast towards Germany to give utterance to it. Henry knows not this — suspects it not. Up to this hour his crimes have brought with them success, and each new success has been the forerunner of fresh crimes. He has, until now, experienced neither reverse nor check; but a change is about to occur, as great, in his fortunes, as in those of the Pagan general, Pompey, of whom it is said that, in his pride, he once boasted he had but to stamp his foot, and armed men would issue from the earth to obey him; but who was reduced, afterwards, to so poor a state, that he was murdered by a wretch, so base and mean, that he would not be permitted to bear the shield of a freeman and a soldier. Henry, at this moment, is like the boastful Pompey; and it is for the empress and the queen to take care that his death be not like that of the proud Roman — or even worse — like to some other Pagans, who, in their despair at a great reverse of fortune, died upon their own swords.”

“O, in mercy’s sake!” said the pious empress, hor-

rified at such an awful warning as this, "tell us what can be done by Bertha or myself, to prevent that worst of evils befalling my son — the death of an impenitent and obdurate sinner."

"Be with him — or, at least, let Queen Bertha be with him, if it be possible, when he is overthrown," replied the bishop, "for overthrown he will be. Even now he is working his own downfall. He has, in the plenitude of his supposed power, been so demented as to declare war against Gregory VII. — to induce one of his creatures to assume the functions of an anti-pope — and he is now preparing to add impiety to impiety, by inducing a bishop to pronounce sentence of excommunication upon his holiness. This scandalous proceeding will take place shortly; and I have been informed (for we have sure information as to all his doings) that he intends to summon you both — empress and queen — to be present at the sacrilegious ceremony. I come now to entreat of you, that if you be required to witness such a proceeding, to go there."

"What!" exclaimed Agnes, whilst her mild eyes, for the first time, flashed with indignation, "be willing witnesses to a sacrilege? — never."

"Such is the answer I expected from you," said the bishop — "such is the reply that I supposed you would send to the king if I did not come to show you how necessary it is that you should comply with such a requisition. About the time that he thus offends publicly in sight of earth and of heaven, the blow, long impending over his head, will fall upon him. You know his pride, and how hard it will be for him to submit to a reverse of fortune. Go then to him — save him from himself — save him from despair; for there will be, gnawing at his heart, many

a baffled sin unrepented of, and many an accomplished sin dwelt upon with criminal satisfaction. Even now, I believe, that in the schism he hopes to establish, the abortive scheme of a divorce would, if he were permitted to be successful, be revived."

"O, my Lord Bishop," said the agitated Bertha, "even if I were to go alone, and barefooted, I will be found by the side of my husband."

Bianca made no observation, but having been told by the empress and Bertha how sadly her daughter's happiness was compromised by the projected divorce, the delicate pinky shade upon her cheek, like the tender blush on the flower of the sweetbrier, was changed to the waxy whiteness of the lily.

"So completely," continued the bishop, "has the king's attention been absorbed by his quarrel with the Pope, and so certain is he that no power on this earth can now resist him, once he chooses to beat it down with his armies, that either he has not heard, or he does not choose to bestow a thought upon what is occurring in Saxony, where his fortresses, established for the destruction of the people, are constantly falling into our hands, and becoming strongholds for the popular defence."

"The king's fortresses taken by the Saxons!" said Bianca, "does your lordship happen to know if Erzegebirge has been one of these fortresses?"

"It has," replied the bishop. "The Saxons, led on by some lord of Italy, have seized upon that fortress, and its Swabian soldiers are now held as hostages for Magnus, Duke of Saxony."

"O, my child, my child! my darling Beatrice, what has become of her?" exclaimed Bianca, almost delirious between the contending emotions of astonishment, joy, and anxiety.

“I know no more, lady,” observed the bishop, “than what I have stated to you. Let this, however, content to quiet your apprehensions, that if your daughter were a prisoner in Erzegebirge at the time it was captured, she most probably remains there, in a state of perfect safety. The conqueror of Erzegebirge is described as an old man — one celebrated in Italy as a warrior — as the bravest of the generals in the whole of the Roman Principality — an especial favorite of the good Pope; Gregory VI.”

“And his name? what can be his name?” inquired Bianca, forgetting in these words, for the instant, the thoughts of her daughter.

“I never heard his name,” answered the bishop. “And what I now state to you respecting him is but rumor, for the old man himself never refers to his past career.”

“Ah!” said Bianca, sighing, “it is but rumor; for there is but one man in all the Roman states to whom, if he were living, your description could justly apply. He died before Beatrice was born — and in his grave lie buried all my hopes of happiness in this world but one — that of again clasping my child to my heart.”

“A messenger from his Majesty demands admission to the presence of the empress and of the queen,” said a soldier, in a loud voice, entering the apartment.

“Conduct him hither at once,” replied the empress, “we are prepared to receive him.”

The soldier bowed, and instantly withdrew.

“This must be some friend of Henry’s,” remarked the empress. “It might lead to much mischief if he recognized you, my Lord Bishop. Be then so good as to seat yourself behind this piece of embroidery.”

“I do so in obedience to your Majesty, although to



myself the man could cause no harm," replied the bishop. "A single blast from my horn would render it impossible for him to take me living from this place a prisoner, and any injury to me now would cost him his life. For his sake — whoever he may be — I shall withdraw from his sight."

So saying, the bishop retired behind the magnificent piece of embroidered tapestry, and at the same instant the envoy of the king entered the apartment.

The messenger was a knight, who wore a hauberk of minute thick shells of gold, which glittered like so many sparkling gems. As he moved, his golden helmet seemed to be one mass of gilding, and had a rim and crest set with precious stones, whilst his lower limbs were encased in a species of leggings, which encircled them as with ropes of gold, and to the belt, which was beset with gems, hung a short sword in a scabbard of gold, whilst its hilt flashed with the mass of diamonds encrusted upon it. The knight in this gorgeous armor — so gorgeous that it seemed more suited for a banqueting hall than a camp, was a man about forty years of age, but whose jet black hair, and handsome features, and fair complexion, gave to him all the appearance of youthful manhood. He entered the room with the proud, confident step of a man that flattery has done much to spoil, and who believed that, with personal beauty, an individual may be pardoned many offences. He was a courtier — and a favorite with the king; he entertained, like Henry, and like most evil-hearted and corrupt-minded men, a mean opinion of the female sex, and fancying that no woman could look upon him without his being admired, he saw with gratified pride that he was in the presence of two noble ladies like Bertha and Bianca — both beautiful, and both seemingly young.

“I am, I presume,” said this gairish knight, with a smile, which showed a range of teeth as white as ivory, “in the presence of their Majesties the empress and the queen.”

“This,” said the empress, “is my daughter, the Queen Bertha—I am the mother of the king. Your name, Sir Knight, and your business here?”

“In the presence of a king, a knight is permitted to wear his helmet—but in the presence of so much beauty, the knight must manifest, by his demeanor, that he is its slave,” said the messenger, as he removed the helmet, and permitted those present to look upon a head that might be a fitting model for a statue of the youthful Mercury.

“A truce to compliments, Sir Knight,” said the empress, in a severe tone. “They do not suit the lips of my son’s subject—and cannot, without reproof, be spoken in the hearing of my son’s wife. Your name, Sir Knight, and the cause of your coming to Magdeburg—and be as brief as the nature of your message will permit; for our time is too precious to be wasted in idle discourse.”

The dark eyes of the messenger flashed with anger when he found himself thus reprovèd; and a feeling of hatred against the four women in whose presence he stood crept into his heart, when he perceived, by their looks, how truly the empress had spoken the thoughts of each.

“My name, madam,” he said, “is Rutger—I am a Count of the empire.”

“Rutger! Rutger! I pray your Majesty’s pardon,” said Adela, “let me look on this man.”

The vehement spirited Adela did not wait the per-

mission she sought for, but walked over to Rutger. She stood looking at him for a minute or so, in the face. The aged woman examined his features as if she were gazing, not at the man, but the picture of a man—and that, too, of a man whose name was loathsome, although his features had remained, hitherto, unknown to her. She gazed upon him from head to foot—and, though she spoke not a word, there was such undisguised disgust expressed by her eyes and lips, that Rutger, with all his unabashed confidence in his personal appearance, blushed, with a sense of awkward shame, that was as painful as it was strange to him.

Adela spoke not a word until her eyes lighted on the magnificent sword by his side, and she said to him :

“This is, I suppose the sword of Attila?”

“It is,” stammered forth Rutger, utterly confounded by the demeanor of the Countess Adela.

“The ways of Providence are wonderful,” said Adela, as if speaking aloud her thoughts. “Here is a thing that calls itself a knight, and that one blow from my old husband’s Danish axe would split in two, as readily and as speedily as the hatchet of the woodman splits a dry block of wood; and yet here it is, safe and sound, and smirking, and dressed up like a vain girl for a holiday, whilst brave men are in their graves, and good men are in exile, and honest men are hiding from the face of day, and all because this compound of gewgaws, gems, and vanity lent itself to as foul a plot as ever yet was concocted by cowards and put in execution by assassins. The ways of Providence are not only wonderful, but inscrutable, or such events as these could never come to pass. I humbly entreat your Majesty to pardon me if I add to his own account of himself some other facts respecting this *knight*.”

The word "knight" was spoken with that withering, scornful, mocking smile, which, when seen upon a woman's lip, fastens in the breast of a man like a poisoned dagger — for it denotes her belief that he upon whom she bestows it is a spiritless dastard.

Rutger so felt it, — for, unconsciously, he placed his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

"I told you he was a *knight* — a polite knight," continued Adela; "for he who would not wear his helmet in compliment to a young queen, is now ready to draw his sword upon an aged countess — but beware, Sir Knight, we women have sharp-pointed instruments for working embroidery — and, if you draw your sword on me, I will stab you with one of them, where you stand. Be calm while I say to her majesty what *you* should have said for *yourself* :

"You, Sir Knight, should have said this — '*I* am the Count Rutger — *I* am the Count Rutger, the chosen, because the willing compurgator of Egen (whose oath no man would believe), when that Egen preferred a false accusation against Otho, Duke of Bavaria — and *I*, Rutger, the friend of Henry, and the witness for Egen, the friend of Henry, deposed, in proof of the accusation, that I held the sword of Attila, the property of Duke Otho, bestowed by Otho upon Dedi the younger, and filched by Egen from Dedi — and so sustaining, by my rank, my credit, and my wealth, the miserable miscreant, Egen — *I* — Rutger, the count — may be regarded as the prime mover of that war which has now so long laid Saxony desolate — and, having done these deeds — when warriors met in arms together, *I*, as a knight, buckled on my beautiful armor, and hied me off to Henschenwege — and at the first sight I got of an enemy, *I* ran away!

— and, though I left my reputation, like my shield, behind me, yet, here I stand with my nice armor, and my fine sword of Attila by my side! — do you not admire *me*? Do you not admire the armor so dearly saved? Do you not admire the sword so marvellously won? Are you not proud to see that he, who was so anxious to save his helmet from a dinge in battle, is now so thoughtful of his duty to the female sex, that he will not wear it in their presence?’

“This, Sir Knight, Count of the Empire — patron of Egen — courtier of King Henry — woman-wooer, battle-skulker, war-exciter, hero of Henschenwege — you should have said for yourself — and then the empress, and more than the empress, the youthful queen, might have looked upon you — *as I do.*”

And, with these words, there shot forth from the eyes of Adela a glance of scornful contempt, which Rutger could not encounter without reddening for very shame — and stammering forth :

“I know not, madam, wherefore you thus address me — I am not conscious that ——”

“I am Adela, the Countess Dedi,” she observed; “and if it were not for you, and the plot that you concocted with Egen, my husband would not now be in exile — my child would not be in prison — my step-son would not be in his grave — my cousin Otho would not be deprived of his rank — my country would not be made a waste — and my fellow-citizens would not be reduced to serfdom. The wrongs that you have done to me and mine are irreparable; if every hair in your head were a life, and that you were shorn of them all, as I hope yet to see you shorn as a craven and a criminal, yet would they not afford sufficient atonement for all the evil you

have done me, and all the mischief you have caused to others. But, had you not the heart of a woman, with the form of a man, I never would have reproached you with my wrongs. It is because I find that you fly the swords of warriors, and seek the society of dames, that I wish to show you that what we women hate worse than a coward, is the eaves-dropping plotter, who concocts a mischief, and shrinks, as you have done, from the responsibility that attaches to it."

"Adela," said the empress, "I pray you peace: I believe that you have much cause for entertaining resentment against Count Rutger, whose name has been mixed up with the persecution of your family and race. Here, however, he is the messenger of the king, and entitled, if not to personal respect on his own account, at least to forbearance as the representative of our sovereign."

"I have not spoken thus to Count Rutger," replied Adela, "merely for the purpose of gratifying any resentment I may justly feel, and that I do feel, against him. I have spoken thus to him, because I more than suspect the purpose for which the king has sent him hither, and which purpose may be concealed either under a real, or a pretended message. Rutger comes here, by the desire of King Henry, to act the lover of our queen! It is not the first time that so notable a project has been devised by his Majesty; and it is in pursuance of such a plan that we see this manikin dressed up in finery, and displaying his frippery, and even tying to his side the sword of Attila; but let him beware of that sword, it is a fatal weapon; terrible to an enemy, when its hilt is held by a brave man, but a sword that always turns its point against the heart of a craven that ventures to

touch it. Let Rutger now speak his message — I have told you the purport of his visit.”

The confusion portrayed in the countenance of Rutger manifested how accurately the Countess Adela had surmised the real intention he had in visiting the queen ; that (as in the affair of Otho) he had consented to be an instrument in the completion of an infamous plot, for the purpose of carrying out the fell designs of Henry against a virtuous and faithful wife.

“ You have not told us the nature of your message, Count Rutger,” said the empress.

“ The king,” stammered forth Rutger, “ directed me to say, that he desired the presence of your Majesty, and commanded that of his wife, the Queen Bertha, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, in ten days from this time, as an affair of great importance to the empire is about to be disposed of: and, at the same time, he bids me tender my personal attendance upon the queen, in order that I might protect her from the peril of so long and dangerous a journey.”

“ O, tender husband ! ” exclaimed Adela, “ who thus cautiously provides that the greatest danger to which his wife shall be exposed will be from the protector he has selected for her ! Assent to such a proposal as this, Queen Bertha, and you will find that you are more safe, when ravening wolves are howling around your litter, than when you are reposing in a bower of roses.”

Whilst Adela thus spoke, the empress and Bertha consulted together, and then the empress thus spoke to Count Rutger :

“ Say to the king, our son, that his wife, the queen, and I will be in Frankfort upon the day appointed. I, in that journey, shall be the protector of my daughter.

I express her feelings and mine, when I say that your presence would be felt as an inconvenience, and we therefore decline it. You may now retire. Farewell, Count Rutger."

The count perceived that the plot of his master against Queen Bertha was suspected, and therefore, without attempting to remonstrate with the empress as to the decision which she had come to, he bowed lowly to both, and hurried from the apartment.

"O, mother," said Bertha, upon the withdrawal of Rutger, "the presence of this base man here, and the intention with which he intruded himself, convince me that Henry persists in his sinful project of a divorce."

"My child," replied the empress, "our sole confidence must be in God. He has already rendered abortive all the plots of your enemies against you. Rely upon him, for he never fails those who have full faith in him. But what detains the Bishop of Halberstadt? He must be aware that this wicked courtier has departed. Why does he not come forth? My Lord Bishop! my Lord Bishop!" said the empress, in a loud voice, "you may come forth. Your enemy has departed."

With these words the bishop again appeared before the empress, and said:

"May I ask your Majesty what was the name of the king's messenger?"

"Count Rutger," replied the empress. "But did you not hear our conversation?"

"Not one word of it," replied the bishop. "Upon passing that tapestry, I perceived that there was an arrow-slit in the upper end of the chamber that looked upon the river, and what I saw there interested me so much that I did not for the moment remember even



where I was. I am sure, too, that some persons in this room are, though they may not be aware of it, interested in what I saw. Do you expect any one to visit you here?"

"I can answer for all here as my children," replied the empress, "for I know the thoughts and hearts of all. They do not hope nor look for a visit from any one."

"Then some persons are coming here," remarked the bishop, "that they neither hope nor expect to see. But I may describe to you what I observed. The arrow-slit from which I gazed commands an extensive view of the river Elbe. Upon looking out upon its waters I could not discern a single boat but one, and that was at a considerable distance. As it came nearer, I could perceive that there were in it but three persons — a female and two men. As it came close, I saw that one of the men was old, and the other a mere boy — that the old man rowed, with a vigorous hand, that the boy steered, and that the female, though concealed by a long veil, was young. I remarked that when a turn of the river brought them within view of the fortress, and that they saw a boat with the king's standard, and manned with the king's red-schaaren, was at the postern-gate, they hastily pushed back, and concealed themselves in their small boat amid the reeds on the river bank. I observed that, as they pushed back, the old man covered himself with a pilgrim's hood, and the young lad cast himself down to the bottom of the boat, the better to escape being remarked.

"It is in that position I left them — thus concealing themselves — and there, no doubt, they will remain until Count Rutger and his attendants have withdrawn. They must be coming here — otherwise they would

have passed onward when they saw the royal standard. They must be Saxons — probably the friends of the Countess Dedi; for, otherwise, coming here, they would not have feared to encounter Rutger.”

“Coming to me they could not be,” said the Countess Adela; “but what do you say of one of them being a boy?”

“One of these three persons is certainly a boy,” remarked the bishop, “a flaxen-haired boy, between sixteen and seventeen years of age.”

“Ah! such, exactly, is the appearance, and such the age of my son,” said the Countess Dedi, “but, alas! he is not now to be found on the waters of the Elbe — he must be sought for on the Maine.”

“May he not have escaped, as the Bishop of Halberstadt escaped?” asked the gentle Bianca, whose heart beat in sympathy with that of the bereaved countess.

“Ah! no,” said the despondent Adela, “for my poor boy had no Udalric of Bavaria to befriend him. There is as little likelihood that it is my boy is in the boat, the bishop has observed, as that the young female is your daughter.”

Poor Bianca trembled, as if convulsions were about to seize her, when this thought was suggested to her. She was attempting to speak, when a smiling countenance — it was as that of an angel, for it was the face of Beatrice — came before her eyes; and, as warm kisses pressed her lips, and the word “mother” sounded in her ears, the world vanished from her sight, and she lay in the arms of her child, as if joy had struck a death-blow to her heart.

The words “mother,” “mother,” sounded in the ears of Adela, and her boy was pressed to her heart, whilst

the exclamations "my son!" "my son!" were repeated, as if, in their repetition, the certainty of the mother, in having her son restored to her, was rendered more sure.

That mother and that son saw not, heard not, thought not of aught else in the world besides. Although the rocky fortress in which they stood had tumbled into ruins beneath their feet, it would not have unfastened the clasping hands of Adela around the form of the son so unexpectedly restored to her. There was fierceness even in the ardent tenderness with which she kissed him, as if each kiss were a vengeance taken upon those who had had the unmanly cruelty to tear from an aged woman her only child — the last — the youngest, too, of all her children.

Whilst Bianca lay still insensible in the arms of Beatrice, the pilgrim advanced, and pressing a long kiss upon the forehead of his daughter, he retired to where the Bishop of Halberstadt stood, and said:—

"For the present, my lord, our presence here can be of no avail. Let me leave this day to Bianca — to the unalloyed happiness of having her child restored to her, and of knowing that her father still lives to watch over her and Beatrice. Such joy may prepare her to encounter the greater sorrows that await her hereafter, and the full extent of which can be but gradually made known to her. Come, my Lord Bishop, your longer delay in this palace may be dangerous. The embraces of Beatrice, and the cares of the good empress and the pious Bertha, will soon restore Bianca to consciousness."

A few minutes after this conversation, a pilgrim was seen rowing across the Elbe a small boat, in which the only passenger was an aged man in the garb of a peasant.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE HYPOCRITE UNMASKED.

IT was midday on a Sunday, in the city of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, and the great church was crowded in all its parts; for not only was it known that the king, the queen, the empress, and the high officers, counts, and lords of the empire, with many of the prelates, would be present, but also that a ceremony was about to be performed by William, the Lord Bishop of Utrecht, which would attract the attention and excite the wonder of Christendom. What the ceremony might be was not known; but when it was rumored that it was specially to take place at the desire of the king, an intense curiosity was excited to witness it, and therefore the humble were not less desirous than the rich to gain admission within the precincts of the church.

A large portion of the church had, by the especial desire of King Henry, been left for the use of the people, for he intended that they should bear away with them a full impression of the omnipotence of his power, and that they should also have their minds impressed, by means of the forms of religion, with a conviction that, in his conflict with Pope Gregory VII., he had, at least, those called bishops to support him. Thus, when high mass in the great church at Frankfort had been concluded, were to be seen in the places immediately adjoining the altar, and near to the thrones erected for Henry, his wife, and his mother, none but persons in gorgeous armor, or in costly robes, and all radiant with gold and jewelry, whilst before them sat, in their magnificent pontificals, *his* “bishops

of the empire." The upper part of the church shone forth, in the blaze of day, one mass of splendor ; and upon that splendor gazed an awe-stricken population, who pressed in a thick crowd together, and who were but the representatives of vast multitudes who thronged in thousands outside, and who waited with impatience to hear whatever might pass, and which it was an utter impossibility for themselves to witness.

The high mass was concluded ; but instead of those who had been in prayer during its celebration preparing to depart, a low murmur of excitement ran through the church, when it was seen that the king and all the high dignitaries rose from their knees to resume their seats, and when the church bells were heard ringing forth, not in regular peals, but in harsh, jangled, and disordered sounds, as if announcing that some awful calamity had occurred. The joyous and triumphant swell of the organ was suddenly changed into a wailing and melancholy cry, as the vestry doors were thrown open, and, issuing forth, were seen first, the youthful acolytes in red robes, and then subdeacons in dark cassocks, deacons in white surplices, priests with their plain chasubles, and the chaplains, in attendance upon the bishop, fully vested as priests. These all came marching forth two by two — file pouring out after file — and all bearing long, white, lighted tapers in their hands ; and last of all issued forth, with a mitre of pure gold upon his head, and a snow-white cope upon his shoulders, the officiating prelate in the ceremony — William, the anti-papal Bishop of Utrecht.

With slow and solemn tread the bishop followed the procession, until he reached the centre of the high altar, the steps of which he ascended ; and, as he did so, the acolytes, subdeacons, deacons, and priests, arranged them-

selves on the steps of the altar, each mounting according to his respective rank — one, a step above the other, and the bishop's chaplains ranging themselves at the two extremities of the altar, before which the bishop stood. When all were so arranged, the bishop turned and faced the vast multitude, and, as he did so, a sudden paleness overspread his countenance. It came upon him as the wailing of the organ ceased, and as the tumultuous jangling of the bells was silenced.

The face of the anti-papal bishop was, at that moment, the face of a desperate man — in the high forehead, now corrugated with wrinkles — in the frowning brows that knit together, and sought in vain to conceal the living fire that darted forth from his blood-shot eyes — in the dilated nostrils, and in the quivering lips, now white and bloodless, might be detected the agonies of a spirit, which defied heaven, and dared the worst tortures of a hell, which it did not disbelieve. Those who had known the bishop, would, in the terrible aspect that now glared forth from beneath the golden mitre, have failed to recognize him. Let not the reader marvel, although he has been previously introduced to him, if he fail at once to know, in this description, one of the individuals previously portrayed.

Close to the side of the bishop was placed, by one of his chaplains, a long, lighted taper; whilst the prelate drew forth from his bosom a parchment, on which some characters were inscribed.

There was a solemn, chilling stillness in all parts of the church, as the bishop advanced from the altar to the outermost verge of the stone platform on which it rested. Every syllable, although spoken in a harsh and broken voice by him, was audible in the most remote corners of that vast church.

“My brethren,” said the pope-hating bishop, “the church, when it has determined upon the excommunication of an incorrigible sinner, has also declared that excommunication should take place upon certain days, and at certain seasons — as upon a Thursday — upon an ascension day — and upon the feast of the dedication of the church of the twelve apostles. It does so, to signify that they, who are so excommunicated, are cast off from all participation in the Blessed Sacrament, instituted first on a Thursday ; upon the ascension day, as showing that the church, which then prays for all, alone renounces them ; and upon the feast of the dedication, as showing that the church, which is opened to all the faithful, expels them from its doors. Necessity compels us, upon this occasion, to deviate from these observances ; but we have preserved others — the disordered ringing of the bells, and the extinction of the lighted candles — the first, as showing that the bells, which, by their regular peal, convoke Christians to prayer, will, by their irregular chiming, scatter the unbelieving into confusion ; and as the light of the candles is extinguished, so shall the light of the holy spirit be darkened in their hearts. One portion of these ceremonies has been complied with, and the other you have yet to witness.

“The excommunication of a Christian is a sad and painful duty, and one to which the church never has recourse but in the last sad extremity. It is painful to direct it against the poorest layman in the community — more painful to direct it against a priest ; but for me, my brethren, has been reserved the most painful of all duties, that of excommunicating one who ranks as the highest of all bishops.

“Why do I excommunicate him ? Because he has

acted as a tyrant — because he has sought for favor with the multitude by thwarting the will of princes — by interfering with them in the government of their dominions — by denying to them the privileges which appertain to them as sovereigns — by seeking to prevent them from rewarding, with the highest offices in the church, those servants whom they know to be most devoted to them, and of whose merits they have personal cognizance. Why do I excommunicate him? Because I am but one of many German bishops that he has visited with his censures, and that he declares to be excommunicated, because we will not compel our clergy to live as if they were angels, and not men, and had not the passions of men. He who rejects the majority of the German bishops, as unfitted to continue bishops, I, on the part of the German bishops, repudiate as our apostolical superior. He who threatens to excommunicate our king, I now excommunicate.

“Yes — from this spot — from this altar, in the presence of my king, of his nobles, and of the assembled multitude, I, William of Utrecht, here declare that Hildebrand, he who falsely designates himself Pope Gregory VII., is a tyrant, a perjurer, a seeker after novelties, a dishonored bishop, and adulterate pontiff — a man whose life is stained with manifold sins, and unnumbered vices; and renouncing him as a pope, and denouncing him as a bishop, and scorning him as a man, I from this moment forward, declare him to be excommunicated.

“To Hildebrand, the false pope, I now say, anathema! anathema! anathema!”

And, as the bishop spoke these words, he seized the lighted taper that stood by his side, and dashing it upon the earth, he trampled out the light. That which he did was imitated on the instant, by the deacons, subdeacons,



and priests ; and, as these lights were extinguished, a shriek of horror arose from all parts of the church.

The anti-papal bishop stood with his foot still resting upon the quenched taper ; he stood moveless, as if he had been transformed to stone — with eyes that seemed to be starting from their sockets — with mouth wide gaping, and with out-stretched arms, and his body resting for support against the altar. Thus he stood, and he heard not the cries that filled the church, for all his senses were absorbed in the spectacle that presented itself to his sight, by the withdrawal of a curtain, at the moment that he pronounced “ anathema ” upon Pope Gregory. The curtain had, up to that moment, screened from his view a side altar, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and now that it was withdrawn, he beheld, in front of a white marble statue of the Virgin, which had its arms extended over them, as invoking a blessing upon their heads, three persons — they were the victims of his life of sin, of sacrilege, of treachery, and of deceit. They were, *the pilgrim ! Bianca ! and Beatrice !* and in the face of all there was the same expression of reproach, of shame, and of abhorrence ; and a single word, uttered by each, denoted their feelings towards him ; for, in these three words were given the past biography of the criminal bishop. These words were : —

“ Eberhard ! ”

“ Manfred ! ”

“ Ruebert ! ”

The side altar of the Virgin, in which these three persons were seen, was within view of those who stood on the high altar, or of those who were on the opposite side of the church to that at which it was placed — lying, as it were, in a niche, and out of the observation of all who

were gathered in the choir, nave, and aisles. Thus, it was distinctly visible to the Bishop of Utrecht, and of his assistants: to a few of the bishops, having seats directly opposite to it; but it was not, and could not be, seen by the king, nor his courtiers, who were on the same side with it, and was completely hidden from the observation of the great body of the congregation beyond them. The three, who thus appeared to the sight of the anti-popery bishop, and who withered his heart by the single word that each addressed to him, were arrayed in a different costume. The pilgrim had cast aside his robe, and now appeared in helmet and haubergeon of polished steel, that shone forth as if both were composed of no other material than glittering silver. Bianca, with white robes, and a garland of snow-white roses on her head, seemed to be a bride; and the beauty of Beatrice was partly concealed beneath her dark robe of a novice, and partly rendered more brilliant by the wreath of white roses that encircled her head, and the diamond cross of the empress that shone forth upon her bosom.

The anti-popery bishop gazed in horror upon these three persons, that seemed to have risen up before him, as by a miracle of heaven, to reproach him for all his past offences, at the very moment that he had aggravated them by the commission of the last crime that he was then in the very act of perpetrating. He believed that, having climbed to the very climax of sin, the moment for his downfall and his punishment had now come; and, so believing and so feeling, a change seemed, in an instant, to be operated in the whole being of the miserable man; for the cries, with which the whole church had been filled, as he pronounced "anathema" upon the Pope, were still heard, when all were instantly quelled

by the shrill shrieking voice of the bishop, who, gazing upon the pilgrim, Bianca, and Beatrice, thus addressed them : —

“ Pardon ! pardon ! pardon ! mercy and forgiveness, Lord of Viterbo ; Bianca, the betrayed ; Beatrice, the virtuous. Pardon me, O Lord of Viterbo ; for when you received me, and hospitably entertained me, I deceived you, by telling you I was a young knight of Germany, at the moment I had received the first tonsure of a deacon. Pardon me, O Bianca ; for, besotted by your beauty, I perjured myself, when, as a husband, I plighted to you my troth, for I was already bound by *the vow* — the vow of celibacy to the church — to God — to the people. Before I saw you — I had vowed at the altar, that I would be a man solely and exclusively devoted to God and to the people — a slave in his service and to theirs — a man belonging wholly to his Creator ; to live, to labor, and to die for the promotion of his glory — a man belonging wholly and solely to the people ; to live, to labor, and to die in promoting their salvation. Before I took *that vow* — I was told — ay, three several times was I told by the pontiff, that I was still free — that I was not compelled, not urged, not required to take any such vow — and yet, despite these repeated warnings, I intruded myself into the sanctuary, and I took **THE VOW**. I took it to perjure myself, and to dishonor you, by deceiving you into a sacrilegious marriage. Base villain that I was, I deceived you by telling you that your father was slain ; I sought to deceive you into a false marriage, by bringing with me an impostor, who was to have performed a sham ceremony between us ; and, when I said that I plighted to you my troth, I was a liar — a perjurer — a villain. Pardon —

pardon me, Bianca! for had you not been so kind, so lovely, and so confiding, I never had lived a life of sin, of mystery, and of treachery. And you, O Beatrice! — my child! my child! — pardon — O, pardon! and pray that pardon may be granted to your hapless father, who now stands thus before you — a public sinner — confessing his sins; and one of whose crimes is that he is the parent — the sacrilegious, guilty parent — of one so stainless and so sinless as yourself. Pardon, O, pardon me! for even your infantile caresses could never pacify, for an instant, the hell-fire that burned in my bosom, when I remembered that your father was a priest, bound by his vow — a bishop, foul with every baseness, when I ought to be an example of virtue and chastity to others. O, Beatrice, my child, pardon — O, God! she is dying before my face, and I dare not, must not, touch her with my polluted hands ——”

These words were spoken by the bishop, as he saw Beatrice fall, fainting in the arms of the pilgrim. As she fell, the pilgrim and Bianca pointed to the statue of the Virgin, at the pediment of which she fell; and, as they so pointed, the curtain that screened the chapel of the Virgin was drawn quickly in front of it, and the persons to whom the bishop had been addressing himself were shut out from his view. He never again looked upon them in this world.

“They point to the statue of the Virgin,” muttered the bishop to himself, “and tell me to pray for her intercession and pardon. They will not forgive me, and they bid me seek for her forgiveness. I have sought to compensate them both for the wrongs I have done them, by a life of tenderness and love, and they will not pardon me; but bid me seek for it from her that I have

offended in thought, in word, and in deed, by years of sin. When *they* will not intercede for me, why hope that she will do so? No — no — no. I deserve no forgiveness; wife and child are alike degraded and dishonored by the connection with a perjured priest and a sacrilegious bishop.

“Yes — I am — a reprobate — a castaway; accursed vow! had I never taken it I might have lived and died honored as a layman. Accursed mitre!” he exclaimed, tearing it from his head, and trampling upon it, “but for thy gaudy gems and damning brilliancy, I never should have felt the demon ambition urging me onward to a life of base hypocrisy.”

The wretched man stood like a maniac upon the high altar, clinching his hands, and stamping again and again upon the golden mitre that lay at his feet. Amazement kept the spectators silent and moveless for a moment, for much of what had passed was absolutely unintelligible to them, as they did not see those to whom the language of the Rome-despising bishop had been addressed. From their surprise they were aroused by an agonizing shriek, which came from the bishop, as he clapped both his outspread hands upon his heart, and a white foam, stained with blood, gathered around his lips.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, “the vengeance of God has fallen upon me, and the pangs of death have seized me — even here — ay, here — in the midst of my sins. Yes — brethren — you have heard me say that I excommunicated Hildebrand. Now listen to me, whilst I say the just judgment of God has fallen upon me. I die — I die an anti-papal bishop, for I have aided the king in all his evil deeds — I have fomented what was bad in his heart — and, to please my sovereign, I have done vio-

lence to my own conscience, by slandering Hildebrand, that I have ever known to be good, holy, pious, exemplary, and virtuous. My crime is unpardonable in the sight of God, and it is punished with death — death — an eternal death.”

And as the Bishop of Utrecht spoke these words, he rolled, apparently a lifeless corpse, from the altar, down the steps to the rails of the sanctuary, marking each step, as he fell, with blotches of dark blood that poured from his mouth.

“Let the church be cleared instantly,” exclaimed Henry, rising from his throne; “a sudden illness has seized our true and trusty friend, the Bishop of Utrecht. Pious soul! he talks so wildly — it is plain he has lost his senses. To the palace, my friends. Good people, depart with all speed. Let none remain in the church but the immediate attendants of the bishop. The heat and excitement have been too much for him. We shall send him our physician. Away — one and all, from the church.”

In a few minutes afterwards, the church, which had been so crowded, was cleared of every one but the chaplains of the bishop, who had raised him up, still in a state of insensibility, and removed him to the vestry, where he was placed upon a couch, and where, by the application of cold water to his forehead, he was, eventually, restored to consciousness. He saw the king’s physician standing by his side, holding his hand, and asking him how he was affected.

“I feel,” said the bishop, “that I am dying — that human skill cannot prolong my existence for another hour. I feel that I am descending down — down into hell. It lies open for me; and now, Sir Physician, I beg of you,

as you value your own salvation, and as you shall answer, at the last day, for the responsibility I now impose upon you, hasten to the king — tell him, for he yet has time to repent (but will never do so), that I, and all others who have favored his vices, are, with himself, doomed to eternal perdition.”

“O, my lord,” exclaimed one of the chaplains, “speak not thus — reflect, that for repentant sinners, our church has provided the aid of the Holy Sacraments.”

“Away with thee, and thy sacraments,” replied the despairing reprobate. “Have I not violated the Sacrament of holy orders? — have I not violated the vow of obedience that I owed to my superior, the pontiff? Have I not violated the vow of chastity? Have I not violated the Sacrament of marriage? Have I not plighted my troth, when I stood, with tonsured head, and consecrated hands, to receive a wife from the hands of a priest? O, monstrous! a priest married by a priest. Have I not, whilst a husband and a father, dared to ascend the altar — to touch the sacred vessels — to offer up the Sacrifice — to grasp the crosier — and, whilst a curse to myself, to pronounce a benediction upon others? The Sacraments! I have desecrated them as far as I could, and if I dared to participate in any more of them, I must but add sin upon sin. By my own deeds I have cut myself off, as a rotten branch, from the church; and I now stand deservedly condemned to my own despair. Pray not for me when I am dead, for the prayers of the living can bring no relief to the souls of the damned.

“Why stare you at me, chaplain, as if I spoke that of which I am not certain. My dying eyes can see things that are as yet invisible to you. I see all my sins rising up around me, and forming, as they rise, a thick mist,

which hangs over and about me, to shut me in, as it were, within an impenetrable pent-house — the thick pent-house of despair — the only thing not penetrable by the ever-descending rays of the mercy of God. I see — I see, as my heart is torn with the agonies of death — as my limbs shiver with torture — as my clammy lips seem to be gluing together with melting fire — that devils stand at my pillow — there by your side — that they blow the flames of a burning hell into my mouth — that they are prepared to fly away with my soul the moment it parts from the body — that they have now, to expedite my death, brought up from the bottomless pit, my broken vow as a priest, and which, as a sharp spear, they are now about to thrust, candescent with heat, down my throat — that they now raise it — that they now — O, it is over —”

William, the anti-papal bishop, lay dead before the chaplain. A few hours before, he had appeared to be a man destined to enjoy a long life. All that now remained of him was a corpse, on the distorted features of which were impressed the proofs that an agonizing death had been endured, and, in the purple and blotched skin, were the manifestations that, even before life had departed, a sudden mortification had seized upon the limbs and the intestines.

The chaplains divested the body of the pontifical robes, in which it had been habited, and, rolling it up in coarse cloths, they carried it at once outside the town; and, setting it down upon unconsecrated ground, they made around it a wall of large stones, as high as the body itself, and then covered it over in the same manner; for, having witnessed the dying moments of the bishop, they felt that they dared not bestow upon him Christian burial, but that he should thus rest blocked up, casting around him in death, as in life — a pestilence.



William, Bishop of Utrecht, the opponent, for many years, of Hildebrand, he whose foul lips had pronounced an excommunication upon the sacred pontiff, Gregory VII., was thus consigned to the earth, not as if he had been a man, a Christian, a priest, or a bishop; but as if his remains had been nought more than the carcass of a dog or of an ass; for that species of burial bestowed upon him was, in those times, designated "an ass's sepulture."

Thus lay, dishonored and imblocked in the infamous grave of an excommunicated reprobate, the man that Bianca had for so long a time loved as a husband, and that Beatrice had ever respected, though she never could love him, as a father.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE EXCOMMUNICATION.

HENRY was alone, in the same chamber, in the palace fortress of Frankfort, in which he was first seen by the reader, when conversing with the Archbishop of Mayence and Diedrich. He paced slowly and moodily up and down the apartment, with his arms crossed on his breast, and his eyes fixed on the floor, seemingly lost in contemplation. He suddenly stopped, and, in doing so, gave vent to the fancies that had been fermenting in his brain:—

"My power is great," he said, aloud, "but I am not omnipotent. I cannot put courage into the hearts of the timid, prudence into the minds of the rash, life into the

bodies of the dead. If I could have done so, Werenher would not have dabbled with poisons, and might still be by my side — Lieman would have eschewed the Paterini, and the swords of Godfrey's followers — Croft would have been here to counsel me, and the Bishop of Utrecht would have been saved from that sudden mania that seized him, and that has now terminated with his death. What mad words he spoke upon the altar, as if he had vision of persons that he had wronged — and amongst those names was that of Beatrice. Beatrice! Could he be in any way connected with that strange personage that she described as her father? May it not be that he, living under a false name, had a wife and family? O, preposterous! no bishop could have dared to live such a life, and not die in despair. But, let me think; they say that William of Utrecht *did* die declaring that the devils were bearing him to perdition. Then it may be that my fair, gentle, and enchanting Beatrice is *his* daughter. If she be — then I am absolved from my promise to her. She never could be my wife; but she may be, she shall be, of all my female companions, the most favored. I hope she is the daughter of William of Utrecht. The least I can do, to show my love for him, is to love his daughter. I must inquire into this; and, if what I suspect prove to be true, then Egen shall be directed to conduct her to Goslar, and there bestow upon her, in the Olympian Palace, that coronet of roses which the death of Clara has left vacant.

“If she be the daughter of William, what a life of hypocrisy the man must have lived! Acting, in one place, the part of a layman, and thinking of his mitre; acting, in another, the part of a bishop, and thinking of his wife and child; and how, in both, he must have

trembled, lest he should be discovered! This accounts for his life of mystery — for his absenting himself from my court, and for his seldom being seen in his diocese; and, whilst the world was fancying he was passing his days in pious contemplation, he was solacing himself with a home, a wife, and a family. O, the arrant hypocrite! sincere in nothing but in his hatred to the Pope, and his opposition to the Church of Rome.

“O, Beatrice! Beatrice! fairest, sweetest, loveliest of your sex, if it were not for my adoration of you, half these thoughts of mine would not be bestowed upon the deceased Bishop of Utrecht. I think of him because I think of you.

“Meddling fool that he was — if he were your father, it is the only virtue I can ascribe to him! — for how dared he, with his weak nerves and excitable temperament, to push himself into a controversy in which two mighty spirits, like Hildebrand and myself, were in collision. What else could he have expected but to be crushed, as he has been; and, as my honest physician assures me, irretrievably damned? Fool that he was! in trying to serve me he has done me much injury. I could see, in the changing features of the versatile Sigefrid — I could perceive in the horrified countenances of the other German bishops — I could notice, in the frightened faces even of most of my courtiers — and above all, in the angry, malignant glances cast upon me by the populace, that they, one and all, regard the sudden madness of the Bishop of Utrecht, followed so speedily, as it has been, by his awful death, as a judgment of heaven in favor of Hildebrand, and, therefore, against me, his avowed opponent. This is a state of things which must not be permitted to continue even for twenty-four hours.

It is a superstitious feeling, and it must be crushed somehow, or some way. I cannot permit a movement, which promised me so much gain, to be converted, by an accident — a mere accident — a stupid accident — to my disadvantage.

“ Let me see — let me see — what is to be done ? ”

With these words, Henry resumed his slow and measured pace, and was again lost in deep thought. From this, however, he was speedily aroused by the sudden entrance into the apartment of a man, whose dust-covered and travel-soiled habiliments showed that he had performed a long journey. This man placed a packet in the hands of Henry, and then, as silently and as hurriedly as he had entered the room, he departed from it.

Henry broke open the packet, and read, with feelings of exultation, the few following lines : —

“ Cenci, Prefect of Rome, to the mighty and magnificent Henry, King of Germany, greeting : —

“ I have fulfilled my promise. The Pope, Hildebrand, is now my prisoner. Whilst celebrating mass this morning, I, and a number of my armed followers, broke into the church. I tore him, by the hair of his head, from the altar, and he now lies, wounded and bleeding, a captive in my tower at Rome ; from whence I am resolved he never shall depart with life, unless he complies with the terms we have both agreed upon. I told him that I had your sanction for what I have done, and I have now left him to consider our conditions, whilst writing this to you.

“ There is great commotion in Rome — the population cry to arms ! but my tower is strong — it is filled with a stout garrison, and I fear not.

“I have found it difficult to prevent some of my followers from slaying Hildebrand. They are incensed against him for having excommunicated them.”

Henry read the letter a second time; and, as he did so, the joy he experienced upon its first perusal was increased.

“These tidings,” he observed, “come most opportunely. What a triumph does such intelligence as this give me over those who fancied that they saw, in the sudden death of the Bishop of Utrecht, a judgment of heaven in favor of Hildebrand. How the cowardly Sigefrid will tremble with fear when he hears there are brave men in Rome to drag the Pope from the altar, and cast him, wounded and bleeding, into a dark dungeon; and that there are heroes anxious to bathe their swords in the heart’s blood of the old hypocrite! Would that they had slain him outright! for it is not fitting that Hildebrand should live and know that I encouraged Cenci in this attack upon him.

“What if the old man should escape from the tower of Cenci?”

“O, it is a vain idea. The life—the family—the estates—the vast wealth of the Cencis, are pledges for the life—imprisonment, or the sudden death of Hildebrand. Cenci can neither yield him up, nor permit him to live, and hope to live himself.

“At last—at last I triumph over Hildebrand. At last, the popedom lies at my feet; and I can pick it up and convert it into an instrument of power, and an engine whereby I can extort and divert into the royal treasury all the riches of the church. O, how those stolid German bishops shall yet wince beneath the weight

of the tiara, when it is worn by one of my puppets! Fools! they fancy I have opposed Hildebrand to please them—they shall soon learn that I only did so to serve myself. O, Croft, honest, sincere, unscrupulous Croft, should have lived to see this day. There, indeed, was a man the most fitted of all I ever knew, to be my pope. Now I grasp within both my hands the church and the state. Now, indeed—now, at last, my triumph is come. Hildebrand bleeds and lies in a dungeon, and I am—a monarch, free, uncontrolled, uncontrollable—absolute. Power—pleasure—wealth—beauty—I can command them all as my slaves, and now, none dare disobey me!”

Rutger here entered the apartment, and said—

“The royal banquet now waits your Majesty’s presence. All the guests are present, but two—the empress and the queen—who pray of your Majesty to excuse them, as both have been—I use their own words—‘so deeply affected by the dreadful scene of this morning, that they find themselves incapable of partaking in any festivity, even though your Majesty presides over it.’”

Henry smiled, and then thought to himself—

“How much more deeply will the pious souls be afflicted when they hear that their loved Pope is a prisoner in the hands of my friends!” He then added—“By whom, Count Rutger, were the words you have repeated, spoken?”

“By her Majesty, the empress, in presence of the queen,” replied Rutger. “Ay, now I think of it,” he added, “the last portion of the message—the complimentary portion to your Majesty, was spoken by the queen.”

“By the queen,” repeated Henry. “Good, kind

woman, that she is! What a pity she never can find favor in my sight! But how prospers your suit with the queen, Rutger?"

"As that of every one your Majesty has permitted to pay court to her," replied Rutger. Candor compels me to add, that she seems to detest me, as much as she loves your Majesty."

"What perverse creatures are these women!" exclaimed Henry. "Now, I not merely detest, but I abominate her. She has, with her tears, washed out every particle of affection I might have once entertained—and mine was, at the utmost, but a fugitive fancy as regards her. And yet I have done my best to please her. I have authorized you, and other of my courtiers, to make love to her. She might have chosen from amongst the handsomest men that surround me, and yet she scorns them all. O, the inexplicable perversity of the female sex! What think you, Rutger, of Bertha. I do not mean as a queen, but as a woman?"

"That I never yet have seen one more deserving of the love, the devotion, and the constant affection of a husband," replied Rutger.

"And would you," asked Henry, "willingly become her husband, if the opportunity were afforded to you?"

"I would give my countship—that is, I would give all I possess—to be the husband of Queen Bertha," replied Rutger.

"Well spoken, Rutger," said Henry, with his strange, malicious smile playing around his lips. "I hold myself much indebted to you, for the support you gave, at an important moment, to the accusation preferred by Egen against Duke Otho. I have felt some difficulty in selecting a proper reward for you. I did not like to

offer you a dukeship, for that would have imposed upon you the necessity of leading military retainers into battle, and your achievement at Henschenwege proves that you prefer showing your soldiers the way out of a conflict.”

Rutger's handsome features were distorted by wrinkles, and his fair complexion was reddened with rage, when he heard the king pronounce this bitter sarcasm upon his cowardice.

Henry enjoyed, without appearing to notice, the confusion of his sycophant, and continued in the same calm tone he had been previously addressing him :

“ I do not think that it would be a fitting reward for such good services as you have rendered to me, to bestow upon you an office that would compel you to perform duties for which you have no liking. You are suited to be a great man—in the society of women—to be an authority upon the decoration of their persons ; to discover for them new-fashioned hoods, and to devise new-fangled bracelets and rich armlets—and therefore do I hope, before many months are passed away, to bestow upon you the hand of Queen Bertha. Be certain, if once she becomes your wife, she will love you as much as she now does me, and for the same reason—as a matter of duty, because you happen to be her husband. Do not ask me, now, Rutger, how this can be effected. Before many weeks are passed away, you shall see that I can do more strange things than unwive myself, and wive you. Come now, Rutger, to the banquet. I am anxious to tell my guests the strange, glorious tidings that have reached me, this moment, from Rome.”

It was amid a loud and boisterous flourish of trumpets, and preceded by his high officers of state, that Henry entered the banqueting hall of his palace, where



all the great lords and prelates of the empire stood waiting his arrival. Henry entered the hall, and as he passed up, between the bending, bowing rows of his subjects, never did he seem so jubilant with triumph, and never was there more pride upon his brow nor a more scornful haughtiness upon his lip, which curled with contempt, as he saw that Sigefrid, the Archbishop of Mayence, was so deeply engaged in conversation with a person in the garb of a pilgrim, that he seemed to be unconscious of the commotion that had been caused by the king's appearance amongst his guests.

Henry passed onward, and a blast of triumph issued from the trumpets, and loud huzzas from the assembled guests, as he was seen to ascend the steps of the throne, at the head of the high table, from which he could be observed in all parts of the hall.

The trumpets ceased, and the huzzas were subdued, when Henry was seen to rise from his throne, and uplift his sceptred right hand, as if he desired to address the assembly.

“My loving subjects,” said Henry, “before I call upon the pious Archbishop of Mayence to bless the food of which we are about to partake, I wish to state to you strange tidings that have come to me from Rome. I am the more desirous to do this, because I am assured that the painful incident of which we were all witnesses this morning, has produced the impression, that, in contending for our rights as Germans, against the pretensions of the Roman pontiff, heaven has proved itself the friend of Hildebrand, by punishing, with a sudden death, the venerable prelate of Utrecht, at the moment he was excommunicating our foe.

“My friends, to believe that the coincidence of acci-

dents can constitute a miracle, is to indulge in a vain, idle, and sinful superstition—a superstition that may find disciples amongst weak-minded women and unreasoning children, but that should be scorned by men of sense, and, above all, repudiated by prelates, priests, and nobles of high rank and great dignity, like those to whom I now address myself.

“Heaven seldom deigns to interfere directly in the quarrels of mortals, and never has it been known to work a miracle on behalf of a tyrant like Pope Hildebrand. If we were to suppose that it had been done so in Germany, by slaying the Bishop of Utrecht, because the bishop denounced Hildebrand as a notorious and flagrant criminal, how comes it to pass, that heaven did not interfere in Rome, to save Hildebrand, even when he was at prayers—that it did not prevent him being torn from the altar by his gray hairs—that it did not prevent him from being wounded by the sword of a soldier—that it did not prevent him being made captive by the Prefect Cenci—that it did not prevent him from being cast into a dungeon—yea—a dungeon even in the city of Rome, and in the strong tower of the Cenci, where he now lies in chains, and liable, at any moment, to be put to death; and, if the prefect Cenci so please, tortured previous to death? Why, I ask, has all this happened? Because the Romans have revolted against the same tyrannical spirit of domination which we complain of. If heaven looked favorably upon the cause of Hildebrand, it would release him from the dungeon of the Cenci—it would punish them as malefactors—it would restore Hildebrand to his throne—it would cause the Romans to hail him as their sovereign, Gregory VII.—and it would empower Gregory to excommunicate his enemies.”

“*And heaven has done all this for Pope Gregory,*” said Archbishop Sigefrid, rising from his seat, and fronting the king. “All that your Majesty has supposed to be impossible, has actually come to pass. Heaven has opened his dungeon-doors for the pontiff; the Cenci, who laid sacrilegious hands upon him, have fled from Rome — the soldier who struck him with a sword has been slain. The Pope now sits upon his throne, and — Henry — King Henry, rend your garments, and cover your head with ashes, *he has excommunicated you — he has pronounced your deposition.*”

Henry was first struck dumb with amazement, when he heard the words of the timid Sigefrid thus replying to him: but the old archbishop’s voice strengthened, and he spoke as if he were inspired, when announcing events that seemed to all the hearers to be miracles — for they lived in times when men believed in such things. The king shrank back in his throne as if paralyzed, and it was not till he heard the archbishop speak of his deposition that all his energy and violence of character seemed to be restored to him.

“Peace! babbling, traitorous fool!” he exclaimed. “You talk of dreams, and not of facts. What I stated was conveyed to me by a messenger who came full speed from Rome. He arrived not an hour ago; and when he left Rome Hildebrand was a prisoner in the tower of Cenci, and there, if not dead, he doubtless still remains.”

“And *here,*” answered Sigefrid, “is the messenger who has come but this moment from Rome. And here is the summons from the Pope to myself, to appear before him at Rome, and explain, as best I may, the support I have given to you. Here, too, are briefs, addressed to the other German bishops, requiring them to do

the same, and here, in your presence, I distribute those briefs to the several bishops—let them disobey them if they dare—as for myself, I shall proceed there bare-footed, and as a penitent, for I have had a fearful warning in the sudden death of the reprobate Bishop of Utrecht, and now—I am no longer what I was—I prefer enduring the wrath of man, to the wrath of God.”

“Archbishop of Mayence,” said Henry, involuntarily quelled by the spirit thus displayed by Sigefrid—in itself a miracle—“I tell you that you have been deceived by some coggling, forging knave. Who is this fellow who pretends to have travelled from Rome faster than my messenger?”

“He is here!” replied Bernhard, advancing to the foot of the throne on which Henry sat. “Your messenger hurried on his road as men run for gold—he was sparing of his life, that he might enjoy what he had won by his race. I left Rome twenty-four hours later than he, and I hurried, too, on my road, for I ran for a prize which I can never hope to enjoy until my life has ceased—and therefore am I careless of it. If I were not—I would not tell your Majesty that which I now announce to you: that I heard the Pope pronounce excommunication upon you—that I heard him declare your subjects freed from their allegiance. Here is the sentence. I place it in your hands—you know the Pope’s signature well, and cannot gainsay it—and now, leaving that copy with you, I call, in the name of the pontiff—for so I am authorized to do—the Archbishop of Mayence, to read aloud the sentence of excommunication and deposition upon you—that all may know the peril they incur in holding further communion with you. Sigefrid, Prince Archbishop of Mayence, read the sen-

tence of His Holiness, Pope Gregory VII., upon Henry, King of Germany.”

“Audacious villain!” exclaimed Henry, starting from his throne, and stamping upon the Pope’s brief, which he had unthinkingly accepted from the hands of Bernhard, “have I no friend here to strike him dead?”

Scarcely had the words been uttered, when Diedrich rushed upon Bernhard with his drawn dagger. The wary forester watched the hand of Diedrich as it descended, and grappling the wrist with one hand, and dashing down the other like a sledge hammer upon the rigid knuckles that held the fatal weapon, and driving his head, at the same instant, into the face of Diedrich, he felled him to the earth, and kneeling upon the breast of the fallen savage, he waved his wood-knife before his eyes for a moment, and then whispered in his ear —

“For the sake of Gertraud, slain by the soldiers of this brutal king, I spare thy life, and say to thee the last words to which she gave utterance: ‘Tell Diedrich that my last prayer was for his sincere repentance; bid him seek for it through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.’ These words she bade me say to thee — I repeat them; think of them — go, and repent of thy sins.”

“Humph!” exclaimed Diedrich as he rose from the ground; and, without looking at his opponent or the king, he thoughtfully left the apartment.

This struggle, for a minute, between two men so unequally matched as the thick, muscular giant, Diedrich, and the apparently weak, lank, but still wiry, Bernhard, was witnessed by the entire assembly; and men marvelled much to see how quickly Diedrich had been overthrown by the forester; and they marvelled still more to see one like Diedrich, so notorious for his ferocity,

pass away from the presence of his opponent as if he had been completely quelled by him. Trifling as the incident might be regarded in itself, it was considered as another of the strange and miraculous events that had already marked the progress of that eventful day.

As to Bernhard, he watched Diedrich until he saw that he had actually departed from the banquet hall, and then, from the place where the conflict between the two had occurred, at the foot of the throne of Henry, he spoke again, in a loud and commanding tone, and his voice was now listened to by those present as one who spoke with authority :

“ Sigefrid, Prince Archbishop of Mayence, by the allegiance you owe to your spiritual superior, I now call upon you — I require of you — and I do so in the name of Pope Gregory VII., to read the deposition of the man before whose throne I now stand.”

Henry looked down, from his throne, upon his lords and the bishops of the empire ; but he found that the faces of all were turned away from him, and directed towards the Archbishop of Mayence.

Sigefrid, the Archbishop, unfolded the parchment that had been placed in his hands by Bernhard, and read aloud its contents : —

*“ The deposition of King Henry, the son of the Emperor Henry, and the absolution from their oaths of all who have sworn allegiance to him.*

“ O, blessed Peter ! Prince of the Apostles, incline thy pious ears to us, and hear me thy servant, whom, from my infancy, thou didst nourish, and that thou hast even until this day saved from the hands of the wicked,

who have hated, and who still detest me, because of my fidelity to thee. Be then my witness, and with thee, our Sovereign Lady, the Mother of God, and the Blessed Paul, thy brother amongst all the other saints, that thy holy Roman Church dragged me, in my own despite, to its government; and that I would have far preferred to end my days in exile, rather than by human means to usurp thy place. And, as I believe that it is through thy gracious favor, and not by my own works, that it has been pleasing, and is still pleasing to thee, that the Christian people specially committed to thee, should obey me, and that, through thy grace, power is given me on this behalf from God, of binding and of loosing, both in heaven and on earth.

“It is in this confidence, and for the honor and defence of thy Church, and in the name of the Omnipotent Trinity, and through thy power and authority, that I forbid Henry, the King, and son of the Emperor Henry, who, by an unheard-of pride, has rebelled against thy Church, to exercise longer any power as a Sovereign over the Empire of the Germans or in Italy, and that I absolve from their oaths of allegiance which all Christians have made or still render unto him; at the same time I interdict any one from serving him as King. And this I do, because it is fitting that he who endeavors and studies to diminish the honor that is due to thy Church, should lose those honors and that dignity which he himself appears to possess. And, because, as a Christian, he has contemned obedience, and will not return to the Lord, whom he has abandoned, by holding communion with those that are excommunicated, and that he persists in perpetrating many iniquities, and despising those warnings, which (thou art my witness) were alone

given by me to him for the sake of his own salvation ; and as he has separated himself from thy Church, and seeks still to produce a schism in it, I do, in thy name, now bind him with the fetters of excommunication, so that all nations may know and experience that thou art Peter, and thou the rock upon which the Son of God has built his Church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” \*

Sigefrid, upon reading this document, handed it to his attendant chaplain, and said :

“ This document must be enrolled in the archives of the Church of Mayence. Let it be there indorsed by you, as a witness, that it was read by me, in the presence of the king, and of the assembled princes and prelates of the empire. And here,” he continued, “ receive also my crosier and mitre. Retain possession of them until I am authorized by the pontiff to resume them. I now set forth upon my pilgrimage to Rome, and I invite all the other German bishops, who are, like me, summoned there as sinners, as unworthy shepherds of the flocks confided to our care, to accompany me on my way thither. As to this place,” observed Sigefrid, looking around the banquet hall, and at the throne on which Henry remained still sitting, “ it is accursed as long as one stricken by anathema remains in it, and no Christian can, without involving himself in the penalties of an excommunication, continue to abide here. Away then, one and all — avoid it as if pestilence clung to its walls, and death stood in its doorway. Remember the

\* This is a literal translation of “ the excommunication and deposition ” of Henry IV., promulgated by Pope Gregory VII. The author believes this is the first time it has ever been translated and published in the English language.



doom of the anti-papal Bishop of Utrecht, and let us be careful we do not tread in the footsteps of one who now howls a demon in hell.”

The words of the archbishop were followed by a sudden rush from the apartment; for fear and horror had seized upon the hearts of all, and each man dreaded that he might, by seeming to side with Henry, be compromised in his guilt, and incur the same awful punishment which they themselves had seen inflicted upon the reprobate no-popery Bishop of Utrecht.

The tables had been spread for a sumptuous banquet — but the viands and the wine remained untasted — the gold and silver vessels untouched — the seats arranged with a due attention to the rank of the bidden guests unoccupied, and there, amid the sun-light glare, cast by a thousand lights, upon a scene glistening on all sides with gorgeous decorations, sat, in his lofty throne, alone, with not one friendly eye to greet him, nor one head to bow down before him, Henry — the excommunicated King of Germany!

But a few moments before, he had entered, the proudest monarch in Christendom, and now! upon the mere recital of a few words, dictated by one old man, and repeated by another, and, the latter one so weak and timid, that he had been an object of constant derision to his sovereign, yet that sovereign now found himself abandoned by all the officers of state, whose duty it was to wait personally upon him, as the head of the German empire — forsaken by his princes, abjured by his prelates, deserted by his military retainers, and not supported even by the presence of a single menial!

It was a change so unexpected, so sudden, and so

awful, that though seen, and even though bitterly experienced as it was by Henry, was still scarcely credible.

Henry sat unmoved, whilst Sigefrid was reading the formal announcement of his deposition and excommunication. He did so, hoping that some one would slay the old archbishop; but rage entered into his heart, and seemed to consume his vitals, when he heard that “coward,” as he was wont to call him, bid the subjects of his king abandon their sovereign, if they would not expose themselves to the pains of perdition. That burning rage was, however, speedily followed by the chilling sickness of despair, when he beheld all, all—even those worthless creatures upon whom he had lavished the treasures of his kingdom, fly from his presence, as if there were contamination in his touch, and that he, of all living things, was, at that moment, the most noisome, the most pestilent, and the most accursed.

Henry gazed around the banquet hall. It was deserted—and the silence seemed to extend beyond its precincts, as if not merely it, but the whole of the palace fortress had been abandoned, and he alone was left out of the hundreds that had crowded its apartments, and hitherto had manned its walls. So complete was the silence, that he could hear the beatings of his own heart.

Henry gazed again and again, but could not believe the reality. He rubbed his eyes, as if he doubted that he could be awake, and that all this was not a horrid dream.

“It must be a dream!” he exclaimed. “It cannot be a truth. What! forsaken—abandoned by all! A king but a minute ago, and now deposed. O, monstrous!

it cannot be a truth. It must — it shall be a mockery. What — ho ! there — some wine. I doom to death the man who dares to disobey me. Wine — I say — the king commands it — where stands my Mundschenk ? Gone ! gone ! all gone. They have left their king alone ! and they pay their court to the old wicked Pope at Rome. Cowards — base, drivelling cowards — thus to fear the vain words of the prisoner of Cenci. Curses upon Cenci, why did he not slay Hildebrand in his dungeon. Curses ! ah ! I can but curse now — I am alone ! alone ! utterly despised, utterly neglected, utterly contemned. My foes triumph over me.”

As Henry spoke these words, the silence, that seemed to encircle him like a shroud, was rent asunder by loud, joyous cheers, that seemed to burst in upon him as they came from a vast multitude gathered in thousands outside the walls of the fortress.

“Hark !” cried Henry, “I guessed truly, my enemies do triumph over me. They come to witness the fallen condition of their king ; they come, perchance, to make me prisoner, to drag me in chains, a captive, to sue for mercy and pardon from Hildebrand. Villains and traitors, they shall find that Henry, the deposed, can die as a king, although they have abjured their allegiance to him.”

As Henry spoke these words, he started from his throne, drew his sword, and seizing a shield, stood fronting the doorway, like a man who believes he is about to forfeit his life, and is determined that, in his downfall, others shall be dragged to death along with him.

“What mean these cheers, slave ?” said Henry, to a single, unarmed man, as he entered the hall.

“The cheers that you hear,” said Bernhard, for it was

to him that Henry had addressed himself, "are those of a rejoicing city. The people of Frankfort thus welcome amongst them, Magnus, Duke of Saxony, who has been restored to liberty in exchange for seventy Swabians, captured in Erzegebirge."

"Magnus free! Erzegebirge taken!" cried Henry, forgetting, for the moment, his own grief in these unexpected tidings. "Know you what has become of Egen, and of a captive lady of whom he had charge?"

"I do," answered Bernhard. "The lady has been restored to her family. She is now safe from further aggression. As to Egen, his life has been spared; but he has been punished as a perjurer and a reprobate."

Henry sank back on one of the seats provided for his guests. This last intelligence seemed to have conquered him; for he lay panting, breathless, and exhausted, like a knight that, overpowered by wearing his armor during a hot summer's day, has, at its close, been stricken down at last, by the weak blow of a pikeman. He raised his eyes heavily to the face of Bernhard, and failing to recognize his features, he murmured forth:

"Baffled by slaves, defeated by dotards, deserted by warriors, forsaken by all, rejected by all, by God, and by man — alone! alone! alone!"

As he spoke these words, his eyes closed, his senses failed, and he lay extended, motionless, and pale, as if he were a disregarded corpse, in the rich banqueting hall of his kingly palace fortress!

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE FAREWELL.

BIANCA and Beatrice were kneeling together before the same altar, in a small, dark chapel attached to the mansion of the Countess Adela. The few gleams of light that penetrated through the sombre painted windows of the chapel, rested on those two lone, silent, heart-broken females, whose habiliments denoted that the one had abandoned, and that the other was about to bid farewell to, the external affairs of this world. Bianca wore the habit of a professed nun ; her daughter, Beatrice, still retained her novice-dress, which she had first assumed in the palace of King Henry.

Bianca and Beatrice spoke not one word to each other ; but the deep groan and the long-drawn sigh that came occasionally from the breast of both, showed that the scene of horror they had witnessed in the great church of Frankfort, still filled them with a poignant grief, which pious thoughts and humble prayers had, as yet, been unable to assuage.

Thus they knelt, in profound devotion and in silent sorrow, when the Countess Adela crept into the chapel, and bowing down, for a moment, before the altar, and there giving utterance to a short prayer, again stood up, and laying her hands upon the shoulders of the mother and daughter, she said :

“ My dear friends, I wish to speak with you.”

Bianca and Beatrice made the sign of the cross on their foreheads, and both, at the same instant, rose from their knees.

“My dear friends,” said Adela, “I am the bearer of a message to you both. My relative, Magnus, Duke of Saxony, claims permission to have an interview with the Lady Bianca and her daughter Beatrice.”

“Brave! truthful! generous Magnus!” ejaculated Bianca. “O, if all men had been but like to ——”

Tears here choked her utterance, she hid her face, for a moment, on the shoulder of the countess, so that her daughter might not perceive the flood of scalding tears that gushed from her eyes.

The name of Magnus was as a magic sound in the ears of Beatrice. For an instant, but so brief was the space of time that it could scarcely be called an instant, there was a smile upon her mouth, and joy in her eyes, but it was quickly followed by a cold shiver, that ran through her frame, and that struck to her heart, as if the thought that filled her mind was barbed with despair. She clung to the altar-railings for support, but she spoke not a word.

Adela waited for the first ebullition of feeling on the part of the mother and daughter to pass away before she resumed her discourse.

“My cousin, Magnus, desires,” she said, “to speak with you both. I suppose, Bianca, you surmise the purport of his visit.”

“I do — I do,” hurriedly answered Bianca, “and, therefore, I will not see him. His happiness — happiness to which his virtues fully entitle him — shall not be blighted by the aspect of her who is now a widow, but has never been a wife. My child, Beatrice, is now an orphan — as lone and desolate as an orphan, but also as independent, as free, and as uncontrolled in her actions as an orphan. She has no father to please — and

her mother, whatsoever she may now do, she cannot displease. I am as one dead to this world. I have, in assuming the habit of a nun, renounced it, and I will not again mingle in its affairs, even to control the actions of my child ; for I know her to be wise, and good, and virtuous. Go, then, Beatrice, with the Countess Adela. See the Duke Magnus — hear what he says — be prepared : for he will ask your hand in marriage, and, having received his proposal, then decide for yourself ; but, remember that whatever be your decision, it is one not for to-day, nor to-morrow, but for all the days of your life — for this world, and for the next. Go, my child. I bless you as you go ; and before I know what your decision may be, I bestow upon it my blessing. Say nought to me now — let the next word you speak be addressed to Magnus — to brave, generous, virtuous Magnus, who now regards you as his betrothed.”

Beatrice knelt down, in order that she might receive, on her knees, a mother's blessing. Bianca blessed her, kissed her on the forehead, and then, turning to the altar, resumed those devotions which had been interrupted by the entrance of the countess.

Adela, placing her arm around the delicate waist of Beatrice, conducted, or rather supported her, into the chamber in which Magnus awaited the coming, as he supposed, of Bianca and her daughter.

The moment that Magnus perceived Beatrice thus led into the room — so beautiful, but yet so changed from what she had been when he greeted her beneath the beech tree in the woods of Aschaffenburg, his first impulse was to rush forward and kiss her hand : but this was suddenly checked ; and he felt, he knew not wherefore, his heart oppressed with a sentiment of hopeless sorrow.

“Good God!” he said, in a voice that was so low and heart-broken in its tones, that it seemed to be a whispered sigh, “you are ill, Beatrice.”

Beatrice looked at him. It was a long, intense gaze, as if she would concentrate, in that prolonged view, all the happiness that earth could give her; for, she was happy to observe that the imprisonment he had endured, and the dangers to which he had been exposed, had but added to his manly graces and noble beauty, by adorning his brow with the wisdom of a statesman, and the gallant bearing of a warrior.

Beatrice spoke not to Magnus; but, as she looked at him, she extended to him her hand. He seized it eagerly, and impressed upon it a burning kiss. As Beatrice felt that kiss upon her hand, she shuddered, and, turning to the Countess Adela, said:—

“Noble lady, generous friend, you watched over me as a mother, when cruel and wicked men had torn me from the arms of a mother. I feel for you the love and veneration of a mother, and I fear the influence of your words and looks upon me, in this interview with Magnus. As my mother has left every thing to my decision, so I pray you also to do. Let that decision be unbiassed—let it be, as I hope you will deem it to be, deserving of your approval—but leave to me my last consolation in this world—the reflection that it is one worthy of Magnus, and of myself. Suffer me to be alone with God, and with Magnus.”

“Willingly—most willingly, my dearest child,” replied Adela; “for that which you now propose to me, I was myself about to suggest. It is but fitting that you should be alone with Magnus, for he comes to ask your hand in marriage, and he does so with the full ap-



proval of his uncle Otho, Duke of Bavaria, of the Count Dedi, and of myself."

With these words Adela quitted the room, and thus left alone the two lovers.

A silence of a few moments succeeded. It was first broken by Magnus.

"You have heard, beloved of my childhood," he said, "the purpose of my visit explained by my cousin, Adela. The happiness that I have dreamed of, from my boyhood, is now mine — I can, in the face of day, before the assembled world, claim you — my own, my beloved, my charming, my virtuous, my persecuted Beatrice, for my wife."

Beatrice covered her face, and wept bitterly.

"Tears!" continued Magnus. "Tears! when I demand your hand in marriage. Beatrice, do you not love me? I do not ask, with a love like to mine, for that is a species of adoration — but, do you not love me?"

"Love you!" answered Beatrice, her pale cheek crimsoning with excitement, when she spoke. "Love you, do you say, Magnus? Hear me, for I am in such a position that I can speak my thoughts more freely than maidens are wont to do. If, from the time that our joyous hours were passed together, on the sweet shores of the Lago Maggiore, I have, at morning, prayed for you; at noonday conversed, in fancy, with you — at night dreamed of you; and always as a being that, bearing the form of a man, had all the sweetness of a seraph — if this be love, I have loved you, and I still love you. If the sparkling dew-drop, as it glittered, reminded me of you; if the perfumed rose recalled you to my thoughts; if the gorgeous sun seemed to set in all its glory, but to bring back to my heart an image of you; if this be love, I have loved, and do love you."

“Speak on, speak on,” said Magnus, dropping upon his knees, and clasping the clay-cold hand of Beatrice — “speak on, angelic Beatrice, for there is rapture in every word, and ecstasy in every sentence, to which you give utterance.”

“Love you, Magnus, dear Magnus,” said Beatrice, looking down upon him, as he knelt before her. “I have loved you, as I believe the angels, in heaven above, love each other; for mine has been a love untainted by a single thought of self; it was a love that was in you, and for you, and that shone upon you, though you felt it not, as the sunbeam illuminates the senseless flower. Such was my love, such is my love, such ever shall be my love for you, Magnus; but, I never can be your wife.”

“Not my wife!” cried Magnus, starting up with horror, as he heard these words. “Not my wife! Good Heavens! Beatrice, what do you mean, by speaking thus to me?”

“That I love you more than myself,” answered Beatrice, bursting into tears. “Listen to me, Magnus, listen patiently, for I speak to you as if I were speaking in the confessional. I desire to lay bare my entire heart before you. If it had pleased God that I should have been born in the same rank of life with yourself, I do believe that never yet was created, nor could there be in this world, a being so happy as I should be at this moment, in frankly placing my hand in yours, and saying, ‘Take me, Magnus — make me, beloved of my heart, your wife; for you take one whose love can never know a change, and whose affection for you can only cease with her existence.’ Thus freely would I speak to you, dearest Magnus, if I were the daughter of a duke, and

that you asked me in marriage. Nay, were I even the daughter of a count, of a tungen, of a freeman, I would so speak, because I could look all your princely relatives in the face, and say, I am not as grandly born as you, but I am greater, because I am happier than you, for I am the wife of my beloved — of Magnus. If I were but the daughter of an honest man, I could do this, and thus would I act: because I could bring no dishonor upon them, and tarnish you with no shame.”

“But, Beatrice,” said Magnus, “in marrying me you become the wife of the Duke of Saxony, and though you were the daughter of a slave, none dare reproach you with the accident of your birth. More than one sovereign has, before now, placed a crown upon the brows of a female slave; and some were slaves without a particle of your virtue, and none possessed a thousandth part of your beauty.”

“And the world,” replied Beatrice, “still reproaches the memories of many of those sovereigns for their weak nature, and their grovelling tastes. But mine is a worse case than any that you cite. A slave may be an honest man; a female slave may have been nobly — nay, even royally born, like the sainted Queen Bathildes of France. You say that you can, in the face of day, and before the assembled world, claim me as your wife. Dearest Magnus, you cannot do so; for if I once appeared before the world as your wife, it would cry shame upon me, and shame upon you. And it would do so rightfully, for my existence is a shame — my life a reproach — my very being a scandal to the church, of which I am an unworthy member.”

“O, Beatrice,” said Magnus, shocked to hear such language applied to herself by his beloved, “you wrong

the world, and you wrong much more yourself. It would readily recognize that you, who scorned the offer of a crown, when tendered to you by a wicked king, were but fittingly decorated with a coronet, when bestowed upon you by one who has ever loved you for your virtues.

“It is not so, Magnus,” replied Beatrice. “Even at your marriage festival the Bishop of Utrecht would come from his dishonored grave to sit amongst your guests, and his name would be whispered by the meanest menial that crawled at your feet. The schismatic priest’s child — the child of sacrilege and of sin, can never become the mother of a child to reproach her with the infamy of its birth. If I married you, it would be but to perpetuate disgrace, and to retain, in living forms, that infamy, which, dying with me, will be forgotten. I stand in this world an accursed thing. There is poison in my blood, and if it commingled with yours, would attach in perpetuity to the princely house of Saxony a stain which an ocean of tears, if I were to shed them, hereafter, could never efface. No, Magnus, I am a blot upon the face of nature — by my birth a leper; and instead of daring to associate myself with the rest of mankind, I should hide my shame from their sight; for they cannot look upon me without being reminded that there once stood at the holy altar a man who lived for years a sacrilegious sinner. That which I ought to do, I will do. Believe me, dearest Magnus, from the first moment that the horrid truth was first told to me by my gallant grandsire — the truly brave Albani — I conceived that plan which I now mean to carry into execution. It is to follow the example of my mother, and of the Empress Agnes — to take the habit of a nun — to proceed with

both to Italy, and in the same convent where my mother was educated, there shall she and I both lay down our lives ; and heaven grant, for the honor of the church, that, in our graves, the criminal, the awful and sinful life of my miserable father may be forever shrouded from the memory of mankind ! ”

“ Beatrice, my own beloved Beatrice,” said Magnus, pausing, as if every syllable stung him with an agony that convulsed his heart, “ the words you speak to me are so strange, so terrible, so unexpected, that, pardon me if I fail to see at once the dreadful conclusion to which they tend. Can it be, that you actually mean to say, that because of a crime — a sin, of which you are as innocent as of any crime or sin that may be committed a hundred years hence, that you therefore will not — for the determination rests with you alone — that you will not become my wife ? Do I understand you aright, that this is your answer to my proposal of marriage ? ”

“ It is my answer, Magnus,” said Beatrice. “ And listen further ; so convinced am I that I am right, that though I love you more, I believe, than any wife ever yet loved her husband, yet sooner than dishonor you, and perpetuate my infamous birth by marriage — that sacrament so sacrilegiously violated by my pope-abjuring father, I would willingly see myself, as an infamous woman, condemned to the stake, and this poor weak body consumed by fire. And this I would do, Magnus — because my love for you is not the love of a woman — because I prefer you to myself, because I love you more than myself ; because I prefer your fame, and the fame of your family, which, considering your high and exalted rank, is part of yourself, to my own pure, ardent, and unceasing affection for you.”

“Then, Beatrice,” observed Magnus, “you doom yourself to a life of misery, and me to despair and death.”

“Say not so,” replied Beatrice. “When heaven places us in such circumstances that we have to choose between the indulgence of our affections and the performance of our duties, and that we sacrifice the former to fulfil the latter, be well assured that there is not a pang forgotten, nor a sigh unrecorded, and that the time will come, though it may not be in this world, when our reward will surpass all that human fancy can imagine of bliss, and peace, and joy. But if we fail in that trial — if we violate our duties to gratify our passions, even in the moment of their gratification, conscience will rise with the face of a demon, and strew every step we take with sharp and rankling thorns. There can be no peace for the sinner in this world; and there would be no peace for me, if I repaid your affection by becoming your infamous wife — for I am infamous — I am the child of sacrilege — the offspring of violated vows. As *your* wife, that would be my thought by day, and my dreams by night; and though my beloved was by my side, yet my marriage with you — because it was *with you* — would be a hell even on this earth.”

“But what have *you* to do with the dishonor of your father?” asked Magnus, again recurring to the same point on which he felt he was most strong; “or what have *I* to do with it, that I cannot choose her that I know to be the best and fairest of her sex as my wife?”

“Alas! your questions are easily answered,” replied Beatrice. “I have to do with the dishonor of my father — say, rather the sacrilegious violation of his vows — for the highest authority has told us that the sins of the

father shall be visited on the children. I must pay the penalty of his sin — an easy penalty, because in performing my duty I may win heaven for myself. And you, Magnus, have to do with it; for it stands as a barrier in the way of the indulgence of your true, pure, and virtuous love. It shows that the same duty which your ancestors discharged towards you, you now must perform towards those who in time must succeed to your name and title; that as your ancestors have given you a name free from the slightest tinge of dishonor, so no infamy, no connection with a sacrilegious family, shall be as a reproach to you, and those who descend from you. Thus have we both to do with my father's sin. It separates us forever from each other in this world; but doing so, and willingly submitting to it, as our great trial in this life, it may be the means of uniting us forever in that world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary can at least find repose. Magnus, dear Magnus, I reject your proposal of marriage; for I never, so help me heaven, will become your wife. The word is now spoken — *the vow is made*. It is my first vow of virginity; I have spoken it before my betrothed; it shall be but repeated before a bishop. God grant me strength to keep it."

"Amen! — amen! — amen!" repeated Magnus, as he looked gloomily upon the earth, "and God grant me my senses to bear it with patience, for I feel that life is loathsome to me, and I long for death."

"Magnus," said Beatrice, clasping one of his hands in both of hers, and raising it to her lips and kissing it. Magnus started; but even this unwonted action did not fully rouse him from the stupor into which he had fallen. "Dearest Magnus," continued Beatrice, "listen to me.

In refusing to become your wife, I have voluntarily cast away from me that which would have been my greatest, and could have been my only happiness in this life. Not married to you, what is there in this earth can afford solace, comfort, or consolation? Not my mother — for alas! she regards herself as the only one of her name that ever was degraded; and in her sorrow there is remorse, for this degradation has fallen on her because she disobeyed the command of her father. In you, then, I see all that my imagination can suggest, and all that my conviction can prove to me of human perfection. And yet I have torn every thought of you out of my breast as my husband. I did this because it was my duty. But, in doing so, I have riven, I feel, the very fibres of my own heart. To me there is nought else left in this world but my cell to repose in, and the chapel to pray in. In both places your vision will often appear — as when you were a boy, and when I saw you beneath the beech tree, and as you are now this moment before me. O, Magnus! do your duty in this world — worthily occupy the position in which God has placed you; use your power for good — be the foe of the tyrant, and the friend of the oppressed; let your ample riches gladden the hearts of the poor; be a champion — for that you can be — an illustrious champion in the cause of the church, and, if need be, die fighting in defence of the Cross. And then, even in my lone cell, my visions will bring to me bliss, and my prayers for you will carry consolation — the consolation that they have been heard, and that angels have descended from heaven to guide you in your path, and to protect you from the worst of dangers — mortal sin.”

“Alas! Beatrice,” said Magnus, “I lack your zeal, for



I have not, and I now feel it in my despair, your perfect purity of heart. I can but pray that I may yet one day prove that I was worthy to be your husband, had heaven so willed that you could conscientiously have accepted me."

"Pray, Magnus," continued Beatrice, "and your prayer will assuredly be heard. And as you pray, look upon this cross. Accept it, my beloved, as the last worldly gift of one who has ever thought of you with affection, and whose last words will be, God and Magnus."

As Beatrice spoke these words, she unfastened from her bosom the cross of brilliants bestowed upon her by the empress, and placed it in the hand of Magnus.

"When I die," said Magnus, "this cross will be found resting upon my heart. I accept it, Beatrice, upon one condition — it is one that you cannot refuse acceding to — it is, that into whatever convent you may enter, I shall have permission to endow it with my estate at the Lago Maggiore, where we first met, in order that you may apply the revenues, whilst you live, to such charitable objects as you think proper, and with power, when dying, to allocate them for such pious intentions as you may desire to have fulfilled."

"I accept the offer," answered Beatrice. "I shall regard the gift as coming from my spouse on earth, and I shall transfer it to my spouse in heaven. And now, beloved Magnus, let us part, as we met, in love and in peace. I hear the impatient tramping of the horses' feet outside. The buzz that reaches us comes from the retinue of the empress, awaiting to escort her to Rome, not as an empress, but as a nun. The empress alone knew my intentions, and now awaits me. For the last time on this earth, then, farewell. We cannot be as husband and wife; let us be as brother and sister."

As Beatrice spoke these words, she held up her fair forehead, and the cold lips of Magnus quivered as they touched it. Beatrice flung her arms around his neck, and kissing him upon both cheeks, rushed from the room. Her utterance failed her — she could not say — “farewell!”

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE CONCLUSION.

THE winter season had arrived. Cold, gusty winds rushed through the leafless trees, and along the banks of the Rhine, speeding upon their course, as they hurried away, large masses of ice, which clashed together, coalesced for a moment, and then again were riven asunder as they were borne off by the rapid current towards the sea. These huge lumps of drifting ice were watched, with an earnest eye, by a man thickly clothed in furs, who stood upon a rampart overhanging the Rhine, and who turned his gaze, from time to time, away from them, towards the opposite side of the river, where there had been erected a fortification like that on which he stood.

The man who so watched, was Henry, the deposed King of Germany. All semblance of the former state with which he used to be surrounded had utterly vanished. He was alone, without a single attendant — and near him were but a few men, with helmets and pikes, who were discharging their duty as sentinels. They were hungry, care-worn, and desperate-looking ruffians — in whose eyes, when they rested upon the king, was

discernible not one single glance of attachment or respect. Had Henry been without his sword, which he carried, not in his belt, but in his right hand — as if he would have it prepared for immediate use, then these sentinels might have been regarded as soldiers guarding a prisoner, and not subordinates under the command of him, who now looked with such uneasy glances upon the waters and the opposite bank of the Rhine.

“Curses upon it,” exclaimed Henry, “if this intense cold continues but three days longer, the Rhine will be covered with one solid mass of ice. Even as it is, and despite the strong wind, I can see it knitting together. Let it but stop for an hour, and a hurricane would not disperse it. The ice once formed, I must abandon this position, or I must wait to see the whole army of the confederate princes pour down upon me — surround me on all sides, and then ——” he smiled with grim despair as he spoke these words, and clasped his sword to his breast; “then this will be the last resource! I shall never stand a living man, and a captive, before Otho of Bavaria and the Bishop of Halberstadt, who have knelt as suppliants at my feet, and — who were not forgiven.”

The sad course of his desperate thoughts was here interrupted by perceiving that there came, floating down towards the fortification from which he looked, a small boat, in which there were but two passengers, a man and a woman. As the boat approached, it was manifest to Henry that a great danger was incurred by it, it being formed of such frail materials that it seemed difficult to guide it, in a certain course, through the impetuous current, and, at the same time, avoid its coming in contact with the huge and jagged pieces of ice, that tumbled down the stream.

“It is Bertha!” he said, “my poor, weak, willing, devoted, but disagreeable instrument, Bertha. She perils life, even now, to serve me, and yet I cannot love her. Poor Bertha! she is faithful and true, but she is so — O, the boat must be swamped by that iceberg that topples over it. There! no, she has escaped! She will tell me, I warrant, that it is the intercession of a saint has saved her. Poor Bertha! I wish I had her piety, or that she had more beauty! I might, in either case, make a better husband. But see! she rises in the boat. She recognizes me, and despite her danger, she stands up to give the signals we agreed upon. See, she clinches her right hand. It is well; she has succeeded in making the inquiries I desired. She now raises her left hand. It tells me that I have no friends amongst the confederate princes. And what? both her hands are now uplifted. They announce that my affairs are in a desperate condition. Curses on her! Is this the skill of which she boasted? The worst of news! There is no time to be lost in learning it. I must hasten to meet her at the landing-place. The idiot wife will regard it as a mark of affection for her, and so deem herself rewarded for all the danger she has incurred. She is my sole chance of safety now, and I must, to the last, play the hypocrite.”

Henry, as he spoke these words, sprang from the fortification down to the spot on which the boat was then touching, and stepping knee deep into the waters, he clasped his arms around Bertha, and carried her, as if she had been a baby, up to the walls of the fortress, and as he bore her, said —

“Say to me one word, Bertha — what is the purport of your intelligence?”

“Not here, my dear husband,” answered Bertha. “What I have to say to you can alone be told where there is no chance of our being overheard. When I tell you all you will praise me for my prudence in being now silent.”

Henry set her down upon the earth, not rudely, but still, though he spoke not, there were impatience and anger manifested by the suddenness of the movement; and there was scorn in the words with which he replied —

“Be it as you will, Bertha. Since you became an ambassador, you have rendered yourself remarkable by your *prudence* — your *skill* — and — your *success*.”

Bertha felt the sneer, but made no reply to it. She merely clasped her husband’s hand in her own, and walked on with him from the outermost walls of the fortification, to the small, poor habitation in which they resided together.

“My dear husband,” said Bertha, when they were quite alone, “I know that you are vexed with me because I would not speak one word of what I had ascertained on the other side of the Rhine. I have heavy and sad news to tell you; but let it be not rendered more doleful by the supposition that your wife, Bertha, is not willing to do every thing that can tend to the promotion of your happiness. I did not wish to speak to you, as long as there was the slightest chance of our being overheard; and the reason I did not wish to do so was this — that there is not a soldier in your fortification that is not a traitor — that all have been, and are, at this moment, voluntarily spies upon your conduct; and it is not their fault that you are not bound, hand and foot, a prisoner at this moment, in the encampment of the confederate princes.”

“ I suspected, from the looks of many of the soldiers,” said Henry, “ evil intentions towards me — that is, a revolt, or a desertion — but not the project of betraying me. There is not a knave amongst them that I have not fed, for years, with the spoils of the Saxons. But are you sure they are all traitors ? ”

“ With the exception of the man who was my companion in that perilous voyage over the Rhine, at such a time as this,” replied Bertha, “ I am sure they are all traitors. Had the offer they made, of betraying you, been tendered to any other than a gallant enemy, like Count Dedi, you would have been seized upon, last night, as you slept, and now confined in a dungeon.”

“ And Count Dedi, having the power of making me a prisoner, or putting me to death, would not avail himself of the opportunity presented him ! ” said Henry, in a tone that indicated how incredulous he was as to the statement that Bertha made.

“ He would not,” answered Bertha. “ He said, that though he had strong reason to suspect that you were not perfectly innocent of the death of his son, still, even if he were sure that you were guilty, yet he would not punish one act of treachery by himself participating in another ; that he no longer regarded you as a king, but as an enemy, and that, as an enemy, he would strike you down if he encountered you in the field of battle ; but he would not degrade himself by rewarding traitors for failing in the duty they owed to you. This was his answer to your soldiers. Be assured, the offer they made to him they will make to others, and you cannot calculate upon finding many like to Count Dedi on the other side of the Rhine.”

“ I am convinced I cannot do so. But what news of

the confederate princes and prelates. Is it possible that I have not one friend left amongst them? What, for instance, says Count Rutger?" asked Henry.

"Count Rutger is dead," replied Bertha. "He has been accidentally slain, by falling from his horse, the point of Attila's sword having, as he fell, entered his side; and the superstitious common people regard it as a judgment from heaven upon him: because, they say, that sword, which had been filched from Otho, was bestowed by Egen, as a bribe to Rutger, to become compurgator for him, in Egen's false charge against the Duke of Bavaria."

"This is a strange — a very strange accident," said Henry, musing. "The handsome Count Rutger dead! he that I loved so much! that was a sharer in all my feasts, and a partner in all my pleasures — and he is dead! Alas! I have lost in him a sure friend."

"On the contrary," observed Bertha, "he was your most inveterate foe. I saw myself, that he endeavored to excite my hatred against you, by saying that you wanted him to become my lover — my unlawful lover in the first instance, and then that you had promised, as he said, to get rid of me, and give me to him as a wife."

"I am glad to hear, Bertha, that he is dead," said Henry, "for he was a foul slanderer to invent such falsehoods respecting me. Let us think of him no more. What say you of the anti-papal prelates?"

"All who were disposed to be your friends," replied Bertha, "are now powerless — they have been stricken with excommunication by Pope Gregory — Robert of Bamberg, Otho of Ratisbonne, Otho of Constance, and Burcard of Lausanne, having been so excommunicated,

are now gone a pilgrimage to Rome, in the hope they may obtain the forgiveness of his holiness. The consequence is, that amongst the confederate princes you have not one friend—not one. All are your enemies, and in the diet which has now been held ——”

“A diet!” exclaimed Henry, terrified. “Is it possible that they have attempted to hold a diet without me?”

“Alas! my dear husband,” said Bertha, “they have dared to do much worse than hold a diet in your absence. In consequence of a letter addressed by Rodolph, Duke of Swabia; Guelp, Duke of Bavaria; Berthold, Duke of Carinthia; Adalberon, Bishop of Wurtzburg; and Adalbert, Bishop of Worms, a diet has been held at Tribur. At that diet, Sigefrid of Mayence, who has returned from Rome, appeared—and there too came the Papal Legates, Sicard, Patriarch of Aquilea, and Altman, Bishop of Passau. At this diet, I grieve to tell you, that you have been regarded as a king already deposed, and there, having recapitulated all the crimes of which they say you have been guilty, they declared that the only remedy was to put in your place some other king; and the only difference between them, for a long time, was in itself a proof of their unanimity; for the Swabians desired that the new king should be a Saxon prince, and the Saxons, on the other hand, said they would prefer a Swabian. A king would have been, at once, elected in your place, if it had not been for a letter addressed to the assembled princes by Pope Gregory, who begged that you might be treated with mildness.”

“You do indeed amaze me,” cried Henry. “Can it be possible that Hildebrand interceded for me?”

“I have read his letter,” answered Bertha, “and there is one passage in it made so deep an impression upon



my mind, that I am sure I can repeat it from memory. It is this : —

“ ‘ As we are not animated against Henry by the pride of this world, nor by any vain ambition ; and as the discipline and the care of the churches are the sole motives that have induced us to act against him, we entreat of you, as our brothers, to treat him with mildness, if he sincerely returns to justice ; and not with that strict justice which would take away from him the empire, but with that mercy which blots out past crimes. Forget not, I pray you, the weakness of human nature ; and bear in mind a pious recollection both of his father and of his mother, with whom can be compared no sovereigns of our time.’ ” \*

Henry did not speak to Bertha for some time after she repeated these lines from the letter of the pontiff. He rose from his seat — paced the room two or three times, and then taking his place by the side of his wife, he remarked :

“ It was very magnanimous in Hildebrand to write thus of me. He that I thought the worst, is the most generous of my opponents.”

“ Bear in mind,” said Bertha, “ the conduct of Dedi.”

“ I do — I do,” replied Henry, “ but it is not to be compared to the perfectly Christian conduct of Hildebrand.”

“ That conduct found an imitator in the valiant Otho of Bavaria,” said Bertha, “ who, when there was an

\* This is a literal translation of a letter addressed by Pope Gregory VII., to the princes and prelates of Germany.

almost unanimous feeling expressed for the immediate election of another king to supply your place, obtained a year's truce for you, within which time an opportunity will be afforded to you of being restored to the throne of which you are now deprived."

"A year's truce! I pray, good Bertha, explain your meaning," said Henry.

"What the diet have agreed upon is this," replied Bertha: "First, that, as you stand excommunicated, they will hold no communication with you directly or indirectly; next, that even if they could, they would not do so, because you have so often broken promises previously made that there is now no relying on your word; thirdly, that they will submit the decision upon their complaints against you to the Pope, who is, for that purpose, invited to be at Augsburg at the feast of the Purification, and that the Pope will then absolve or condemn you as he thinks proper; fourthly, that if within a year and a day from the time that excommunication was pronounced against you, absolution be not obtained by you from the Pope, they will regard you, as deprived, then and forevermore, of the crown of Germany."

"And *this?*" said Henry, with scornful rage, "is the only mercy that my rebellious subjects will show me."

"This and this only," replied Bertha, "and even this was with difficulty obtained by Otho of Bavaria, who declared that now you are deprived of such evil counsellors as Rome-hating Croft, Count Werenher, Lieman, and others, you might be induced to govern Germany well and wisely."

"Good Otho!" observed Henry, with a sneer, "the time, perchance, may come when I shall have the oppor-

tunity of proving whether he prophesied truly or not respecting me."

"From the private soldier to the highest prince in that immense army that is now confederated against you," remarked Bertha, "there is but one sentiment expressed, namely, that they never again will submit to see in your hands such absolute power as you hitherto have exercised, and which was a temptation to you to become a tyrant, and to deprive the nobles of their privileges and the people of their freedom."

"What! Bertha," said Henry, "have you, too, in the camp of the rebels, learned to speak the language of traitors?"

"O, my beloved husband!" said the gentle Bertha, "it is better that the truth be whispered in your ear by a loving wife, than that it should be repeated by a foe, who holds a sword, when you have no shield to protect your heart. Consider, dearest Henry, the position in which you are at this moment — surrounded by traitors, who are ready to sell your blood — assailed by indignant subjects, who are determined upon your degradation now — for they insist, that, abiding the reconciliation with the Pope, you shall be treated as a private individual — and resolved upon your ultimate deposition in case the year should pass away, and you still remain an excommunicated man. Consider all this, Henry, and then reflect there is but one path of safety for you."

"And what is that?" asked Henry.

"It is, without a moment's delay, to fly from this place — to betake yourself with me to Italy; we can travel as pilgrims — to see the Pope — he is a generous, kindly, tender-hearted old man — to seek a reconciliation with him. Ask it, and you will be sure to obtain it."

Such was the advice of Bertha to her husband.

Henry listened to the words of Bertha. They seemed to produce a deep impression upon his mind; for folding his arms, and casting himself back upon the couch on which he had been sitting, he closed his eyes to all external objects, and lay, for a long time, pondering upon the course he should pursue. At length his reflections were at an end, for, starting up, he kissed Bertha's hand, and said :

“Excellent adviser, you have pointed the way out of all my difficulties. It is but this day that I heard old Hildebrand was at Canossa. We will go there—you disguised as a pilgrim. I will do something better than that. I shall make my appearance before him with the bared head and the naked feet of a penitent. Think you not that such a semblance of humility by the proud King of Germany will melt the heart of Hildebrand, and induce him to regard me rather as a saint than a sinner. O, yes—I see it all, I shall be freed from the excommunication, I shall be restored to my throne and power, and then ——”

Henry paused; for he feared to give expression to the dark thoughts of revenge that were brooding in his heart.

“And then?” said Bertha, wishing to hear him declare that he would amend his life and govern justly hereafter.

“And then,” continued Henry, “you shall find that my love and devotion, my truth and fidelity, will prove how grateful I can be for the good advice you have given me. And now, dear Bertha, make what preparations you can for our journey. We shall proceed on our road towards the Alps in the morning.”

A heavy fall of snow had taken place in the course

of the night, but so intense was the cold, that it had hardened, like a rock, and all around was one bleak scene of whiteness, as Henry and his gentle wife stealthily stepped forth from the habitation in which they had passed the night, to encounter all the perils of a journey, on foot, to Canossa. They had not advanced two yards from the door until a horrid spectacle presented itself to their view: it was that of a miserable man, eyeless and noseless, covered with rags, shivering with cold, and who, hearing their steps on the hard surface on which they trod, cried out, in a whining voice:

“Good Christians! whoever you may be, pity a wretched blind man, who is perishing of cold and famished with hunger.”

“Merciful heaven!” exclaimed Henry. “This is Egen — my favorite Egen. Who has dared thus to treat him? Ask him, Bertha.”

“My good man,” said Bertha, “here is a piece of gold for you. I will place it in your hand on condition you tell me, truly, who you are, and how you came to be deprived of sight.”

“I am Egen,” the trembling, starving wretch replied. “I was, at one time, in the employment of King Henry, and having been the first to inform him of the residence of a beautiful maiden — Beatrice, of Aschaffenburg — and having afterwards carried her away, and detained her at Erzegebirge, for him — when that fortress was captured by the grandfather of Beatrice, he deprived me of my eyes, because they had looked upon Beatrice, and had been used for her betrayal into the power of the wicked King Henry.”

“Here, take the gold,” said Bertha, shuddering. “Go, and, in your prayers, remember King Henry.”

“Remember him!” said Egen, as he groped his way along the road, “if I do, it will be to pray for the perdition of him who has caused my destruction, and who has left me, as I am, a maimed and forlorn mendicant.”

Henry and Bertha commenced their fearful journey, and, in that journey, they had but one companion. Of all the Germans, there was but one man to aid, support, or help them; and that was a man, remarkable neither for his rank nor his riches.

It was the same man who had rowed Bertha across the Rhine — it was Diedrich of Treves.

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THE END.









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